



**WASHAKIE COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

LONG RANGE PROGRAM

NATURAL RESOURCE LAND USE PLAN

ADOPTED 2010

**WASHAKIE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Natural Resource Land Use Plan**

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WASHAKIE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
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Washakie County Conservation District's Vision Statement

“The Washakie County Conservation District shall continue to promote and encourage the motive and means for the optimum production and conservation of resources to enhance economic opportunity and the quality of life. The Washakie County Conservation District shall strive to promote a clean and healthy environment.”

Purpose

The purpose of the Washakie County Conservation District (WCCD) is to share and implement the visions of planning for existing and future sustainability of Washakie County through the conservation and wise multiple use of our natural resource base, coupled with maintaining our custom and cultures and a healthy economic base.

Through the efforts of cooperation and communication among the local people, our community will have a beneficial impact on sustaining a strong and viable multiple-use of our public and private lands, including agricultural, industrial, mineral production, commercial, recreational and historical uses, which together will provide the continued ability to generate wealth and the growth and need of our community.

The WCCD Natural Resource Land Use Plan has been developed in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) Base Funding Criteria as per “Wyoming Conservation District Law” (W.S. 11-16-101 through 11-16-134).

The WCCD has long been respectful of the constitutional concept of private property rights. It is the intent of this Plan to be a guide for the citizens of the (WCCD), and others, for identifying and respecting the customs, culture, economic viability, social stability and quality of life found in this unique area, and then applying those values to resource conservation, planning, growth, development, and such changes as they may occur within the WCCD through time.

Authority

The WCCD, pursuant to W.S. 11-16-122 (iv) and (xvi) of the Wyoming Conservation Districts Law is authorized to develop plans for the WCCD and to file said plans in the office of the Washakie County Clerk.

Governmental Subdivision of the State

The WCCD is a local government and a governmental subdivision of the state as defined and established by the Wyoming Statutes at Title 11, Chapter 16, et seq., entitled – “Wyoming Conservation Districts Law”. The Board of Supervisors of the WCCD (5 members) are elected by the people of the WCCD at General Elections, by popular vote. The elected member represents both the rural and urban populations within the WCCD. The Supervisors are the only locally elected board charged specifically with the responsibility of representing local people on natural resource issues. A Conservation District Supervisor serves the community and district

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voluntarily and without pay. The WCCD Board of Supervisors employs a District Director, and an Education Specialist to implement the projects and programs of the WCCD. The WCCD programs and administration is now supported by a one-mill levy, which is voter approved, revenue generating projects, and by grants. The WCCD was partially funded by a ½ mill levy from 1994 through 2002, then during the 2002 General Election, voters approved an increase of up to one mill levy.

The WCCD is guided by the legislative declarations and policy of the Wyoming State Legislature with the following charge:

AS REPRINTED FROM: W.S. § 11-16-103 Legislative declarations and policy

It is hereby declared that the farm and grazing lands of Wyoming are among the basic assets of the state; that improper land use practices cause and contribute to serious erosion of these lands by wind and water; that among the consequences which would result from such conditions are the deterioration of soil and its fertility and the silting and sedimentation of stream channels, reservoirs, dams and ditches; that to conserve soil, and soil and water resources, and prevent and control soil erosion, it is necessary that land use practices contributing to soil erosion be discouraged and that appropriate soil conserving land use practices be adopted.

It is hereby declared to be the policy of the legislature to provide for the conservation of the soil, and soil and water resources of this state, and for the control and prevention of soil erosion and for flood prevention for the conservation, development, utilization, and disposal of water, and hereby to stabilize ranching and farming operations, to preserve natural resources, protect the tax base, control floods, prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs, preserve wildlife, protect public lands, and protect and promote the health, safety and general welfare of the people of this state.

The above, being the charge and direction of the Wyoming Legislature for all Conservation Districts within the State of Wyoming, the WCCD's responsibility to the cooperators of the District is measurable and accountable by the actions the WCCD takes to accomplish the direction given by the Wyoming Legislature.

The District Board of Supervisors, an elected body, and a local government, is the local guide to the management of lands within the jurisdiction of the WCCD and is accountable to the citizens of the District.

Coordination, Cooperation and Collaboration

This plan is intended to provide a positive guide for the people of the WCCD and local, state, and federal agencies in coordinating their management activities. This should be done in a manner consistent with locally led planning efforts. The intent is to ensure that agency actions provide additional benefits to local citizenry. Coordination with the local government, such as the WCCD, can help achieve this important goal.

Statutes exist that outline roles of local government in planning activities. These statutes generally outline the need to coordinate land use planning activities with state agencies, boards, commissions and departments; and provide technical assistance, information and education to the state, counties, municipalities, regions and political subdivisions of the state, relative to land

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use planning.

The WCCD, and its citizens, recognize that federal law outlines a multiple use management paradigm of federally managed lands. The WCCD has long supported multiple use, not only for federally managed lands but also for State managed lands. Sustaining multiple uses includes preservation of historic and traditional economic uses on federally and State managed lands within and affecting the WCCD.

Upon gaining Statehood, the State of Wyoming retained concurrent civil and criminal jurisdiction by the State of Wyoming on all lands ceded to the federal government (W.S. 3610-103). To this end, local government works in coordination with federal agencies.

It is the intent of the WCCD to ensure communication with federal and State agencies on proposed actions that affect resources that lie within jurisdictional boundaries of the WCCD. Where appropriate, the WCCD board will coordinate with federal and state agencies in planning and implementation of those actions. When formal communication is required, official notification and delivery of information and documents should be directed to the attention of the Chairman of the Washakie County Conservation District, 208 Shiloh Rd., Washakie, WY 82401. Electronic correspondence should be sent to wccd@rtconnect.net.

Federal Involvement

Federal laws governing land management require coordination by the managing agency. The federal agencies authorities provided or cited throughout this plan are given direction on cooperating with local government and other agencies. In the Executive Order for Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation, August 26, 2004, guidance is given to federal government agencies.

In 36 CFR Part 219.1 (National Forest...Planning) Interaction with private landowners, it is clearly indicated that:

“The responsible official must seek to collaborate with those who have control or authority over lands adjacent to or within the external boundaries of national forests or grasslands to identify:

- (a) Local knowledge;*
- (b) Potential actions and partnership activities;*
- (c) Potential conditions and activities on the adjacent lands that may affect management of National Forest System lands, or vice versa; and*
- (d) Issues (Sec. 219.4).*

In 36 CFR Part 219.14 (National Forest...Planning) Involvement of State and Local Governments, it states that:

“The responsible official must provide early and frequent opportunities for State and local governments to: (a) Participate in the planning process, including the identification of issues; and (b) Contribute to the streamlined coordination of resource management plans or programs.

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In 40 CFR Part 1506.2 (Council on Environmental Quality) Other Requirements of NEPA it states:

(b) Agencies shall cooperate with State and local agencies to the fullest extent possible to reduce duplication between NEPA and State and local requirements, unless the agencies are specifically barred from doing so by some other law. Except for cases covered by paragraph (a) of this section, such cooperation shall to the fullest extent possible include:

- (1) Joint planning processes.*
- (2) Joint environmental research and studies.*
- (3) Joint public hearings (except where otherwise provided by statute).*
- (4) Joint environmental assessments.*

43 CFR Part 1610.3-2 outlines that:

“State Directors and District and Area Managers shall, to the extent practicable, keep apprised of State and local governmental ... policies, plans, and programs, but they shall not be accountable for ensuring consistency if they have not been notified, in writing, by State and local governments ... of an apparent inconsistency.”

43 U.S. § 1701, The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), declared the National Policy to be that:

“the national interest will be best realized if the public lands and their resources are periodically and systematically inventoried and their present and future use is projected through a land use planning process coordinated with other federal and State planning efforts” (43 U.S.C. § 1701(a)(2)).

43 U.S.C. § 1712(c) of FLPMA, sets forth the “criteria for development and revision” of land use plans. Section 1712 (c) (9) refers to the coordinate status of a county which is engaging in land use planning, and requires that the Secretary [of Interior]

“shall . . . coordinate the land use inventory, planning, and management a activities . . . with the land use planning and management programs of ... local governments within which the lands are located.”

43 U.S.C. § 1712, also provides that the Secretary of Interior:

“shall . . . assist in resolving, to the extent practical, inconsistencies between federal and nonfederal government plans,” and “shall . . . provide for meaningful public involvement of State and local government officials . . . in the development of land use programs, land use regulations, and land use decisions for public lands.”

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It is reasonable to assume that “meaningful involvement” refers to consultations and involvement throughout the planning cycle not merely at the end of the planning cycle. This latter provision of the statute also distinguishes the elevated status of local government officials from members of the general public or special interest groups of citizens in the decision making process.

43 U.S.C. § 1712 (c) (9) provides that the Secretary of Interior assure that the BLM’s land use plan be “consistent with State and local plans” to the maximum extent possible under federal law and the purposes of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

The provisions of 43 U.S.C. § 1712 (c) (9) of FLPMA set forth the nature of the coordination required by the Bureau with respect to the planning efforts by local government officials. Subsection (f) of Section 1712 sets forth an additional requirement that the Secretary of Interior “shall allow an opportunity for public involvement” which again includes local governments. The “public involvement” provisions of Subsection (f) do not limit the coordination language of Section 1712 (c) (9) or allow the Bureau to simply lump local government officials in with State government, special interest groups of citizens or members of the public in general. The coordination requirements of Section 1712 (c) (9) set apart for special involvement those government officials who are engaged in the land management and resource conservation planning process, as is the WCCD. Engaging in the land management and resource conservation planning process fulfills the WCCD Board’s obligation to plan for future management and uses.

Additionally, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that all federal agencies consider the impacts of their actions on the environment and on the preservation of the culture, heritage and custom of local government.

In 42 U.S.C. § 37 4331 (a) the law provides:

“...it is the continuing responsibility of the Federal Government, in cooperation with State and local governments, and other concerned public and private organizations, to use all practicable means and measures, including financial and technical assistance, in a manner calculated to foster and promote the general welfare, to create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony, and fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations of Americans.”

WCCD Natural Resource Land Use Planning Process

In November 1999, the WCCD initiated this collaborative planning process in order to implement the policy of the Wyoming Legislature. In 2001, the WCCD implemented the initial WCCD Natural Resource Land Use Plan, which was submitted to and filed with the Washakie County Clerk. On December 1, 2005, the plan was amended and adopted by the WCCD Board of Supervisors.

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The goals were derived initially, (2001) from public participation sessions, thereby allowing control of the WCCD resources guided by the visions of the Community. On April 7th and 8th, 2010, public meetings were held in Ten Sleep and Worland. In addition, questionnaires were sent out explaining who the WCCD is with an outline of our goals and goal statements. The public was asked to give input on where they felt the WCCD should focus our efforts under each goal. They were also asked to rank the 10 most important natural resource, land use, or land management issues facing our community in the next decade, and to rank the 5 most important products, programs, or services the WCCD can provide. Public input made within the 45-day public comment period were incorporated to update the goals and WCCD policies.

Through the adoption of the plan, the Board of Supervisors have incorporated the results of the public participation sessions, questionnaire information, and public comments, with existing WCCD information and the existing Long Range Plan adopted by the Board in 2005.

Current specific goals of the WCCD can be outlined as follows, recognizing that significant programmatic overlap occurs. For example, education is a necessary component of all operations to some degree:

- Public Information and Education
- Tree Program
- Water Quality / Quantity
- Habitat Enhancement
- Waste Management
- Government Agency Interaction and Coordination
- Range and Irrigated Land Management Program
- Internal District Operations
- Special Projects
- Recreation
- Minerals and Oil and Gas Development

It is recognized that the Washakie County Conservation District will continue to experience change driven by a variety of social, economic, and natural resource issues and concerns, resulting in programmatic evolution through time.

The WCCD has been a Government Cooperator in the Bighorn National Forest's Forest Plan Revision, and is currently a Cooperating Agency in the BLM Big Horn Basin RMP revision.

The WCCD particularly relies on the USDA-NRCS for technical assistance and other support.

WCCD anticipates continuing membership in the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts and The National Association of Conservation Districts.

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Introduction

A number of factors contributed to the rapid deterioration of western agricultural lands during the early 1930's. The application of poor farming procedures, misuse of range and extreme lack of moisture were probably foremost in creating these adverse conditions.

Recognizing the need to stop further degradation of these valuable lands, Senator Earl Bower, of Washakie County, introduced a bill establishing the Wyoming Soil Conservation Act in February 1941. This Act authorized the establishment of Soil Conservation Districts. These newly formed bodies were given the responsibility of natural resource conservation within their respective districts.

On December 31, 1941, the Nowood Soil Conservation District at Ten Sleep became one of the first four Districts in Wyoming. The five Board of Supervisors were Rouse Anderson, A.D. Leithead, Ray L. Brown, E.T. Beckley and L.J. "Smilo" Davis. Mr. Davis served more than thirty-five years on the Nowood Conservation District Board. The District office was established in 1942 and was closed on April 15, 1964 in order to be serviced through the Worland office.

Two of the oldest Conservation Districts in the State of Wyoming consolidated to form the Washakie County Conservation District (WCCD) in 1990. This combined the Nowood Conservation District, which was established in 1941 in Ten Sleep, and the Washakie Conservation District, which was established in 1943 in Worland.

WCCD Goals and Policies

For each operational Goal, the District adopted Policy based upon the communities input in the development of the Natural Resource Land Use Plan.

The WCCD Board of Supervisors have adopted the following general policies which will help in the operation and administration of the WCCD.

Washakie County Conservation District Policy -

- i. The WCCD will cooperate and consult with Cooperators and residents of the WCCD, and the several public institutions/government agencies in the conservation of the water, soil, plants and wildlife resources in the WCCD, within budgetary constraints.
- ii. The WCCD will encourage, through adopted programs and projects, and if feasible, Cooperators in the WCCD to create and complete resource management plans as a foundation for the conservation of the natural resources in the WCCD's watersheds.
- iii. The WCCD will provide technical and material assistance in a equitable fashion to the Cooperators of the WCCD, within budgetary constraints.
- iv. The WCCD will conduct their statutory responsibilities in their entirety, in cooperation and with the trust and acceptance of the WCCD's Cooperators.

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- v. The WCCD will review, study and comment, when possible, on all local, state and federal legislation, rules and regulations promulgated or revised that may have an effect on the WCCD Natural Resource Land Use Plan and our Cooperators.
- vi. The WCCD will strive to cooperate and consult with the private individuals and groups, along with local, state and federal governmental agencies in order to pursue the continued resource management and enhancement in the watersheds of the WCCD in conjunction with existing or adopted resource management practices of all agencies within the jurisdictional boundaries of the WCCD.
- vii. The WCCD recognizes the distinction between the land use management requirements for the Section 15 and Section 3 lands (Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, as amended). The WCCD will strive to provide assistance to the Cooperators of the WCCD in their continued historical use and management of the Section 15 lands within the jurisdictional boundary of the WCCD.
- viii. The WCCD Board of Supervisors will continue to be aware of natural resource issues and concerns within the boundaries of the WCCD and create information sources to share with the Cooperators of the WCCD in their on-the-ground soil and water resource management projects, to help sustain long term economic base for future generations.
- ix. The WCCD Board of Supervisors will coordinate with the Washakie County Commissioners and/or Washakie County Planning & Zoning Commission concerning the impacts of on-site sewage waste water systems on the groundwater or surface water resources of the lands affected by development.
- x. The WCCD recognizes that natural background is prevalent in our perennial, intermittent and ephemeral streams and we will strive to define the water cycle to include the natural backgrounds effect on water quality in our jurisdiction.
- xi. The WCCD Board of Supervisors reserves the right to appeal local, state and federal decisions that adversely affect the Washakie County Conservation District Natural Resource Land Use Plan.

Public Information and Education

Goal –

Natural resources and their related issues and concerns are not static in nature. Members of the public may not be fully aware of the intricate details involved in resource management issues. The WCCD's goal is to share information and educate the public about natural resource issues. The following policies of the WCCD will be used as guidance in achieving the goal of providing public information and education.

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Public Information and Education Policy -

- i. Promote agricultural and natural resource conservation in public schools, with youth organizations, and in other venues where youth and children receive formal education.
- ii. Provide education and information to the general public on natural resource issues and topics.
- iii. Promote viable farming, ranching and business opportunities and operations.
- iv. Insure that cooperators are made aware of technical assistance and funding programs that are available.
- v. Recognize natural resource and agricultural success stories through district programs and local media.
- vi. Promote the development and application of Best Management (BMP), both new and existing, for the improvement of natural resources.
- vii. Provide guidance, information, and education to elected government officials and decision makers on conservation and natural resource management issues, and the impacts, and outcomes related to policies initiated by government.

Tree Program

Goal -

The WCCD will help alleviate and control soil erosion, improve energy flow, improve the water and nutrient cycle within the District, and provide affordable trees to the public and educate them on their beneficial uses. The following policies of the WCCD will be used as guidance in achieving the tree program goal.

Tree Program Policy

- i. Support the use of tree plantings and the use of other plant materials to provide for improved natural resource conditions and community aesthetics within the WCCD.
- ii. Proactively, and with other entities, provide Cooperators with information regarding selection of appropriate varieties of trees for the intended use, the use of trees as windbreaks and living snow fences, proper techniques of tree planting and maintenance, irrigation systems, program funding, wildlife interactions, and sources of trees through the WCCD website, printed materials, educational workshops, and such other methods as may be appropriate.
- iii. Provide technical assistance, equipment, and cost share for tree planting projects
- iv. Make trees, weed barriers, and other essentials available to the community

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Water Quality/Quantity

Goal-

The WCCD will strive to increase the efficient use and maintain and improve the quality and quantity of Washakie County's waters through education, technical assistance, Best Management Practices and coordination. The following policies of the WCCD will be used as guidance in achieving the goal of water quality/quantity.

Water Quality/Quantity Policy -

- i. Promote Best Management Practices to reduce non-point source pollution and water conservation.
- ii. Support water development projects that increase water quantities for beneficial use within the district, while conserving the traditional custom, culture, and economy of the area.
- iii. Recognizing the importance of irrigation systems that make up a critical part of the water cycle within the district, support the implementation of irrigation Best Management Practices.
- iv. Where appropriate, develop water quality data in support of district priorities and programs. The WCCD will only recognize the collection of chemical, physical, biological, and historical constituents as credible scientific data in regards to water quality.
- v. The WCCD is opposed to any federal governmental control over individual water rights within the boundaries of the district and within the boundaries of the State of Wyoming.
- vi. The WCCD will support the statutory beneficial uses of stored water.
- vii. The WCCD recognizes that natural background influences are prevalent in our perennial, intermittent and ephemeral streams and will strive to define the water cycle to include the natural background's effect on water quality in our jurisdiction.

Habitat Enhancement

Goal -

The WCCD recognizes and encourages commitment to maintaining and improving the enhancement of habitat by incorporating concerns and proper management in the planning, programs and projects of the WCCD. The following policies of the WCCD will be used as guidance in achieving the habitat enhancement goal.

Habitat Enhancement Policy -

- i. Work with government agencies, local cooperators, and other interested parties in the management, maintenance and improvement of habitat, emphasizing voluntary and incentive based programs.
- ii. Work to encourage the use of tools such as grazing, plantings, water development, fire, chemical application, and other best management practices to improve habitat.

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- iii. Support the development and use of new technologies in land use management that are alternatives to permanent reductions in stocking rates.
- iv. The WCCD will only recognize threatened and endangered species that are listed based on clear, convincing, peer reviewed, scientific data. The financial burden imposed upon private landowners by the listing of threatened or endangered species and the associated critical habitat designations shall be the responsibility of the Federal Government.
- v. WCCD will support cooperative effort with State, federal and private land managers to enhance cooperative weed management efforts countywide coordinated with and primarily managed by the Washakie County Weed and Pest Control District.
- vi. The WCCD supports and strongly encourages the control of noxious weeds and pests by owners, managers, and users of all lands including easements, right-of-way's, and municipalities.

Waste Management

Goal -

The WCCD will coordinate, support and implement recycling, waste reduction, and proper waste disposal programs within Washakie County. The following policies of the WCCD will be used as guidance in achieving the waste management goal.

Waste Management Policy –

- i. Promote, maintain and enhance recycling efforts in the WCCD.
- ii. Promote education/information regarding recycling awareness.
- iii. Promote awareness of new technology and resources associated with waste management and recycling.

Government Agency Interaction and Coordination

Goal -

The WCCD will continue to represent local interests in the planning and implementation efforts of local, state, and federal government agencies within the boundaries of the WCCD. The WCCD will facilitate efforts to participate in natural resource management planning in order to provide for the economic stability and to protect local customs and cultures. The following policies of the WCCD will be used as guidance in achieving the government agency interaction and coordination goal.

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Government Agency Interaction and Coordination Policy –

- i. Participate with Cooperators and government agencies in making sound natural resource decisions that are scientifically-based, legally defensible and sensitive to resource health and responsive to multiple-interest users.
- ii. Work with local, state and federal government to encourage and support state control of water rights and to maintain opportunities for future water right allocations.
- iii. Coordinate with local, state and federal government on educating about the eradication of introduced invasive species.
- iv. Coordinate with local, state and federal government regarding endangered species issues.
- v. Work to ensure local input on state and federal land management issues to promote multiple use of public lands (grazing – wildlife and domestic, logging, minerals, recreation) and protect private property rights.
- vi. Maintain partnerships with local, state and federal agencies to provide technical assistance and/or funding to local Cooperators.
- vii. Develop, promote and defend viable alternatives to the proposed actions of other government agencies where the proposed action would adversely impact any of the resource bases of the WCCD.
- viii. The WCCD shall provide comment(s), seek Coordination Status, or seek to become a Cooperating Agency, as is appropriate for the WCCD’s purposes, for federal land use planning affecting the WCCD in order to effectively represent and protect the WCCD’s custom, culture, economy and general welfare.
- ix. The WCCD will support traditional multiple land uses as a means to maintain continuity in the local economy, and assure the sustainability of existing agricultural, recreational, and industrial interests while maintaining or improving the present environmental quality of life.

Range and Irrigated Land Management Program

Goal –

The WCCD will promote Best Management Practices for the improvement and continued use of all rangelands and irrigated cropland to sustain agriculture productivity. The following policies of the WCCD will be used as guidance in achieving the range and irrigated land management program goal.

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Range and Irrigated Land Management Program Policy -

- i. Support predator control efforts within the WCCD.
- ii. Research new markets for agriculture waste products.
- iii. Assist and promote local Cooperators continued use of Best Management Practices for erosion control and vegetation management on rangeland and irrigated cropland. The WCCD supports livestock grazing as a tool for the sound management of private, state and federal lands.
- iv. Work to increase productivity of land to increase and/or maintain Active Preference AUM's to maximum sustainable levels on rangeland in the WCCD. The WCCD will not support any action that causes the net loss of Animal Unit Months (AUM's) for livestock on any allotment, permit or lease on lands owned or managed by the State of Wyoming or the United States Government, which is not based on sound science.
- v. Promote and encourage rangeland monitoring programs.
- vi. The WCCD does not encourage any action that results in a net loss of irrigated lands within our district.

Internal District Operations

Goal –

The WCCD will carry out duties established by statutes, the local public and Board of Supervisors to maintain a structural, stable and functioning District. The following policies of the WCCD will be used as guidance in achieving the internal district operations goal.

Internal District Operations Policy –

- i. Employ personnel to effectively carry out the WCCD goals.
- ii. Analyze district supervisor and staff needs and make sure every effort is made to secure assistance and/or training from private, local, state and federal sources.
- iii. Review the powers and duties of conservation districts and supervisors annually, as clarified in 11-16-122 of the Conservation District Law.
- iv. Budget funds to carry out WCCD goals.
- v. Review the development and/or revision of conservation plans and the implementation of those scheduled conservation practices.
- vi. Complete and maintain an up-to-date Natural Resource Land Use Plan.

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- vii. Increase capacity of the WCCD Board of Supervisors by bringing in associate board members.
- viii. Convene monthly board meeting in addition to special or emergency meetings as needed.
- ix. To actively participate at meeting of organizations of which the WCCD is a member.
- x. Seek funding for natural resource and conservation projects.
- xi. Strive to improve its ability to provide services and operational programs and to work with Cooperating Agencies, Partners, and Associates.
- xii. Review subdivision site areas and plans and make recommendations on soil suitability, potential soil erosion during and after construction, potential flooding or wetland concerns to the Washakie County Commissioners/Washakie County Planning Office as clarified in 18-5-306 (a)(xii)(B)(b) of the Wyoming State Statutes.

Special Projects

Goal -

The WCCD will strive to meet the rural and urban public's conservation needs through assistance and special project efforts to promote a healthy community through conservation practices. The following policies of the WCCD will be used as guidance in achieving the special projects goal.

Special Projects Policy -

- i. Promote and implement urban conservation and beautification projects.
- ii. Provide cost-share funding for on-the-ground natural resource conservation BMP projects.
- iii. Promote the use of renewable alternative energy sources.

Recreation

Goal –

The WCCD will encourage recreational activities that enhance opportunities for economic development and maintain the custom and culture of the County while ensuring conservation of the rangeland, water, and soil resources. The following policies of the WCCD will be used as guidance in achieving the recreation goal.

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Recreation Policies -

- i. Support recreation in the management of state and federal lands that are consistent with the multiple uses of these lands, and to promote the continuation of historical access on the state and federal lands.
- ii. Promote good stewardship by recreational users on private, state and federal lands.
- iii. Promote the value of natural resources for recreation.

Minerals and Oil and Gas Development

Goal –

The WCCD supports minerals and oil and gas production and will provide information and education on the importance of the conservation of our natural resources. The minerals and oil and gas industry is a significant part of the custom and culture of the district, and it provides economic stability to the county. The following policies of the WCCD will be used as guidance in achieving the minerals and oil and gas development goal.

Minerals and Oil and Gas Development Policies –

- i. The WCCD supports and encourages the continued development and extraction of minerals, and oil and gas within its jurisdiction in keeping with the local and regional custom and culture in order to maintain the economic stability of the WCCD.
- ii. The WCCD encourages mineral, and oil and gas production to be conducted in an environmentally sound manner and to ensure Industries continuance is compatible with the principles of multiple-use on federal lands.

WCCD Resource Characteristics

WCCD Static Land Status.

The Washakie County Conservation District includes all lands in Washakie County. The western boundary borders on Hot Springs and Park Counties. The northern boundary borders on Big Horn County and the southern boundary again borders Hot Springs County. The WCCD occupies the southeastern part of the Big Horn Basin. The Absaroka Mountains are to the west, the Pryor Mountains to the north, the Big Horn Mountains to the east and the Bridger and Owl Creek Mountains to the south. The Big Horn Mountains are separated from the foothills by Nowood Creek. Please see Section 3 in the APPENDIX, (page34) for the jurisdictional boundary of the WCCD.

The WCCD comprises 1,432,753 acres, which includes the incorporated towns of Worland and Ten Sleep and is wholly located in Washakie County, in North Central Wyoming. Of the total area of the WCCD, approximately 374,120 acres are privately owned; approximately 918,007 acres are owned by the Bureau of Land Management; approximately 1427 acres are owned by the Bureau of Reclamation; approximately 36,274 are National Forest lands and approximately 102,925 acres are owned by the State of Wyoming. About 20 percent of the privately owned land

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is irrigated cropland, 78 percent is rangeland and 2 percent is woodland. The federally administered land is predominately rangeland, with approximately 4 percent in woodlands.

Below is a breakdown of ownership within the WCCD.

Private	26.2 %
USDA Forest Service	2.6 %
USDI Bureau of Land Management	64.1 %
USDI Bureau of Reclamation	.1 %
State of Wyoming	7 %

The basin is composed of uplands, alluvial fans, terraces, and badlands. The lowest point in Washakie County, about 3,950 feet above sea level, is where the Big Horn River leaves the county. The highest point, about 9,576 feet, is in the northeastern corner of the county. The elevation of the irrigated lands lie 3,900 feet above sea level, along the Big Horn River, north of Worland, to 5,700 feet south of Gooseberry Creek, along the Washakie-Hot Springs County line. Elevations vary from 4,400 feet at Ten Sleep to over 9,500 feet east of Meadowlark Lake, in the Big Horn Mountains.

The WCCD is served by the Burlington Northern Railroad and several freight trains pass through the area each day. Direct connections to major farm markets in the Midwest and northwest are provided. Farm-to-market transportation facilities are U.S. Highway 16, which crosses the county from north to south and enters the northeast corner of the county, passes through Ten Sleep and joins U.S. Highway 20 at Worland.

State secondary roads, and well maintained county roads, serve the major parts of the county and the farming and ranching communities. A major airline provides feeder airline service to the county and charter airlines are also available. A bus line provides daily service from north to south.

Electricity is provided in Worland by the Pacific Power and Light Company and along the Big Horn River by High Plains Power. The Ten Sleep and Nowood Creek areas receive electricity from the Big Horn Rural Electric Association. Natural gas and telephone service is available in most of the county.

Irrigation water from the Big Horn River is diverted into the Big Horn and Bluff Canals on the west side of the river and into the Hanover Canal on the east side. Water for the Worland Valley area comes as direct flow from the Big Horn River; however, additional water is stored in Boysen Reservoir. Irrigation water for the Nowood and Gooseberry areas is supplied by several small ditch companies, diverting water from Nowood, Ten Sleep, Gooseberry and Cottonwood Creeks and their tributaries. The irrigation water supply usually is very limited from mid-July through the rest of the growing season. Artesian wells supply water for several isolated sprinkler systems just east of Nowood Creek.

The drinking water that supplies Ten Sleep and Worland comes from the Madison Formation. Northeast of Worland and west of Trapper Creek, lies the "Paint Rock Anti-Cline" which is a

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porous strata-like formation that angles many miles and 2000 plus feet under the ground surface. Geologically formed of dolomite or lime, this formation covers a large area of the United States and is an underground ocean of fresh water.

The Worland well heads located between Manderson and Hyattville or Bonanza include Husky #1, which is 4210 feet deep, has 9 5/8" casing, and produces a static pressure of 190 psi that will flow 9000 gallons per minute free head, and the other well, Worland #3, produces a static pressure of 230 pounds that has a free head flow of 14,400 gallons per minute. Worland #3 is the largest artesian well in the world and has a 2500 foot 21" casing. The pipeline crosses the Nowood River and runs 22 miles slightly southwest to the pressure reducing station, 4 miles east of Worland, where chlorination takes place.

The Ten Sleep well heads, #1 and #2 are located on NW ¼ SW ¼ of Section 16, T47N R88N. Well #1 is 1050 feet deep and produces a static pressure of 144 psi and the other well, #2 is 1098 feet deep and produces a static pressure of 128 psi.

Geology

Most of the WCCD is in the Big Horn Basin, which is a structural basin that developed about 65 million years ago. The Big Horn and Owl Creek Mountains were uplifted at this time, and large quantities of pre-Tertiary sediments were eroded into the developing Big Horn Basin. Following the uplift of the mountains, a broad regional uplift raised basins and mountains thousands of feet to their present position.

Bedrock in the WCCD consists of rocks of Precambrian through Tertiary age. Because the Big Horn Basin is a large synclinal basin, the oldest rocks are exposed in the Big Horn Mountains in the eastern part of Washakie County, and younger rocks crop out in the western and central parts of the county. Sedimentary rocks have been eroded completely from the summit of the Big Horn Mountains, exposing Precambrian rocks. In the western and central parts of the county, the total sedimentary rock sequence is as much as 15,000 feet thick. Faults and folds are common along the western flank of the Big Horn Mountains.

The principal aquifers are as follows: alluvium of Quaternary age, Willwood Formation of Tertiary age, Fort Union Formation of Tertiary age, and the formations of primarily Paleozoic age –Goose Egg Formation, Tensleep Sandstone, Madison Limestone, Bighorn dolomite and Flathead Sandstone.

The relief of the WCCD is typical of that of intermountain desertic basins. The relief is the result of geologic processes that began with mountain building. After the mountains were thrust up, the Tertiary Willwood Formation was deposited in the basin. This was followed by a period of erosion. Next, a valley-filling formation of stratified sand and gravel was deposited. The shaping of the present landscape began during the erosional cycle that followed. West of the Big Horn River, most of the terrace material and much of the underlying shale and sandstone were carried away and the gravel-capped pediments of the basin were formed. Where the shale and sandstone have been eroded, badlands occur. The stratified sand and gravel deposits originated primarily as outwash from the Absaroka, Shoshone, and Owl Creek Mountains to the west. East

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of the Big Horn River, the landscape is dominated by monoclinical backslopes, uplands, narrow, alluvial deposits along intermittent drainageways, badlands, and mountain fronts.

Climate

The WCCD is protected from strong winds by the Absaroka Mountains to the west and Big Horn Mountains to the east. Francs Peak, approximately 65 miles west of Worland, has an elevation of 13,140 feet and Cloud Peak, approximately 40 miles northeast of Worland, has an elevation of 13,165 feet. The protection provided by these mountain ranges results in very light winds or calm at Worland much of the time. It also has a pronounced effect on the temperature and precipitation at Worland. The air moves downslope into the basin from all directions. When moving downslope, the air is compressed and heated, warming at a rate of 5.5 degrees F for every 1,000 feet of descent. This warming of the air also contributes to the low relative humidity in the area.

Shallow cold airmasses approaching from Canada are largely blocked by the Big Horn Mountains; however, deeper cold airmasses can spill into the basin. The cold air can be trapped in the basin, resulting in severely cold temperatures that persist for several days. Also, in winter a layer of cold air can form in the basin because of the loss of heat by radiation and the drainage of cold air from the surrounding mountains. This usually occurs during periods when winds are very light and the night sky is clear for several days. Moisture from the Pacific Ocean is largely blocked by the mountain chains between Worland and the west coast. This climate is classified as semiarid.

In summer and winter, the daily maximum and minimum temperatures vary greatly. This is primarily because of the high elevation and low humidity, which permit rapid warming by solar radiation, and also because of the passage of both warm and cold airmasses. Thus, Worland is subject to wide and sometimes abrupt changes in temperature. The average annual air temperature is about 45 degrees.

Freezes late in spring and early in fall are common. The average last occurrences of 32 degrees and 28 degrees in spring are May 13 and April 30, respectively. The average first occurrences of 32 degrees and 28 degrees in fall are September 23 and October 4, respectively. Thus, the average length of the growing season is 133 days at 32 degrees and 157 days at 28 degrees.

The average annual precipitation is about 8 inches at Worland and about 13 inches at Ten Sleep. Generally, the least amount of precipitation falls during December, January, and February; the amount increases rapidly to a peak in the latter part of May and the first part of June. The amount of precipitation decreases rapidly during the last part of June through August. Precipitation increases to a secondary peak in September, then decreases again to a low in winter. Normally, about 3.93 inches of the annual precipitation falls between the average 32 degree freeze-free dates, and about 4.74 inches falls between the average 28 degree freeze-free dates. Occasional thunderstorms are accompanied by hail, but most of the hail is light and is limited to small areas.

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Sunshine is abundant in the WCCD and there are few days during the year without some sunshine. It is estimated that Worland receives sunshine on the average about 70 percent of the time possible annually, ranging from about 65 percent in winter and spring to about 75 percent in summer and fall.

Soils

The soil of the WCCD is a product of our climate (temperature, precipitation, pressures and winds), geology and time. The soils of Washakie County formed in material derived from limestone and sandstone on mountainsides and from interbedded sandstone and shale in the Big Horn Basin. The general slope of bedrock east of the Big Horn River is to the north-northwest and west of the Big Horn River it is north-northeast. The west flank of the Big Horn Mountains is a series of monoclinal ridges with short, steep front slopes and long, sloping back slopes. Starley, Starman, and Spearfish soils and Rock outcrop are on the front slopes and Woosley, Clayburn, Chittum, Stubbs and Vale soils are on the back slopes.

Granite and gneiss are in the northeastern corner of the county. There is a small area of glaciation, about 4 miles long, extending from the county line south along Ten Sleep Creek. Granile, Tine, Limber and Hyattville soils are also in this area. The southern part of the county is underlain by clay shale. These areas have shallow to very deep soils on rolling topography.

Many of the soils of the WCCD show a strong influence of man. By cultivating and leveling the soils, man has altered the natural soil horizons. This has changed the character of these soils and in some places, their classification. Man has irrigated excessively in many areas, causing the soils to become wet or salty.

Surface Water Resources

Surface water supplies about 94 percent of water for off-stream use in the WCCD.

There are three types of streamflow characteristics: perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral. Perennial streams have continuous streamflows sustained by water stored in snowpack and ground-water discharge. Though high streamflows are caused by spring snowmelt, low streamflows occur in the winter months when the snowpack is frozen and ground-water discharge is at its smallest rate. Low streamflows generally occur during the irrigation season with higher streamflows in the spring and summer, depending on storage needs. Intermittent and ephemeral streams generally have their headwaters near the center of the county and are characterized by periods of no flow. High streamflows in intermittent streams usually are associated with snowmelt, thunderstorms or sustained rainstorms; high streamflows in ephemeral streams are only associated with thunderstorms or sustained rainstorms.

The Big Horn River and Nowood Creek are the major drainage systems in the WCCD. The Big Horn River flows from south to north and most of the water is already in the river when it enters the county and is regulated for irrigation supply and flood control at Boysen Dam, 19 miles upstream from the county line. Drainage from the western part of the county comes from Cottonwood, Gooseberry, Fifteen Mile and Tenmile Creeks. Nowater Creek drains the badlands

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to the east. It receives most of its water from streams flowing west out of the Big Horn Mountains. The Nowood Creek enters the Big Horn River at Manderson, Wyoming, just north of the county line.

The water, which falls in the WCCD, is insufficient to support any but rather small-scale human activity. Almost everything in the county depends in some way on diverting surface water or developing groundwater. The current and domestic consumption would be impossible without management of the Big Horn River and the Nowood River as they flow through the county.

The Big Horn River in the WCCD has an average flow of approximately 1,000,000 acre feet which is enough water to cover 1,000,000 acres of land to a depth of one foot. The streams and creeks of the county contribute over 390,000 acre feet to the river's flow.

Groundwater.

The principal ground-water aquifers in the WCCD in descending order are as follows: Alluvium, Willwood Formation, Fort Union Formation, Goose Egg Formation, Tensleep Sandstone, Madison-Bighorn aquifer and the Flathead Sandstone. The Willwood Formation is exposed in the central and western parts of the county, and the Fort Union Formation is exposed in the center of the county. The remaining principal aquifers crop out along the flank of the Big Horn Mountains in the eastern part of the county. The Tensleep Sandstone, Madison-Bighorn aquifer and the Flathead Sandstone probably have the greatest potential for further development in eastern Washakie County.

Groundwater in the WCCD is generally confined to the areas adjacent to streams and rivers within their underlying aquifers. The aquifers are generally composed of silts, sands and gravels underlain by sedimentary sandstone and shale rocks. The aquifers in areas not directly influenced by the streams and rivers are limited to underground permeable sandstones and limestones. Artesian wells occur within the WCCD and provide a viable water resource to residents of the WCCD. However, in some of the outlying areas, the availability of water suitable for domestic use is a problem for residents.

Nearly 83 percent of the water used for mining is withdrawn from ground-water sources. Mining uses about 50 percent of the total ground water withdrawn in the county.

Vegetation.

Vegetation is responsible for providing food resources, aesthetic quality, erosion control, evapotranspiration and economic benefits to the WCCD. The following five vegetation zones are prevalent in the WCCD and reflect the differing climatic and parent soil regimes in the region of the WCCD.

SUB-ALPINE: The zone exists in the WCCD from an elevation of approximately 9,500, east of Meadowlark Lake, to the top of the conifer tree line. Alpine tundra, rocky summits, talas slopes, avalanche chutes, scree slopes, alpine lakes, meadows, stream channels, waterfalls, permanent and temporary snowbanks typify the zone. Most of the vegetation is herbaceous, with lichens

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and sporadic low and dwarf shrubs. The vegetation in this region is mainly used for wildlife food and cover. The vegetation traps snow to enhance water runoff to feed the numerous streams as a source of drinking water for wildlife, livestock, and humans.

MONTANE: The zone includes the area from the top of the conifer tree line to the open grasslands and meadows. Most of the trees are conifers, however some species of deciduous trees (aspen and cottonwood) are found also. The forested area are generally divided into three types: the spruce/fir forest occurs at the upper limit of the zone, the Lodgepole Pine is on the middle slopes and the Ponderosa Pine/Douglas Fir is on the lower part of the zone. The middle part of the zone typically has numerous springs, ponds and lakes with open grassy areas (parks) surrounded by aspen trees and densely populated Lodgepole Pine. The trees in the lower zone are in an open forest, with ground cover of shrubs and grasses, and large open areas are common. Some of the open areas are wet meadows of sedges and willows and others are open grasslands. The vegetation in this zone provides the many forest products and uses like timber, firewood, posts, poles, Christmas trees, and tree transplants, wildlife and livestock forage. This area also provides water and recreation as well as the intangible resources that move our minds and soothe our souls such as wildlife and wildflowers, magnificent scenic vistas, mountain trails, fresh air and the freedom of wide open spaces.

FOOTHILLS: On the lower slopes of the mountains there is a zone of shrubs and small deciduous trees. Sagebrush occurs where favorable moisture and soil conditions exist. Juniper trees also occur in the foothills. The vegetation in this region provides grazing opportunities and habitat for wildlife and livestock. It also provides stability for the highly erodible soils found in this region.

BASINS: Along the rivers and streams at lower elevations, deciduous trees (cottonwood & russian olive) and brush exist. Open areas are typically covered with perennial grasses such as: Basin wildrye, smooth brome and poa (kentucky bluegrass). There are swampy and wetland areas adjacent to the streams occupied by cattails and various rushes and sedges. The vegetation in this area provides habitat for many species of waterfowl, wildlife, and livestock as well as opportunities to level the land for high production agriculture and building sites.

BADLANDS: In the lowest areas of the WCCD, sparse vegetation is found. The sparse vegetation conditions are caused by the lack of moisture throughout the growing season. The climax plants are bluebunch wheatgrass, indian ricegrass, needle and thread grass with five to fifteen percent sagebrush. The saline upland areas have saltbrush and the lowland areas have greasewood. The Badlands have considerable influence on the water quality within the WCCD. The sparse vegetation in this area is used for grazing by livestock and wildlife habitat. The Bureau of Land Management also runs approximately 160 wild horses in this area.

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Important characteristics that modify surface flow from drainage basins within each elevation zone of Wyoming mountains and basins.

Elevation Zone	Alpine	Sub-Alpine	Montane	Foothills	Basins	Badlands
Soil Texture	B, C, G, S	B, C, G, S	Some Si B, C, G, S	More Si G, S, Cl	Si, S, Cl	Cl, Si, S
Soil Water Holding Capacity	Very Low	Very Low	Low	High	High	Very High
Rock to Soil Ratio	Highest	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low	Very Low
Soil Vegetation Cover	High	High	Moderate	Low	High-Low	Lowest
Infiltration Rate	High	High	Moderate	Moderate	High-Low	Lowest
Summer Storms	Frequent rains, Low intensity	Frequent rains, Low intensity	Frequent rains, Low intensity	Sporadic rains, High intensity	Sporadic rains, High intensity	Sporadic rains, High intensity
Surface Runoff Potential	Low	Low	Higher	High	Low-High	High
Loading-Soil Chemicals	Low	Low	Higher	High	High	High

B = Boulder, C = Cobble, G = Gravel, S = Sand, Si = Silt, Cl = Clay

* The above information was used from Wyoming Watersheds and Riparian Zones.

WCCD History, Custom and Culture.

History

Topography played an important part in the development of Washakie County. It was a deep, fertile valley, isolated by high-formidable mountains, with few negotiable passes. Agriculturally, the area was rich, and all along the Nowood valley there was good and plentiful water and vast miles of buffalo grass. Here existed a natural abundance - deer, elk, buffalo, bear, trout in the creeks, which made it a favorite hunting area and winter camping ground for several Indian tribes. The severe winter storms generally were shunted away from the area because of the tall mountains surrounding, making the winters mild. To the west of the foothills there were many miles of "badlands," clay soils whose nature was hidden by luxurious grass and was an ideal environment for salt sage, a high-protein superior livestock feed which was grazed during the winter months. The Big Horn River, one of the few waterways in the United States that channels north, provided many square miles of river-bottom land with capabilities of raising bumper crops. Washakie County, which includes 2125 square miles beginning south of the 12th Standard Parallel, was originally part of Johnson County as far west as the Big Horn River.

In 1807, John Colter, a member of the Lewis and Clark northwest exploration party, joined up with Manuel Lisa and, starting at the mouth of the Big Horn River, made a lengthy exploratory trip to the south and west, trapping and trading with the Crow Indians.

The first permanent settlement of the Ten Sleep area was around 1880 by cattlemen. The first large herds of cattle were brought into the area by a group of local ranchers in 1886. These cattle were driven overland from Texas to the Upper Nowood country. The following winter was severe and 80% of the cattle died because no hay or feed was available.

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During the 1890's, large numbers of sheep were brought into the area. There were more cattle in the Basin than ever before, but sheep were steadily encroaching on the cattlemen's domain. The cattlemen had grown to consider it their own open range because of prior occupancy and they were concerned that when the sheep were trailed over a section it was no longer usable for cattle grazing, but the indisputable fact stands that the range had been consistently overstocked and overfed, and the near-drouth conditions that prevailed for several years was also a major factor in the decline of open pasterage. The resulting feuds were terminated in 1909 in the "Ten Sleep Raid," in which three sheep men and large numbers of sheep were killed.

Irrigated farming began in the Ten Sleep area about 1883, and in 1888, the first irrigation works was built in Worland, the Pfeiffer Ditch, which is the first recorded appropriation of water on the Big Horn River. The Big Horn Canal was constructed in the early 1890's, which took three years to build, mostly by teams of horses. In 1904 the Hanover Canal Association was formed and was to supply water for irrigation of the several thousand acres of rich bottom land along the Big Horn valley. The Lower Hanover was to irrigate the bottom land and the Upper Hanover was to take its water from the river several miles farther south and at a higher elevation, to irrigate a thirty-mile long area of benchland. This was the most extensive irrigation project in the state.

In 1903, a pioneer camp was established on the west bank of the Big Horn River, at its confluence with Fifteen Mile Creek. The camp was on the Bridger Trail, a road established by mountain man Jim Bridger for miners enroute to the goldfields of Montana. Charles H. Worland, a nursery salesman, selected this location as a halfway point between Basin City and Thermopolis, and the town located here now bears his name. The camp became an overnight stop for stagecoaches and freighters and provided them with supplies.

In 1904, work began on the Hanover and Big Horn Canals and people flooded in for the jobs created by this construction. The telephone arrived in Camp Worland, as well as a school, a church and a store with a post office. In 1905, a newspaper was begun. In 1906, Camp Worland moved across the Big Horn River and became the incorporated Town of Worland where the railroad, a bank, doctors and lawyers arrived. The railroad opened this area to markets that up to this time were not available. The farmers started irrigating from their canal, planting and raising alfalfa, wheat and sugar beets. The wheat was ground for flour and used for chicken feed.

Washakie County was organized in 1911 as a division of Big Horn County, which included all of Big Horn Basin and Yellowstone Park. It was named in honor of the Shoshone Indian Chief "Washakie." In 1913 the Town of Worland became the county seat. The Town of Ten Sleep was incorporated in 1932, although it was in existence before that date. Ten Sleep takes its name from its location, ten sleeps (nights of travel) between the great Sioux camps on the Platte River and an area near Bridger, Montana.

Agriculture

Agriculture is the primary basis for Washakie County's economy. In general, the agricultural operations use sound management techniques and have done much to conserve and build up the soil on ranches and farms.

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The irrigated areas are used for growing sugar beets and malting barley, which are the main cash crops and both are high value crops. Other crops grown locally include alfalfa hay, beans, grass hay, alfalfa seed, oats, feed barley, turnips, native grass and flower seed and corn. Some of the irrigated areas are used for irrigated pastures as well.

The livestock industry accounts for a large portion of Washakie County's agricultural income and is the oldest continuing industry in the county and is still the single largest land user. Many of the ranches have summer range on the Big Horn Mountains and some operate on rangeland the year around, supplementing the range grass with hay and concentrates during the winter and spring. Livestock raised in the area is primarily cattle and sheep, however, there are several breeders of good quality saddle horses in the area. 80% of the acreage in the WCCD is utilized for grazing.

Industry, Minerals and Oil and Gas Development

Natural gas, oil, sulphur and bentonite constitute the minerals in Washakie County. Sand and Gravel are other economic resources present within the WCCD.

A variety of industries operate in the county. Many residents find employment in the mining and processing of minerals and the providing of related services. Oil and gas are produced from several fields in the county. Bentonite, mined west of Ten Sleep, is processed in Worland. Sulphur extraction and liquid gas processing are conducted north of Worland and a grain buying, processing and storage plant is also located north of Worland. Holly Sugar, Pepsi and Crown Cork and Seal are amongst some of the larger industries.

Tourism and Recreation

Tourism and recreation have been increasing in recent years, and WCCD is feeling the effects of the increased amount of visitation and requirements for access. The construction of cabins in the mountains, near reservoirs and streams, for leisure time/vacation activities reflects that the land ownership is shifting from historic long-term ranch family open space and land ownership. Hunting and fishing pressures continue to grow on the private lands and the limited number of streams stocked with fish.

Some of the recreation enjoyed within the WCCD include off-road vehicle (4-wheelers and larger vehicles) use, snowmobiling, hunting & fishing, rock climbing, rock-hunting, skiing, horseback riding, searching for artifacts, bird-watching and enjoying the abundant wildlife of the area.

The WCCD has several historical sites and area attractions, which include:

- i. The Pioneer Square in Worland is dedicated to ranchers, farmers and those that followed and put down roots to weave a new civilization here.
- ii. The Big Horn National Forest's 1.1 million acres includes hiking trails, horseback riding, camping, hunting, rock climbing, skiing, site seeing and fishing.

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- iii. Ten Sleep Fish Hatchery, at the mouth of the Ten Sleep Canyon, hatches approximately 6 million eggs each year, which produces and rears rainbow, cutthroat, and brook trout.
- iv. Washakie Museum & Cultural Center and Ten Sleep Museum include important Paleoamerican exhibits of the Colby & Horner site artifacts, Meeteetse Hadrosaur fossils, a Sheepeater Shoshone lodge and artifacts, a rock shelter replica, historic wagons, a sod house and historical photographs and much more.
- v. The Ten Sleep Raid monument, on the Upper Nowood Road, describes a feud between sheepmen and cattlemen during the 1890's.
- vi. Leigh Creek monument, located above Ten Sleep, describes the story of an English nobleman, Gilbert Leigh, who was hunting Big Horn Sheep when he and his horse plummeted over a cliff in the fog.
- vii. Camp Worland monument, on the west end of Worland, describes the site of the original town of Worland.
- viii. The Colby Site is located approximately 2 miles east of Worland and is one the largest known mammoth kills in North America.
- ix. Big Cedar Ridge find has produced hundreds of species of plants, some of which have never been known or found in North America.

Wildlife

Wildlife and fish are a recreational, renewable natural and aesthetic resource in the WCCD. Wildlife and fish know no political or jurisdictional boundary. Wildlife is prevalent in all the areas of the WCCD with most being managed solely by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

Private landowners in the WCCD also play a role in managing wildlife by providing additional forage that eases pressures on sensitive wildlife habitat. This prevents the deterioration of the natural resources of the WCCD.

Prominent species of wildlife include: mule and white-tailed deer, antelope, elk, moose, bear, pheasant, cottontail rabbits, sage grouse, blue grouse, hungarian partridge, ducks and chucker. The rivers and streams in the WCCD have fisheries of varying qualities.

Although not very plentiful, some pheasants are found along the drainages and irrigated areas, but seem to be increasing as more habitat is created by private landowners. Chucker partridge are found in the rough and rocky areas; blue grouse are found in the high elevations; and sage grouse are in the areas predominated by sagebrush. These game birds and small animals have been reduced in numbers by the increase in skunks, raccoons, fox, coyotes and eagles in recent years.

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State and Federal Lands

Upon the statehood of Wyoming in 1889, the state was granted the Section 16 and 36 lands in all Townships across Wyoming. They were ceded to the state for the support of the common schools. These lands were in turn leased in most cases to adjacent landowners who acquired preference rights to lease said lands. As state lands are often integral parts of ranching operations in the WCCD, any change in their management that would eliminate their continued use would not be in the best interest of the Cooperators of the WCCD.

The WCCD contains lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management. These lands are, for the most part, Section 3 designated lands (Taylor Grazing Act, 1934 as amended). Characteristically, Section 15 lands are specially designated as such due to their nature of being isolated, interspersed and intermingled with the private/deeded lands. On Section 3 lands, the BLM applies allotment management plans and requirements dissimilar with that of Section 15 lands.

An example would be that on Section 3 lands the BLM may apply weed free management requirements (certified weed free hay feeding only). But on Section 15 lands, the above requirement could not be implemented due to the interspersed nature of the BLM managed lands with private lands. The federal agency does not have control over the management of the private lands. The custom of the WCCD has been to manage the Section 15 lands as though they are private, and a part of the whole. To change the management towards that of Section 3 lands would place the custom of the WCCD in jeopardy.

The WCCD contains 36,274 acres within the Big Horn National Forest, which is administered by the USDA Forest Service. These lands are used for a variety of multiple uses, including, among others, livestock grazing, recreation, wildlife habitat, forest products, and water. Some of these lands are leased by Cooperators to graze sheep and cattle.

Public Lands in General

“Public land” as used in this section is real property owned or controlled by an agency or bureau of either the State or federal government. Nearly 75% of the land which makes up the WCCD is “public land”. This section is not intended, nor should be interpreted, as a position(s) on private property issues, or rights of private property owners with respect to County regulations. The County’s custom and culture has been significantly influenced by the relationship of the citizenry to public land, and the economic benefits that derive from public land.

The public lands and the rights and privileges residents have come to rely on in all of the public lands, are central to the custom and culture of the WCCD. The WCCD finds public land and natural resources management practices are both relevant and substantive to its custom and culture, its economy, its environment, its quality of life, and its ability to protect and enhance local resources in spite of potentially detrimental outside influences.

Economics

In 1994, the Department of Agricultural Economics of the College of Agriculture at the University of Wyoming prepared a detailed report on the economic contributions of the federally managed lands within the four county region of Johnson, Big Horn, Sheridan and Washakie counties. The report provided an in-depth view of the economic and fiscal interdependencies

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coexisting among the private land-users and public land-managers and the local governments. The report analyzed the economic effects of Federal lands grazing, timber production, mineral development, and production of (oil, natural gas, bentonite, coal and uranium, mining and production of sand and gravel), irrigation water/crop value, tourism, historical and recreational industries. The summaries of each section of the report provides the reader with an undeniable vision of the direct and indirect negative economic effects of reduced grazing opportunities and oil/gas seismic, exploration, development, and production opportunities. The report also depicted a continued reliance on the overall price controlled irrigated agricultural industry. The use of public lands for grazing, mineral development and other multiple uses by the Cooperators of the WCCD must be continued or steadily increased in the WCCD to sustain a viable natural resource and economic/fiscal future for the cooperators of the WCCD.

WCCD Incorporations by Reference.

For purposes of the WCCD Natural Resource Land Use Plan, the Board of Supervisors incorporates by reference the following: “Report to the Big Horn Country Coalition-ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF FEDERAL LANDS WITHIN THE BIG HORN MOUNTAIN AREA Prepared by: Robert R. Fletcher, Professor, et al., Department of Agricultural Economics, College of Agriculture, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming, FINAL May 1994”, SOIL SURVEY OF WASHAKIE COUNTY WYOMING, Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service (now NRCS) in cooperation with the University of Wyoming Agricultural Experiment Station, Issued 1976, WATER RESOURCES OF WASHAKIE COUNTY Prepared by United States Geological Survey in cooperation with the Wyoming State Engineer, Issued 1993, WASHAKIE: A WYOMING COUNTY HISTORY Written by: Ray Pendergraft in 1985, SUBLETTE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT PUBLIC LAND USE POLICIES; adopted in 2008, SWEETWATER COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT LAND USE PLAN; adopted in 2005, NIOBRARA CONSERVATION DISTRICT LONG RANGE PLAN; adopted in 2004, MEDICINE BOW CONSERVATION DISTRICT NATURAL RESOURCE AND LAND USE PLAN; adopted in 2005, and MEETEETSE CONSERVATION DISTRICT LONG RANGE PROGRAM: LAND USE MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION PLAN; adopted in 2008, WYOMING WATERSHEDS AND RIPARIAN ZONES Written by Quentin D. Skinner, Kelly K. Crane, Joseph G. Hiller and J. Daniel Rodgers and published in 2000.

Acknowledgments.

The Washakie County Conservation District Board of Supervisors would like to thank Cathy Cooper, Watershed Coordinator; Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts, for her cooperation for helping with the development of the WCCD Natural Resource Land Use Plan and in helping to facilitate our public meetings.

The Washakie County Conservation District would like to extend our thanks to the public for your comments. It is you who helped us determine our goals and visions for the future of our community. We look forward to assisting and working with the citizens of the WCCD. We would also like to thank all of those who assisted us in finalizing our plan by reviewing, editing and commenting on the plan regarding your areas of expertise.

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Summary

The initial public participation planning process used by the WCCD has successfully brought out the assets and deficits, advantages and disadvantages, the hopes and fears, problems and potentials, and the values of our Community. The process also brought about a clear direction and purpose for the WCCD, as well as establishing trust among the members of the planning process and Community. Through the continued involvement of the public of the WCCD, the WCCD will continually strive to achieve our goals as set out in the Washakie County Conservation District Natural Resource Land Use Plan – 2010. Our plan will be also be used to create the WCCD Annual Plan of Work.

WASHAKIE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
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Washakie County Conservation District Maps.

- a. Geology
- b. Jurisdictional Boundary
- c. General Soils
- d. Land Ownership
- e. Primary Landcover
- f. Annual Precipitation
- g. Hydrography
- h. Oil and Gas Wells

WASHAKIE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT GEOLOGY
ELEMENT CLASSIFICATION

Ai – Old alluvial plain with scattered deposits of eolian, residuum, and slopewash.

Ri – Bedrock and glaciated bedrock including hot spring deposits and volcanic necks; mixed with scattered shallow deposits of eolian, grus, slopewash, colluvium, residuum, glacial, and alluvium.

Ti – Structural terrace including and/or mixed with deposits of alluvium, eolian, residuum, slopewash, and terrace.

ai – Alluvium with scattered deposits of terrace, slopewash, eolian, residuum, grus and glacial.

bdi – Dissected bench with scattered deposits of residuum, slopewash, landslide, and eolian.

bi – Bench including eolian, slopewash, outwash, and bench and/or mesa.

fdi – Dissected alluvial fan and gradational fan deposits mixed with scattered deposits of slopewash and residuum.

fi – Alluvial fan and gradational fan deposits mixed with scattered deposits of slopewash, residuum, and eolian.

gi – Glacial deposits mixed with scattered deposits of slopewash, residuum, grus, alluvium, colluvium, landslide, and /or bedrock outcrops.

li – Landslide mixed with scattered deposits of slopewash, residuum, Tertiary landslides, and bedrock outcrops; landslides too small and numerous to show separately.

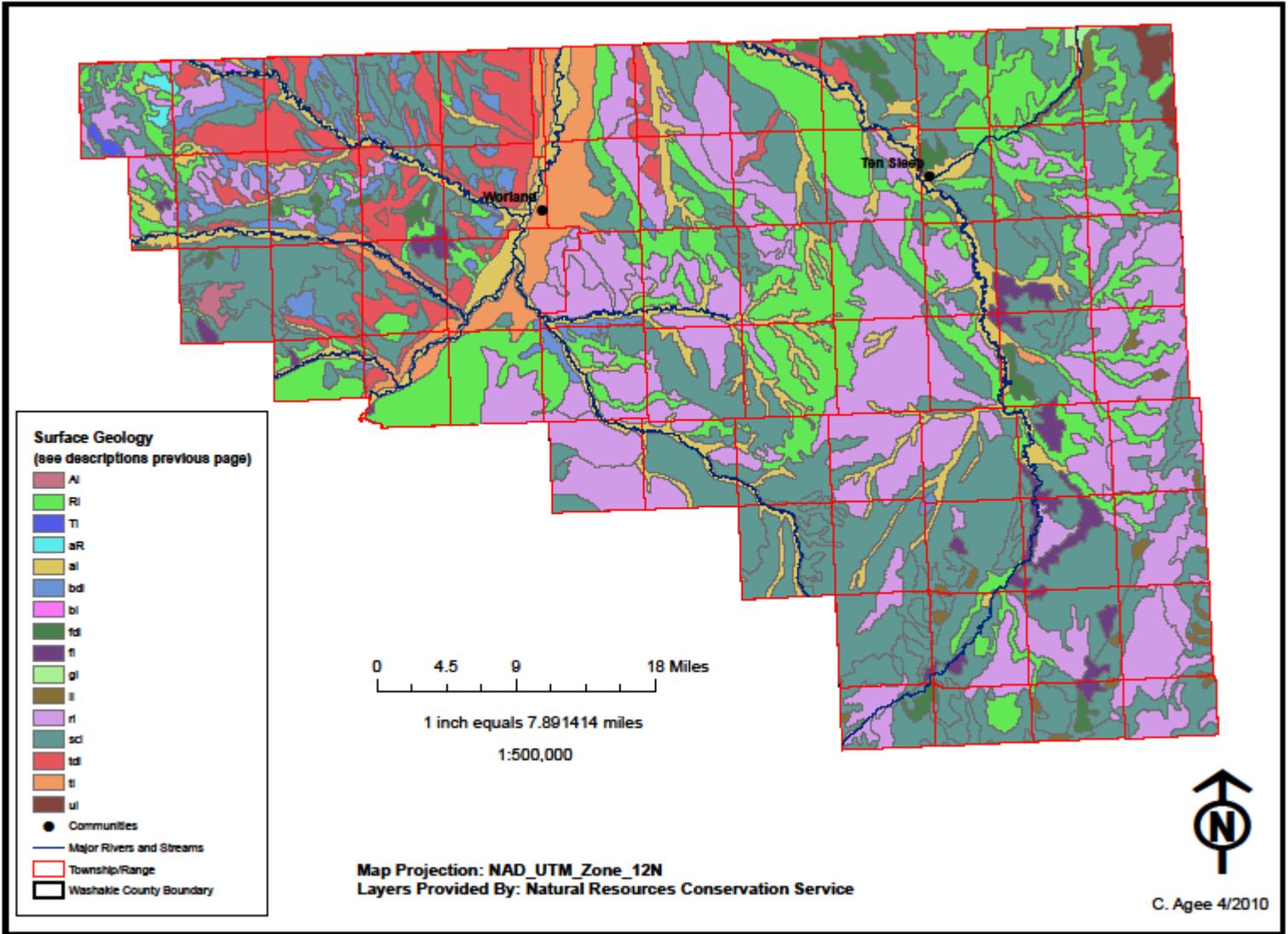
ri – Residuum mixed with alluvium, eolian, slopewash, grus, and/or bedrock outcrops.

sci – Slopewash and colluvium mixed with scattered deposits of slopewash, residuum, grus, glacial, periglacial, alluvium, eolian, and/or bedrock outcrops.

tdi – Dissected terrace deposits mixing with alluvium, residuum, eolian, and slopewash.

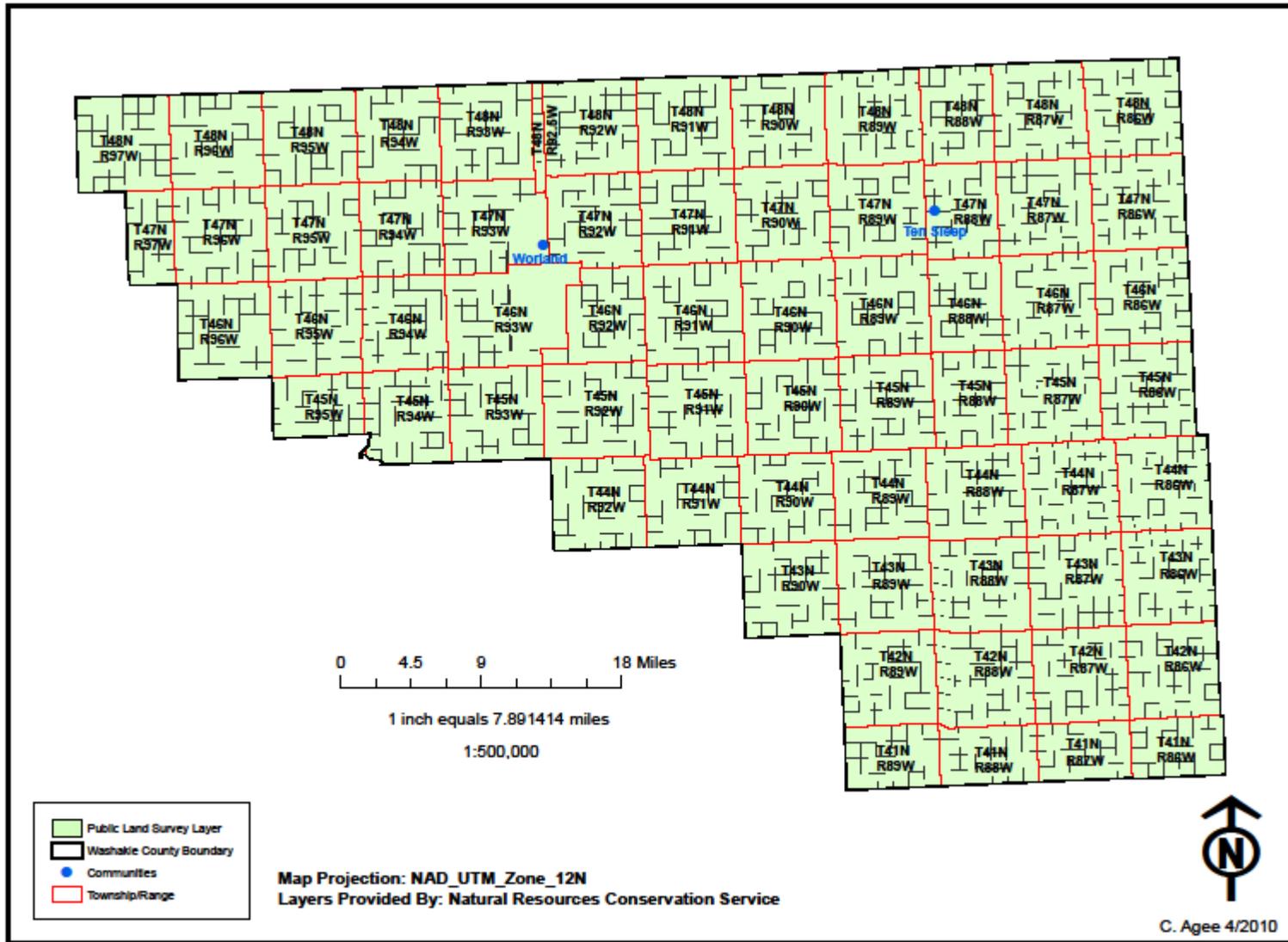
ti – Terrace deposits mixed with scattered deposits of alluvium, residuum, eolian, slopewash, and outwash.

ui – Grus mixed with alluvium, eolian, slopewash, grus, and/or bedrock outcrops.



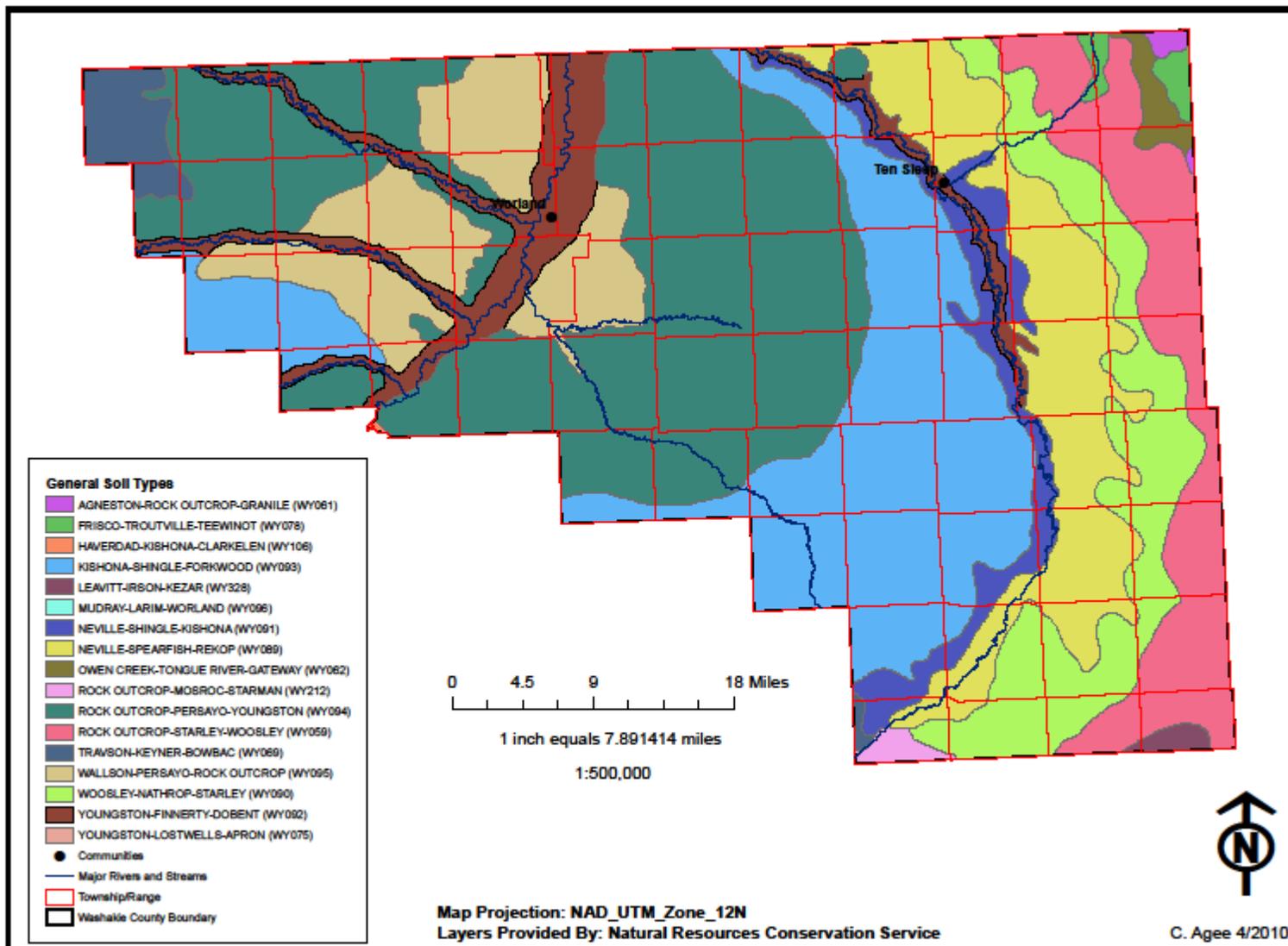
Washakie County Conservation District, Surface Geology Map, Washakie County Wyoming

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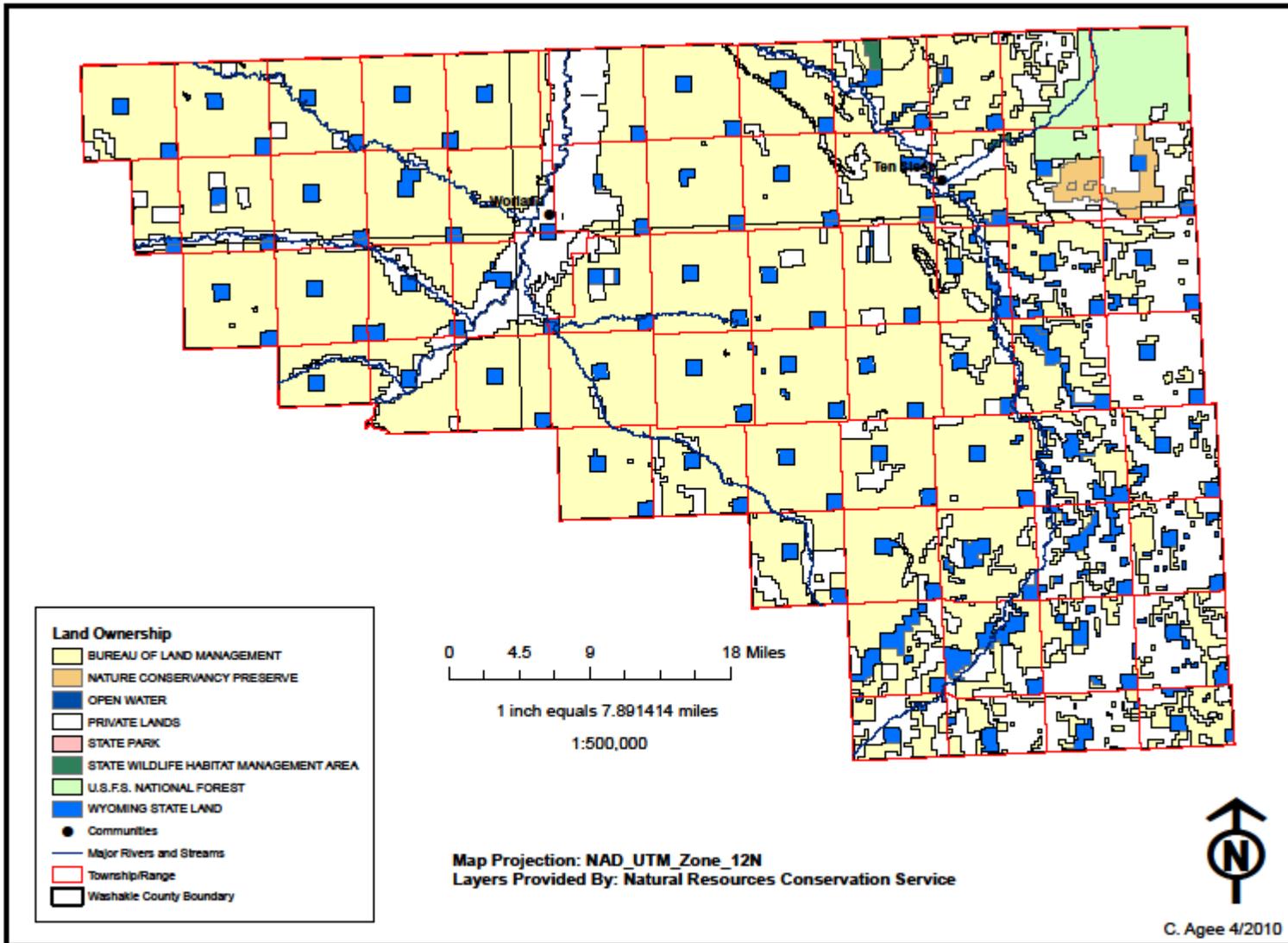
Washakie County Conservation District, Jurisdictional Map, Washakie County Wyoming

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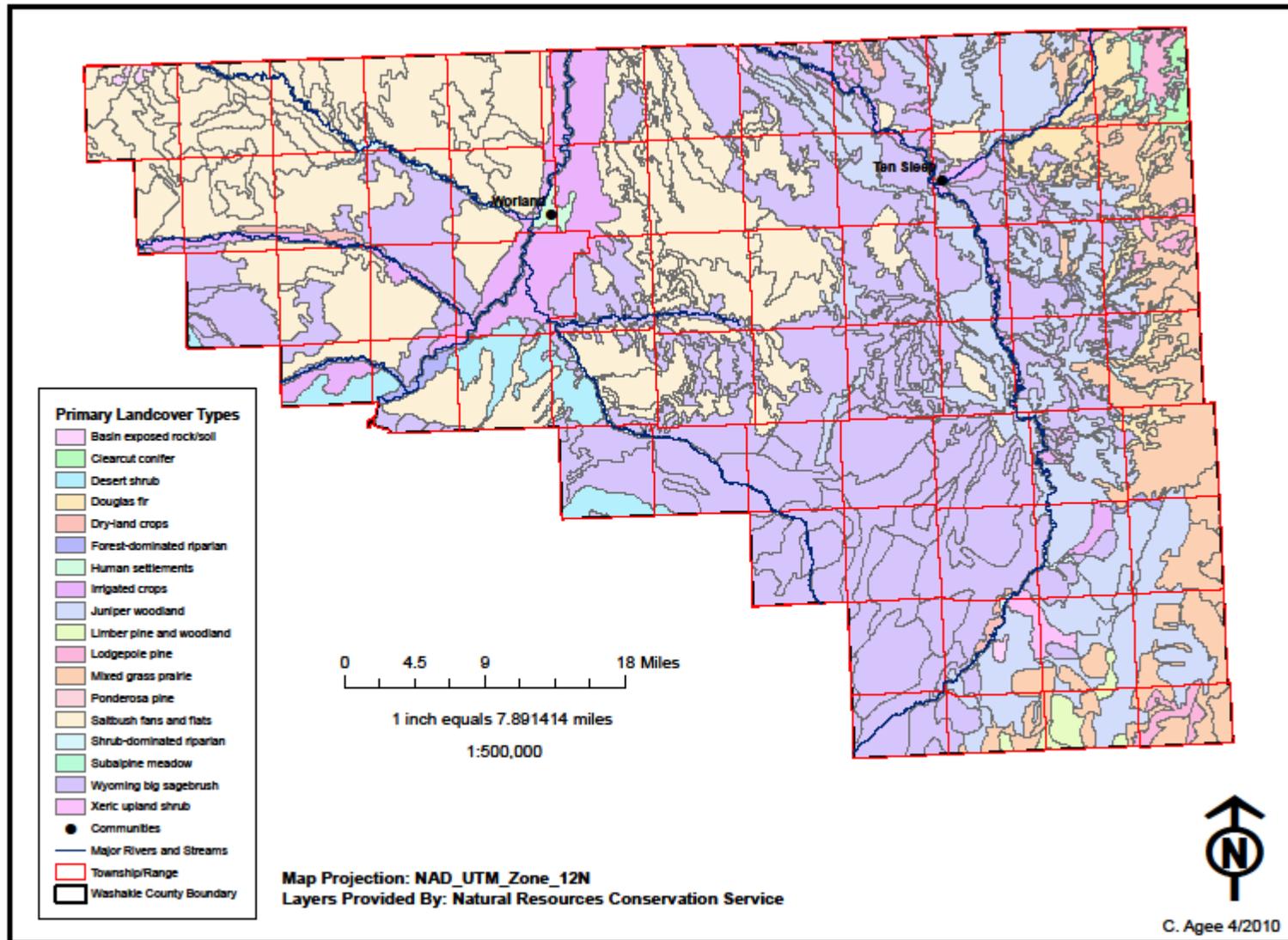
Washakie County Conservation District, General Soils Map, Washakie County Wyoming

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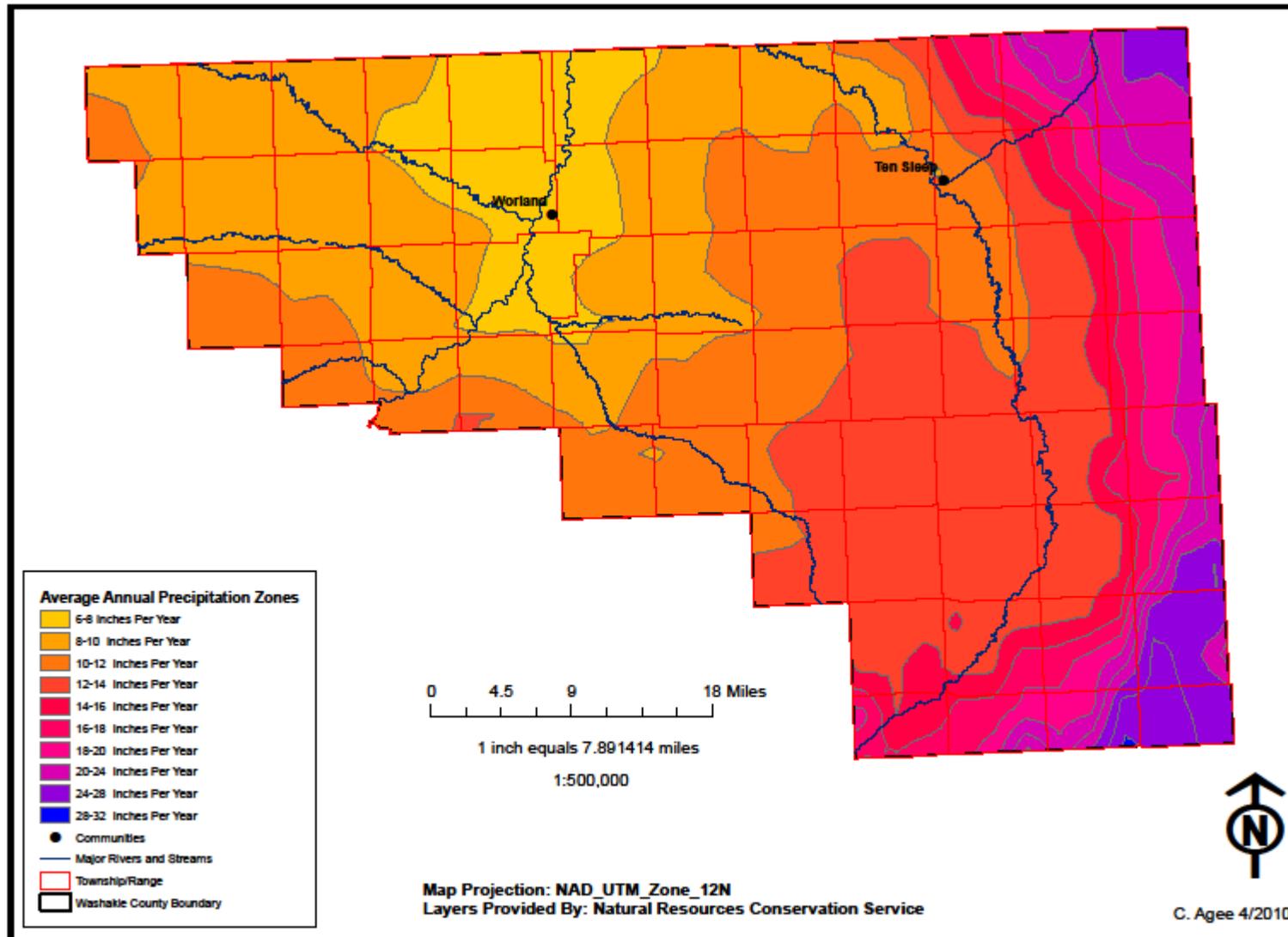
Washakie County Conservation District, Land Ownership Map, Washakie County Wyoming

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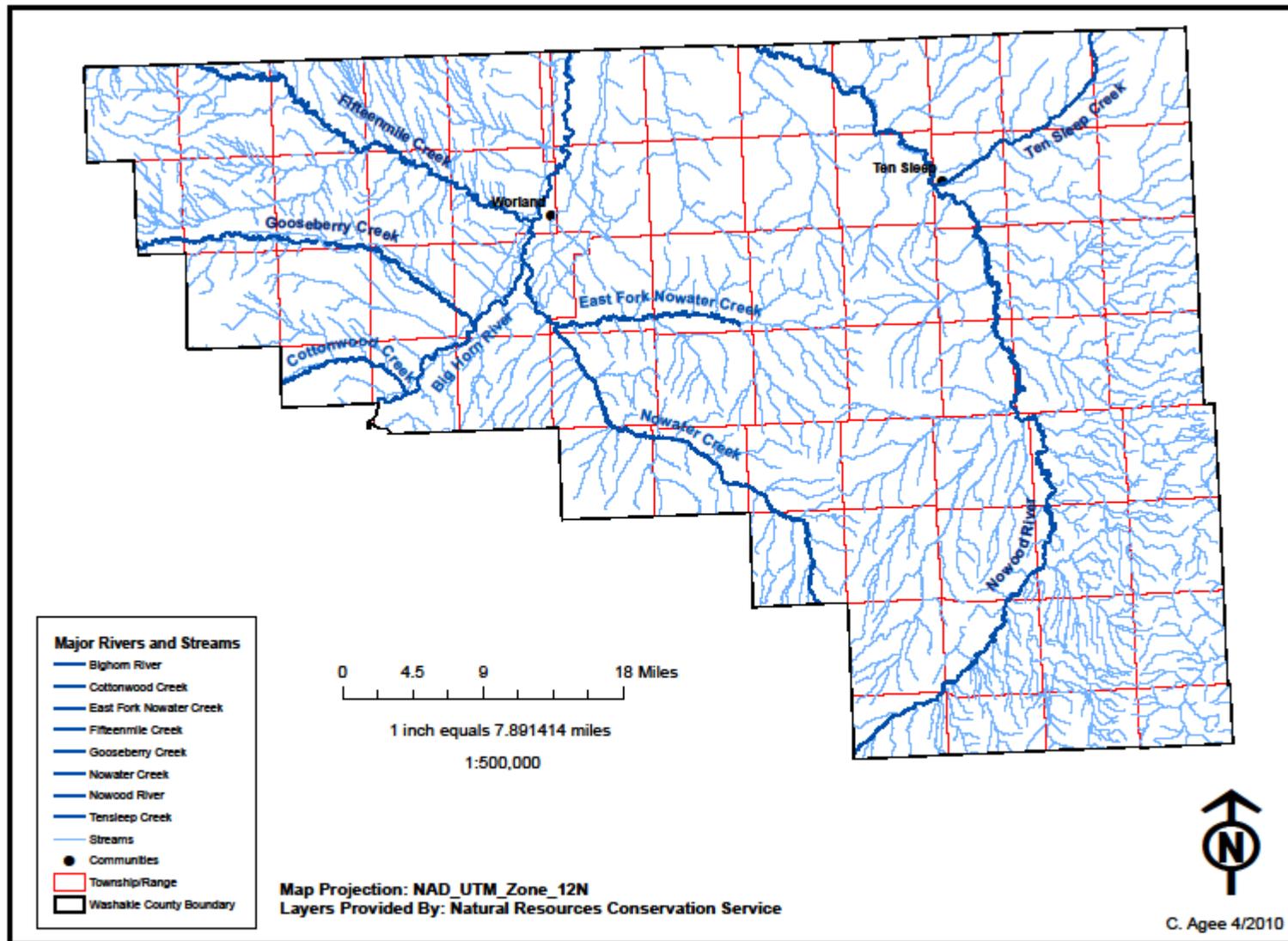
Washakie County Conservation District Primary Landcover Map, Washakie County Wyoming

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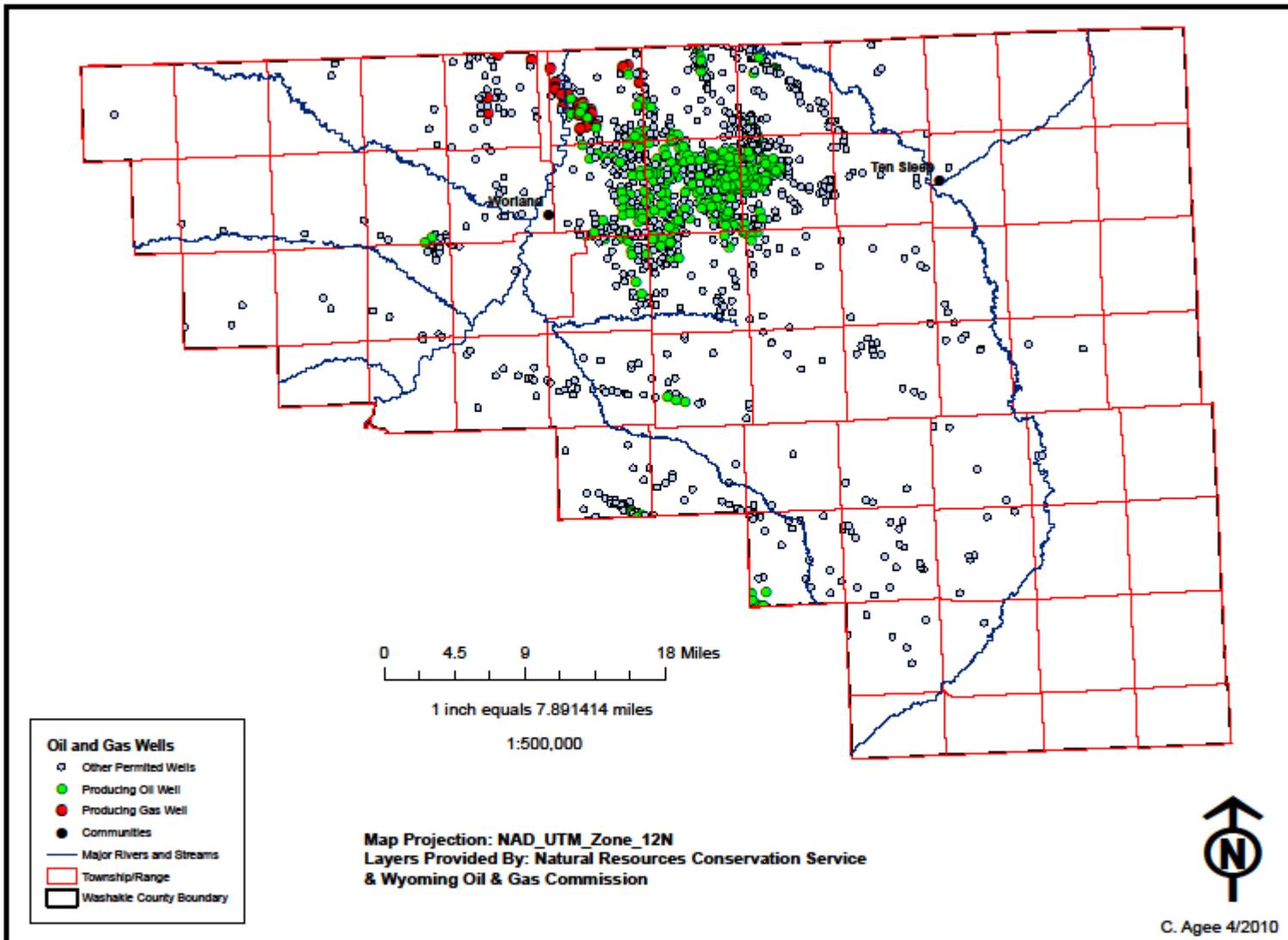
Washakie County Conservation District, Annual Precipitation Map, Washakie County Wyoming

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Washakie County Conservation District, Hydrography Map, Washakie County Wyoming

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Washakie County Conservation District, Oil and Gas Wells, Washakie County Wyoming