

CONVERSE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

ANNUAL REPORT

2020 - 2021



<p>ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK 2021-2022</p>	<p>ANNUAL BUDGET 2021-2022</p>
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“Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land.”
Aldo Leopold

INTRODUCTION

SIGNATURE PAGE



The Annual Report presented here highlights the programs and activities completed by the Converse County Conservation District in the past year.

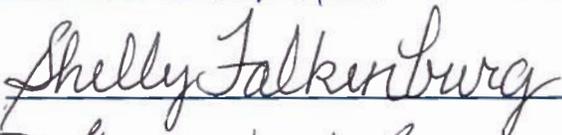
The Annual Plan of Work outlines the projects and goals for this year and directly relates to the Converse County Conservation District Land Use and Natural Resource Management Plan.

The Annual Budget provides a fiscally responsible approach to funding the services and programs of the Converse County Conservation District this year.

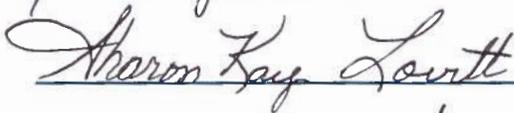
We, the Supervisors of the Converse County Conservation District, as duly authorized by Wyoming Conservation District Statute, hereby accept and adopt this 2021-2022 Annual Plan as the guideline for work priorities in the Converse County Conservation District.



P. Stan Mitchem, Chairman



Shelly Falkenburg, Vice Chair



Sharon Lovitt, Secretary/Treasurer

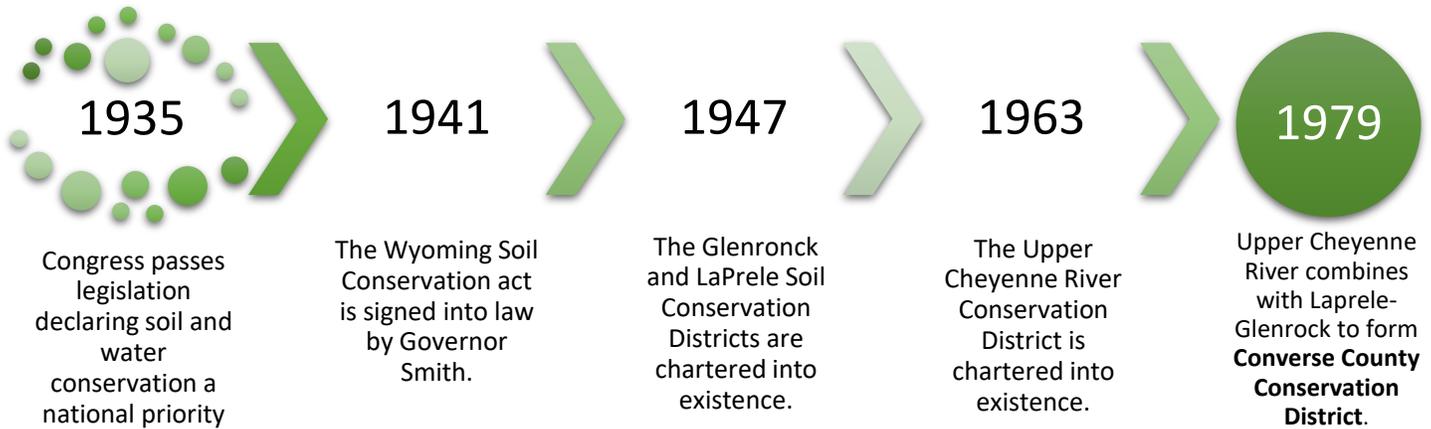


Doug Horner, Supervisor



Susan Downs, Supervisor

HISTORY



There are currently 34 Wyoming conservation districts working to preserve natural resources across the state.

Conservation Districts originated as a result of the Dust Bowl of the 1930's. A great dust storm blew out of the plains with such force that the sand passed over Washington D.C. and continued 300 miles into the Atlantic Ocean. It has been estimated that 300 million tons of soil were blown away in this decade. Congress, realizing that only active support from landowners would guarantee the success of conservation efforts, unanimously passed legislation declaring soil and water quality as a priority in 1935.

Governor Smith signed authorization for the Wyoming Soil Conservation Act on March 5, 1941. This act was copied by several other states due to its "far-sighted features for the saving of land and water resources." This act allowed for the formation of the 3 conservation districts that combined to eventually become the Converse County Conservation District (CCCD).

CCCD operations and projects are funded by a county mil levy, with additional funds coming from grants as well as state and federal funding. When the districts combined in 1979, the board met in the homes of the members, there was no district manager, and they had very little, if any, budget to operate with. Today, CCCD is housed with NRCS in Douglas, and they meet at the USDA Service Center conference room. The staff consists of a District Manager and a Program Assistant who, along with the 5-member Board of Supervisors, oversee the district budget and activities.

VISION STATEMENT

“The Converse County Conservation District will strive to achieve a better understanding of the conservation ethic. To the best of our ability, we will recognize our community’s natural resource needs. We will work to realize a balance between use and protection of these same natural resources, for the people’s health, safety, and welfare. “

PERSONNEL

CCCD Staff

Michelle Huntington – District Manager
Anna Gray – Program Assistant

NRCS Staff

Currently Vacant – District Conservationist
Evan Trotter – Rangeland Conservationist
Todd Schuldies – Civil Engineering Technician

Board Members

Stan Mitchem - Chairman
Shelly Falkenburg - Vice Chairman
Sharon Lovitt - Secretary/Treasurer
Doug Horner - Member
Susan Downs - Member

Board of Supervisors

The CCCD is governed by a five-member board of supervisors. Three members are rural, one is urban, and one is designated as at-large. They are elected by the residents of Converse County and serve staggered four-year terms. Supervisors are unpaid, elected volunteers who attend monthly meetings and are actively involved in overseeing the activities of the conservation district. The Converse County Conservation District Board of Supervisors typically meets the third Thursday of each month at 4:30pm in the USDA Service Center Conference Room in Douglas. Meetings are open to the public pursuant to Wyoming Statute 16-4-403.



2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT

PROGRAMS

Household Hazardous Waste Day

The District held its 21st annual Household Hazardous Waste and Pesticide Collection Day on September 12th, 2020 at the Wyoming State Fairgrounds in Douglas. Paint, batteries, pesticides, oil, and large quantities of other hazardous wastes were collected. Veolia Environmental Services was contracted to handle the waste materials and volunteers from the local community assisted with the collection to ensure that the collection site ran smoothly.



Seedling Tree Program

CCCD sold over 3,200 trees and plants during the 2020/2021 Seedling Tree Program. In addition, the district sold many rolls of weed barrier fabric, polymer granules and fertilizer tablets. The District made available a tree planter and a weed barrier machine free of charge to those who purchased trees. The District offered a windbreak planting cost share program, which one landowner utilized.

Over 35 varieties of trees and plants sold



Best Sellers included:

- Rocky Mountain Junipers
- Eastern Red Cedars
- Hybrid Cottonwoods
- Nanking Cherries
- Chokecherries
- Crabapples

Solar Conversion

The District provides financial assistance to landowners in Converse County to convert old windmills, electric pumps etc. into solar pumping systems for livestock watering. Cost-share of this program is 50% not to exceed \$5,000.00. Five conversion projects were funded in 2020/2021.



Resource Enhancement Program

The District provides financial assistance for a wide variety of projects under the Resource Enhancement Program. The flexible design allows the District to help landowners with any project that will protect, enhance, or restore resources in Converse County. This program can apply to any number of projects such as soil erosion mitigation, stream bank stabilization, resource damage repair like helping to repair head gates after a natural disaster or putting in a solar well in remote pastures to help with livestock distribution. These are merely a few examples of the many improvements this program could help fund. The district funded five projects in the 2020/2021 year.



Community Pride Enhancement

The Converse County Conservation District's Community Pride Enhancement program provides for conservation, beautification, and resource enhancement on public properties for public benefit. In fiscal year 2020/2021 there were three projects eligible for this program.

PROGRAMS

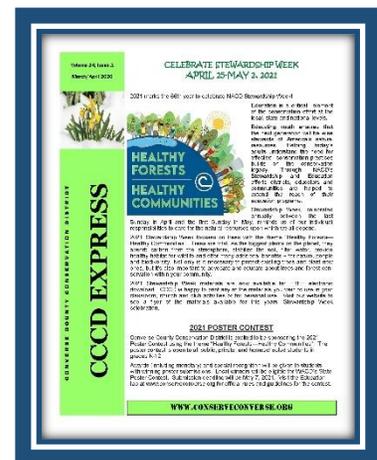
Community Canopy

The Community Canopy Program is for residents of Converse County who require trimming and/or removal of trees on private property. Applicants can only request assistance for trees that are hazardous and must prove a public benefit to having the tree trimmed or removed. Twenty landowners were eligible to participate and received cost-share assistance through this program in 2020/2021.



Newsletter

CCCD publishes and mails a newsletter six times a year to keep Converse County residents and other interested parties informed about the current natural resource issues. Design and printing of the newsletter is completed in-house by District staff. The newsletter contains information about District and NRCS programs and activities, workshops, educational articles on a variety of natural resource topics and information from the Farm Service Agency and Converse County Weed and Pest. Over 5,000 newsletters were sent out during the fiscal year 2020/2021.



Septic Systems

The District offers cost-share funding to address individual septic systems that require renovations, maintenance, or improvements in order to minimize the probability of surface groundwater contamination. Twelve landowners in Converse County qualified for and received cost-share dollars for their septic systems during the 2020/2021 year.

Education Programs

The District conducted a variety of education events throughout the year. Each lesson included a corresponding activity to reinforce the natural resource conservation message.

Education topics included watersheds, pollinators, recycling/composting, soil health, trees, birds, and water conservation. The

District works with local youth to participate

in Stewardship Week, and has a yearly poster contest. Winners are sent on to compete at the state level, and also receive a prize.



Water Quality

CCCD sponsors a Well Water Testing Day twice per year. This event is provided free of charge to Converse County residents and the District utilizes

funding from the Wyoming Department of Agriculture to aid in providing the testing days. Collection

sites are offered in Douglas and Glenrock and the water samples are

taken to Energy Laboratories in Casper for total coliform/e-coli

bacteria testing. The District held their 6th annual Fall Well Water Testing Day on October 20, 2020, and the 19th annual

Spring Well Water Testing day on May 18th 2021. Well owners with positive results received instruction on how to shock chlorinate their private water

wells. On-site testing for nitrates, pH and hardness was offered as well.



RECOGNITION OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND WORKING PARTNERS

Equipment Rental

The District has a large Great Plains No-Till drill that it makes available to Converse County residents. No-Till drills are a ‘best management’ practice, as they allow landowners to plant seeds with minimal disturbance of the ground. No-tills preserve soil’s health by allowing beneficial organisms, such as microbes and worms, to exist uninterrupted. Erosion from wind and water is reduced by not overturning the soil’s structure and allowing previous plants to decompose on the top layer. The lack of disturbance also reduces weed populations, by leaving the top layer of soil intact so new seed beds aren’t turned to the surface. This last year The District purchased an ATV/UTV towable no-till that was available to landowners with smaller properties. The small drill saw great success, and the District has observed several successful plantings using these drills.



Wyoming State Fair

Converse County Conservation District partnered with the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts and the Wyoming Natural Resource Foundation to provide information and education during the Wyoming State Fair held August 11-15, 2020. Conservation District employees provided fairgoers with information on what a conservation district is, and how we can assist landowners, urban and rural, through one of the 34 districts in Wyoming. The children’s activity station allowed a teaching opportunity and the chance to make a soil microbe. A rain barrel was given away daily.

2021-2022 ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK

With reference to the Land Use and Natural Resource Management Plan, Converse County Conservation District has prepared this Annual Plan of Work to meet the needs of the residents and focus on natural resource management in Converse County. Our goal is to develop and provide new projects and/or programs that benefit the community and are needed in Converse County as well as continue with existing programs that serve the natural resource needs of the county and the people who live here.

Converse County Conservation District will continue to work closely with County Commissioners, City of Douglas, Town of Glenrock, and many other entities to provide support and remain in open communications about events and/or issues that affect natural resource and Converse County residents.

The Converse County Conservation District Board of Supervisors and staff are committed to taking a leadership role in the wise use of natural resources in Converse County. The goals and actions set forth in this plan are steppingstones on the road to realizing the conservation and natural resource goals of the District. Through continued public awareness, education, and teamwork, we can all wisely manage our natural resources. We are committed to serving those individuals who have the best interests of our resources in mind.

The District has many areas that it strives to serve the county in. The community and our relationship with it are the basis of our organization, all our actions are taken with the benefit of the public in mind. We endeavor to manage the District responsibly, and to continue to develop new programs to fill needs within our community. We work to preserve agricultural sustainability, by helping our producers implement best management practices, and striving to improve the quality and yield of their land. As Converse County has great stakes in the energy industry, the District stays up to date in new developments in the oil, gas and mineral industries and how they relate to water and soil quality. Educating the members of our community about conservation is a priority for the District. Letting the community know what they can do to preserve natural resources extends our abilities to improve soil and water quality exponentially. If members of the community are aware and willing to implement conservation programs on their land, then we can aid them with our variety of programs. The District works with landowners to implement our programs in the most beneficial and efficient way possible.

A key element to the conservation district system is our relationship with producers and landowners. CCCD employees strive to have the best communications and interactions possible with our customers to facilitate this relationship.

COMMUNITY INTERACTIONS

Goals

- **Maintain responsible management of District funds and resources**
- **Maintain detailed records of programs, projects, and day to day activities**
- **Remain up to date about any laws concerning management and practices that would affect the District**
- **Continue to improve professional skills and knowledge of natural resources, conservation and administration**
- **Remain knowledgeable about natural resource development within the county, and their impacts on soil and water quality**
- **Work with and recognize members of the community and other agencies that allow us to achieve our goals**
- **Keep the community informed of our programs and activities**
- **Work with local, state and federal agencies on land use planning efforts**

Actions

- **The District will follow the budget that was planned and approved in June 2021**
- **The District will adhere to financial procedures in the state statutes**
- **The District will adhere to the Annual Plan of Work, and produce an Annual Report at the end of each year**
- **The District Manager will fulfill all grant reporting requirements obtained through the fiscal year**
- **The District staff will attend meetings and trainings pertaining to natural resources, conservation and administration**
- **The District will sponsor an Annual BBQ and Awards Night to thank natural resource users and supporters of the District**
- **The District will provide awards and certificates of appreciation to employees, supervisors, and cooperators as appropriate**
- **The District will keep residents informed of our activities via our newsletter, website, social media, and advertising**
- **The District will maintain positive relationships with our working partners and collaborate with them on projects when appropriate**
- **The District staff will provide subdivision reviews upon request**
- **The District will act as a cooperating agency with federal land management agencies and stay actively engaged in the development of Environmental Impact Statements, Environmental Assesments and Plan Amendments for the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management**

Goals

- Educate the community on what they can do to improve soil and water quality, as well as informing them of what we can do to help
- Provide education on rangeland management practices and native grasses
- Educate the public on innovative management practices to promote water quality
- Work with local schools to educate both students and teachers about conservation and natural resources
- Work with local organizations such as the Boys & Girls club to provide students a fun and positive experience learning about conservation
- Educate the public on the importance of wildlife and non-game animals within the county

Actions

- The District board and staff will host field tours of natural resource projects going on throughout the county
- The District board and staff will encourage landowners to become involved with educating students and host field trips
- The District board and staff will sponsor the Annual NACD Stewardship Week poster contest
- The District will provide information to the public about proper septic care and management
- The District shall educate the public on water saving techniques
- The District will maintain and utilize the Pathway to Water Quality to educate the public on a wide variety of topics relating to water-related issues specific to Converse County
- The District staff will provide in-class lessons and will provide education activities for youth at the Douglas and Glenrock libraries and Boys & Girls clubs as requested
- The District will partner with the Converse County Weed & Pest to host small-acreage workshops, educating the community on what they can do to improve their land, and how we can help them
- The District will assist landowners seeking information about land use and land management
- The District will provide education on various wildlife species within the county, as well as their habitats, emphasizing the importance wildlife have to a healthy environment
- The District staff will educate themselves about keystone species native to the county, to then implement best management practices for these species

PROGRAMS

Goals

- Assist land users that are working to improve and preserve natural resources.
- Promote the involvement of county residents, businesses, and organizations in the District's projects and programs
- Promote effective management of agricultural lands
- Provide the community with a proper and positive outlet for residents to dispose of household waste
- Work with the City of Douglas, Town of Glenrock, and the County of Converse to improve recycling within the county
- Assist landowners in water development projects
- Work with landowners to address drought related issues
- Promote watershed planning on a locally-led level
- Take steps to preserve the habitats of wildlife
- Promote the planting and care of trees

Actions

- The District will offer a variety of cost-share programs and continue to look for needs in the community to best provide technical and financial assistance
- The District will work with the City of Douglas and the Town of Glenrock to improve recycling opportunities in both Douglas and Glenrock
- The District will assist in locally-led watershed planning, and will act as the sponsor for Small Water Development projects through the Wyoming Water Development Commission
- The District will work with other agencies to procure and provide funding for wildlife habitat preservation and restoration
- The District will inform landowners about programs that can help them enhance wildlife habitat
- The District will sponsor a Trees for Trash program in both Douglas and Glenrock upon request
- The District will utilize grant funds from the Wyoming State Forestry Bark Beetle Mitigation program and assist Converse County Firewise with beetle control efforts in Esterbrook
- The District will make available products to promote the survival of trees
- The District will work with 4-H clubs, County Commissioners, local landowners and others in the planning, planting, and maintenance of windbreaks
- The District will work with Converse County Weed & Pest to manage Russian Olive populations within the county

YEARLY TIMELINE

Bi-Monthly Newsletter
Distributed



Jul.



Annual BBQ and
Awards Night

Aug.



Booth at
Wyoming
State Fair

WACD Area 2
Meeting



Sep.



Household
Hazardous
Waste Day

Oct.

Fall Well Water
Testing Day



Elected
Officials
Luncheon



Wyoming Association
of Conservation
Districts Convention



Nov.



Dec.

Meet with
landowners
to plan
large scale
projects,
such as
windbreaks



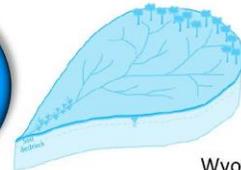
Conduct education
events with local
schools and
organizations.



Jan.



Feb.



Wyoming
Watershed
Conference



Mar.

Plan with other agencies to provide
Converse County with the best
service we can offer.

Apr.

Soil and Water
Stewardship
Week



Seedling Tree
Distribution



May

Jun.



Prepare End of Fiscal Year
Reports

Spring Well Water
Testing Day



Plan and Approve Budget
for 2021/2022

RECOGNITION OF OUR WORKING PARTNERS



Bureau of Land Management

City of Douglas

Converse County 4-H

Converse County Bank

Converse County Commissioners

Converse County Extension Office

Converse County Firewise

Converse County School District #1 (Douglas)

Converse County School District #2 (Glenrock)

Converse County Weed & Pest

Eastern Wyoming Community College

Environmental Protection Agency

LaPrele Irrigation District

Laramie Peak Pine Beetle Association

National Association of Conservation Districts

Thunder Basin Grassland Prairie Ecosystem Association

Thunder Basin Grazing Association

Town of Glenrock

Town of Lost Springs

Town of Rolling Hills

U.S. Forest Service

U.S. Geological Survey

University of Wyoming

University of Wyoming Extension Service

USDA – Farm Service Agency

USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service

Wyoming Ag in the Classroom

Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts

Wyoming Department of Agriculture

Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality

Wyoming Game and Fish

Wyoming Natural Resource Foundation

Wyoming State Forestry Division

Wyoming Water Development Commission



2021-2022 BUDGET

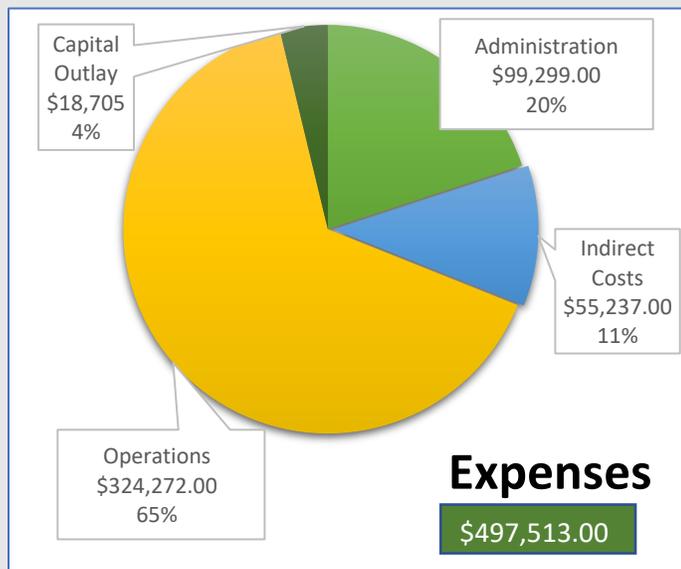
FUNDING, ADMINISTRATION, AND ACCOUNTING

CCCD is approved for 1 mil of funding as voted on by the residents of Converse County. The Converse County Conservation District held their annual budget hearing in June in accordance with the Wyoming State Statute 16-4-103. The district also receives operating money through state biennium funding, state and federal grant funds, and our seedling tree program. CCCD maintains responsible fiscal procedures and records to be accountable with the funding we receive. Preparation of the District's 2021-2022 budget was in accordance with state statutes and submitted to the Converse County Commissioners, Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts, Wyoming Department of Agriculture.

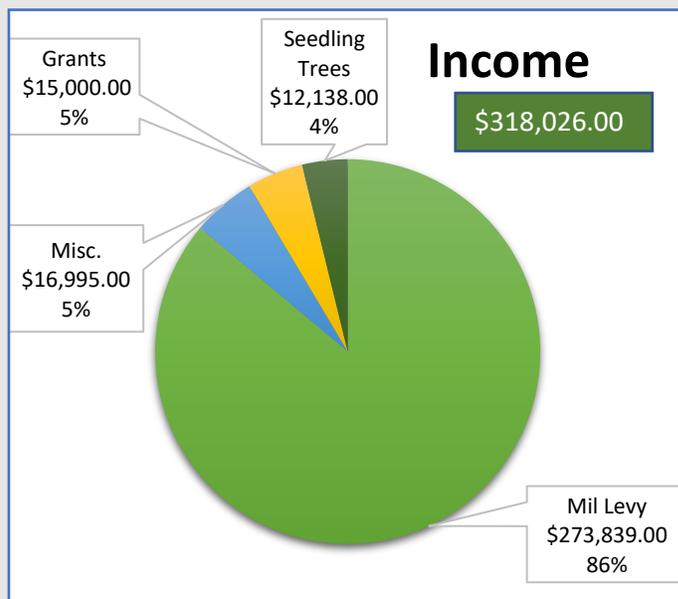
All monthly, quarterly state and federal government reports were filed in a timely manner. The district continues to be in compliance with the Wyoming Department of Agriculture, Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts, Wyoming Department of Revenue, Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, Internal Revenue Service and Wyoming Department of Audit fiscal and reporting requirements.

The accomplishments documented in this report relate directly to the goals, objectives and action steps as identified in the Converse County Conservation District Annual Plan of work.

2020/2021 Fiscal Year Summary



Reserve and Investment Accounts: \$897,782.96



FY 2020/2021 Cash Beginning Balance: \$196,902.00

2021 – 2022 FISCAL YEAR BUDGET

INCOME

Beginning General Fund Balance	\$196,902.00
Tax Revenue	\$527,125.00
Grants.....	\$79,894.00
Miscellaneous.....	\$15,573.00
Seedling Tree Program.....	\$8,500.00
Total	\$827,994.00

EXPENSES

Administration.....	\$185,300.00
Capital Outlay	\$15,000.00
Fixed Expenses.....	\$8,650.00
Operations.....	\$618,994.00
Total	\$827,944.00

Reserves on hand June 30th, 2020..... \$850,000.00