



Goose Creek Watershed Annual Newsletter

Goose Creek Watershed Group
Sheridan County Conservation District
Natural Resources Conservation Service
The City of Sheridan
Sheridan County
February 2017

In 2001, SCCD, the City of Sheridan, Sheridan County, and other partners initiated a water quality improvement effort on the Goose Creek watershed. Water quality monitoring occurred in 2001 and 2002 and in several subsequent years. This monitoring identified levels of bacteria that exceeded Wyoming water quality standards for recreational uses. A watershed plan was approved in 2005, which recommended continued monitoring, information and education activities, and continued administration of cost-share programs for improvement projects. The Wyoming Dept of Environmental Quality (WDEQ) proceeded with the development of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) in 2010. A TMDL indicates the amount of a given pollutant a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards. The SCCD, along with other partners, incorporated recommendations from the TMDL into local Implementation Strategies.

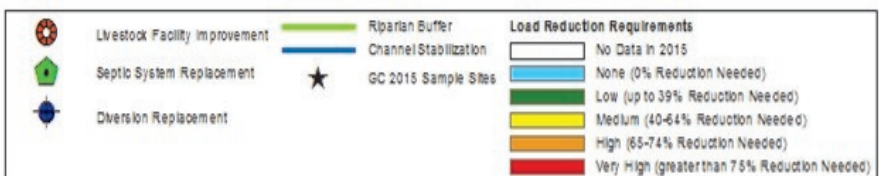
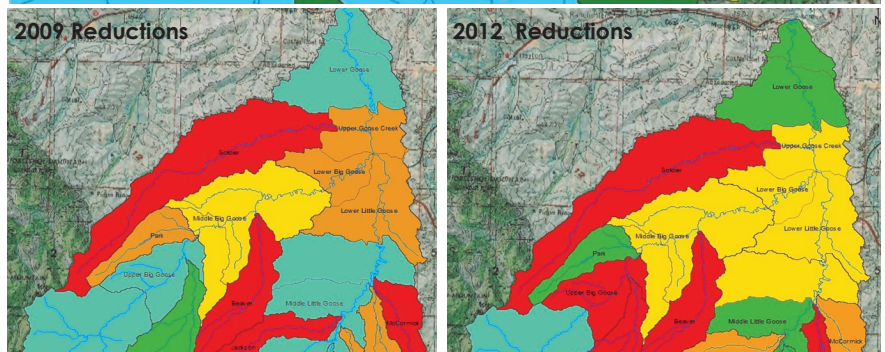
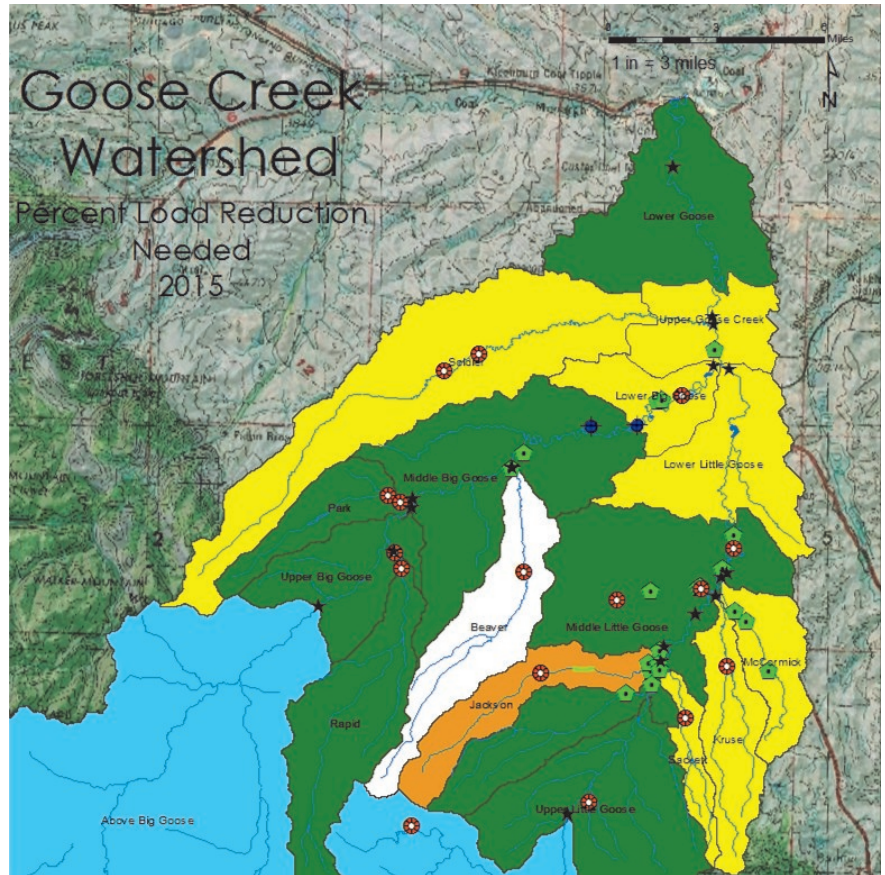
The TMDL used water quality monitoring information to determine the percent reductions needed for bacteria levels to meet water quality standards. Using a similar process, SCCD has been able to incorporate data collected in subsequent monitoring years to document reduction requirements in relation to installed improvement projects (See Maps). There are 5 reduction categories, including:

- No reduction needed (for segments meeting water quality standards)
- Low (up to 39% reduction needed)
- Medium (40-64% reduction needed)
- High (65-74% reduction needed)
- Very High (greater than 75% reduction needed).

These figures are based on the average of data collected within the monitoring season. SCCD was unable to sample Beaver Creek in 2015.

SCCD uses the information from multiple years to help prioritize project requests. Typically, tributary watersheds and lower subwatersheds require higher bacteria reductions than other parts of the watershed. In most cases, reduction requirements have decreased since 2009, with the majority of subwatersheds in the Low or Medium reduction categories.

Continued implementation of improvements projects is necessary to support further bacteria reductions and continue to improve water quality in the Goose Creek Watershed.



New to the Area: Be Aware of Invasive Grasses

Medusahead and ventenata (North African wiregrass) are invasive annual grasses with extremely aggressive characteristics. They have recently been identified in Sheridan and Campbell counties. The University of Wyoming Extension developed a flyer to provide more information and photos of the grasses. The flyer can be found on the SCCD website at www.sccdwy.org. If found, please report these grasses to Sheridan County Weed and Pest (752-7930) or UW Sheridan Research and Extension Center (673-2647).

Goose Creek Watershed Steering Committee Meeting

The annual Goose Creek Watershed Steering Committee Meeting will be held on **Thursday, March 9th at 6:00 p.m.** at the **Downtown Sheridan Association's Community Room** (corner of Main and Coffeen Street in Sheridan). The Goose Creek Watershed Steering Committee, which is comprised of landowners and interested parties, provides input and recommendations to the SCCD for implementing resource programs within the Goose Creek Watershed. The meeting is open to anyone living in or interested in the Goose Creek Watershed. Stay tuned to the District website (www.sccdwy.org) and Facebook page for an upcoming agenda. Please come join us on March 9th, your input is always welcome!

Wyoming Water Development Commission Study



EnTech, Inc., Professional Engineers of Sheridan is working with the Wyoming Water Development Commission (WWDC) and the Sheridan County Conservation District (SCCD) in preparing a Level I Watershed Study of Goose Creek. Much of the focus of the study encompasses:

1. Possible surface water storage and upland water development opportunities available within the watershed
2. Rehabilitation and/or improvements associated with existing irrigation infrastructure within the watershed.

This past summer, EnTech worked to assess existing irrigation infrastructure conditions. Interested parties were also contacted to ascertain their ideas on possible surface water storage and upland water development sites. This information is being evaluated to identify possible projects to develop or improve the use of water within the watershed, perform conceptual designs of these potential projects, and develop conceptual cost estimates for these potential projects.

Once the Level I Watershed Study is completed (Fall 2017), projects can become eligible for the following:

- For projects with costs less than \$135,000, up to \$35,000 in grants are available on a 50/50 basis through the WWDC's Small Water Projects program;
- For projects with costs greater than \$135,000, public entities formed within the watershed can apply for WWDC Level II (Preliminary Design) studies and eventually Level III (Final Design and Construction) funding.

For more information, contact:

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Carrie Rogaczewski, SCCD, 672-5820, ext 3

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Jodee Pring, WWDC, at 307-777-7626 (jodee.pring@wyo.gov)

SOCIAL INDICATORS SURVEY

Gaining a community perspective on water quality concerns in Sheridan County

Water quality can be affected by the choices people make. Consequently, many of our water quality improvement projects are geared towards changing people's behavior. In 2015, SCCD invited several local agencies/ organizations to participate in a survey process for the Goose Creek Watershed. The information gained through this survey can be used to tailor the priorities and projects of individual organizations in support of the overall goal of improving the quality of water in the Goose Creek watershed. Participants provided valuable insight into the development of the survey questions and distribution mechanisms.

Many of the respondents had some awareness of water quality issues and potential impacts. There was less understanding about practices to improve water quality and the availability of assistance programs.

Although overall response to the survey was lower than anticipated (especially among larger landowners), there were some things that stood out. Many of the respondents had some awareness of water quality issues and potential impacts. There was less understanding about practices to improve water quality and the availability of assistance programs. SCCD will consider these results when developing future outreach materials and in future program development. The final summary report will be provided to all of the participating agencies as well as made available on the SCCD website.

WE'RE LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD PROJECTS!

Through federal and state grants, the SCCD offers financial assistance for projects that benefit water quality in impaired watersheds. Typical projects include installing fencing or stockwater systems to minimize livestock access to waterbodies, relocating corrals or animal feeding areas away from waterbodies, and replacing eligible septic systems to eliminate sewage discharges. Descriptions of select projects are available on SCCD's website (www.sccdwy.org).

If you would like to apply for cost-share funds through one of SCCD's many water quality improvement programs, we encourage you to contact SCCD to determine if the project is eligible and to learn more about the application process. Batching deadlines for project applications are March 1st and July 1st.