

ANNUAL WATERSHED MEETINGS

Every winter, the SCCD holds annual watershed meetings for each watershed to provide updates on watershed activities and gather input on water quality monitoring, improvement programs, and other activities. Meetings include updates on completed projects and activities, monitoring plans and/or results, upcoming activities, and other information about programs and opportunities. SCCD values the opportunity to engage directly with stakeholders in each watershed. If you are unable to attend this year, want more information, or just have questions, please reach out.

MEETING SCHEDULE

PRAIRIE DOG CREEK WATERSHED
MARCH 7, 6:00 PM
PRAIRIE DOG COMMUNITY CENTER

TONGUE RIVER WATERSHED
MARCH 21, 6:00 PM
RANCHESTER TOWN HALL

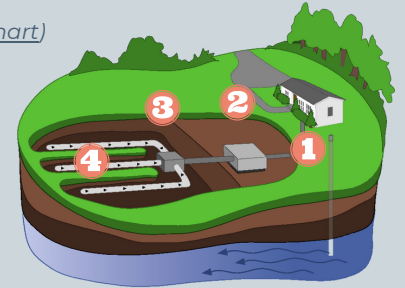
GOOSE CREEK WATERSHED
APRIL 3, 6:00 PM
COTTONWOOD BUILDING
2ND FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

DON'T FORGET ABOUT YOUR SEPTIC!

A properly designed and maintained septic system poses no threat to groundwater. However, inadequately functioning and/or failing septic systems can contribute to contamination of groundwater. Wastewater from septic systems may include many types of contaminants, including harmful bacteria and viruses. Knowing and properly maintaining your system helps protect our groundwater.

HOW DOES IT WORK? *Graphic and overview courtesy of the EPA ([epa.gov/septic/septicSMART](https://www.epa.gov/septic/septicSMART))*

- 1** All water runs out of your house from one main drainage pipe into a septic tank.
- 2** The septic tank is a buried, water-tight container usually made of concrete, fiberglass, or polyethylene. Its job is to hold the wastewater long enough to allow solids to settle down to the bottom (forming sludge), while the oil and grease floats to the top (as scum). Compartments and a T-shaped outlet prevent the sludge and scum from leaving the tank and traveling into the leach field.
- 3** The liquid wastewater then exits the tank into the leach field. If the leach field is overloaded with too much liquid, it will flood, causing sewage to flow to the ground surface or create backups in toilets and sinks.
- 4** Finally, the wastewater percolates into the soil, naturally removing harmful bacteria, viruses, and nutrients.



HOW OFTEN SHOULD THE TANK BE PUMPED?

You should have your septic tank pumped once every 3-5 years. The frequency depends on a variety of factors.

- ▶ The capacity of the septic tank
 - The more people that use the system, the faster solids will accumulate, and the more the tank will need pumped.
 - The addition of high water use appliances, like a hot tub or whirlpool tub, may exceed the capacity of the tank.
- ▶ The volume of the solids in the wastewater
 - If you have a garbage disposal, your system will need pumped more regularly. A garbage disposal can increase the amount of solids in the tank by as much as 50%.

IS MY SEPTIC SYSTEM WORKING AS IT SHOULD?

Septic system owners should be alert to the following warning signs of a failing system:

- ✗ Slowly draining sinks & toilets
- ✗ Plumbing backups
- ✗ Sewage odors
- ✗ Gurgling sounds in plumbing
- ✗ Greener, lusher grass in one area of yard
- ✗ Ground wet or mushy underfoot

None of these signs can be considered a sure indication that a system has failed, but the appearance of one or more signs should prompt a landowner to have their system inspected. Failures also can occur without any warning signs, so yearly inspection is recommended.

HAVING ISSUES WITH YOUR SEPTIC AND LIVE NEXT TO A WATERBODY?

We may be able to help. The Sheridan County Conservation District provides cost-share assistance for repair or replacement of septic systems located near certain waterbodies. Basic eligibility requirements include:

- ▶ System must have been installed prior to 1973.
- ▶ System must service a single-family dwelling only.
- ▶ System must impact one of the eligible waterbodies in the Prairie Dog Creek, Goose Creek, & Tongue River watersheds. A full list can be found at sccdwy.org/septic-system-projects under Septic Self-Assessment.

If you meet the basic eligibility, contact our office to set up a site visit to determine if your project qualifies.



WHAT'S UP IN MY WATERSHED?

PRAIRIE DOG CREEK WATERSHED MEETING THURSDAY, MARCH 7TH, 6 PM PRAIRIE DOG COMMUNITY CENTER

- Sampling in 2023 was completed at eight sites, including five mainstem sites on Prairie Dog Creek, and at three tributary sites on Wildcat Creek, Meade Creek, and Jenks Creek.
 - The 2023 *Prairie Dog Creek Watershed Monitoring Report* is in progress.

RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECTS

- 1 fencing & stockwater project (Upper Prairie Dog Creek)
- 1 septic system replacement project (Dutch Creek)
- 1 well rehabilitation project (Lower Prairie Dog Creek)

IN-PROGRESS PROJECTS

- 2 fencing & stockwater projects (Lower and Lower Middle Prairie Dog Creek)

PENDING REQUESTS

- 1 fencing & stockwater (Lower Prairie Dog Creek)

TONGUE RIVER WATERSHED MEETING THURSDAY, MARCH 21ST, 6PM RANCHESTER TOWN HALL

- The 2022 *Tongue River Watershed Monitoring Report* was approved by the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality in December and is available on our website at sccdwy.org/tongue-river-watershed.
 - Bacteria concerns were present during at least one sampling period at all sites apart from TR09.
 - Additional results will be reviewed at the watershed meeting.
- Debris cleanup at the former Acme Power Plant is nearly finished and will help facilitate future cleanup of soils and asbestos. Debris at the site includes tires, wood, scrap metal, various appliances, campers, boats, furniture, and more.
- The USDA *National Water Quality Initiative Readiness Phase Report* for portions of the the Tongue River watershed is currently being drafted. Once approved, USDA EQIP program dollars will be earmarked to install eligible practices in the project area.

GOOSE CREEK WATERSHED MEETING WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3RD, 6 PM COTTONWOOD BUILDING

- The 2021 *Goose Creek Watershed Monitoring Report* was approved by the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality in December and is available at sccdwy.org/goose-creek-watershed.
 - Bacteria concentrations exceeded the standard at all sites apart from the uppermost canyon sites.
- The USDA *National Water Quality Initiative Readiness Phase Report for the Upper Big Goose Creek Watershed* was approved and EQIP program dollars have been earmarked for eligible practices in the project area.

RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECTS

- 1 irrigation improvement (Robertson-Zullig Ditch)
- 1 stockwater & drain conversion modification (Big Goose Creek)

PENDING REQUESTS

- 1 septic replacement (Little Goose Creek)

The SCCD offers cost-share assistance for fencing & stockwater projects that address potential bacteria contributions to eligible waterbodies. Visit sccwy.org/livestock-projects or call our office to see if your project qualifies.

CITY OF SHERIDAN GOOSE CREEK RESTORATION

The Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) is in the final phases of the 1135 Stream Restoration Project. The remaining task involves the final improvements to the confluence area and to finish installing the drop structures in Big Goose Creek. Work will resume in the late spring/early summer of 2024 depending on the amount of runoff. Project completion and Mill Park opening is scheduled to be completed in the late Summer of 2024. The ACOE is also working on the General Investigation (GI) Study for the concrete chutes through downtown Sheridan. A public meeting was held on February 13, 2024 to present the draft of the final study to the public and to get additional information and feedback.



HUME DRAW ASSESSMENT



The Hume Draw Assessment, which is being completed through a partnership between the City of Sheridan and the SCCD, is underway. Over the spring and summer, Water and Environmental Technologies (WET) compiled and evaluated existing information and performed field surveys. An update meeting was held in November to discuss their findings and proposed recommendations. Currently WET is in the process of developing a final recommendations plan for the Hume Draw Project Area. The plan is scheduled to be completed sometime in April of this year. The recommendations will include various tasks from small to large projects that can be undertaken to improve water quality and habitat of the Hume Draw Project Area.

The mission of the Sheridan County Conservation District is to protect Sheridan County's land and water quality through assistance programs, information and outreach, monitoring, and planning.



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