



2023-2024



WESTON COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCE DISTRICT

Annual Plan of Work

JULY 2023-JUNE 2024





District Operations

The District will take the lead in local conservation efforts and coordinate with local, state, and federal entities to work together for the conservation of the soil, water, vegetation, wildlife, and other natural resources of Weston County. The District will provide technical assistance to ensure projects are feasible. Programs will be implemented in a fiscally credible manner, leveraging local funding to expand current and future efforts.

Goals

1. Maintain the credibility, recognition, and acceptance of the WCNRD through competent personnel and timely and professional service.
2. Improve and expand conservation efforts and programs by seeking partnership opportunities with local, state, and federal entities.
3. Seek financial stability by diversifying funding sources.
4. Continue to increase membership in the District.

Objectives	Responsibility
Hire an office admin to assist in office work, to administer community programs, and provide a constant contact at the office when District Manager is out of the office.	District Manager/Board
Maintain a fiscally sound and responsible budget. Present a transparent and open view to the public about finances and district operations	Staff
Provide staff with adequate training and resources in order to provide timely and professional service.	District Manager/Board
Provide adequate information and training to enable Board members to make informed decisions, develop policy, and convey a consistent message.	District Manager/Board
Foster regular and positive relations with local media sources including the News Letter Journal, The Weston County Gazette, KASL Radio, and others	Staff
Pursue new and unique sources of capital to leverage public funding and continue to expand current conservation programs.	Staff
Increase WCNRD's logo and name recognition in the community and awareness of District programs through incentives, promotional items, sponsorships, and presence at public events.	Board/Staff





Rangeland Health

Effective range management is based on the relationship between the soils, vegetation, and water. Water quantity and distribution, improving native vegetation, improving riparian areas, livestock management, soil erosion, and sustaining wildlife habitat are all major concerns for rangeland health.

Goals

1. Promote Best Management Practices (BMP’s) for the improvement and continued use of all rangelands to sustain agriculture productivity within the District.
2. Provide expertise and guidance to promote healthy rangelands.



Objectives	Responsibility
Promote and educate landowners on conservation practices that improve range condition, livestock management, and wildlife habitat.	Staff
Support monitoring efforts of rangeland conditions to assist with management decisions.	Staff
Reverse the encroachment of ponderosa pine and juniper into rangeland meadows and encourage meadow regeneration.	Board/Staff
Promote erosion prevention structures through education, demonstration, implementation and monitoring.	Board/Staff

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has"
 – Margaret Mead



Water Resources

Improving both water quality and quantity are important components of the conservation districts mandate. One of the most limiting factors in effective livestock grazing, as well as wildlife distribution in Weston County is access to reliable water sources. A big part of the District’s efforts have been in developing more reliable water sources by converting windmill powered wells to solar power, adding pipelines to increase distribution of stock water, as well as the drilling of new wells.

Goals

1. Assist in maintaining and improving the quality and quantity of water sources within all watersheds in the District
2. Expand water availability for livestock and wildlife

Objectives	Responsibility
Provide cost share incentive to District members to develop additional water sources including distribution pipelines, spring developments, solar conversions, and new wells.	Board
Provide technical assistance to ensure project design and implementation aligns with best management practices	Staff
Follow-up on projects identified in previous watershed studies performed in Weston County and submit projects to the Wyoming Small Water Projects grant.	Board/Staff
Provide cost share on well and cistern water testing to encourage District members to test and understand the quality of their water	Board

“Of all the questions which can come before this nation, short of the actual preservation of its existence in a great war, there is none which compares in importance with the great central task of leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us.”

— Theodore Roosevelt





Forest Health

Despite continued efforts much of the forested acres in the region have become dense and overstocked. This has led to pest outbreaks, including mountain pine beetle, as well as increasing the incidence and severity of wildfires. Proper timber management, forest thinning, and defensible space against wildfire are major concerns in these areas.

Goals

1. Promote best management practices in forest management to produce healthy forests with reduced susceptibility to disease, insect pests, and severe wildfire
2. Encourage conservation tree plantings to improve wildlife habitat, mitigate wind and snow issues, and to stabilize riparian areas



Forest Management

Objectives	Responsibility
Provide education and technical assistance to landowners to properly manage their forests and reduce threats and to better meet management goals.	Staff
Provide financial incentive to landowners to properly thin forested acres	Board
Provide financial incentive to help landowners develop defensible space to protect structures and property from wildfire	Board/Staff

Tree Program

Objectives	Responsibility
Provide an annual conservation tree sale to encourage affordable conservation tree plantings	Board
Provide planting survival aids such as fabric mulch and tree protectors for purchase	Staff
Provide general tree planting and care information and assist with tree selection and design assistance for conservation tree plantings	Staff
Encourage and support community tree planting and beautification projects through the Community Tree Grant	Board/Staff



Wildlife Habitat

Wildlife face many challenges including reliable water sources, dwindling habitat, overgrown forests, and loss of sagebrush habitat areas. As wildlife habitat occurs on private, state, and federal lands within the District, cross-boundary conservation efforts facilitated by the District are extremely important.

Goals

1. Promote practices that improve wildlife habitat in district programs, plans, and projects.
2. Enhance efforts by state and federal agencies in managing wildlife.

Objectives	Responsibility
Cooperate with landowners and agencies in wildlife habitat improvement projects and management	Board/Staff
Support conservation plan initiatives as an alternative to an endangered species listing.	Staff
Encourage ecosystem approach to wildlife habitat management, rather than individual species approach	Board/Staff
Work with Wyoming Game and Fish, landowners, and other interested parties in developing plans to address issues over elk overpopulation in Wyoming	Staff

The function of the Conservation District is to take the available technical, financial, and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them to meet the needs of the local land user.

— *Pete Nowak*



Waste Management

While district members are willing to properly dispose of hazardous waste, they often don't have the means and it can often become a burden financially as well. They also often don't know what can be thrown away and what needs to be disposed of properly. Septic systems are also a concern and can be a source of contamination of ground water when not maintained properly.

Goals

1. Encourage the reduction, reuse, and recycling of materials
2. Increase opportunities for proper waste management.

Objectives	Responsibility
Provide information on the benefits of recycling, composting and proper hazardous waste management	Staff
Educate the community on proper storage and disposal of hazardous waste materials	Staff
Sponsor annual Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day	Board
Provide information on permitted septic system installation and alternatives	Staff
Provide a septic cost share program to encourage regular and proper maintenance and inspection of septic systems.	Board



Land Use Planning

While maintaining open space for agriculture and preserving agricultural production is important to the District, the subdivision of large tracts of land into small acreages is also a reality. The District will work with new landowners to continue best management practices and conservation efforts. Land use planning that accounts for the conservation of natural resources is also important as more and more people move into the Black Hills and surrounding areas within the District.

Providing local opportunities for the enjoyment of the outdoors through recreation can help to strengthen the local economy through tourism and provides the opportunity to increase the general public's appreciation for and understanding of our natural resources.

Goals

1. Encourage proper development with consideration of potential impacts to natural resources.
2. Encourage preservation and enhancement of the viewshed and recreational opportunities for residents of Weston County as well as tourists.



Objectives	Responsibility
Request cooperating agency status for Weston County Natural Resource District on issues that affect the natural resources where the District has expertise	Staff
Provide written documentation to the Weston County Planning Board on soil suitability, erosion control, sedimentation, and flooding problems for proposed subdivisions in the county	Staff
Advocate open spaces concepts and principles and the retention of agricultural lands in production	Board/Staff
Work with local, state, and federal entities to preserve, promote, and develop new public access areas for recreation including hiking and biking trails, fishing and hunting access areas, and off-road recreation	Board/Staff

“One of the best, and certainly the most promising, of the devices yet invented by man for dealing democratically and effectively with maladjustment in land use, as well as for carrying forward positive programs of desirable conservation, and for maintaining the work, is the soil conservation district.”
 – Hugh Hammond Bennett





Education and Outreach

Promoting the conservation of our natural resources begins by creating an appreciation for the benefit they bring all of us. This includes educating residents as well as the upcoming generations about the importance of our natural resources and their conservation to foster an understanding of, and appreciation for, the natural resources all around them. Creating an appreciation can lead to a sense of stewardship, even if they don't take part in the District's conservation programs themselves.

Goals

1. Raise awareness within the general public of conservation efforts and ongoing programs and projects.
2. Improve appreciation of natural resources and foster a sense of responsibility and stewardship through information and outreach programs.
3. Identify urban conservation opportunities that can help residents of urban areas of the District appreciate conservation efforts.

Objectives	Responsibility
Provide useful and up-to-date technical information on natural resources, practical and/or creative land management practices and technologies, funding programs, projects, deadlines, and other announcements through high quality newsletters, an updated website, and social media	District Manager/Board
Provide educational presentations to school children and youth groups on natural resource issues and conservation programs and projects through classroom activities, field days, tours, displays, etc.	District Manager
Meet with community groups to better understand their concerns and identify opportunities to partner on conservation projects	District Manager/Board

In the end we will conserve only what we love, we will love only that what we understand, and will understand only that what we are taught.
 — Baba Dioum, Sengal





2023-2024 District Budget

Reserves as of July 1, 2023 \$ 116,165.94

Revenue

Administrative	\$ 3,100.00
City/Town/County Aid	\$ 8,175.00
Mil Levy	\$ 158,376.77
State Aid	\$ 8,823.50
Contract Revenue	\$ 15,000.00
Sale of goods	\$ 10,000.00
State Grants	\$ 90,300.00
Private Grants	\$ 45,000.00
Cash on hand	\$ 126,083.01
Total Revenues	\$ 464,858.28

Expenses

Administrative	\$ 75,209.74
Operations	\$ 343,240.44
Indirect costs	\$ 36,408.10
Addition to reserves	\$ 10,000.00
Total Expenses*	\$ 464,858.28

*This includes carryover funds for committed projects and grants



We, the supervisors of the Weston County Natural Resource District, as duly authorized by Wyoming Conservation District Statute, hereby accept and adopt this 2023-2024 Annual Plan of Work August 8, 2023, as a guideline for work priorities in the District.

This Plan of Work serves to guide the Weston County Natural Resource District in implementation of goals and objectives identified in our Long-Range and Natural Resource Management Plan (this document can be found on our website at www.westoncountynrd.org).

To stay current on natural resource issues, members of the District will attend the annual Area 1 meeting in September and the Wyoming Association of Conservation District (WACD) convention in November. In addition, board members and staff communicate with the County Commissioners and other local and state elected officials on a regular basis to discuss natural resource issues in the county. Every effort is also made to pursue funding from grant sources, leveraging local funding to help accomplish our goals.

David Tysdal, Chairman

Tucker Hamilton, Vice-Chairman

Emily Hartinger, Secretary/Treasure

Gene Norman, Supervisor

Tom Streeter, Supervisor





Special Thanks to our Cooperators and Partners!

We appreciate the support from the following agencies and organizations who are instrumental in assisting the District with carrying out its programs and activities.

Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts

Wyoming Department of Agriculture

Wyoming State Forestry Division

Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Natural Resource Conservation Service

City of Newcastle

Newcastle Area Chamber of Commerce

Farm Service Agency

Weston County Commissioners

Weston County Weed and Pest

Wyoming Refining Company

Weston County Fire Protection District

Weston County Senior Services

National Wild Turkey Federation

Saddle and Sirloins FFA Chapter

Weston County School District #1

Weston County School District #2

Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality

Town of Upton

Upton Chamber of Commerce

University of Wyoming

Wyoming Honor Conservation Camp

Inyan Kara Grazing Association

Weston County Senior Services

Wyoming Wildlife Natural Resource Trust

University of Wyoming Small Acreage Team

Wyoming Water Development Commission

University of Wyoming Extension

It is the policy of the Weston County Natural Resource District to uphold a program that ensures high standards of honesty, integrity, impartiality and conduct and ensure a safe and healthy workplace free from discrimination or harassment of any kind.


Weston County Natural Resource District

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ccarter.wcnrd@gmail.com



A brown sign with white text on a metal frame stands in a grassy field. The sign reads "WESTON CO. NATURAL RESOURCE DISTRICT". The background features a clear blue sky, a few wispy clouds, and a grassy hillside. A wire fence is visible in the foreground.

WESTON CO.
NATURAL
RESOURCE
DISTRICT

Photos provided courtesy of Caleb Carter, Tanner Jenks, Lacey Sloan, and Emily Hartinger

Pictures cannot be reused without written consent



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