

# POWDER RIVER CONSERVATION DISTRICT



## Annual Report FY 2010-2011

### *Mission Statement*

*The Powder River Conservation District's mission is to provide education and leadership for the conservation of our natural resources, the wise use of Wyoming's waters, the improvement of our environment, and the preservation of our agricultural heritage through a responsible conservation ethic.*

# Powder River Conservation District

The Powder River Conservation District was established in August of 1955. Petitions for the organization of a Soil Conservation District, were circulated at various organization meetings at Barnum, Kaycee, Sussex, and Mayoworth, and signed by ranchers located in the southern end of Johnson County.

Many changes have been made in the past fifty-six years and the district continues to grow and provide service to the citizens of Southern Johnson County. There are approximately 1,220,528 acres within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Powder River Conservation District. Of the total area of the PRCD, approximately 910,510.20 acres are privately owned; approximately 312,422 acres are administered by the Bureau of Land Management; approximately 104,468.10 acres are owned by the State of Wyoming; approximately 3,454.80 are owned by the U.S. Forest Service and approximately 546.90 acres are owned by Johnson County.

The district has one incorporated municipality, the Town of Kaycee, with a current population of 270. The main drainages in the District are the North Fork, Middle Fork, Red Fork, and South Fork of Powder River. The majority of the district is composed of native rangeland, both private and government.

The agriculture of the Powder River Conservation District is centered around livestock operations. Irrigated areas are used primarily for the production of hay and small grain as supplemental food for livestock. The mineral industry includes oil and gas production, bentonite, uranium, and coal reserves. This scenic ranching community is rich in heritage and history.





# PRCD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



The Powder River Conservation District is governed by a five member Board of Supervisors. Three supervisors are rural, one is urban, and one is designated as at-large. They are elected by the residents of Southern Johnson County during the general election. They serve staggered four year terms, with two positions available at a general election one year and three positions available at the next year. Supervisors are unpaid, elected volunteers who attend monthly board meetings and are actively involved in overseeing the activities of the conservation district. Board meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at the PRCD office and are open to the public.

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## **CHAIRMAN**

George Renkert (rural)

## **VICE-CHAIR**

Bill Jones (urban)

## **SECRETARY/TREASURER**

Amy Icanberry (rural)

## **SUPERVISOR**

Dan Mahoney (rural)

## **SUPERVISOR**

Kevin Lund (at-large)

## **DISTRICT PERSONEL**

Anita Bartlett-District Manager

## **NRCS STAFF**

Allison McKenzie-District Conservationist

Kassie Bales-Rangeland Management Specialist

## **HOW TO CONTACT PRCD**

### **Address:**

350 Nolan Avenue

P.O. Box 48

Kaycee, WY 82639

### **Phone:**

(307) 738-2321

### **Fax:**

(307) 738-2107

### **Email:**

Anita.Bartlett@wy.nacdnet.net

### **Website:**

www.powderrivercd.org

# ADMINISTRATION & OPERATIONS

**ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS GOAL:** To be accountable for all public funds and ensure all District programs are carried out in a responsible manner.

## ACCOUNTING

The District continues to maintain responsible financial procedures and records to be accountable of all funds that it receives. The 2010-2011 budget was prepared in accordance with all state statues and submitted to the Johnson County Commissioners, Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts, and the Wyoming Department of Agriculture. All monthly, quarterly, and yearly state and federal reports were filed in a timely manner.

## TRAININGS

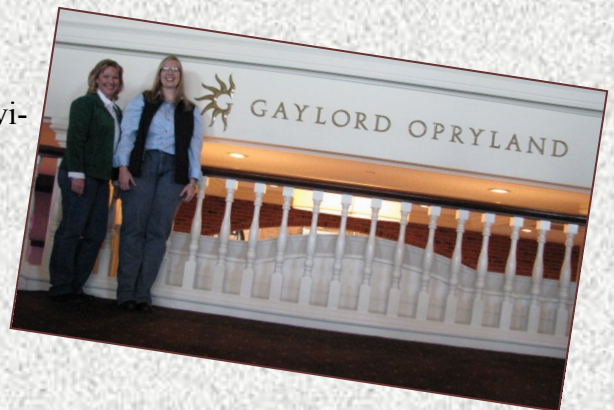
The District staff and/or Board Members attended the following trainings:

- ✧ Wyoming Conservation Employee's Association Training
- ✧ WCDEA Winter Training
- ✧ Coordination Class
- ✧ Northern Rockies Tree School
- ✧ Project Learning Tree, WET, and Wild Training
- ✧ Parliamentary Procedure Webinar

## MEETINGS

The District Staff and/or Board Members attended the following meetings:

- ✧ Wyoming Conservation Districts Employee Association Meetings
- ✧ WACD Annual Convention in Cheyenne
- ✧ NACD Annual Convention in Nashville, TN
- ✧ Area I meeting at the TA Ranch, Johnson County
- ✧ Powder River Watershed Steering Committee meetings
- ✧ Buffalo BLM Field Office Resource Management Plan revision meetings
- ✧ Johnson County Local Work Group meetings
- ✧ Northeast RC&D meetings
- ✧ Women in Ag
- ✧ NRCS Partnership Meeting
- ✧ Lake DeSmet & Natrona County Conservation District Meetings
- ✧ Johnson County Commissioner meetings



## PRCD FUNDING



- Johnson County Mill Levy
- Wyoming Department of Agriculture
- NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection Program
- Anadarko Petroleum Corporation
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# INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

**INFORMATION DISSEMINATION GOAL:** To provide conservation information to the public through a comprehensive media plan.

## Newsletters

The District's Quarterly newsletter "Powder River News" was mailed to more than 300 Southern Johnson County households, four times last year. Included in these newsletters was information regarding District and NRCS activities, events, and educational articles on a variety of natural resource topics.

## Website

The District continues to update the website monthly to keep the public updated on its programs and activities.

## Media

Numerous news articles and advertisements were published in the Kaycee Community Voice, Buffalo Bulletin, and the Wyoming Livestock Roundup detailing the District's activities, projects, programs, and other information.



# TREE PROGRAM

**TREE PROGRAM GOAL:** To promote the planting of trees that will improve our watersheds, benefit the environment, our communities and aid in the conservation of our natural resources.

## Tree Program

- Provided informational handouts on planning, planting, and the maintenance or windbreaks and shelter belts.
- Made the tree planter available to landowners for the planting of seedling trees.



- Donated approximately 80 seedling Black Hill Spruce trees to the Kaycee Elementary School for the Adopt a Tree Program.

## Tree Sales

- Provided a variety of large stock trees, shrubs and seedlings to the community. Approximately 120 seedling trees and 150 large stock trees and shrubs were ordered and planted for conservation purposes.



# EDUCATION/OUTREACH

**EDUCATION/OUTREACH GOAL:** To strengthen, expand, and build a strong public education and outreach program that will create an understanding of natural resource conservation through a variety of youth and adult education opportunities.

## YOUTH EDUCATION

### • **Ag In The Classroom Activities**

This past year the PRCD visited the Kaycee Elementary School and Middle School classrooms to present a variety of Ag in the Classroom activities that included:

- ❖ **The Miraculous Seed**-students dissected monocot and dicot seeds to learn the differences in these types of seeds. They also germinated different types of seeds in order to see how different types of seeds grow.
- ❖ **Transplanting**-students transplanted seeds that they grew. Through this process they learned why plants need such things as soil, water, and sun for continual growth.
- ❖ **What is a Mineral?**-through a series of six hands on experiments students learned to identify 20 different minerals based on the characteristics of luster, color, streak, hardness, cleavage, fracture, and other special characteristics.
- ❖ **Johnson County 3-4th Grade Rendezvous**- The 3-4<sup>th</sup> grade students in all elementary schools in Johnson County gathered to hold a Rendezvous to learn skills that early pioneers/mountain men would have known. This year Anita taught a lesson on identifying animal tracks, why it is important to know what type of animal one is tracking and how this can be useful today.
- ❖ **Wildlife ID**-KMS OREO students learned to identify wildlife based on their tracks, skulls and furs.
- ❖ **Mapping Skills**-KMS OREO Class learned how to identify parts of a map, read different types of maps, and how government agencies use maps for agricultural purposes. As well they worked with the District Manager to create their own maps in ARCMAP.



### • **Kaycee Middle School Ecology Camp**

A three day Ecology Camp was held at HR Camp near Laramie Peak. Students from Kaycee Middle School studied forest ecology, where they learned how to determine the age of a tree, the damage that has been done, or tell when times of drought occur by looking at a tree cookie. As well, they learned leadership/teamwork skills through a variety of low and high rope courses.

### ❖ **Wyoming Resource Education Days**

The Wyoming Resource Education Days (WyRED) allows students and adults to spend a week on a historic working ranch. This year, 32 students and adults learned about range management, geology, soils, plant physiology, plant identification, ecological sites, range utilization, water quality, riparian ecology, and wildlife interactions. The PRCD sent district staff to WyRED, which was hosted by the Natrona County CD, to assist with the week long camp.





# EDUCATION/OUTREACH

## YOUTH EDUCATION CONTINUED...

- **Black Hills Natural Resource Youth Camp**

This year District Manager Anita Bartlett assisted with the planning of the Black Hills Natural Resources Youth Camp and three youth from Kaycee attended the Camp, which is designed to give young people the opportunity to experience the natural world and its resources through hands-on-activities.

- **Adopt a Tree Program**

The PRCD continued its Adopt A Tree Program this spring with the Kaycee Elementary Students. Each KES student was able to take home a Black Hills Spruce seedling tree to plant. This year along with being able to take home a tree, students learned about the importance of Arbor Day and the role trees play in the world today.

- **World Water Monitoring Day**

This event was done in conjunction with the Johnson County 4-H Extension Educator allowed the KES 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class & the KMS OREO class to teach the students the importance of water quality and the how oxygen/carbon dioxide levels in the water effect water quality and aquatic animals.

- **The PRCD sponsored the Natural Resource 4-H Award at the 2010 Johnson County Fair.**

- **The PRCD purchased 2 laptop and a printer for the Kaycee FFA.**

- **The PRCD worked with Boys & Girls Club to promote agriculture.**



## ADULT EDUCATION

- **Putting Profit Back into the Ranch**

This one day hands-on applied training session taught how to conduct an economic analysis of participants ranch. These powerful management tool help identify the strong profit centers of a ranch and the areas that need management attention. Participants were provided with tools and resources to take home to begin working on their individual operations

- **Xeriscape/Landscaping Workshop**

This workshop that covered the basic principles of water-wise landscaping, site inventory and general garden design. There was discussion on a variety of water-wise plants that can be used to create an attractive Wyoming landscape, with a focus on perennials.

- **State Forestry Tree Workshop**

This workshop taught about tree species specific to the Kaycee area, tree planting, common tree diseases, and insects, and proper pruning techniques. A hands on pruning demonstration was also given.

- **Coordination Workshop**

Partnering with the Lake DeSmet CD this eight hr course packed in six powerful lessons showing how to implement coordination with federal and state agencies to protect your local economy, property rights and way of life.

- **City Council Presentation**

District Manager Anita Bartlett gave a presentation on the District's programs and services to the Kaycee City Council.





# SPECIAL PROJECTS

**SPECIAL PROJECTS GOAL:** To provide technical assistance on projects to residents of Southern Johnson County that targeted in other project areas.

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

- **Hazardous/Household Waste Collection Day with Lake DeSmet C. D.**

The PRCD work with Lake DeSmet Conservation District and other sponsors to hold a Hazardous Waste Collection Day in Buffalo for the people of Johnson County. There was a great turn out and approximately 22 tons of waste was collected.

- **Arbor Day Celebration**

During the 5th Annual Arbor Day Celebration Kaycee Mayor Tom Knapp read the Arbor Day proclamation and spoke about the importance of Arbor Day. This celebration was held in conjunction with the Powder River Conservation Districts Tree Workshop featuring speakers from



- **Free Well Water Testing Day**

In September the District hosted it's Annual Free Well Water Testing Day. Approximately 30 private wells were tested for nitrates, nitrites, hardness, pH, and bacteria. Fourteen of these well tested positive for bacteria and the district worked with the landowners to treat and re-test the wells.

- **Russian Olive Removal Program**

The PRCD partnered with local landowners, Johnson County Weed & Pest, and contractors to remove Russian Olive Trees from the stream banks of the Middle Fork of Powder River as it flows through Kaycee.



- **Emergency Watershed Protection Project**

The District worked cooperatively with the NRCS and local landowners to replace the Red Fork Diversion which was damaged due to flood waters. The old diversion was removed and a new Diversion was installed.

- **Cost Share Programs**

The PRCD offers two Cost Share Programs: the first is for large rural projects that make a positive difference on the land and the second provides incentive for residents and businesses to conserve soil, water and energy. Nine cost share applications were approved this first year.

- **Landscaping at Meike Bunkhouse**

The PRCD donated and installed weed barrier, edging, shrubs, and trees to Meike Bunkhouse the new senior housing development in Kaycee. These materials were placed on the south side of the building for the senior citizens to enjoy.

- **Landscaping at the Kaycee Town Park**

The landscaping project included the addition of raised flower beds planted with water wise plants to promote water conservation, the Park Rules sign had been repainted, trees and shrubs were pruned, dead growth was removed, and hauled away. As well, two new trees were planted and pruning and removal of dead growth had begun on trees and shrubs within the park.



# SPECIAL PROJECTS

## SPECIAL PROJECTS Continued.....

- **Gauge Station Installation**

The PRCD install a gauging station on the upper reaches of the Middle Fork of Powder River. This gauge will be used to monitor flood water coming off the mountain and to estimate the flow of water that will flow through the Town of Kaycee.

- **Drip Irrigation/Weed Barrier/Irrigation Dam/Rain Barrel Sales**

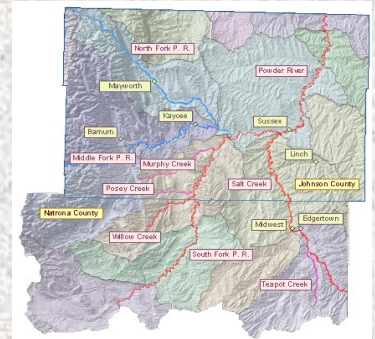
The PRCD sells drip irrigation hose, parts, weed barrier, rain barrels and irrigation dam material as a service to Southern Johnson County.

# WATERSHED PLANNING

**WATERSHED PLANNING GOAL:** Promote and protect the quality of Wyoming's waters, reduce siltation of streams channels and reservoirs, promote wise use of Wyoming's water. Continue working towards removing impaired streams from the 303(d) list.

## WATER QUALITY

- The PRCD continued to monitor the three sites set up on the South Fork of Powder River, Willow Creek, and Murphy Creek to determine current water quality of these streams, and to see if implemented best management practices were making a difference in water quality.
- Continued winter water quality monitoring on the three sites on the South Fork of Powder River, Willow Creek, and Murphy Creek to see if there is a trend in selenium concentrations during different seasons.
- Utilized the District's Watershed Inventory to prioritize watershed activities within the District.
- Provided activities to the local schools and youth organizations targeting the importance of water quality.
- Hosted a Free Well Water Testing Day to test for nitrates, nitrites, pH, and bacteria.
- Worked with cooperators to address water quality concerns through USDA programs.
- Completed 17 Recreational UAA site visits in Southern Johnson County and Northern Natrona County for WACD & Wyoming DEQ.



## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POWDER RIVER WATERSHED WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN

- Completed the background documentation for a Use Attainability Analysis to address Site Specific Criteria for the Selenium Standard on Murphy Creek.
- Provided DEQ an annual update on the progress of the watershed plan.
- Maintained local partnerships to coordinate watershed planning efforts.
- Worked cooperatively with the NRCS to provide landowners with recommended BMP's to help reduce non-point source pollution.
- Utilized USDA incentive programs and alternative funding sources for new projects and continued water conservation projects.
- Met with the Powder River Watersheds Steering Committee to update them on the progress of the watershed plan.

# NATURAL RESOURCES

**NATURAL RESOURCES GOAL:** The Powder River Conservation District will promote programs available to assist landowners with decisions and options for proper management of range, pasture, and croplands. The district will work in cooperation with other county, state, and federal agencies.

## WORK COOPERATIVELY WITH THE NRCS

- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program**
  - ✧ Stock Water Development
    - ✧ 3 new 2011 contracts awarded and 8 active contracts with the main focus on stock water development
  - ✧ Sage Grouse Initiative
    - ✧ There are 8 active contracts focusing on the improvement of sage grouse habitat.
- **Conservation Plans**
  - ✧ Proper Grazing Management
  - ✧ Irrigation Water Management
- **Dull Knife Dam**
  - ✧ Worked on the Emergency Action Plan and finding funding for the rehab of the dam.
- **Wetland Reserve Program**
  - ✧ 1 new 2011 contract was awarded and 2 active contracts with in the district and work begun on the projects to develop ponds to increase habitat for wildlife dependant on riparian areas.
- **Conservation Stewardship Program**
  - ✧ 2 new contracts were processed and 1 active contract focused on rewarding current conservation practices and encourage new conservation efforts.
- **Town of Kaycee Berm Design**
  - ✧ With the completion of the Environmental Assessment the NRCS is working on the design for the flood protection project with the town of Kaycee.
- **Local Work Group**
  - ✧ Established local priorities and ranking criteria for local applications

## WORK COOPERATIVELY WITH THE BLM AND STOCK TRAIL USERS CRM TO IMPROVE THE STOCK TRAIL

- **Develop Reliable Water Sources**

The PRCO and the Kaycee Stock Trail Users evaluated the water sources on the stock trail and determined which sources need improvement.
- **Maintain Fences**

New gates were purchased for the Stock Trail.
- **Control Noxious Weeds**

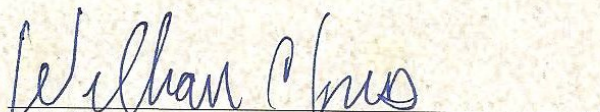
Worked towards developing a plan with the BLM and Johnson County Weed & Pest to control noxious weed along the stock trail.



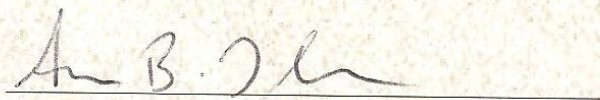
*We, the Supervisors of the Powder River Conservation District, as duly authorized by the Wyoming Conservation District Law, hereby adopt this 2010-2011 Annual Report as the culmination of the work completed within this conservation district for the 2010-2011 fiscal year.*

  
George Renkert, Chair

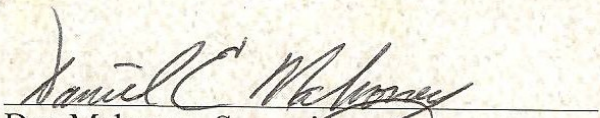
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William Jones, Vice-Chair

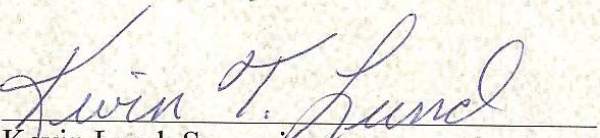
9-09-11  
Date

  
Amy Icanberry, Secretary/Treasurer

9-8-2011  
Date

  
Dan Mahoney, Supervisor

9-8-11  
Date

  
Kevin Lund, Supervisor

9-8-11  
Date