

# Powder River Conservation District



## Annual Report FY 2014-2015

### *Mission Statement*

*The Powder River Conservation District's mission is to provide education and leadership for the conservation of our natural resources, the wise use of Wyoming's waters, the improvement of our environment, and the preservation of our agricultural heritage through a responsible conservation ethic.*

# Powder River Conservation District

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The Powder River Conservation District was established in November of 1955. Petitions for the organization of a Soil Conservation District, were circulated at various organization meetings at Barnum, Kaycee, Sussex, and Mayoworth, and signed by ranchers located in the southern end of Johnson County.

Many changes have been made in the past sixty years and the district continues to grow and provide service to the citizens of Southern Johnson County. There are approximately 1,220,528 acres within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Powder River Conservation District. Of the total area of the PRCD, approximately 910,510.20 acres are privately owned; approximately 312,422 acres are administered by the Bureau of Land Management; approximately 104,468.10 acres are owned by the State of Wyoming; approximately 3,454.80 are owned by the U.S. Forest Service and approximately 546.90 acres are owned by Johnson County.

The district has one incorporated municipality, the Town of Kaycee, with a current population of 270. The main drainages in the District are the North Fork, Middle Fork, Red Fork, and South Fork of Powder River. The majority of the district is composed of native rangeland, both private and public.

The agriculture of the Powder River Conservation District is centered around livestock operations. Irrigated areas are used primarily for the production of hay and small grain as supplemental food for livestock. The mineral industry includes oil and gas production, bentonite, uranium, and coal reserves. This scenic ranching community is rich in heritage and history.



# PRCD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



The Powder River Conservation District is governed by a five member Board of Supervisors. Three supervisors are rural, one is urban, and one is designated as at-large. They are elected by the residents of Southern Johnson County during the general election. They serve staggered four year terms, with two positions available at a general election one year and three positions available at the next election. Supervisors are unpaid, elected volunteers who attend monthly board meetings and are actively involved in overseeing the activities of the conservation district. Board meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at the PRCD office and are open to the public.

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## **CHAIRMAN**

William Jones (urban)

## **VICE-CHAIR**

George Renkert (rural)

## **SECRETARY/TREASURER**

Amy Icanberry (rural)

## **SUPERVISOR**

Dan Mahoney (rural)

## **SUPERVISOR**

Kevin Lund (at-large)

## **DISTRICT PERSONEL**

Anita Bartlett-District Manager

## **NRCS STAFF**

Allison McKenzie-District Conservationist

Katie Schade-Rangeland Management Specialist

Kassie Bales-Rangeland Management Specialist

John Lawrence– Technician

## **HOW TO CONTACT PRCD**

### **Address:**

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P.O. Box 48

Kaycee, WY 82639

### **Phone:**

(307) 738-2321

### **Fax:**

(307) 738-2107

### **Email:**

Anita.Bartlett@wy.nacdnet.net

### **Website:**

www.powderrivercd.org

# ADMINISTRATION & OPERATIONS

**ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS GOAL:** To be accountable for all public funds and ensure all District programs are carried out in a responsible manner.

## ACCOUNTING

The District continues to maintain responsible financial procedures and records to be accountable of all funds that it receives. The 2014-2015 budget was prepared in accordance with all state statues and submitted to the Johnson County Commissioners, Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts, and the Wyoming Department of Agriculture. All monthly, quarterly, and yearly state and federal reports were filed in a timely manner.

## TRAININGS

The District staff and/or Board Members attended the following trainings:

- ✧ Wyoming Conservation Employee's Association Training
- ✧ WCDEA Winter Training
- ✧ Conservation Candidate Agreement with Assurances/Conservation Candidate Agreement Workshop

## MEETINGS

The District Staff and/or Board Members attended the following meetings:

- ✧ Wyoming Conservation Districts Employee Association Meetings
- ✧ National Conservation Districts Employee Association Conference Calls
- ✧ Wyoming Association of Conservation District's Annual Convention in Sheridan, WY
- ✧ Area I meeting hosted by the Lake DesMet CD
- ✧ Buffalo BLM Field Office Resource Management Plan revision meetings
- ✧ Johnson County Local Work Group meeting
- ✧ NRCS Partnership Meeting
- ✧ Johnson County Commissioner meetings
- ✧ Stock Trail Users Meetings
- ✧ Wyoming State Forestry/Tree Board Meetings
- ✧ Town of Kaycee City Council Meetings
- ✧ Dull Knife Irrigation District Meetings
- ✧ Powder River/Tongue River Basin Meeting



**District Manager Anita Bartlett serves as the WCDEA President.**

## PRCD FUNDING



- Johnson County Mill Levy
- Wyoming Department of Agriculture
- Anadarko Petroleum Corporation

# INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

**INFORMATION DISSEMINATION GOAL:** To provide conservation information to the public through a comprehensive media plan.

## Newsletters

The District's Quarterly newsletter "Powder River News" was mailed to more than 300 Southern Johnson County households, four times last year. Included in these newsletters was information regarding District and NRCS activities, events, and educational articles on a variety of natural resource topics.

## Website

The District continues to update the website monthly to keep the public updated on its programs and activities.

## Media

Numerous news articles and advertisements were published in the Kaycee Community Voice, Buffalo Bulletin, and the Wyoming Livestock Roundup detailing the District's activities, projects, programs, and other information.



# TREE PROGRAM

**TREE PROGRAM GOAL:** To promote the planting of trees that will improve our watersheds, benefit the environment, our communities and aid in the conservation of our natural resources.

## Tree Program

- Provided informational handouts on planning, planting, and the maintenance of windbreaks and shelter belts.
- Made the tree planter available to landowners for the planting of seedling trees.



- Donated approximately 90 seedling Douglas Fir trees to the Kaycee Elementary School for the Adopt a Tree Program.
- Two Quaking Aspen Trees were planted at the Meike Bunkhouse in honor of Arbor Day.

## Tree Sales

- Provided a variety of large stock trees, shrubs and seedlings to the community. Approximately 90 seedling trees and 50 large stock trees and shrubs were ordered and planted for conservation purposes.

# EDUCATION/OUTREACH

**EDUCATION/OUTREACH GOAL:** To strengthen, expand, and build a strong public education and outreach program that will create an understanding of natural resource conservation through a variety of youth and adult education opportunities.

## YOUTH EDUCATION

### • Ag In The Classroom Activities

This past year the PRCO visited the Kaycee Elementary School (KES) and Middle School (KMS) classrooms to present a variety of Ag in the Classroom activities that included:



✧ **The Miraculous Seed**-students dissected monocot and dicot seeds to learn the differences in these types of seeds. They also germinated different types of seeds in order to see how different types of seeds grow.

✧ **Transplanting**-students transplanted seeds that they germinated in the Miraculous Seed lesson. Through this extended activity, they learned why plants need such things as soil, water, and light for continual growth after germination.

✧ **What is a Mineral?**-through a series of six hands on experiments students learned to identify 18 different minerals based on the characteristics of luster, color, streak, hardness, cleavage, fracture, and other special characteristics.

✧ **Transpiration**-KMS 6th grade worked with District Manager Anita Bartlett to learn how transpiration occurs in plants and why it's function is important to plants. They also conducted experiments to show transpirations in plants.

✧ **Flower Dissection**-District Manager Anita Bartlett visited the KMS 6th grade Science class where they dissected Tulips in order to learn the parts of flowers and what those parts are used for in the growth and reproduction of the plant.

✧ **Microscopes**-The PRCO went to the KMS 6th Grade Class to assist them with learning the basics of how to use Microscopes.



✧ **Johnson County 3-4th Grade Rendezvous**- The 3-4<sup>th</sup> grade students in all elementary schools in Johnson County gathered to hold a Rendezvous To learn skills that early pioneers/mountain men would have known. This year Anita taught a lesson on identifying animal tracks.

✧ **Mapping Skills**-KMS OREO Class learned how to identify parts of a map, read different types of maps, and how government agencies use maps for agricultural purposes. As well, they were able to utilize the PRCO's mapping software to create maps.

✧ **Plant Kingdom**-Anita Bartlett taught the KMS 6th grade science class about the different classes of plants within the plant kingdom and how they function together within their ecosystems.

✧ **Plant Cell Models**-Anita Bartlett worked with the KMS 6th grade science class to create plant cell models. This activity helped students to understand how a plant functions.

✧ **Animal Adaptations**-PRCO District Manager, Anita Bartlett taught a session on Animal Adaptations and their Habitats. The youth learned about habitats and adaptations of animals and how these two things are related. They then created their own animal and discussed the special adaptations it had in order to live in its environment.



# EDUCATION/OUTREACH

## YOUTH EDUCATION CONTINUED...

- **Black Hills Natural Resource Youth Camp**



This year District Manager Anita Bartlett assisted with the planning of the Black Hills Natural Resources Youth Camp which is designed to give young people the opportunity to experience the natural world and its resources through hands-on activities that included how to catch and band birds, the importance of forest health, identifying wildlife based on their furs, geocaching, and fishing and archery. The PRCD also provided scholarships for 11 Kaycee youth to attend this 3 day camp.

- **Adopt a Tree Program**

The PRCD continued its Adopt A Tree Program this spring with the Kaycee Elementary Students. Each KES student was able to take home an Eastern Red Cedar seedling tree to plant. This year along with being able to take home a tree, students learned about the importance of Arbor Day and the role trees play in the world today.



- **World Water Monitoring Day**

The PRCD visited the KMS Presentations class to assist in teaching the students the importance of water quality and the how oxygen/carbon dioxide levels in the water effect water quality and aquatic animals. This visit included a trip to the Middle Fork of Powder River where the kids were able to do hands on activities where they tested for Dissolved Oxygen, pH, and nitrates.

- **Stream Bank Disturbance Field Day**

The PRCD and the NRCS Engineers provided a field day for the KHS Sophomore Science class to showcase stream bank disturbance due to erosion caused by flooding/high water on the Middle Fork of Powder River. They also were able to see designs to correct the erosion issue in order to stabilize the stream banks.



## ADULT EDUCATION

- **Estate Planning Workshop**

The PRCD hosted an Estate Planning Workshop taught by native Wyoming Attorney, Robert Wyatt. Mr. Wyatt has 40 years of professional experience in estate and tax planning. The workshop was tailored for ranch owning families who are interested in keeping their ranch in the family. Those that attended received valuable information in the options available to them to pass their family ranch down to the next generation.

- **City Council & County Commissioner Presentation**

District Manager Anita Bartlett gave a presentation on the District's programs and services to the Kaycee City Council and to the Johnson County Commissioners and attendees of those meetings.

- **CCAA/CCA Workshop**

The PRCD worked with the Lake DeSmet Conservation District to host a Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances/Candidate Conservation Agreement Workshop to inform landowners about the application process and the requirements of the program.

# SPECIAL PROJECTS

**SPECIAL PROJECTS GOAL:** To provide technical assistance on projects to residents of Southern Johnson County that are not specifically targeted in other project areas or come up unexpected during the year.

- **Hazardous/Household Waste Collection Day with Lake DeSmet C. D.**

The PRCD worked with Lake DeSmet Conservation District and other sponsors to hold a Hazardous Waste Collection Day in Buffalo for the people of Johnson County. There was a great turn out and approximately 22 tons of waste was collected.



- **E-Waste Collection**

In November 2012 the PRCD began to collect e-waste within the community, since this time the district has collected over two tons of e-waste to be recycled. This Program has taken off in the community and keeps a considerable amount of electronic waste out of our landfill.

- **Free Well Water Testing Day**

In October the District hosted it's Annual Free Well Water Testing Day. Thirty two private wells were tested for bacteria (Total Coliform/E. Coli Coliform) and twenty four were tested for Domestic/Livestock/Irrigation use. Ten of these wells tested positive for bacteria (Total Coliform) and the district worked with the landowners to treat and re-test these wells.

- **Small Projects Cost Share Programs**

The PRCD offers a Small Project Cost Share Program that provides incentive for residents and businesses on projects that make a positive difference on the land to conserve soil, water and energy. Two cost share projects were completed this past year through our Small Projects Cost Share Program with the District's portion totaling \$1,815. They included a xeriscaping project and a tree planting project.



- **Arbor Day/Tree Plantings at Town Park**

This year to celebrate Arbor Day the Powder River Conservation District worked with the Boys and Girls Club of the Big Horns-Kaycee, the Meike Bunkhouse, and Wyoming State Forestry to plant two Quaking Aspen Trees. These trees were planted in front of the Meike Bunkhouse in celebration of 9 years as a Tree City USA town.

- **Dull Knife Irrigation District**

The PRCD worked with the North Fork Water Users to form the Dull Knife Irrigation District. They assisted them with map making, scoping meetings and a field tour. Through the formation of the Irrigation District the Dull Knife Irrigators were able to obtain funding to insure the repair of the Dull Knife Reservoir

- **Emergency Watershed Protection Program**

The PRCD and the NRCS began working with local landowners following flood waters Memorial Weekend to obtain Exigency Emergency Watershed Funding to repair damage incurred on stream banks and structures on the Middle Fork of Powder River and Powder River



- **Irrigation and Landscaping Sales**

The PRCD sells drip irrigation hose and parts, weed barrier, rain barrels, composters, recycling bins and irrigation dam material as a service to Southern Johnson County.

# NATURAL RESOURCES

**NATURAL RESOURCES GOAL:** The Powder River Conservation District will promote programs available to assist landowners with decisions and options for proper management of range, pasture, and croplands. The district will work in cooperation with other county, state, and federal agencies.

## RURAL COST SHARE PROGRAM

The PRCD offers Rural Cost Share Program that is designed for large rural projects that make a positive difference on the land: to conserve soil, water and energy. Six Rural Cost Share projects were completed this past year with the District's portion totaling \$71,060. The projects included drilling a well, installing stock water pipeline, two cross fences, stock tanks, and a reservoir restoration project.



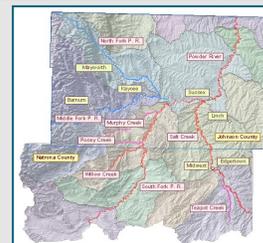
## WORK COOPERATIVELY WITH THE NRCS

- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program**
  - ✧ Stock Water Development-one new 2015 contracts processed along with 3 active contracts which focus on stock water development
  - ✧ Sage Grouse Initiative-6 active contracts that focus on the improvement of sage grouse habitat.
- **Conservation Plans**
  - ✧ Proper Grazing Management
  - ✧ Irrigation Water Management
- **Conservation Stewardship Program**
  - ✧ Four active contract, which focus on rewarding current conservation practices and encourage new conservation efforts.
- **Local Work Group**
  - ✧ Established local priorities and ranking criteria for local applications

# WATERSHED PLANNING

**WATERSHED PLANNING GOAL:** Promote and protect the quality of Wyoming's waters, reduce siltation of streams, channels and reservoirs, promote wise use of Wyoming's water. Continue working towards removing impaired streams from the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) list.

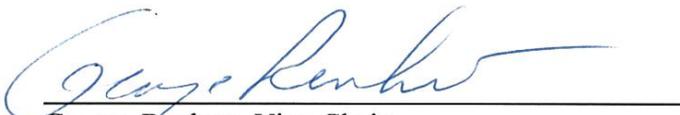
- Provided activities to the local schools and youth organizations targeting the importance of water quality.
- Hosted a free Well Water Testing Day to test for nitrates, nitrites, pH, and bacteria.
- Worked with cooperators to address water quality concerns through USDA programs.
- Maintained local partnerships to coordinate watershed planning efforts.
- The PRCD spent \$3,765 towards water quality monitoring.



*We, the Supervisors of the Powder River Conservation District, as duly authorized by they Wyoming Conservation District Law, hereby adopt this 2014-2015 Annual Report as the culmination of the work completed within this conservation District for the 2014-2015 fiscal year.*

  
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William Jones, Chair

Sept 15 2015  
Date

  
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George Renkert, Vice-Chair

9/15/15  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Amy Icanberry, Secretary/Treasurer

9/15/15  
Date

  
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Kevin Lund, Supervisor

9-15-15  
Date

  
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Daniel Mahoney, Supervisor

9-15-15  
Date