

Powder River Conservation District



Annual Report FY 2019-2020

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 responsible conservation efforts

Powder River Conservation District

The Powder River Conservation District was established in November of 1955. Petitions for the organization of a Soil Conservation District, were circulated at various 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-five 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 PRCO, 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.

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 Tuesday of each month at the PRCD office and are open to the public.

CHAIRMAN

William Jones (urban)

VICE-CHAIR

George Renkert (rural)

SECRETARY/TREASURER

Wade Curuchet (rural)

SUPERVISOR

Dan Mahoney (rural)

SUPERVISOR

Kevin Lund (at-large)

DISTRICT PERSONEL

Anita Bartlett-District Manager

NRCS STAFF

Allison McKenzie-District Conservationist
Kassie Camino-Rangeland Management Specialist
Charlie Bradshaw-Soil Conservationist

HOW TO CONTACT PRCD

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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 accurate records. The 2019-2020 budget was prepared in accordance with all state statues and submitted to the Johnson County Commissioners, Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts, Wyoming Department of Agriculture, and the Wyoming Department of Audit. 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:

- ✧ EzGrant Webinar Training
- ✧ NRCS Range Training
- ✧ WCDEA Winter Training
- ✧ Barnyards & Backyards Virtual Trainings
- ✧ Public Purchase Training

MEETINGS

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

- ✧ Wyoming Conservation Districts Employee Association Meetings
- ✧ Wyoming Association of Conservation District's Annual Convention in Evanston, WY
- ✧ Area I meeting hosted by the Campbell County Conservation District
- ✧ Johnson County Local Work Group meeting
- ✧ Johnson County Commissioner meetings
- ✧ Wyoming State Forestry/Tree Board Meetings
- ✧ Town of Kaycee City Council Meetings
- ✧ Special District Task Force Meetings
- ✧ NRCS State Technical Meetings
- ✧ NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection Program Meetings
- ✧ BLM Wyoming Pipeline Corridor Cooperator Meetings
- ✧ Kaycee Flood Levy Meetings
- ✧ Johnson County Natural Resource Planning Committee Meetings
- ✧ Governor's Press Conferences
- ✧ Johnson County Weed Bounty Meetings

Awards/Honors

- **District Manager Anita Bartlett:**

- Currently serves as the Chair of the Johnson County Wyoming Public Lands Initiative Committee.

PRCD FUNDING



- Johnson County Mill Levy
- Wyoming Department of Agriculture
- Natural Resource Conservation Services

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. 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 keeping the public updated on programs and activities.

Media

Numerous news articles and advertisements were published in the Kaycee Community Voice and the Buffalo Bulletin detailing the District's activities, projects, programs, and other information. This past year the PRCD also created a District Facebook page to reach out to the community in the midst of the COVID pandemic.



TREE PROGRAM

TREE PROGRAM GOAL: To promote the planting of trees that will improve our watersheds, benefit the environment and 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.
- Donated approximately 75 seedling Poplar trees to local landowners due to the Adopt a Tree Program being cancelled with schools shut down for the pandemic.



- The District assisted the Town of Kaycee to celebrate Arbor Day.

Tree Sales

- Provided a variety of large stock trees, shrubs and seedlings to the community. Approximately 107 seedling trees and 52 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 PRCD 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.

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

• **District Facebook Youth Educational Videos**

With the cancellation of the Johnson County Schools during the spring of 2020, the PRCD developed a Facebook page in which the PRCD posted educational videos for youth to participate in at home. Those videos included: How to make Slime, Ice Cream in a Bag, Seed Dissection and Germination, Cloud Dough, Borax Crystals, Butter in a Jar, Elephant Toothpaste, Bouncy Balls and Floam.



• **Rise and Shine Learning Center Education Olympics**

The PRCD presented two educational workshops at the Education Olympics. Those included Blooming Flowers, and Edible Slime.

ADULT EDUCATION

• **City Council & County Commissioner Presentation**

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

• **Leadership Johnson County Presentation**

Anita Bartlett spoke to the Leadership Johnson County class on the purpose and activist of the conservation District.

• **District Facebook Educational Posts**

With the restrictions of the COVID pandemic the PRCD got creative this spring and took to posting educational materials on their Facebook page including: plant and insect information, gardening advice and district notices.

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 unexpectedly.

- **Hazardous/Household Waste Collection Day with Clear Creek C. D.**

The PRCD worked with Clear Creek 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 20 tons of waste was collected.



- **Well Water Testing Day**

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

- **Small Project Cost Share Programs**

The PRCD offers a Small Project Cost Share Program to residents and businesses for projects that conserve soil, water and energy. This past year the Powder River Conservation District funded one small cost share project. The District's portion of this project totaled \$1,000.



- **Emergency Watershed Protection Program**

Flood waters returned to Johnson County in June of 2019 with record high water in portions of the Middle Fork of Powder River. The PRCD worked with the NRCS and local landowners and received funding for five Non-Emergency Watershed Protection Program Projects.

- **Spruce Budworm Forest Health Project**

The PRCD worked in conjunction with Wyoming State Forestry and local landowners to apply for and receive WY SF Bark Beetle Funding to thin stands of Douglas Fir on the Southern end of the Big Horn Mountains in Johnson County.

- **PRCD Photo Bi-Annual Photo Contest**

The PRCD held its 1st bi-annual photo contest for ages pre-school through adults. Many photos were entered in the contest and winners received a gift certificate to the local business of their choice.

- **Johnson County Weed Bounty Program**

The PRCD worked in conjunction with the NRCS, Johnson County Weed & Pest, BLM, and other agencies to host a weed bounty workshop in Southern Johnson County and helped participants collect weeds for the county's weed bounty program.



- **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 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 a Rural Cost Share Program that is designed for large rural projects that make a positive difference on the land by conserving soil, water and energy. One Rural Cost Share project was completed this past year with the District's portion totaling \$76,109.21. These projects included the installation of stock water pipeline, stock tanks, drilling of a water well, an irrigation pipeline and an irrigation pumping system.



WORK COOPERATIVELY WITH THE NRCS

- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program**
 - ✦ Stock Water Development—one active contract which focuses on stock water development.
 - ✦ Irrigation Development— one active contract which focuses on irrigation management
 - ✦ Sage Grouse Initiative— one active contract that focus on the improvement of sage grouse habitat.
- **Conservation Plans**
 - ✦ Proper Grazing Management
 - ✦ Irrigation Water Management
- **Conservation Stewardship Program**
 - ✦ Four active contracts, which focus on rewarding current conservation practices and encourage new conservation efforts.
- **Local Work Group**
 - ✦ Established local priorities and ranking criteria for local NRCS 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.
- Worked with EPA/WDEQ/WWC Engineering on the Murphy Creek UAA
- Hosted a Well Water Testing Day to test domestic/livestock/Irrigation use and bacteria.
- Worked with cooperators to address water quality concerns through USDA programs.
- Maintained local partnerships to coordinate watershed planning efforts.
- The PRCD spent \$2,177.00 towards water quality projects.

