

Powder River Conservation District



Annual Report FY 2021-2022

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-seven 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)-resigned

Tom Harlan (rural)-appointed

SUPERVISOR

Kevin Lund (at-large)

DISTRICT PERSONEL

Anita Bartlett-District Manager

NRCS STAFF

Allison McKenzie-District Conservationist

Kassie Camino-Rangeland Management Specialist

Shad Mills-Rangeland Management Specialist

HOW TO CONTACT THE 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:

- ✧ WCDEA Winter Training
- ✧ Barnyards & Backyards Virtual Trainings

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 held in Cody, WY
- ✧ National Association of Conservation District's Annual Convention held virtually
- ✧ Area I meeting hosted by the Sheridan 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
- ✧ NRCS State Technical Meetings
- ✧ NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection Program Meetings
- ✧ Johnson County Natural Resource Planning Committee Meetings
- ✧ Johnson County Weed Bounty Meetings
- ✧ Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust Meetings
- ✧ Dull Knife Irrigation District Meeting

Awards/Honors

- District Manager Anita Bartlett currently serves as the representative for the NRCS Division IV Conservation Districts to the State Technical Committee
- Sponsored the winning photographs for the WACD Photo Contest
- Sponsored the winning Youth Photograph for the NACD Youth Conservation Across America Photo Contest
- District Manager Anita Bartlett was recognized for 15years of service to the PRCD and WCDEA.

PRCD FUNDING



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

- WY Wildlife & Natural Resource Trust
- US Fish & Wildlife Services
- WY Game & Fish Department
- WY Natural Resource Foundation
- Resources Legacy Fund

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. As well, the district utilizes their Facebook page to keep the people of southern Johnson County informed of their activities.



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 60 seedling Ponderosa Pine Trees to the Kaycee Elementary School for the Adopt a Tree Program.



- The District assisted the Town of Kaycee to celebrate Arbor Day by planting trees at the Kaycee Community Garden

Tree Sales

- Provided a variety of large stock trees, shrubs and seedlings to the community. Approximately 120 seedling trees and 178 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:

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



✦ **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.

✦ **Erosion Types & the Enviroscape**-4th Grade STEM students learned about the different types of erosion and ways to prevent them.

✦ **Maps**-KES 4th Grade students learned about different types of maps and how to read them.

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

• **Johnson County 3-4th Grade Rendezvous**

The 3-4th 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.

• **Adopt a Tree Program**

The PRCO continued its Adopt A Tree Program this spring with the Kaycee Elementary Students. Each KES student was able to take home a Ponderosa Pine Seedling 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 our environment.



• **Johnson County 4-H Mountain Camp**

This year at Mountain Camp District Manager Anita Bartlett taught students how to identify different types of animal tracks.

ADULT EDUCATION

• **City Council & County Commissioner Presentations**

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.

• **State Forestry Field Day**

Anita Bartlett attended the Wyoming State Forestry Field Day to give a presentation on District Projects which landowners can participate in.

• **Gardening Presentation At Meike Bunkhouse**

District Manager Anita Bartlett gave a presentation on types of gardening and plants that can be grown locally in our climate and elevation.

• **District Facebook Educational Posts**

The PRCO continues to post educational materials on their Facebook page including: plant and insect information, gardening advice and district events and 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 PRC D 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 tons of waste was collected and removed from the county.

- **Well Water Testing Day**

In October the District hosted it's Annual Well Water Testing Day. Private wells were tested for bacteria (Total Coliform/E. Coli) and for Domestic/Livestock/Irrigation. Any of the wells that tested positive for bacteria (Total Coliform/E.coli), the district worked with the landowners to treat and re-test these wells.



- **Emergency Watershed Protection Program**

Began the construction of three diversion/stream restoration projects. The construction of the Moffett and Harlan projects was completed but seeding and willow planting still needs completed. 90% of the Gosney project was completed. All three diversions were function for irrigation use by irrigation season. These projects included the replacement of the headgates, irrigation pipelines, and stabilization of the streambank around the headgates. These new diversion structures assist with the passage of fish along the Middle Fork of Powder River.



- **Spruce Budworm Forest Health Project**

The PRC D worked in conjunction with Wyoming State Forestry and local landowners to complete a 440 acre Spruce Budworm Forest Health Thinning Project on the Big Horn Mountains.

- **Annual Arbor Day Celebration**

This year, to celebrate Arbor Day, the Powder River Conservation District worked with the Johnson County Cemetery District, the Town of Kaycee, and Wyoming State Forestry to plant 4 apple trees at the Kaycee Community Garden located at the Coop Coffee Shop in celebration of Kaycee's sixteen years as a Tree City USA town.



- **Johnson County Weed Bounty Program**

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



- **Irrigation and Landscaping Sales**

The PRC D 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. Two Rural Cost Share projects were completed this past year with the District's portion totaling \$26,639. These projects included the installation of stock water pipeline, stock tanks, drilling of a water well, and an irrigation pipeline.



WORK COOPERATIVELY WITH THE NRCS

• Environmental Quality Incentives Program

- ✧ Stock Water Development—two active contract which focuses on stock water development.
- ✧ Irrigation Development— six active contract which focuses on irrigation management

• Agricultural Management Assistance Program

- ✧ High Tunnel System – one active contract which is extending the growing season in an environmentally safe manner.

• Conservation Plans

- ✧ There are currently nine active conservation plans in southern Johnson County for the following practices:
 - Proper Grazing Management
 - Irrigation Water Management

• Conservation Stewardship Program

- ✧ Three 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.

