



YOUR INPUT NEEDED!

LOCAL WORKING GROUP MEETING & SURVEY

Local Work Groups (LWGs) are convened by Conservation Districts to provide recommendations to the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) for implementation of Farm Bill conservation programs. While funds are allocated at the discretion of Congress, LWGs provide the opportunity to direct how the funds will be used locally.

EQIP is probably one of the most widely used programs in Sheridan County for installation of natural resource conservation practices. It has been used to fund fencing, stockwater developments, irrigation upgrades, invasive grass treatments, among other things. Program funding is awarded on a competitive basis based on funding priorities and ranking criteria established by the LWG for the upcoming year. It is important to note that the LWG does not review, rank, discuss, or approve individual project applications.

The 2023 Sheridan County LWG meeting will be on *Wednesday May 24 at 9:30 am in the upstairs conference room of the District/NRCS Office (1949 Sugarland Drive)*. The purpose of the meeting is to identify natural resource and program priorities and criteria for the 2024 USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for Sheridan County. During the meeting, participants will review current priorities and criteria and discuss potential changes. Specifically, we'll consider the following questions:

- What are the highest priority natural resource concerns for Sheridan County?
- What natural resource concerns should receive the highest/lowest priority for funding?
- What natural resource concerns/project types are not being addressed adequately?

To assist with this process, we are requesting input on natural resource and project type priorities for Sheridan County. A short survey (3 questions) is available on the District website (www.sccdwy.org) or by scanning the QR code. Survey responses will be incorporated into discussions during this year's Local Work Group meeting.



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CALENDAR

- MAY 16-18** WCDEA Annual Training - Pinedale
- MAY 29** Memorial Day **Office Closed**
- JUNE 6** Monthly Board Meeting
- JUNE 19** Juneteenth **Office Closed**
- JUNE 22** City of Sheridan Arbor Day Event
- JULY 04** Independence Day **Office Closed**
- JULY 11** Monthly Board Meeting
- AUGUST 1** Monthly Board Meeting
- AUGUST 8 & 9** 2023 Working Lands Workshop
- SEPT 4** Labor Day **Office Closed**
- SEPT 5** Monthly Board Meeting

NRCS SNOWPACK SUMMARY

The 2022-2023 winter seems like it will be one to remember. I heard it compared with the winters of 1978-79 and 1984, and have seen data in our region reflecting more snow this winter than 1948-49 and it's infamous blizzard. Records were set for total snow and snow in a day, and beyond that it was long and cold. I know I haven't seen a winter that compares in my relatively brief time in Sheridan.

The 2022-2023 snow season started slow with snow-water content values well below 30 year medians on November 1. By midmonth it had begun to change, and by December 1 both our local river basins were above median. Then, with the long, cold winter that set in and didn't really begin to break until April, values did not change much, staying a bit above median through the winter. Snow-water values remained above median on May 1 but have fallen rapidly in first third of the month. This is due to our recent mild weather in combination with an interesting condition we observed early on in the winter. For the latter half of the winter snow-water values exceeded medians most at low to med elevation sites, up to about 7000 feet, while high elevation sites, above 9000 ft, remained close to and in some cases remained below medians. As our weather has gotten nice in the last few weeks and snowpack begins to melt, the lower elevation snow which melts more quickly, leaves the lower percent of median snow-water snowpack and our overall, basin-wide snow-water values drop quickly. So far, we have not seen exceptionally high stream flow, and with continued mild weather and now below median snowpack water content, it is less likely that we will see exceptional streamflow even at traditional peak runoff time in late May and early June.

The winter has made for good soil moisture so far, and we've had a few nice rainy days, which makes me think summer 2023 might be without drought conditions, but as we know this can change quickly. The old saying is in Wyoming we are only two weeks away from a drought at any moment, so hopefully we can stay two weeks away all summer long!

-Andrew Cassiday, Sheridan Field Office, USDA NRCS District Conservationist

HUME DRAW ASSESSMENT UPDATE

In partnership with the City of Sheridan, the District received a grant to assess and develop an improvement plan for Hume Draw and associated ponds and wetlands.

The project will include an evaluation of the current condition as it relates to concerns with algae, sediment, and invasive species. In May, the City will be hiring a consultant to compile existing data and gather new information. Additional data may include documentation on areas of concern, pond depth and streamflow analyses, habitat assessments, water quality sampling, and other surveys.



Information will be used to develop a plan that describes existing conditions and outlines proposed alternatives to serve as a basis for future discussions. The proposed alternatives will target direct improvements to the Hume Draw system and potential benefit to water quality in Goose Creek.

Funding for the project is through the US Environmental Protection Agency under Section 205j of the Clean Water Act administered by the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality.

ACME POWER PLANT RECLAMATION PROJECT UPDATE

Now that some big funding pieces have fallen into place, there will be several things happening as part of the cleanup efforts at the former Acme Power Plant.

Site cleanup: In 2022, the District was awarded \$1,085,000 in federal grants to address asbestos contamination and initiate soil cleanup (including debris removal) at the former Acme Power Plant. Part of the grants include engaging professional services to ensure cleanup activities meet state and federal requirements. Earlier this spring, the District hired WWC Engineering for providing those services; WWC is currently in the midst of preparing required plans and documentation for approval by WDEQ and EPA. Once those are completed, we'll begin the process of selecting cleanup contractors. We are hopeful that some debris removal can begin as early as this fall.

Diversion removal: Though conditions were not ideal, the diversion removal was mostly completed in April. Based on concerns with permitting agencies, no channel excavation occurred. The structure was detached at the streambed surface so nothing is extending up into the water column. A rock ramp was placed above and below the current location to prevent any sediment movement. We will monitor the site over the coming months, especially during lower flows, to determine whether some final adjustments are needed.



Photos courtesy of WWC Engineering

Other activities: The Infrastructure Needs Assessment and Site Planning Market Study reports are nearly complete. These are activities being funded through EPA Technical Assistance grants. These will provide valuable information and cost estimates associated with various future use scenarios.

As things continue to move forward, the District and other members of the Working Group, will be more actively seeking additional funding resources to serve as match for the federal grants and bridge the gap for activities not covered with existing funding. This may include specific fundraising campaigns or events. Be on the lookout for ways you can support this exciting project.

AS ALWAYS, SCCD ASKS THAT YOU RESPECT FENCES AND ADJACENT LANDOWNERS BY NOT ATTEMPTING TO ENTER THE SITE. EXPOSURE RISKS VIA SKIN CONTACT, INHALATION, AND INGESTION ARE SIGNIFICANT. IN ADDITION, ANYONE ENTERING THE SITE CAN TRACK CONTAMINANTS TO SURROUNDING AREAS.

INVEST IN SHERIDAN'S NATURAL RESOURCES

SCCD is one of the 34 conservation districts in Wyoming. Each district has a unique program tailored to meet the specific natural resource needs of its district.

The SCCD is funded primarily through federal and state grants with some support from local funding sources, including contributions from private citizens.

As a political subdivision of state government that uses donations solely for public purposes, your investment in the SCCD is considered a tax-deductible charitable contribution.

Individual or business name

Mailing address

City, state, zip

Email address

Phone number

CONTRIBUTION AMOUNT

\$50 \$100

\$150 \$500

Other \$ _____

CONTRIBUTION PREFERENCE

- Acme Power Plant Reclamation Project
- Watershed Programs & Monitoring
- Oil Recycling & Tree Program
- Invasive Grasses & Range Monitoring
- Information & Outreach
- Anywhere Needed

Please make checks payable to SCCD or donate online at www.sccdwy.org

"ONE WATER" 2023 POSTER CONTEST

Each year the SCCD reaches out to local K-12 educators and students to participate in the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Annual Stewardship Week Poster Contest. For contest rules, entry forms, and more details, visit www.sccdwy.org/poster-contest

Individual posters will be judged at the local level in July. Local winners will receive a gift certificate to Sheridan Stationery. Winning posters then go on to the state competition in October for a chance to win a \$100 cash prize.

If the poster wins at the state level, it will go onto the national competition, where prizes are \$200 (1st), \$150 for (2nd), and \$100 (3rd).

The deadline for poster submission is June 30, 2023.

Please mail or drop off submissions to our office at:
Sheridan County Conservation District
1949 Sugarland Drive, Suite 102, Sheridan, WY 82801



SUPERVISOR VACANCY

Our newest Board Supervisor, Annie Addlesperger, will be moving in August. As a result, the District will need to appoint someone to fill the "at-large" position vacancy until the next general election (2024); at that time the position will be placed on the general election ballot for the unexpired 2-year term. The appointment will also need to be approved by the Wyoming Board of Agriculture. *To qualify, the individual must be a registered voter residing anywhere in Sheridan County.*

As a Conservation District Supervisor, you will help establish programs to address local natural resource concerns, prioritize programs and projects, provide direction for the staff, and serve as advocates for programs and practices to improve water and land quality in Sheridan County.

If interested, please submit a letter of interest by July 7, 2023. Letters can be emailed to carrie.rogaczewski@sccdwy.org or mailed/delivered to Sheridan County Conservation District at 1949 Sugarland Drive, Suite 102; Sheridan, WY 82801. Contact the office or visit our website (www.sccdwy.org) for more information.

SCCD COST-SHARE ASSISTANCE **FALL DEADLINE**

The District is accepting requests for fall/winter 2023 water quality improvement projects. The application deadline is August 1. Funding is available for projects that address potential bacteria contributions to waterbodies within the Tongue River, Goose Creek, and Prairie Dog Creek watersheds. Potential projects include fencing and water development, relocation of corrals, and replacement of eligible septic systems.

For more information, assessments, and applications, visit www.sccdwy.org or contact our office at 307-672-5820 ext. 3.

SHERIDAN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT



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

SCCD's regular board meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month at 4 pm.*

*July's meeting will be rescheduled to July 11.

DISTRICT STAFF

Carrie Rogaczewski
District Manager

Jackie Turner
Program Specialist

NRCS STAFF

Andrew Cassidy
District Conservationist

Oakley Ingersoll
Soil Conservationist

Chelsea Winslow
Soil Technician

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Emerson Scott
Chair

Edith Heyward
Vice-Chair

Orrin Connell
Secretary-Treasurer

Stephanie Masters
Supervisor

Annie Addlesperger
Supervisor

2023 WORKING LANDS WORKSHOP

Join us on August 8 & 9 as we welcome Nicole Masters for the next chapter in the Working Lands Series on soil health, regenerative agriculture, adaptive grazing, cover crops, and other multidisciplinary natural resource topics.

“
For years many of us involved in regenerative agriculture have been touting the soil health – plant health – animal health – human health connection but no one has tied them all together like Nicole does...”

-Gabe Brown, Brown's Ranch



AUGUST 8: CLASSROOM: \$50
The Kinnison Theater at Sheridan College

AUGUST 9: FIELD DAY: \$75
Rock Springs Ranch, Decker, MT

Must attend Day 1 to attend Day 2.
Lunch provided both days.
Prices will increase after June 30.
Register at www.sccdwy.org or scan the QR code.



To unsubscribe from our mailing list, please email jackie.turner@sccdwy.org