

# UINTA COUNTY *Conservation District*

Annual Report 2019-2020

Plan of Work 2020-2021



**Uinta County  
Conservation District**



# What is a Conservation District?

**Conservation districts** are local units of government established under state law to carry out natural resource management programs at the local level by providing technical assistance and tools to manage and protect land and water resources in U.S. states and insular areas. There are more than 3,000 conservation districts in the United States. In Wyoming, there are 34 conservation districts in 23 counties.

Conservation districts may go by different names such as Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Soil Conservation Districts, Resource Conservation Districts, or other similar names. However, they all share a single mission: to coordinate assistance from all available sources; public and private, local, state and federal, to develop locally-driven solutions to natural resource concerns.

## History of Conservation Districts

During the Dust Bowl of the 1930's, it became clear that there was a need to conserve natural resources, specifically soil. Intensive efforts were made by state and local governments to develop adequate programs for soil conservation. However, those agencies often ended up competing with each other and local leadership was needed to coordinate their efforts as well as tie them into local conditions and priorities. In March of 1941, State Legislature passed an act to establish conservation districts in Wyoming. As subdivisions of the State of Wyoming, conservation districts were to direct programs that protected local, renewable natural resources.

## Our Roots

The Uinta County Conservation District was organized on June 4, 1948, as the Bridger Valley Soil and Water Conservation District, in accordance with Wyoming State Law. The original District included only the eastern portion of Uinta County, however, several landowners petitioned and were included in the District. The District now includes and services all of Uinta County and the name of the District was changed to the Uinta County Conservation District in 1993.

The Uinta County Conservation District is responsible for directing conservation programs that aim to conserve the soil, water and vegetative resources within our county. This is accomplished through Conservation programs that promote sustainable use of our natural resources. Success and advances in conservation in Uinta County is due to the stewardship of the local landowners and concerned citizens of the county. Funding for programs is received through a mill levy that was passed during general election in 1988. UCCD also receives grant funding through other local, state and federal agencies to get projects on the ground.

## LAND USE PLANNING CONTINUED

- Continue participation as a Cooperating Agency during federal land planning processes to represent the interests of the local landowners and land users,.
- Maintain a working relationship with Uinta County Weed and Pest to distribute information on noxious weeds in Uinta County and assist with weed management efforts
- Offer basic soil testing and other soil information including maps and lab information
- Assist with organization of Uinta County Soil Health Day and present range monitoring values and concepts at the workshop
- Assist both large and small landowners with their resource questions and provide science based solutions for the sustainability of the natural resource
- Assist and educate large and small landowners in developing grazing plans and the benefits of proper grazing management
- Educate landowners on the cost share programs that the district offers as well as the many other programs and resources available through other agencies
- Maintain and develop working relationships with federal, state, and county government agencies responsible for natural resource management
- Keep landowners informed on natural resource developments that affect the producers of Uinta County
- Work with landowners to develop conservation plans that addresses their resource concerns and improvement opportunities
- Work with private landowners to complete range monitoring and conservation planning on private land
- Assist private landowners with resource concerns using data from trail cameras where appropriate
- Provide rubber tire water tanks to allow producers to provide water for livestock and wildlife in remote areas
- Work with landowners to re-seed burned areas on private ground



## SPECIAL PROGRAMS

**GOAL:** Provide information, technical and financial assistance for natural resource related projects that aim to improve natural resource stewardship in Uinta County.

### OBJECTIVES:

- Work with landowners through UCCDs Natural Resource Projects cost share program to partially fund and complete a headgate replacement as required by the State Engineers Office
- Complete alternative water source project that was approved for funding by UCCD board
- Complete the design of the Bridger Well 18 small water project and put it out to bid for construction in February of 2021
- Select contractor through a competitive bid process to construct the Bridger Well small water project approved for funding through the Wyoming Water Development Small Water Program
- Complete one reservoir rehabilitation project that was funded through Small Water Program
- Promote District cost share programs and encourage more participation
- Promote the Wyoming Water Development Commissions Small Water Program and assist landowners through the application and construction process
- Continue UCCDs Cooperative Agreement with Partners for Fish and Wildlife to provide landowners with technical and financial assistance for habitat and conservation projects.
- Provide assistance to local entities and organizations on community enhancement and urban conservation programs
- Assist Eagle Scouts with future projects as needed
- Promote and assist residents with future Community Enhancement Grants
- Continue to actively participate on the B.E.A.R. Project Board and support the activities and improvements of the Bear River Greenway
- Hold a well water Testing Day for Uinta County residents
- Develop disaster programs as needed to provide producers with technical and financial assistance in a timely manner.

## LAND USE PLANNING

**GOAL:** Improve livestock production, wildlife habitat, recreation and watershed protection while improving and maintaining productivity on rangelands and pasturelands in Uinta County.

### OBJECTIVES:

- Work with and assist BLM and USDA Forest Service with range assessments on grazing allotments
- Offer seeding alternatives that can be used in conjunction with range treatments for various soils and management objectives to increase vegetative cover
- Continue to review and provide recommendations on subdivision reviews as required by the state

**Mission:** To be a leader in natural resource conservation by providing resources, education, technical assistance and information for the development and improvement of our natural resources, to promote and protect agriculture, protect the tax base and promote the health, welfare and safety of Uinta County residents.

## Get to know us

The Uinta County 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 Uinta County during the general election. Supervisors may come from many different occupations, but must reside within the boundaries of Uinta County and must be residents of Wyoming. 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 third Thursday of each month and are open to the public.



**Kelly Guild**  
Chairman (rural)



**Dennis Cornelison**  
Vice Chairman (rural)



**Spencer Eyre**  
Secretary/Treasurer (rural)



**Kevin Condos**  
Member (at-large)



**Carol Hamilton**  
Associate Board Member



**Shaun Sims**  
Member (urban)

# Administration

*The UCCD staff oversees the day-to-day operations of the conservation district. They administer conservation programs and provide technical assistance and other services as directed by the Board of Supervisors. Mill levy funding as well as funding from other local, state and federal agencies is administered through the UCCD office. Natural resource education is a key component of UCCDs mission. Through successful outreach efforts, the conservation district can work with land users to provide effective resource management.*



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**Grant Redden**  
Natural Resource Specialist  
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**Katie Lott**  
Education Coordinator  
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- Monthly Board of Supervisors Meetings
- Annual Budget Hearing
- Completed compliance requirements for the Wyoming Department of Ag
- Local Work Group Meeting
- Coalition of Local Governments meetings
- Area V meeting
- Attended the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts annual meeting in Buffalo
- Completed Annual Report and Plan of Work
- Water Quality Training
- Participated in Cybersecurity webinar
- IT training to understand correct use of office equipment
- Participated in webinars related to grant tracking, bookkeeping and retirement opportunities.
- Staff participated in a number of webinars and online learning opportunities to improve knowledge of natural resources to better serve our constituents.

*Contact us...*

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Conservation District  
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## WATER QUALITY CONTINUED

- Work with Partners for Fish & Wildlife, the Town of Bear River, Forsgren Engineering and Flare Construction to complete construction of a permanent diversion structure on the Morris Brothers Ditch Diversion and the John Sims Ditch diversion
- Work with partners and landowners to complete an engineered design to replace two additional push up dams with a more permanent, fish passable structure on the Bear River
- Submit 319 application for Phase III of the Bear River Restoration projects
- Complete grant tracking, reporting and other administrative tasks for all sources of funding to complete stream restoration projects
- Provide the public with educational materials, tours, workshops and activities to increase awareness of water quality
- Continue providing water quality improvement programs, such as Septic System Remediation, Livestock and other Pastured Animals program, Irrigation Water Management and others

## PARTNERSHIPS

**GOAL:** Develop and maintain partnerships with local, state and federal agencies to encourage multiple-use of our natural resources.

### OBJECTIVES:

- Build lasting relationships with local landowners and citizens of Uinta County to further education and conservation work that will benefit local resources
- Work with the USDA Forest Service and Wyoming State Forestry on projects that will improve forest health
- Host a Community Leader event to foster partnerships with our community leaders and keep them informed of current activities and resource concerns
- Stay abreast of federal land planning projects, rule changes and proposed decisions that affect our local constituents
- Coordinate with NRCS, BLM, Partners for Fish and Wildlife, Wyoming Department of Ag, Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative, Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust, and Wyoming Game and Fish to work with landowners and complete sound conservation practices and range monitoring
- Continue participation as cooperating agency in state and federal land planning processes and proposed decisions



## TREE PROGRAM

**GOAL:** Offer low-cost seedling trees and shrubs, supplies and technical assistance and information to Uinta County Citizens to encourage the establishment of conservation tree plantings such as windbreaks, living snow fences, shelterbelts, erosion control, wildlife habitat, and more.

### OBJECTIVES:

- Hold an annual seedling tree and shrub sale from October through April, providing seedling trees and shrubs and planting materials to Uinta County residents
- Work to provide an online tool for tree information specific to Uinta County that will help residents decide on what species to plant where and how to care for and maintain tree plantings
- Review and update the Windbreak Cost Share Program criteria to allow more opportunities for landowners to participate in the program
- Work with Evanston Parks and Rec to plan and coordinate Arbor Day
- Provide tree supplies such as tree protectors, weedbarrier and polymer to assist with tree plantings.
- Provide technical assistance for tree plantings that includes assistance with design, species selection, planting and maintenance
- Host a tree workshop to educate residents about hazardous tree removal, pruning, proper tree planting and maintenance
- Participate in Arbor Day and provide a seedling tree for participating students in Uinta County
- Provide outreach materials and offer hands-on assistance with local schools and youth organizations about the importance of trees
- Maintain a professional working relationship with Wyoming State Forestry Division and the U.S. Forest Service

## WATER QUALITY

**GOAL:** Work to maintain and improve the quality of water in Uinta County through education, technical assistance and promotion of Best Management Practices.

### OBJECTIVES:

- Review and follow the Sampling and Analysis Plans for the Blacks Fork/Smiths Fork and the Bear River
- Maintain working relationships with landowners who provide access for water quality monitoring
- Organize water quality data that was collected in 2020 into useable spreadsheets and charts
- Continue to collect water quality data on Uinta County rivers to measure water quality trends over time
- Work with landowners on future stream restoration projects and practices that improve water quality
- Work to secure funding that can be used to offset the costs of implementing Best Management Practices

## Community Enhancement Grants



The purpose of the **Community Enhancement Grant Program** is to encourage natural resource projects that benefit the public. The program provides funding for smaller conservation projects that enhance the community. Grants are available to groups and other organizations for amounts up to \$5,000. This year UCCD awarded 3 grants for the following projects.

- ◇ \$3,500-Upgrade, Develop and Maintain the Rio Oso Trail System at the Bear River State Park
- ◇ \$5,000-Evanston Off-Ramp Enhancement Project Phase 1
- ◇ \$3,500-Wyoming Stewardship Project to bring quality ag lessons into Wyoming Classrooms



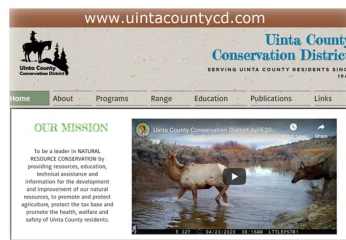
## Outdoor Education Grants

The **Outdoor Education Grant Program** is designed to get kids outside where they can participate in hands-on learning that focuses on natural resources and agriculture. The grant can be applied for any time throughout the year for any amount up to \$1,000. Schools and youth organizations throughout Uinta County are eligible to apply. The grants can be used for things such as camp expenses or fees, lodging, meals, student transportation and educational materials.

The grant has been used for tree plantings, soil testing, Ride with a Ranger Program, scout camps, Camp Carpe Diem, Adopt a Trout program and a youth conservation camp.

# Community Outreach

- Held Uinta County Soil Health Day in Lonetree with 60 participants
- Held a Garden Tour at Good to Grow Farms with over 30 participants
- Produced 4 newsletters which were distributed to over 600 households and placed at area businesses
- Updated and improved existing website with more detailed information and interactive forms and videos
- Attended the Wyoming-Utah Ag Days held in Evanston
- Sponsor of Weekly Market Report, Centsible Nutrition and 4H radio program on KNYN 99.1 and KADQ 98.3
- Attended monthly B.E.A.R. Board meetings
- Offered Barnyards and Backyards, Plants with Altitude, Rangeland plants, Redbooks and other publications to the public
- Partnered with Benedicts, a local grocery store, to provide re-useable grocery totes at minimal cost to customers
- Held a Wildflower Virtual Tour on our website, Facebook and Instagram pages during the summer months to spotlight 46 native wildflowers of Uinta County and the adjacent Uinta Mountains
- Member of Greater Bridger Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Member of Evanston Chamber of Commerce
- Held annual Elected Officials Dinner
- Partnered with Uinta County Weed & Pest to host Hay Growers workshop
- Provided informational booth at the annual Weed & Pest Conference
- Held annual Well Water Testing Day in June with 89 total tests completed on 55 wells in Uinta County.
- Attended a Hay Growers Meeting put on by the local NAPA dealer to introduce the conservation district and programs the district offers



## PUBLIC AWARENESS CONTINUED

- Post flyers of events at local businesses and announce programs and events in local newspapers, Facebook, UCCDs website and through email blasts
- Promote the district website through radio advertising during local sports activities.
- Keep local educators up to date with activities and events via in-school flyers, emails, and mailings
- Work with local grocery stores to provide shoppers with low cost, reusable grocery totes that include UCCDs contact information and website printed on them
- Work with local radio stations to sponsor the Northern Ag Network by advertising UCCD programs and upcoming events

## OUTREACH / ACTIVITIES

**GOAL:** To educate the public, of all ages, to create a strong knowledge and understanding of natural resource stewardship and the importance of agriculture.

### OBJECTIVES:

- Work with LIS 5th Grade teachers to plan, organize and participate in an Outdoor Field Trip for students in early October at Bridger Lake
- Continue the Adopt A Rancher program in Bridger Valley and Evanston Schools
- Host WyRED in June of 2021
- Promote the Outdoor Education Grant to schools and other organizations in Uinta County
- Actively promote world, national and regional activities such as National Soil and Water Stewardship week, World Water Monitoring Day, Wyoming Agricultural in the Classroom, Earth Day, and Arbor Day
- Create outdoor activities for youth that relate to natural resources, agriculture and create an awareness of conservation.
- Plan informational tours, public workshops and display boards that address current resource concerns
- Continue to offer and promote the Community Enhancement Grant program
- Maintain an informational and interactive website specific to the District's goals, programs, workshops, and other activities
- Plan and organize the bi-annual Ag Expo for all Uinta County 3rd and 4th graders
- Promote Wyoming Ag in the Classroom to area schools, home school students, and scout groups
- Work with Wyoming State Forestry to host tree care workshops throughout the year
- Partner with NRCS and landowners to hold Uinta County Soil Health Day
- Host an outdoor teacher workshop to provide local and statewide teachers with UW and PTBSB credits with courses geared toward Natural Resources and Agriculture



## ADMINISTRATION

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

### OBJECTIVES:

- Hold monthly Board of Supervisor meetings and encourage the public to attend
- Develop and maintain an accurate and legal District budget
- Provide the Board of Supervisors with accurate financial information so they can make appropriate decisions
- Follow Procurement Rule procedures, all public comment and adoption procedures
- Comply with Chapter 1, Wyoming Conservation Districts Financial Policies in order to receive state funding
- Complete all required state and federal reports in a timely manner
- Provide opportunities for professional development of staff and board members
- Attend meetings and trainings to increase knowledge of natural resources and to stay informed of local, state and national conservation issues
- Complete and distribute an Annual Report and Plan of Work
- Attend Area V meeting and WACD convention in
- Continue participation as a Bear Board member
- Participate in cyber security for public entities webinar training and other IT trainings to make sure district information is safe and secure

## PUBLIC AWARENESS

**GOAL:** To promote community awareness of conservation district activities and programs.

### OBJECTIVES:

- Participate in tours of the Bear River to showcase projects that have been done to improve fish passage, water quality and streambank stabilization.
- Participate in the Annual Wyoming Weed and Pest Conference
- Organize annual dinner for elected officials and community leaders to educate them about UCCD programs and opportunities.
- Produce a quality newsletter to be distributed quarterly to Uinta County residents
- Distribute newsletter to local dentist offices, health care offices, banks and other businesses to be available for viewing in waiting rooms.
- Maintain participation at community events and public functions
- Find new ways to promote the district website via advertising, Instagram and Facebook

# Projects & Partners

- Assisted with one headgate replacement project and one emergency canal repair project through UCCD's cost share programs - \$15,615.39
- Maintained cooperative agreement with Partners for Fish and Wildlife to complete projects that benefit habitat, stream restoration, fish passage and other important resources
- Completed and funded 5 Habitat Conservation and Restoration projects through the Partners for Fish & Wildlife cooperative agreement - \$46,480.33
- Applied for and received two grants from the Wyoming Wildlife & Natural Resource Trust to help with the cost to complete the replacement of push-up dams in the Bear River Watershed on the Morris Brothers Ditch and John Sims Ditch with permanent, fish-passable diversion structures - \$147,500
- Currently administering two 319 grants from the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality for Bear River Restoration - \$158,666.25
- Closed out one grant from the Wyoming Wildlife & Natural Resource Trust after completing 4100 feet of stream restoration on the Bear River with the help of several other project partners - \$125,000
- Completed 3 water development projects through the Wyoming Water Development small water program - \$56,767.65 WWDC, \$56,767.64 local
- Received grant funding through WG&F for the Morris Brothers Ditch Project and the John Sims Ditch project on the Bear River \$50,000
- Attended a Good Neighbor Authority meeting to learn how we can work with agency partners on important natural resource projects

### Fiscal Year 2020 Private & Local Project Funding

**\$171,816** from private & local funding

- Private Landowners
- UCCD Cost Share Program
- Bear River Restoration
- Small Water Projects

### Fiscal Year 2020 Federal Grants Project Funding

**\$177,280** from Federal Grants

- Partners for Fish and Wildlife
- Bear River Restoration
  - Wetland Restoration
  - Reservoir Rehabilitation

### Fiscal Year 2020 State Grants Project Funding

**\$537,934** from State Grants

Wyoming Game & Fish

- Bear River Restoration
- Wyoming Wildlife & Natural Resource Trust
- Bear River Restoration
  - Clean Water Act Section 319 Grant
  - Bear River Restoration Phase I
  - Bear River Restoration Phase II
- Wyoming Water Development
- Spring Development
  - Well rehabilitation



# Water Program

- Completed E.coli sampling on 7 Blacks Fork Sites, 5 Smiths Fork sites and 1 site on Threemile Creek; 13 total sites, 3 times from May-September
- Collected lab chemistry samples on all 13 sites once in May and once in September
- Completed chemistry sampling on 6 sites on the Bear River, one on Sulphur Creek and one on Yellow Creek in September 2019 and June 2020
- Attended a two-day Fish Passage Tour with Trout Unlimited and USFWS Partners Program to showcase the work that has been done on the Bear River
- Attended a public tour of the completed Booth Project
- Worked with Town of Bear River and Forsgren Engineering to complete the design of the Morris Ditch Diversion structure
- Put together two Requests for Proposals for the construction of the Morris Brothers Ditch Diversion and the John Sims Ditch Diversion and selected contractor to complete both projects
- Completed water quality re-certification training offered online



Provided the following cost share programs to address water quality:

- Septic System Remediation Program
- Livestock & Other Pastured Animals Program
- Irrigation Management
- Water Development

## UINTA COUNTY *Conservation District*

ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK 2020-2021





## FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020

|  |    |         |
|--|----|---------|
| <b>Beginning Balance</b> (cash on hand July 1, 2018) | \$ | 25,770  |
| Savings and Investments Account                      | \$ | 73,335  |
| General Fund CD Balance                              | \$ | 470,095 |
| <b>Income</b>  |    |         |
| Mill Levy  | \$ | 177,823 |
| State & Federal Grants                               | \$ | 145,179 |
| Operating Revenue / Interest                         | \$ | 28,802  |
| <b>Total Income</b>                                  | \$ | 351,804 |
| <b>Expenses</b>                                      |    |         |
| Administration                                       | \$ | 95,159  |
| Operations   | \$ | 296,844 |
| Indirect Costs                                       | \$ | 52,862  |
| Capital Outlay                                       | \$ | 6,521   |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>                                | \$ | 451,386 |

## FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021

|  |    |           |
|--|----|-----------|
| <b>Beginning Balance</b> (cash on hand July 1, 2020) | \$ | 8,576     |
| Savings and Investments Account                      | \$ | 129,843   |
| General Fund CD Balance                              | \$ | 333,373   |
| <b>Total Anticipated Income</b>                      |    |           |
| Mill Levy  | \$ | 150,000   |
| State & Federal Grants                               | \$ | 639,627   |
| Operating Revenue / Interest                         | \$ | 109,266   |
| <b>Total Anticipated Income</b>                      | \$ | 898,893   |
| <b>Anticipated Expenses</b>                          |    |           |
| Administration                                       | \$ | 132,747   |
| Operations   | \$ | 930,415   |
| Indirect Costs                                       | \$ | 62,420    |
| Capital Outlay                                       | \$ | 17,000    |
| <b>Total Anticipated Expenses</b>                    | \$ | 1,142,582 |

# Range Program

- Provided garden and lawn soil testing
- Provided 2 subdivision reviews
- Sampled and obtained test results on pasture soils for producers as well as fertilizer recommendations
- Sampled moisture, salinity, and pH to assess lawn conditions.
- Worked with BLM, Forest Service and permittees on federal land range monitoring
- Produced GIS monitoring maps for field work
- Provided rubber tire tanks for producers to aid in grazing distribution of both livestock and wildlife
- Provided technical assistance with soil information and maps, soil testing, plant and tree identification, grazing management, and range monitoring
- Monitored wildlife and livestock impact on upland vegetation and water quality through use of a trail camera survey



# Education Program

- Continued Adopt-A-Rancher program for 3rd grade at Urie Elementary; Implemented program for 3rd grade at Clark Elementary and Mountain View Elementary
- Taught *Spooky Spiders & Wacky Webs* lessons to 64 Bridger Valley Child Development Center Pre-school students
- Taught *Owl Pellets* lesson to 71 Bridger Valley Child Development Center Pre-school students and 65 Urie Elementary 2nd grade students
- Taught *Hibernation* lesson to 48 Urie Elementary Kindergarten students
- Taught *Weather Measurement* and *Plants We Eat* lessons to 51 Urie Elementary 1st graders
- Taught *Soil Testing* lesson to 19 Evanston High School 11th/12th grade students
- Held poster contest for Soil & Water Stewardship Week for all Uinta County students
- Held annual Bridger Lake Field Trip for LIS 5th grade students, partnering with WY Game and Fish, US Forest Service, and LIS teachers
- Received training in Project Learning Tree and Project WILD education curriculums



# Seedling Tree Program

- Sold seedling trees to 34 customers from October through May
- Sold over 1,400 seedling trees and shrubs
- Provided design and other technical assistance for 2 windbreaks
- Provided weed barrier, polymer and tree protectors to aid in plantings
- Provided diatomaceous earth as a natural bug repellent
- Worked with local residents to address tree concerns including wind and snow damage, aphids, wet wood and identifying and treating other tree diseases
- Put articles in local newspapers to encourage participation in seedling tree program
- Provided information on how to plant and care for seedling trees

