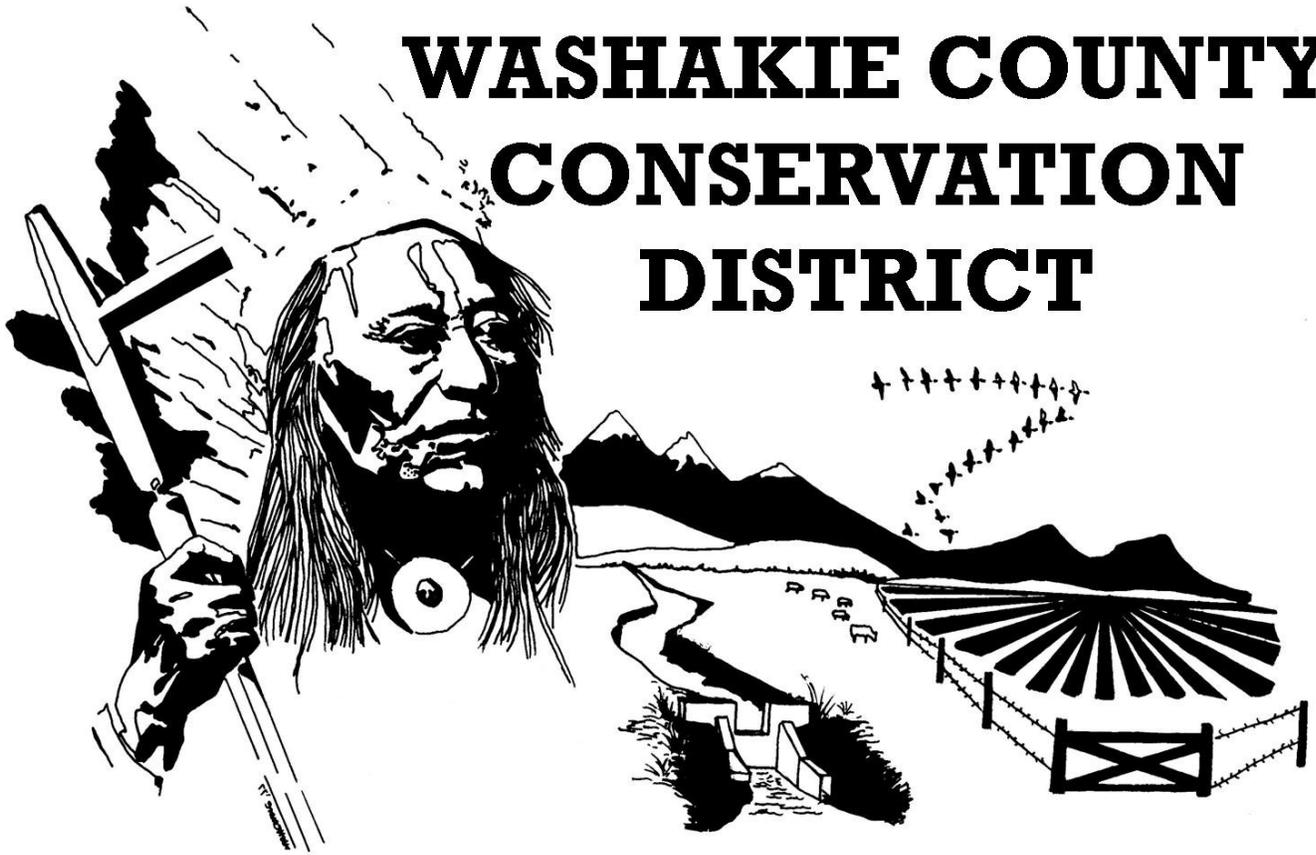


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# **WASHAKIE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT**



## **ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2019**

## Introduction

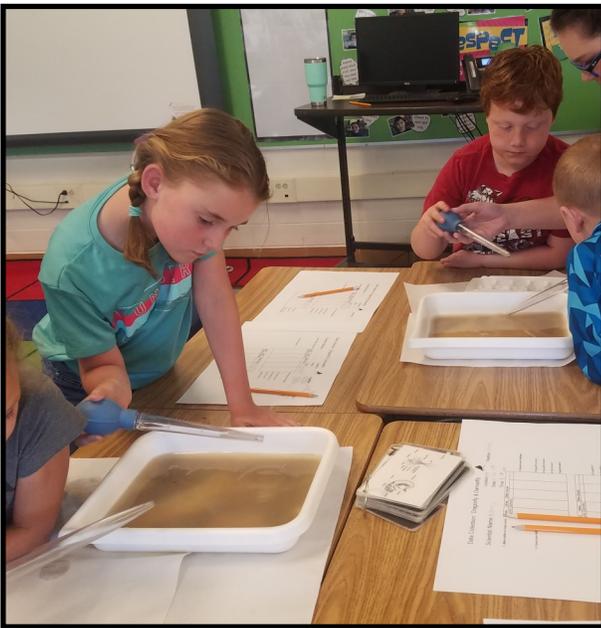
Conservation District Board members are the only locally elected board charged specifically with the responsibility of representing local people on natural resource issues.

The Washakie County Conservation District's (WCCD) Board of Supervisors employ a Director, a Program Assistant, an Outdoor Education Specialist, and an Outdoor Maintenance person, to help ensure successful implementation of our projects and programs.

WCCD is funded by grants and also local tax dollars (mill levy), which is voter approved. From July 1, 2018 to June 30th, 2019, WCCD received \$165,748 from local property tax dollars and \$300,218 from grants, totaling 465,966. A total of \$364,240 was returned to our local community through purchases of goods and services, at 78%.

WCCD's Annual Report describes accomplishments in meeting goals as identified in our Annual Plan, from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019.

## PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION—YOUTH



**Summer School Students  
Learning About Macroinvertebrates**

WCCD assisted with Summer School Science Camp for eleven 2nd graders. The students spent three days learning about dragonflies, macroinvertebrates, and doing water quality testing. The camp included a field trip to the WCCD's Outdoor Classroom and Meadowlark Lake.

Each month, WCCD led story hour at the Washakie County Library in Worland; each session having a different theme. Stories and crafts were enjoyed, which revolved around themes of changing leaves, owls, animal tracking, winter solstice, hibernation, and migration. An average of nine children attended each month.

Chicken life cycles and the hatching process was presented to the Southside Elementary Life Skills classroom (2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade) and the 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> graders in Ten Sleep. The classrooms incubated 7 eggs over the course of 3 weeks. Students read the book, "From Egg to Chicken", worked on the life cycles, and talked about the growth of

the embryo and the hatching process. Once a week, the eggs were candled and their progress was monitored, then the students participated in an activity. Students also examined fertilized and unfertilized eggs and labeled parts of an egg diagram. Five out of seven chicks hatched in Ten Sleep and two out of seven hatched at Southside.

A skull identification lesson was taught to forty-one High School Zoology students. The students learned some key points scientists use to ID skulls, how to use a dichotomous key, and how to identify skulls from the anatomy and dietary habits. Six different stations were set up with a key and a skull.

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION—YOUTH continued.....**

WCCD gave presentations to five 5th grade, six 2nd grade, and a group of homeschool students on this year's stewardship theme, "Life in the Soil: Dig Deeper".



**5th Grade Grand Prize  
Winning Poster**

Students learned about the importance of soil and the different layers of soil. Students enjoyed an activity of making their own edible soil horizons and over 220 students participated in the annual conservation district poster contest. Grand prize was awarded to Grayson Vickers for one 2nd grade and one 5th grade student. Prizes were also awarded for 1st and 2nd place in each grade. Winning posters were on display at the Washakie County Library in Worland during stewardship week. The grand prize winners for the poster contest were Grayson Vickers for 5th grade and Cachelynn Forshee for 2nd grade.



**2nd Grade Grand Prize  
Winning Poster**

Eighty students from four 5th grade classes at West Side School participated in a field trip to the Carrell's property over the course of two days. Students learned about hound dogs and by using a tree id book, walked around the property identifying the various trees, conducted a scavenger hunt, learned about the differences between antlers and horns, and learned to identify various skulls.

Using modeling clay and plaster of paris, twenty-three 2nd & 3rd grade students from Ten Sleep learned about trace fossils and the differences between molds and casts. Students made their own fossil impressions using shells, plastic bugs, dinosaurs, and plants.



**Students Making Their Own  
Fossil Impressions**



**Students On Their Tree  
Identification Trek**

WCCD met with a preschool group on several occasions to teach children about animal adaptations, wildlife tracks, and trees. Each session involved a story, craft and activities all related to the specific theme.

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION—YOUTH continued.....**

One Hundred and eight 8<sup>th</sup> graders from Worland Middle School participated in a field trip to Legend Rock. Students were divided and rotated through five different stations. WCCD led a station on predators & prey teaching the effects of ecological changes related to their survival rates.

A “Campfire Chat” was held at the Outdoor Classroom for families to learn a little about owls. Melissa Hill, from Draper Museum, was the guest speaker. Over forty people attended and twenty-four of them were children ranging from pre-k to 5<sup>th</sup> grade. In true campfire fashion, there was cocoa, s’mores, games and stories. A fable book was read about owls, and every time they heard the word “owl,” everyone would hoot. After the story, Melissa shared her knowledge about owls and the audience had to opportunity to ask questions at the end. Children received owl masks, “Rockie’s Sagebrush Adventure”, and a pamphlet with info and games about owls to take home.



**Students Participating in the Predator Prey Game at Legend Rock**



**Students With Their Owl Masks**



**Students During Campfire Chat, Learning About Owls**

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION—GENERAL PUBLIC**

WCCD sponsored WESTI Ag Days, an annual education agriculture conference in Worland, again this year. A display was developed of the Nowood Watershed, and information was gathered from participants regarding existing water development on rangeland and video taping possibilities. In addition, attendees were provided with information on funding opportunities for potential new water development projects.

An online story map was created to highlight all of the projects implemented using funds from the DEQ 319 grant within the Bighorn River—Slick Creek Watershed. The story included before and after photos, costs, map locations, and project descriptions. This story map was utilized as the final report, and well received by the DEQ.

WCCD continues to increase our presence through local newspapers, WCCD's website and Facebook page, local radio, working groups, partner meetings, and workshops. Our website and Facebook pages continue to be an important part of our outreach. With over 756 followers on Facebook, WCCD continues to engage with county residents and inform them about issues, cost share, and education opportunities: WCCD staff participated in two different local Radio talk shows on July 31st and December 18th; Six newspaper Ads were published in local newspapers; two news articles were written and published in the local newspaper; One Pollinator Workshop was held at the Outdoor Classroom on September 8th; WCCD co-hosted the 1st annual Women's Ag EXPO August 29th at the Washakie County Fairgrounds.



**WCCD's Pollinator Plot at the Outdoor Classroom**

## TREE PROGRAM



**Wyoming Sugar Employees Planting Their Austrian Pine Windbreak**

WCCD continued to make weed barrier and ground staples available, where 20 rolls of weed barrier and 7 boxes of 500/box ground staples were sold.

WCCD, Washakie Development Association, and NRCS worked with Wyoming Sugar Company on a community beautification project. The project included the planting of 85 Austrian Pine trees along Worland's Bike/Walk path on Airport Road. This project not only beautifies the pathway, but as the trees grow, will help screen a lime pit and provide a natural windbreak. WCCD provided

technical assistance to Wyoming Sugar for the species selection and design, and also provided \$2500.00 in cost share funds towards this 1st phase of their community beautification project. The project also included the installation of weed barrier, tree cages, and a drip system.

## WATER QUALITY/WATER QUANTITY

An application for the Paxton Berm Emergency Watershed Protection program (EWP) was submitted to NRCS in August 2017, the funding was approved by congress in April 2018, then WCCD received the signed agreement with NRCS in July 2018. WCCD moved forward with hiring an engineering firm to develop the design and also hired a contractor to haul the rock and construct the Paxton Berm. Following completion of the design, construction on the Paxton Berm will begin in July 2018.



**Big Horn River Streambank Erosion—Paxton Berm EWP Project**

## **WATER QUALITY/WATER QUANTITY continued.....**

WCCD's "Washakie County Homeowner's Guide to Septic Systems" publication continues to be made available during WESTI Ag Days, on WCCD's website, and direct mail to all landowners applying for a subdivision, where future septic systems were planned.

WCCD was awarded, for the third and final year, an NRCS National Water Quality Incentive (NWQI) grant for the Lower Nowater Watershed. A total of \$78,525.00 was provided to landowners this fiscal year; one pivot sprinkler project; two irrigation pipeline projects. A news release was published in the local newspaper to announce the funding availability, and program information.

WCCD was awarded a grant from the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) in 2018, for \$52,000 to be utilized to fund engineering design work for NRCS contracts. The 1st round funded the project engineering designs for six different NRCS projects in Hot Springs and Washakie County. A second and third round of project engineering designs were funded with the remaining \$44,533.01, which included eight different NRCS projects in Big Horn, Hot Springs, and Washakie County. This grant was completed and closed in May of 2019.

WCCD initiated administration, outreach, and implementation of the WDEQ 319 grant for the Big Horn River-Slick Creek and Lower Nowater Watershed Implementation program. No projects were completed, but several potential projects are being discussed in partnership with the City of Worland,, Worland Drainage District, and private landowners. These include burying a dirt waste ditch along Washakie Avenue and one along Road 11, both in Worland.



WCCD conducted the third and final year of water quality monitoring on Nowater Creek. The motivation for WCCD water quality monitoring is the listing of these stream reaches by Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ) as impaired due to non-compliance with EPA standards for E.coli.

WCCD received honorable mention for a poster of the Worland Sewer line EWP project at WACD's Watershed Conference on February 20th - 21st.

**WCCD Program Assistant Measuring Discharge on Nowater Creek**

## **WASTE MANAGEMENT**

WCCD continued working with the Town of Ten Sleep, Worland Landfill, Ten Sleep FFA, Renew U Recycling, and local residents to assist in mileage reimbursement to haul recyclables out of Ten Sleep, where they are properly recycled. Worland Landfill continues to provide dumpsters at Ten Sleep Town Hall and Ten Sleep School, to be used to collect office paper and cardboard. Worland Landfill travels to Ten Sleep once a month to collect the items and WCCD reimburses them for mileage. A citizens group in Ten Sleep, Renew U Recycling, continues holding a recycling event every month where they collect various items to be recycled. The Ten Sleep FFA hauls WCCD's recycling trailer to a recycling center in Buffalo, when full, and WCCD provides mileage reimbursement funds.

WCCD continues to replenish the sixteen dog waste stations with bags. The waste stations were provided by WCCD through a WDEQ 319 grant. These stations help reduce pollutants reaching our waterways.

WCCD continued with the cell phone recycling effort in partnership with Cell Phones for Soldiers (CPFS), where all cell phones; new or old, working or broken, are accepted. Appropriate cell phones are refurbished and given to soldiers overseas, returning soldiers, or their family members. Any phone not reissued to soldiers are properly recycled in the United States. Forty-six cell phones were provided to CPFS this fiscal year.

WCCD continued to coordinate with the City of Worland for an Event Recycling effort where 55-gallon recycling containers for aluminum cans and plastic water bottles can be utilized at community events by organizations where they "adopt" an event and arrange for picking them up and providing them at their event, collecting and recycling the contents, then returning the bins after the event. One organization utilized the program this fiscal year.



**Volunteers Unloading Christmas Trees Into Stockpile**

The 24th Annual Christmas Tree Recycling Program was organized by WCCD and held on January 5, 2019, where volunteers and family members from Worland Rotary Club, Worland Recycles, NRCS, WCCD staff and board members, Chief Washakie FFA, and the Ten Sleep FFA gathered Christmas trees from residents in Worland and Ten Sleep. Bighorn Rural Electric chipped the trees into mulch, and in Worland, were added to the community compost pile providing organic matter for the composting process. The finished compost was made available to local gardeners.

## **GOVERNMENT AGENCY INTERACTION AND COORDINATION**

WCCD maintained partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies to provide technical assistance and/or funding to local landowners. Partnerships regarding technical assistance to landowners included: Worland NRCS staff's technical support for engineering WCCD's WDEQ 319 projects and WCCD's On-the-Ground projects, and NRCS's technical support for the range grass plots at the Outdoor Classroom. Partnerships regarding funding assistance to landowners included: NRCS through their EWP for the Paxton Berm; WDEQ through WCCD's Big Horn River-Slick Creek/Lower Nowater Watershed Implementation Program 319 grant, and WDA through WCCD's Nowood Watershed grant.

WCCD continued to participate as a Big Horn Forest Steering committee member where WCCD Supervisor, Susan Pennington, attended meetings on August 28, 2018, and May 14, 2019.

WCCD Director met several times with the local Emergency Management Director and Washakie County Commissioners to discuss a potential Army Corp of Engineers 205 assessment project.

WCCD Supervisor, Dan Rice, attended the Alkali Creek Reservoir public meeting in Hyattville.

WCCD Director attended the NRCS Division III Local Work Group meeting on May 2, 2019 in Cody.

WCCD hosted and helped plan the 1st annual Women's Ag Expo, in collaboration with USDA agencies (Farm Service Agency, NRCS) and Washakie County Extension Service.

WCCD's Program Assistant participated, on behalf of a local landowner, a Resource Health Assessment with the Worland BLM for the Lower Black Mountain Draw, Upper Black Mountain Draw, and West Black Mountain allotments. An overview and results document was created and provided to the landowner, upon completion.

WCCD submitted comments on August 1, 2018, to the Worland BLM pertaining to the Wyoming Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Greater Sage-Grouse.

WCCD submitted comments on October 15, 2018, to the BLM regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Alkali Creek Reservoir Project.

WCCD submitted comments on February 11, 2019, to the Worland BLM on the proposed for Fifteenmile Wild Horse Herd Management Area (HMA) Population Management Action.

WCCD submitted comments on April 15, 2019, to the Environmental Protection Agency regarding Revised Definition of the Waters of the United States.

WCCD Board continued to contract with a private consultant to represent WCCD on the Wyoming Public Lands Initiative (WPLI) committee for Washakie County. The consultant developed comments to the Washakie County Commissioners on July 12, 2018. There were three proposals that moved forward to the Wyoming County Commissioners Association; Honeycombs for soft-release to RMP management; Bobcat Draw to add an NSO restriction; Cedar Mountain with "special management area" language, and language was added to define livestock grazing as a "non-discretionary" use.

## **RANGE AND IRRIGATED LAND MANAGEMENT**



**Reservoir Enhancement Project**

WCCD initiated a new grant for the Nowood watershed, which was approved for funding by the Wyoming Department of Ag. There were four different completed stockwater projects identified around the state, where WCCD met with the landowners and interviewed, videotaped, and obtained Drone photo footage in order to develop YouTube videos. WCCD also conducted outreach to landowners to offer assistance in determining where additional stock water structures could be installed to increase flexibility in grazing management; improve grazing distribution; catch sediment; and improve rangeland condition and soil health.

WCCD continued to support and assist with student natural resource activities by providing full registration contributions to five Chief Washakie FFA students to attend WyRED, which was held in Wheatland on June 11—14. Luke Voss was the high individual and the top camper winning a new belt buckle for each, Konnor Macy was 2nd, and Branson Townsend took 3rd.

Through the Rural Cost Share Program and Special Discretionary Funds Program, WCCD utilized mill levy funds to help landowners implement “on-the-ground” projects. There was \$21,099.00 provided to four different landowners for a Windbreak, a Spring Development, a Reservoir Enhancement, and a Settling Pond and Buried Irrigation Pipeline project.



**Stockwater & Spring Development Project**

## **RANGE AND IRRIGATED LAND MANAGEMENT continued.....**



**NRCS Employee Adjacent to Deep Pot Cottonwood**

The final of a three-year study is completed along Gooseberry Creek in western Washakie County where Russian olive and Salt cedar removal took place between 2004-2008. Field trials of a variety of tree, grass, and forb species were designed to identify species for rehabilitation efforts on these saline sites after invasive tree removal, utilizing a WDA Research Grant. Evaluations were completed in August and a list of established species, along with a summary of other program information was published.



**Chief Washakie FFA Attendees During WyRED in Wheatland**

## INTERNAL DISTRICT OPERATIONS

WCCD Board's election of officers was conducted during the January 21st board meeting by the WCCD Director with the following results: Chairman – Dave Slover, Vice-Chairman – Dan Rice, Secretary/Treasurer – Vance Lungren.

WCCD staff received training as follows: The WCCD Program Assistant attended WACD's Certification Training on February 26-28. The WCCD Program Assistant attended the Wyoming Conservation District Employees Association Training in Lander on March 19-21. The WCCD Director attended Wyoming Department of Agriculture's (WDA) Watershed Improvement District (WID) training on April 30. The Outdoor Education Specialist attended training on macroinvertebrate identification in Lander on October 11-12.

Special meetings, conferences, webinars, and teleconferences which were attended by WCCD Board and staff included the following: WACD Area III meeting in Powell, Joint Corporations Committee meeting in Thermopolis, WACD Public Records Teleconference, DEQ's Public Meeting on the Moneta Discharge Topic, Hot Springs Citizen meeting on the Moneta Discharge concern, South Big Horn CD Discussion on WID statutes, Red Lane WID meeting discussing WID statutes, National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Convention in San Antonio, Big Horn Basin Sage Grouse Working Group, WACD Annual Convention in Evanston, Washakie County Commissioner meetings, Meetings with Y2 Consultants, who were awarded the Wyoming Water Development Commissions Middle Big Horn Level I Study, NRCS Division III Local Work Group meeting in Cody, NACD Spring Fly-In in Washington DC, and WACD's

Watershed Conference. Maintenance was conducted on the WCCD's website by WCCD staff. In addition, maintenance was completed conducted on the WCCD's Facebook page.

WCCD Board, during March through July board meetings, reviewed and approved the WCCD Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 budget, with the budget hearing held on July 15th.

WCCD hosted a legislative meeting on December 18th, for Big Horn Basin Legislatures, Washakie County & Meeteetse Conservation District board members and staff, and the Washakie Co. Commissioners.



**Josh Kipley (standing), Meeteetse Conservation District Summarizing Accomplishments During WCCD's Legislative Function**

## **INTERNAL DISTRICT OPERATIONS—continued.....**

WCCD's Director prepared and mailed an annual reports for the Big Horn River-Slick Creek and Lower Nowater Watershed Implementation 319 grants to Wyoming DEQ, an interim report for the WDA Nowood Watershed grant program was submitted, quarterly reports were submitted to NACD for the NACD Technical Assistance grant, and quarterly reports were submitted the NRCS for the Paxton Berm Emergency Watershed Protection Program.

WCCD Board of Supervisors who had signed the NRCS Confidentiality Agreement, reviewed and approved the development and/or revision of seven NRCS conservation plans.

WCCD Director submitted the required documents to WDA and WACD by the August 30th and December 31st deadlines in regard to risk management and funding criteria. Risk Management Practices were reviewed and approved by the WCCD Board of Supervisors during their January 21st board meeting.

WCCD budgeted and paid the WACD and National Association of Conservation District dues.

WCCD Director prepared and mailed signed monthly WCCD board meeting minutes to: WCCD Board, WACD, WACD Area III Directors, WDA, Legislatures, Washakie Co. Commissioners, Board of Ag Representative, Washakie Co. Planning Commission, and Mayors of Ten Sleep and Worland.

WCCD's Outdoor Education Specialist updated the Education Program Manual.

WCCD's Annual Plan of Work was approved by the WCCD Board during their July 15th board meeting, which was submitted to WDA and WACD, meeting the December 31, 2019 deadline.

WCCD's Annual Report was developed and submitted to WDA and WACD, meeting the December 31, 2019 deadline.

A summary report of FY 2019 activities was developed by WCCD Director, and submitted to WDA and WACD and was presented during the annual legislative event, meeting the December 31, 2019 deadline.

Worked in partnership with NRCS, Washakie Co. Weed & Pest, Landis Benson, and Worland Boys School Students to improve and maintain WCCD's Outdoor Classroom.

WCCD participated in fundraising for Wyoming Natural Resource Foundation through the sales of raffle tickets, and by contributing an auction item.

## **RECREATION**

WCCD promoted good stewardship by recreational users on private, state, and federal lands through the distribution of WCCD's Respect the Land publication, and an October newspaper Ad in the Hunting Edition of the Northern Wyoming Daily News, which outlined key points to respecting the land, utilized from the publication. The brochures were also distributed in Ten Sleep during their annual Hunterfest event.

## **SPECIAL PROJECTS**

WCCD continued to participate with Hot Springs Conservation District regarding the Cottonwood Grass Creek Watershed Improvement District (WID) Board of Director election. Joint WCCD and Hot Springs Conservation District meetings with the Cottonwood Grass Creek WID board were held via teleconference on December 28, 2018 and April 5, 2019.

WCCD continued to coordinate with South Big Horn Conservation District, and oversee the Nowood Watershed Improvement District (WID) Board of Director election. Joint WCCD and South Big Horn Conservation District meetings with the Nowood WID board were held on October 1st & December 3rd of 2018 and February 4th, March 4th, May 6th, and June 3rd of 2019.

WCCD's Program Assistant created the WCCD's 2019 wall calendars which were printed and distributed to local businesses, agencies, and members of the public.

WCCD and South Big Horn Conservation District sponsored a Wyoming Water Development Commission Level I Study, which was approved for funding. Y2 Consultants was awarded the contract and scheduled the 1st public input meeting on September 27th. There were six members of the public in attendance and several project were identified for potential design considerations and funding possibilities. WCCD Board members and staff met periodically to receive updates of the progress of the study.

# **POLLINATOR PLOT WORKSHOP**

## **A Fun Day for the Whole Family**

**Save the Date!**  
**SEPTEMBER 8**

- 
- ◆ Learn about bees, butterflies, moths, and hummingbirds
  - ◆ Learn how to landscape for pollinators
  - ◆ Tour our new pollinator plot and outdoor classroom
  - ◆ Fun activities for younger and older children
  - ◆ FREE Lunch!

**Flyer Created for Outreach for the WCCD's Pollinator Plot Workshop**

## **FY 2019 Financials**

### **Income**

Mill Levy	165,748	Special Projects	176
Tree Program	4,523	Reimbursable Expense Income	2,906
Dept. of Ag Grants	12,276	319 Grants	9,025
Interest Income	1,741	NACD TA Grant	32,000
Paxton Berm EWP	245,917	Small Acreage Grant	1,000

### **Expense**

#### **ADMINISTRATION**

Personnel	79,487
Contract Labor	1,478
Mileage/Meals/Lodging	3,128
Office Supplies/Equip./Tech Support	5,260
Training	245
Dues/Legal Fees	11,999
Postage/Advertising/Accounting	2,956
Vehicle Fuel & Maintenance	822
Phone/Internet/Website	1,209
Reimbursable Expense	2,906

#### **OPERATIONS**

WDA Research Grant-Gooseberry	1,360
Education Program	2,851
Misc. Program Services	8,860
Water Quality Programs	11,132
On-The-Ground Projects	23,782
Resource Library	280
Meeting Expense/Workshops	1,042
Projects/Organizations Support	2,637
Paxton Berm EWP	245,917
NACD TA Grant	11,467

#### **INDIRECT COSTS**

Insurance/Bond	2,172
Payroll Costs/Employee Benefits	28,905