

Cody Conservation District



**conserving
natural resources**
for our future

Long Range Plan
2024-2028

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Board Members

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Mission Statement

The members of the Cody Conservation District Board of Supervisors are committed to improving the quality of life within the district, through good stewardship of land, water and other natural resources, by providing information and education services to the District’s residents.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

Equity and environmental justice refer to behaviors and decisions that recognize and integrate cultural and biological diversity to support sustainable communities in Park County where people can interact in a safe and productive manner with equal opportunities. Adopted in 1890, Article 1, Section 2 of Wyoming’s Constitution states “all members of the human race are equal.” The Cody Conservation District (CCD), resoundingly supports this truth and we strive to ensure it is upheld as conservation outreach and programs are implemented. This includes evaluating the delivery of services provided and

the CCD's effectiveness in reaching the underserved members of our communities. It also means sustaining environmental conditions that afford everyone the chance to thrive. Equity and environmental justice are inherent in our mission. The CCD considers ecosystems that comprise the landscape and the social and cultural diversity of communities located therein. We rely on relationships in the community to the fully grasp conservation issues present. To be more effective, we will continuously explore ways to engage all members of our communities and promote representation across the social and cultural spectrum that comprises those communities.

History

The Soil Conservation District concept began in the Dust Bowl Era of the 1930's in response to severe drought and drastic soil loss. In February of 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt urged all states to pass legislation authorizing locally led soil conservation programs. This need initiated the formation of conservation districts across the United States with the first passage of the Soil Conservation Law in Arkansas in March 1937. The Wyoming State Legislature followed suit by passing the enabling legislation for the formation of local conservation districts in March of 1941.

The Cody Conservation District (CCD) was organized on May 20, 1942. There have been seven additions to the original District boundaries since its formation, bring the total acreage within the CCD boundaries of 2,470,710 acres.



Authority

CCD is a local residing subdivision of the state as defined and established by the Wyoming State Statues at Title 11, Chapter16, et seq., entitled “Wyoming Conservation District Law.” The people residing within the CCD boundaries elect the five-member Board of Supervisors of the CCD by popular vote during the general election. The elected members represent both the rural and urban populations within the District. The Board of Supervisors

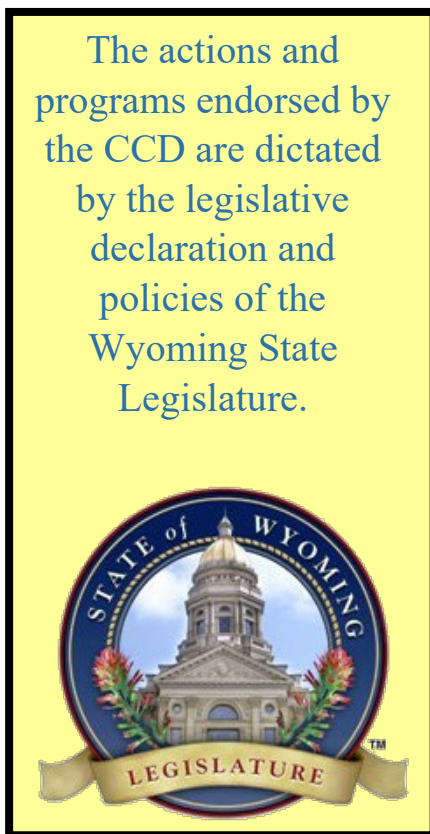
are a locally elected board charged with the responsibility of representing local people on natural resource issues. A conservation district supervisor serves the community voluntarily.

The Cody Conservation District, pursuant to W>S> 11-16-122(IV) and (XVI) of the Wyoming Conservation District Law, is authorized to develop plans for the Cody Conservation District and to file said plans in the office of the Park County Clerk.

Legislative Declarations

The CCD is charged with the following:

(1) AS REPRINTED FROM: W>S>S> 11-16-103
Legislative Declarations and Policy

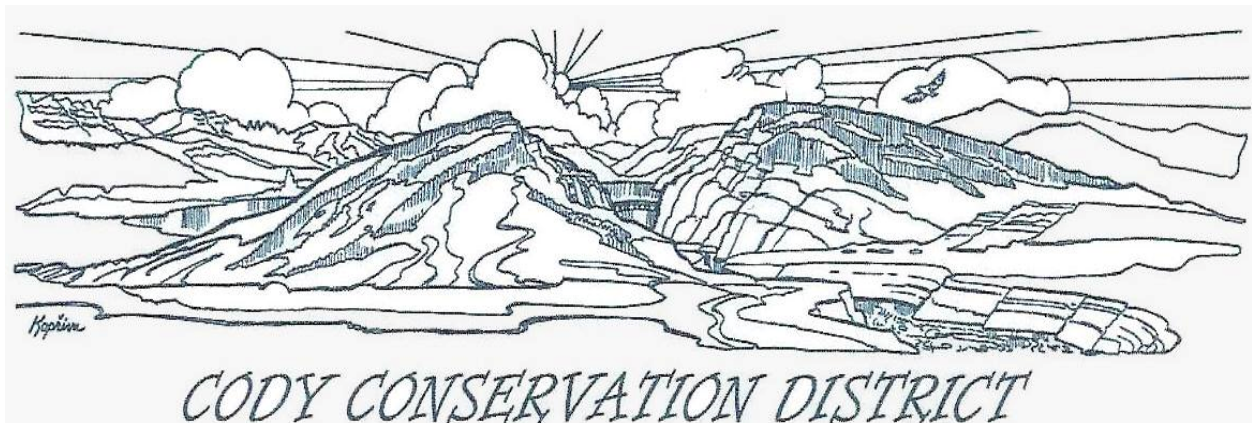


(a) It is hereby declared that the farm and grazing lands of Wyoming are among the basic assets of the state; that improper land use practices cause and contribute to serious erosion of these lands by wind and water; that among the consequences which would result from such conditions are deterioration of soil and its fertility and the silting and sedimentation of stream channels, resources, dams and ditches; that to conserve the soil, it is necessary that land use practices contributing to soil erosion be discouraged and that appropriate soil conserving land use practices be adopted.

(b) It is hereby declared to be the policy of the legislature to provide for the conservation of the soil and water resources of this state, and for the control and prevention of soil erosion and for flood prevention for the conservation, development, utilization, and disposal of water, and hereby to stabilize ranching and farming operations, to preserve natural resource, protect the tax base, control floods, prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs, preserve wildlife, protect public lands, and protect and pro- mote the health , safety and general welfare of the people of this state.

(2) The above being the charge and direction of the Wyoming Legislature for all Conservation District Boards within the State of Wyoming, the CCD Board of Supervisors, and elected body and local government, is the local leader of the

management of lands within the jurisdiction of the CCD and is accountable to the citizens of the district.



Our District

The CCD is one of three conservation districts in Park County; it encompasses the central and western portion of the County. The Powell-Clarks Fork Conservation District borders the CCD to the northeast, while the Meeteetse Conservation District lies to the southeast.

The CCD lies mostly within the Big Horn Basin of northwestern Wyoming. The western border of CCD is the eastern boundary of Yellowstone National Park, from the Montana State line to the southeast corner of the Park, and then follows the border of Park County, along the Continental Divide to the boundary of the Meeteetse Conservation District

Elevations range from over 12,200 feet above sea level to below 5,000 feet along the Shoshone River where it flows out of the CCD into the Powell-Clarks Fork Conservation District.

The City of Cody is the only municipality in the CCD, and is also the County Seat. Major rural subdivisions exist along the Lower South Fork of the Shoshone River the Wapiti valley

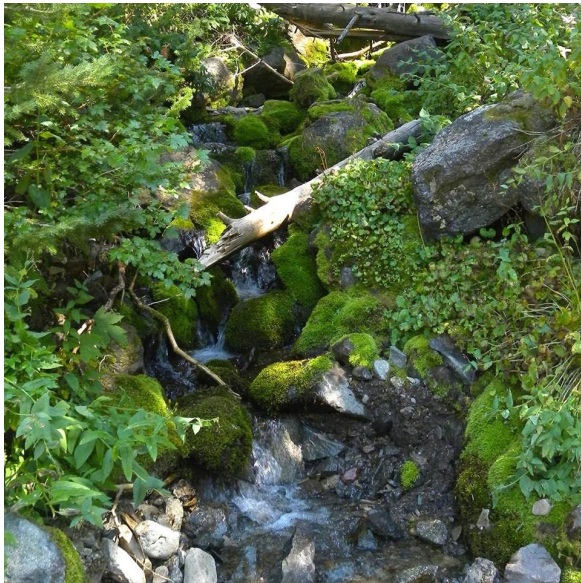
along the North Fork of the Shoshone River between Buffalo Bill Reservoir and the Shoshone National Forest and northeast of Cody from the city limits to the boundary with the Powell-Clarks Fork CD.

Natural Resource Description

Vegetation

The north-facing slopes of higher elevations are dominated by coniferous species including Lodgepole pine, Subalpine fir, Douglas fir and Engelmann spruce. Some aspen can be found interspersed within the forests. South-facing slopes are dominated by grass species include bluebunch wheatgrass, kingspike fescue, Idaho fescue and Columbia needlegrass and Wyoming big sagebrush and antelope bitterbrush.

Basin areas are generally void of the large tree overstories typical in the mountains. Exceptions are planted trees around structures and in shelterbelts. Plains cottonwood, peachleaf willow and Russian olive are among the most common species. Major grasses include western and thickspike wheatgrass, blue grama, Indian ricegrass, sand reed, and needle and thread. Wyoming big sagebrush, fourwing saltbush, and rabbit brush are common shrubs.



There is a wide variety of riparian habitat found in the Cody Conservation District. Cottonwood and aspen are common overstory species.

Willow, water birch, chokecherry, gooseberry, rose, and red-osier dog- wood are common shrubs. A number of grasses and grass-like plants occur in these riparian areas including several species of sedges, rushes, cattails, and reed grasses.

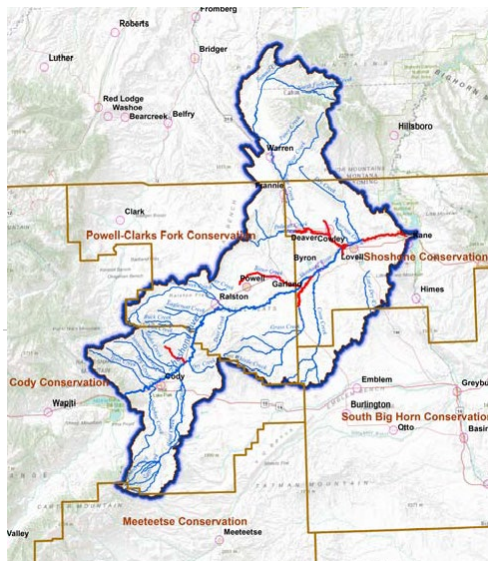
Noxious weeds occur throughout the district. Canada thistle, downy brome, hoary cress, yellow toadflax and Russian knapweed are the most widespread.

Sensitive Habitats

Wetland and riparian landscapes occur in saturated soils along streams and waterways in the CCD. This productive habitat serves as travel corridors for many animal species, both as seasonal migratory stops and permanent home territories. These densely vegetated zones provide important thermal cover to protect species from temperature extremes. These particular habitats also help to collect and filter surface water and in effect purify, redistribute and protect the districts water.



Watershed



The CCD encompasses three hydrologic units, or drainage basins, within its borders.

- (1) The Shoshone River Watershed consisting of the South Fork and North Fork of the Shoshone River above the Buffalo Bill reservoir and the River below the reservoir to the point it flows into the PCFCD.
- (2) A portion of the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone,

from where it flows into Wyoming from Montana and flows out of the Clarks Fork Canyon into the PCFCD.

- (3) The Dry Creek drainage, a tributary of the Big Horn River which drains the area along the eastern flank of Carter Mountain, between the Shoshone River and the Greybull River.

Wildlife

Wildlife is abundant within the CCD and is indeed one of the many amenities of the area. Wildlife habitat types include open water and wetlands, grasslands, shrublands, riparian areas, and forest. The following is a brief list of the Districts commonly observed resident mammal and bird species.

Mammals

Badger Bear
Big Brown Bat
Bighorn Sheep
Bobcat
Bushy Tailed Woodrat
Coyote
Deer Mouse
Whitetail and Mule Deer
Dessert Cottontail
Elk
Fox
Grey Wolf
Least Chipmunk
Little Brown Bat
Martin
Mink
Moose
Mountain Lion
Pronghorn Antelope
Red Fox
Red Squirrel
Striped Skunk
Western Harvest Mouse
Whitetail Jackrabbit
Whitetail Prairie Dog
Wyoming Ground Squirrel

Birds

American Avocet
American Goldfinch
American Kestrel
Bald Eagle
Belted Kingfisher
Black-capped Chickadee
Canada Goose
Cassin's Finch
Chukar
Common Merganser
Dark-Eyed Junco
Downy Woodpecker
Golden Eagle
Great Horned Owl
Green Winged Teal
Killdeer
Mallard
Mountain Chickadee
Northern Flicker
Northern Harrier
Northern Pintail
Pine Siskin
Red Tailed Hawk
Short Eared Owl
Western Meadowlark
Yellow Warbler



Water Quality and Quantity

Surface water is one of the primary sources of water for consumptive uses within the CCD boundary. The municipal water supply for the City of Cody, as well as other municipalities along the Shoshone River, is drawn from the Buffalo Bill Reservoir, and treated at the Shoshone Municipal Pipeline water treatment facility on the southwestern edge of Cody. The majority of irrigation activities are also made possible through the availability of surface water in Park County.



Soils

Soil is one of our most basic natural resources. It determines not only what our landscape looks like, but also our ability to adapt and transform that landscape. However, there are limitations and hazards inherent to many soil types that occur throughout the District. Some soils are seasonably wet and may retain moisture and as a result can be unsuitable for construction. Sites with higher water tables can also be unsuitable for underground utilities or basements. These soil types can often be found in low-lying areas and along waterways.

Other soils are dominated by shallow bedrock or rock outcroppings that may be unsuitable for foundations and roadbeds. These soil types can often be found along canyon rims benches, and mountain foothills.

Impervious soils required for some sanitary facilities need detailed evaluations to prevent surface and groundwater contamination.

The District also contains highly erosive soils due to the sedimentary nature of the background geology in the Big Horn Basin. Erosive soils, if disturbed by human activities, may exacerbate potential air and water pollution concerns.

Land Use

Approximately 35 percent of the District is rangeland, which is used for a variety of production activities, including agriculture. Many of these agricultural operations supplement range forage with irrigated pasture. The area also supports many deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, and some moose and big horn sheep.



Some timber is harvested from the national forest lands, but all of it is shipped north to a large sawmill at Livingston, Montana. Gravel is produced from a number of gravel pits commonly associated with glaciated areas in the district.

Land ownership in the CCD consists of Federal, State, and Private lands. Federally-managed lands include Bureau of Land Management, U.S.D.A. Forest Service and the Bureau of Reclamation lands. They account for roughly sixty percent of the total land area. State lands encompass twelve percent of the land area within CCD boundaries including Wyoming Game and Fish properties, public schools, state parks, cultural resources, historic sites, and state forestry. Private land ownership accounts for about twenty-seven percent of the total

lands, while Other, including riparian areas, wetlands, and otherwise unclassified land, accounts for less than onepercent.

Community Enhancement

The District will strive to implement natural resource conservation practices that address soil health and erosion; water quality, quantity and use; energy conservation, wildlife habitat; and enhancing the natural landscape along public corridors and properties by working with the City of Cody and other agencies and organizations who offer programs that benefit our natural resources. The District will provide education on natural resources and on natural conservation Best Management Practices.

Education and Outreach

The District will participate and provide natural resource conservation education opportunities that encourage awareness of conservation best management practices.

- Provide educational opportunities to the community through seminars, events, workshops, tours and hands on activities.
- Provide conservation information to the public utilizing our website, various media, and displays at local events.
- Look for opportunities to inform policy makers of local issues, concerns and

- opportunities.
- Strive to build stronger relationships with local officials and policymakers for the benefit of natural resources.
 - Seek and incorporate public input for program development, assessment, and implementation.

Land Use Plan

The District promotes land uses that are compatible with the natural resources of a given area (soils, water, vegetation, wildlife, etc.)

- Promote the protection of prime agricultural land and open spaces.
- Provide input to City/County Planning Commission on soil suitability of all new subdivisions.
- Continue implementing a seedling tree program to encourage windbreak and shelterbelt plantings.
- Provide financial assistance to landowners to address resource concerns.



Urban Land Use Plan

The District encourages the appropriate use of natural resources to address unique challenges of urban living in Park County.

- The District will continue to provide assistance and promote community enhancement

programs and urban conservation projects.

- The District will increase awareness of natural resources issues and the relationship within an urban setting.
- The District will foster a stronger working relationship with the City of Cody to promote and implement natural resource conservation and pollution prevention practices.

Water Quality

The District will strive to reduce point and nonpoint source pollutants and maintain healthy watersheds while improving agriculture, fisheries, wildlife habitat, and recreation.

- The District feels that water resource goals are generally best met through voluntary, locally initiated and led, scientifically driven watershed-based approaches.
- The District supports best management practices (BMPs) designed to reduce point and nonpoint source pollution and maximize stream bank stability and riparian health.
- The District supports the use of credible data when making use attainability and beneficial use support determinations.
- The District will provide educational workshops regarding water irrigation systems for the general public.
- The District will continue to work with various stakeholders (WGFD, NRCS, WDEQ, USGS, UW, WACD, PCFCD, area irrigation districts, Trout Unlimited), working on the Willwood Dam sediment issues on the Shoshone River.

