

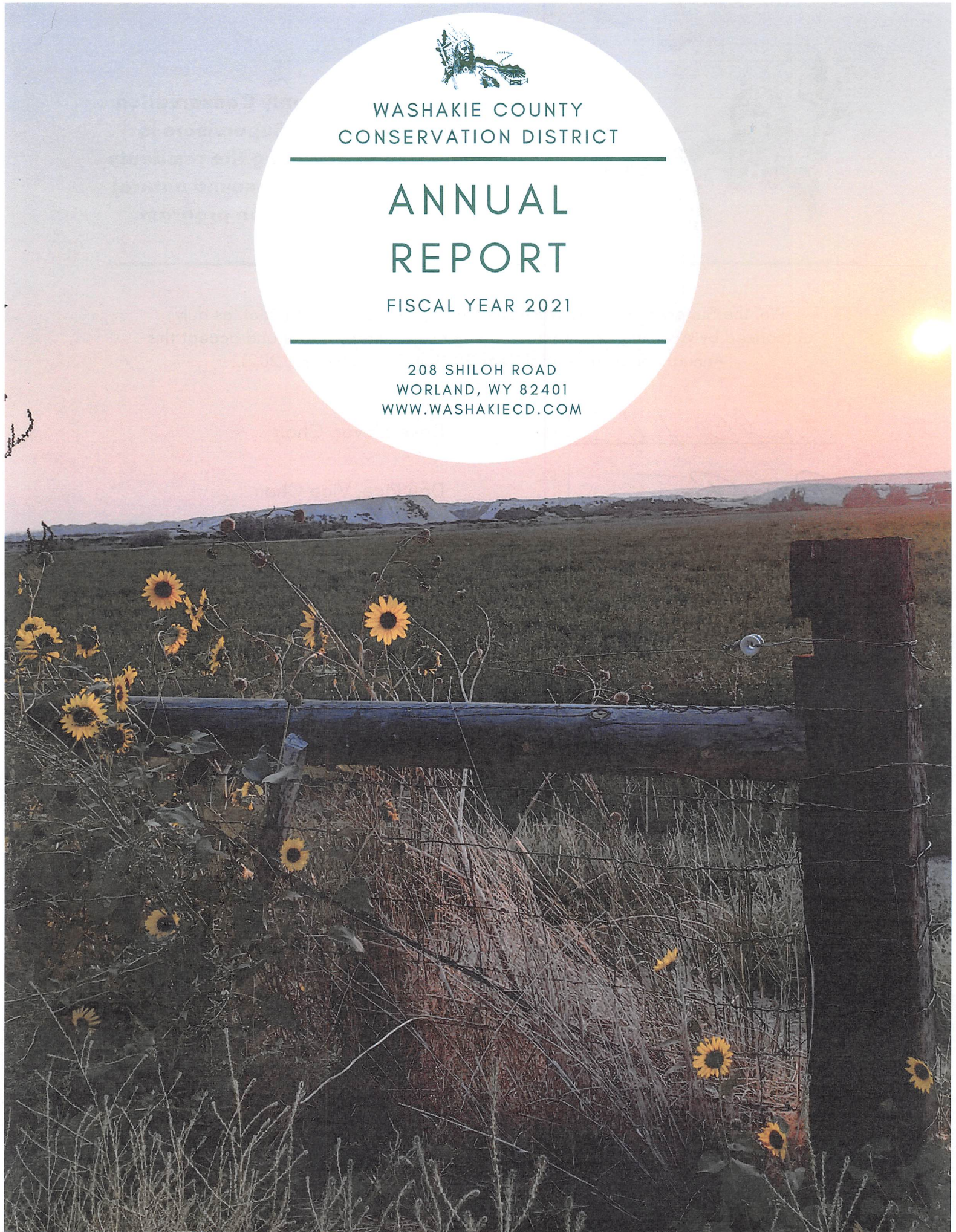


WASHAKIE COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2021

208 SHILOH ROAD
WORLAND, WY 82401
WWW.WASHAKIECD.COM





The Washakie County Conservation District Board of Supervisors is committed to providing the residents of Washakie County a sound natural resource conservation program.

We, the Supervisors of the Washakie County Conservation District, as duly authorized by Wyoming Conservation District Law, hereby adopt and accept this Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2021 on December 20, 2021.

Dave Slover, Chair

Dan Rice, Vice Chair

Vance Lungren, Secretary-Treasurer

Susan Pennington, Supervisor

Charley Orchard, Supervisor

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Board of Supervisors



Dave Slover, Chair



Dan Rice, Vice Chair



Vance Lungren, Secretary-Treasurer



Susan D. Pennington, Supervisor



Charley Orchard, Supervisor

WCCD Staff



Amanda O'Keefe
Director



Halli Caines
Program Assistant

WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

Washakie County Conservation District (WCCD) is a local governmental subdivision of the State of Wyoming as defined and established by Wyoming Conservation District Law. WCCD Board of Supervisors are elected by the people of Washakie county at the general elections by popular vote. Conservation District Board Members are the only locally elected volunteer board charged specifically with the responsibility of representing local people on natural resource concerns.

We provide locally led leadership, and encourage and promote through education, the conservation of natural resources. We assist landowners and land managers in practicing sound natural resource stewardship and conservation for the long term benefit of the people by using monitoring, partnerships, staffing resources, and mill levy funding as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Board of Supervisors

Dave Slover, Chair

Dan Rice, Vice Chair

Vance Lungren, Secretary-Treasurer

Susan Pennington, Supervisor

Charley Orchard, Supervisor

WCCD Employees

Amanda O'Keefe, Director

Halli Caines, Program Assistant

Dusty Vail/Ben Vega, Seasonal Outdoor Maintenance

NRCS Staff

Laura Galloway, District Conservationist

Allen Croft, Civil Engineer

Blaise Allen, Range Management Specialist

Emma Allen, Soil Conservationist

Kaile Brant, Soil Conservationist



DISTRICT OPERATIONS

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

In addition to monthly board meetings, District Supervisors participate in other local, regional, state and national activities. During Fiscal Year 2021, this included:

- Nowood and Cottonwood Grass Creek Watershed Improvement District Monthly and Quarterly Meetings
- State and Federal Agency virtual meetings (listed under Government Agency Interactions)
- Sage Grouse Local Work Group, August 2020
- Bighorn National Forest Steering Committee Meetings, October 2020 & May 2021
- 2020 Area III Meeting hosted by South Bighorn Conservation District, September 2020
- 2020 WACD Annual Convention (virtual), November 2020
- 2020 Annual Legislative Luncheon hosted by Washakie County Conservation District, December 2020
- Christmas Tree Recycling Event, January 2021
- 2020 NACD Annual Convention (virtual), February 2021

District Supervisors continued to serve as

Representatives on:

- Washakie Watersheds Steering Committee, Dave Slover
- Gooseberry Creek Irrigation District, Dave Slover
- USDA-FSA State Committee, Dave Slover
- Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts, Dan Rice, Vice President
- Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts, Dan Rice, Area III Director
- Local Sage Grouse Working Group, Vance Lungren
- Worland Community Garden, Susan Pennington, President

Dave Slover and Susan Pennington were both re-elected in the November 2020 general election. The WCCD Board held the election of officers during the January 2021 Board meeting and the results were: Dave Slover-Chair, Dan Rice-Vice Chair and Vance Lungren-Secretary/Treasurer.

STAFFING & ADMINISTRATION

WCCD Director Tori Dietz retired on July 31, 2020 after 30 years of service. Amanda O'Keefe was hired to assume the responsibilities of Director and continue to implement programs in place and explore other program opportunities that would benefit the WCCD district.

In addition to participation in various webinars that provide informal training, WCCD staff participated in the following training during Fiscal Year 2021:

- Grant Writing USA-Grant Writing Training, August 2020, Amanda & Halli
- WACD Principles of Water Quality Training, January 2021, Amanda & Halli
- Conservation District Employee Certification Training, February 2021, Amanda
- WACD Water Quality Monitoring & Analysis Training, May 2021, Amanda

The Annual Legislative Luncheon was held on December 15, 2021 at the University of Wyoming Extension offices and lunch was catered by Goodies. In attendance were all WCCD Supervisors and Staff, Senator Ed Cooper, Representative John Winter, and Washakie Commissioners Fred Frandson, Aaron Anderson and Terry Wolf. This was a successful event and provided a great venue to speak about current legislative issues and how they pertain to conservation districts.

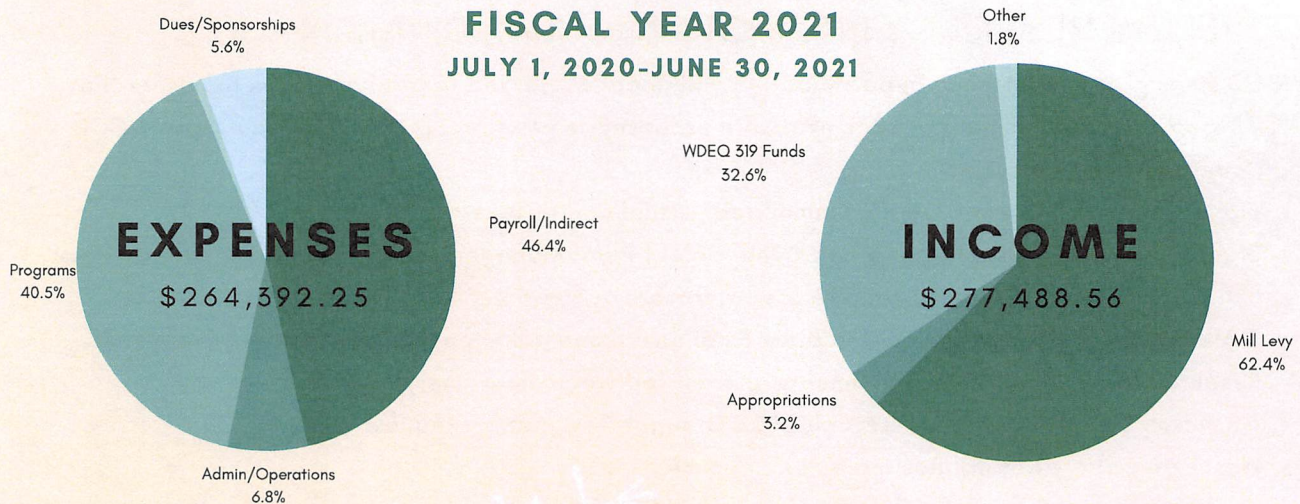
DISTRICT OPERATIONS, cont.

GOVERNMENT AGENCY INTERACTION & COORDINATION

WCCD finds great importance in participating with local, state and federal agencies to assure that WCCD goals and policies are in alignment with proposed legislation. During the fiscal year, WCCD participated in the following:

- Bighorn National Forest Steering Committee, virtual and in-person meetings.
- Bighorn National Forest Invasive and Other Select Plant Management Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement, comments and related webinars or meetings.
- BLM Wyoming Pipeline Corridor Initiative Final Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Resource Management Plan, comments and related webinars or meetings.
- Washakie County Commissioners Fall 2020 Drought Designation Request.
- Washakie County Natural Resource Plan, comments.
- Bighorn National Forest Dispersed Camping Taskforce, virtual and in-person meetings.
- BLM Grazing Regulations Environmental Impact Statement, comments and related webinars or meetings.
- Bighorn National Forest Ten Sleep Canyon Climber's Management Plan, comments and related webinars or meetings.
- USFS Rangeland Management Directives, comments and related webinars or meetings.
- Washakie County Emergency Management, LEPC and THIRA meetings.
- University of Wyoming Barnyards and Backyards, webinars.
- Bighorn Climber's Coalition, virtual and in-person meetings.
- USDA NRCS Cart Demo webinar, virtually.
- Wyoming Water Association Annual Meeting, virtually.
- Wyoming Weed & Pest Annual Meeting, virtually.
- Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting, virtually.
- NRCS Local Work Group Meeting, in person.
- NRCS Ecological Site Description Local Work Group Meeting, virtually.
- Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality Annual Meeting, virtually.
- National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting, virtually.
- Area III Annual Meeting located in Basin, in-person and virtually.
- National Association of Conservation District Employees Annual Meeting, virtually.
- Wyoming Association of Conservation District Employees Annual Training, virtually.
- NACD Winds, Water and Wildfire Conference, virtually.
- US Census Department training, virtually.
- City of Worland Public Works Superintendent and UW Extension meeting regarding Compost Lot and Food Waste Reduction programs, in-person
- Hot Springs Weed & Pest Annual Tour, in-person.
- National Watershed Coalition webinars.
- Wyoming Stock Grower's Association Environmental Stewardship Award, nomination of Galloway Ranch, LLC.
- Various Wyoming Legislative meetings, virtually.

FINANCIALS



In Wyoming, conservation districts are funded through a variety of sources. Washakie County Conservation District receives 1 mill levy. A mill levy is the number of dollars a taxpayer must pay for every \$1,000 of assessed value on real property. FY2021 total mill levy income received was \$173,284.70 of which \$114,521.70 was returned to our local community through purchases of goods and services (66%).

WCCD also receives appropriation and lab analysis funding through Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA). In order to qualify for this funding, WCCD must meet the required funding criteria. This includes demonstrating risk management practices, providing proof of worker compensation, unemployment insurance, bonding and liability insurance. We are also required to provide WDA, Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) and the Department of Audit (DOA) and annual budget and proof that we are in compliance with the DOA through an audit compliance. Other requirements for funding are listed under District Operations. WCCD successfully submitted all required criteria for funding by the given deadlines.

During Fiscal Year 2021, WCCD utilized grant funding made possible through WDA and Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ). These funds were granted in previous fiscal years and both grant programs expired during 2021.

- WDA funds were utilized to facilitate small stock water development projects within Washakie County that would benefit the water quality of the Nowood River. This project at the end of FY21 is still under development and the final deliverable is due to WDA by December 31, 2021.
- WDEQ funds were utilized through a 319 Implementation Grant awarded in 2017. The final deliverables on this project were 7 open ditches converted to pipeline, with cost share to the landowners involved.

Finally, WCCD generated a small amount of income through weed barrier sales, with 27 rolls and 5 boxes of staples sold within the community.

The Fiscal Year 2021 budget was reviewed and approved by the Board of Supervisor during the July 2020 board meeting. Each year the budget is available for public review and comment. WCCD received no public feedback.

FINANCIALS

FISCAL YEAR 2022

JULY 1, 2021-JUNE 30, 2022

in anticipation of Mill Levy Income expected to be lower than the previous years, WCCD was conservative in preparing the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget. The State is anticipating losses in oil, gas and mineral revenues due to some restrictions put in place by the new Administration. It is our responsibility to the taxpayers in Washakie County to be fiscally responsible so we can still offer the same level of service and cost share as in previous years.

The WCCD Board of Supervisors met to review the FY2022 Budget on July 19, 2021. The meeting was advertised per Statute requirements, but there was no participation from the public. The Board voted to approve the budget and it was sent to the Department of Audit for review, where they too approved the budget. Below is the budget, less reserve funds on hand.

INCOME

TOTAL ANTICIPATED INCOME: \$178,041

MILL LEVY, \$131,341
TREE PROGRAM, \$6,350
APPROPRIATIONS, \$8,824
WATER QUALITY/EQUIP., \$4,551
REIMBURSABLE EXP. INCOME, \$25,000
SPECIAL PROJECTS, \$1,000
AREA III MEETING, \$375
INTEREST, \$600

EXPENSE

TOTAL ANTICIPATED EXPENSE: \$265,271

ADMINISTRATION

- PERSONNEL, \$80,584
- CONTRACT LABOR, \$1,000
- MILEAGE/MEALS/LODGING, \$3,500
- OFFICE SUPP./TECH SUPPORT, \$4,500
- TRAINING, \$1,000
- DUES/LEGAL FEES, \$12,288
- POSTAGE/ADVER./ACCT, \$2,900
- VEHICLE FUEL/MAINTENANCE, \$2,855
- REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES, \$25,000

EXPENSE, cont.

OPERATIONS

- EDUCATION PROGRAMS, \$1,650
- RECYCLING PROGRAMS, \$3,106
- TREE PROGRAMS, \$4,950
- WATER QUALITY PROGRAMS, \$4,355
- ON-THE-GROUND PROJECTS, \$56,000
- PROJECTS/ORG. SUPPORT, \$6,750
- MEETING EXP./WORKSHOPS, \$5,875
- RESOURCE LIBRARY/DISPLAYS, \$400

INDIRECT COSTS

- PAYROLL EXP./BENEFITS, \$46,054
- INSURANCE/BONDS, \$2,504



Public Information & Education

YOUTH OUTREACH

WCCD had challenges with general outreach to the youth within the community with Covid-19 restrictions still in place. We were fortunate to have in-person activities resume in the latter part of the fiscal year. Listed below are the activities and outreach that we completed:

- Wyoming PLT Arbor Day Contest theme was Trees: That's WY: facilitated the contest and presentation of awards to Worland and Ten Sleep 4th and 5th graders.
- National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Annual Poster Contest theme was Healthy Forest, Healthy Communities: facilitated the contest and presentation of awards to Worland and Ten Sleep 2nd and 5th graders.
- Washakie County completed outreach to homeschooling groups and were able to establish contacts and provided emails with information on natural resource learning resources.
- WCCD Kid's Corner monthly informational Facebook post was created offering fun activity and resources pertaining to natural resource learning.



GENERAL PUBLIC OUTREACH

WCCD continues to reach out to the public to keep them informed on what is happening in the conservation and natural resources world. We have several methods to do this, but rely heavily on social media to inform the public. Listed below are the outreach activities that were completed:

- Weeds of the West display table with contest put up during the Washakie County Fair, July-August 2020.
- Guest appearance on Big Horn Radio Community Connections with LeAnn Baker to discuss current programs and introduce new Director, August 2020.
- Interview with Northern Wyoming News for the legacy article on Tori Dietz, former Director and an introduction and background on new Director, August 2020.
- Outreach flyer to landowners within the Horse Gulch sub-watershed, September 2020.
- Calendar photo and quote contest for WCCD 2021 Calendar, October-November 2020.
- Westi Ag Days, sponsorship and display table, February 2021.
- 5 advertisements in the Northern Wyoming News: Legacy Edition, Hunting Edition, Harvest Edition, and Christmas Tree Recycling event which was also posted in Ten Sleep Tribute.
- Social Media postings that related to local events, COVID updates, federal agency cost share programs, WCCD cost share programs and updates on activities listed on this page.
- Installation of two new Boundary Signs in coordination with Hot Springs and Clear Creek Conservation Districts.

NATURAL RESOURCE PROGRAMS

WATERSHED IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Washakie County Conservation District, with the support of NRCS, strives to increase the efficient use, as well as assist landowners to maintain and improve the quality and quantity of waters within Washakie County through education, technical assistance and best management practices. This is done through cost share programs, and when available local, state and federal grant funding.

Below is a list of projects that were completed during this fiscal year:

Big Horn River-Slick Creek and Lower Nowater Watershed 319 Implementation Grant, with grant funding awarded by WDEQ was funded in 2017 and the program closed out on May 31, 2021. The purpose of the program was to promote and implement recommended BMP's within the watersheds that would reduce bacteria contributions to Sage, Slick and Nowater creeks from cropland, rangeland, riparian and small acreages. This project consisted of:

- 7 open ditches converted to buried pipeline totaling 16,907 feet, 2 irrigation reservoirs totaling 900 cubic yards.
- Two watersheds, Slick Creek (100800071201) and Lower Nowater Creek (100800070805) for a total of 1,805 acres treated.
- Technical assistance and project design provided by NRCS Civil Engineer, Allen Croft.
- Total funds expended: 319 Funds, \$198,669.20 and Non-Federal Match, \$141,545.01

WCCD Rural Cost Share Program provides landowners with 50% cost share (up to \$10,000) on projects while utilizing mill levy funding set aside specifically for larger on the ground projects that make a positive impact on water quality and quantity, reduce erosion of soils, improve habitat and to help keep agricultural operations viable. WCCD provided assistance to one project located next to a feedlot which converted 1,250 feet of open ditch to buried pipeline.

The Washakie County Homeowner's Guide to Septic Systems publication continues to be made available online and a booklet is displayed throughout events such as the Washakie County Fair and Westi Ag Days. This guide provides landowners with a starting point on the considerations for installing, replacing and maintaining a septic system, in addition to providing some basic summaries of alternatives for locations where a conventional system will not protect human health and the environment.

During fiscal year 2021, WCCD provided, at the request of the County Planner and per Wyoming Statute 18-5-306, three Subdivision Reviews Soil Reports. These reports are compiled using the NRCS Web Soil Survey and then are reviewed and approved by the WCCD Board of Supervisors.

This review is advisory in nature to the Landowner, Planning Staff and County Commissioners to inform and educate. These reports include soil suitability, erosion control, sedimentation and flooding concerns.

NATURAL RESOURCE PROGRAMS, cont.

WATERSHED IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS, cont

WCCD received full grant funding for the Nowood Watershed Stock Water Development Program: Phase I through the Wyoming Department of Agriculture. During FY21, the Program Assistant requested an extension of the program through December 31, 2021 and the request was granted.

An interim report was completed in October 2020. In addition to the footage that was obtained in the previous fiscal year, WCCD obtained narrative to complete the audio portion of these videos, identified an additional project that was implemented between Worland and Ten Sleep in the badlands and obtained drone and ground video footage and purchased Adobe Premiere Pro to compile the video and audio footage to produce 5-6 videos. These videos are still in production and will be completed prior to the grant program expiration.

WATERSHED PLANNING

The Middle Big Horn Level I Watershed Study was completed by Y2 Consultants, LLC, Eagle Engineering and Surveying and Dahlgren Consulting in January 2021. The purpose of this project was to provide a comprehensive inventory of the watershed and bring forward potential watershed improvement and development projects across the study area. The study area included parts of four counties (Washakie, Big Horn, Hot Springs and Park) and encompassed approximately 1800 square miles.

The Washakie Watersheds Steering Committee met once during this fiscal year in September 2020 to discuss proposed projects that were requesting to utilize WDEQ 319 funding. The committee reviewed and recommended 3 applications, which in turn the WCCD Board of Supervisors approved.

WASTE MANAGEMENT, TREE & RECREATION PROGRAMS

WCCD continues to see success with the Recycle Trailer and the Adopt an Event Recycling programs for the Town of Ten Sleep. This program is headed by the Ten Sleep National Honor Society (TSNHS). The recycling trailer is located in Ten Sleep and they hold a monthly recycling event and then haul these materials to Buffalo. WCCD then reimburses mileage to the TSNHS. The Adopt an Event provides 55-gallon recycling containers that are placed throughout the school for recyclable materials, or offered for local events within Washakie County, and then are taken to the monthly Recycle Trailer event. WCCD also provided new magnets for the recycling trailer this year.

In Worland, WCCD continues to replenish the fifteen dog waste stations that are located at city parks and recreation centers. The City of Worland as well as local citizen also assist in monitoring the stations. This program was made possible from a previous WDEQ 319 grant.

Fiscal Year 2021 was the last year that WCCD promoted and collected cell phones and tablets for the organization Cell Phones for Soldiers due to little participation. WCCD will replace this program in FY2022 with Adopt A Highway through Wyoming Department of Transportation.

NATURAL RESOURCE PROGRAMS, cont.

WASTE MANAGEMENT, TREE & RECREATION PROGRAMS, cont.

The 26th Annual Christmas Tree Recycling Program was organized by WCCD and held on January 9, 2021. We had a great turn out of volunteers and their families from the Worland Rotary Club, Hake Realty, University of Wyoming Extension Office, NRCS, WCCD, Chief Washakie FFA and Ten Sleep FFA. This year we had two separate events where trees were collected in Worland and Ten Sleep.

The trees in Ten Sleep were collected by the Ten Sleep FFA and then hauled to Worland Compost Lot to be chipped. Big Horn Rural Electric once again volunteered and provided the chipping free of charge. The chipped material was added to the community compost pile and the finished compost will be made available to local gardeners.

Unfortunately, the Hazardous Household Waste Event that is held jointly with Washakie Weed & Pest was postponed due to Covid for 2020 and 2021. The next event will tentatively be held in 2022.

WCCD successfully sold 27 rolls of weed barrier and 5 boxes of staples as part of the Tree Program.

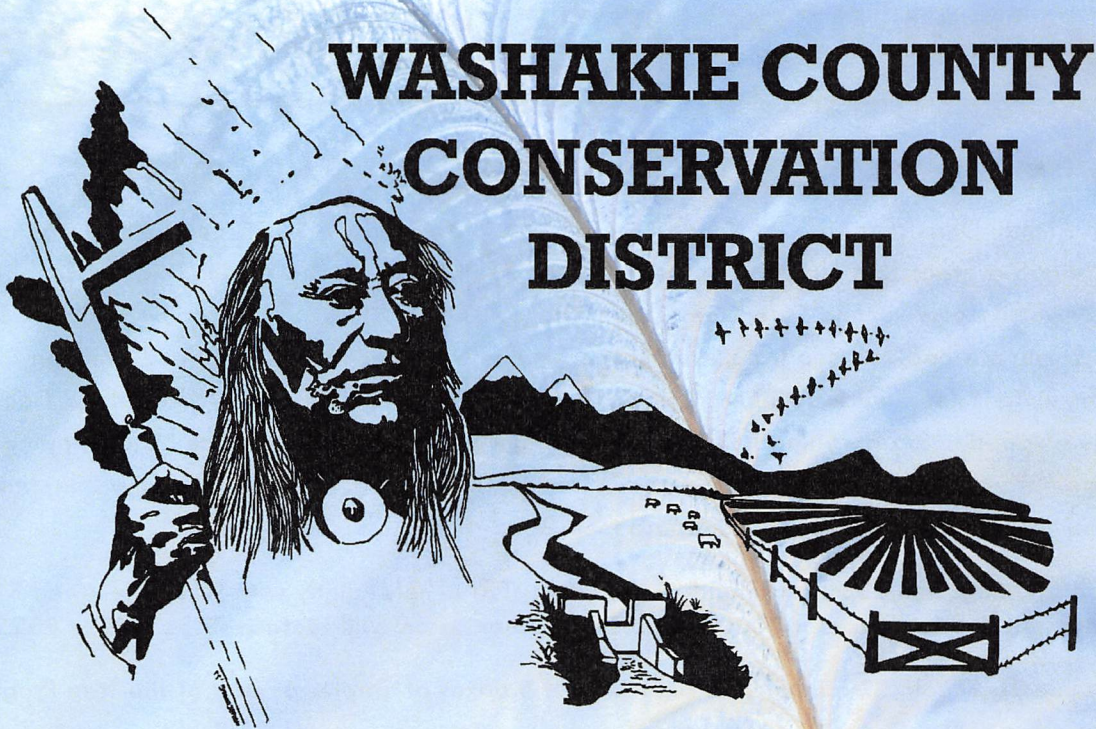
In conjunction with the 100th Anniversary the the National Association of State Foresters, we distributed 100 bare root seedlings to West Side Elementary and the public free of charge.

WCCD and the Washakie County Commissioners have been working together to identify boat ramp access areas within Washakie County for recreation purposes on the Big Horn River. We have had two meetings with the Commissioners on this, including a site visit in April 2021.

SPECIAL DISCRETIONARY FUNDING

West Side Elementary School in Worland came to WCCD with their project to create an outdoor learning space and garden for their 4th and 5th grade classes. This project was a result of the Covid 19 pandemic and a need to provide the students with a space where they can get outdoors and learn without the mask requirements. This space consists of eight (3'x8') raised garden beds and six picnic tables, and provides students with the ability to do hands on learning about the internal and external structures of plants, how energy is transferred, organic material decomposition, and the importance of balance and conservation in an ecosystems. Andrea Cooley headed this project and did a fabulous job with organizing the installation, the planting and subsequent harvesting of the fruits and vegetables produced. To help offset some of the costs, they held a fundraiser selling wild flower seed packets. WCCD was happy to sponsor this project and provided \$2,500 in special discretionary funding.





Located in the USDA Service Center at
208 Shiloh Road
Worland, Wyoming 82401

You can email us at wccd@rtconnect.net
or call (307) 347-2456, ext. 101

Visit us online to get more information and
see what's going on at www.washakiecd.com
or on Facebook.

