



LINCOLN CONSERVATION DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT JULY 1, 2010 TO JUNE 30, 2011

Last fiscal year was very eventful. The overall weather conditions were very unique. The summer of 2010 was average, for the most part, but during fall last year, moisture conditions were above average and continued on into winter and spring. In early spring, this past year's county wide snow packs were substantially above average and approaching concern levels for severe overland flooding problems if we had a warm, wet spring. Luckily, we had a cold, wet spring with high water flows being stretched out until the end of June. There were some serious damages due to flood flows throughout the district. However, overall not really as bad as during the mid 1980's. Cooperation between local county government and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was excellent. Financial assistance was given both by FEMA and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) to repair damaged municipal and private structures which were eligible. Overall, it was felt a major catastrophe had been dodged.



Hayland fields after flooding were covered with sediment and debris

With the high water, a lot of the hayland and pastureland fields were inundated with water late into the spring. Local ranchers and farmers were afraid established alfalfa and grass crops would be lost due to being submerged for so long. It turned out to be fine. There were spots where the vegetation was lost, but the extra water stimulated other drier areas in fields to be highly productive.

The rangeland vegetation greatly benefited from the wet, cool spring. Rangeland grass production

was at an all time high. The Lincoln Conservation District (LCD) grasses grow during the wet season, shutting down growth when it is hot and dry. Due to the extra vegetative production, there was plenty of feed for livestock and wildlife this past summer. This should help wildlife have extra feed on critical wintering areas this winter. When water is available, it is amazing how productive local rangeland can be.

LCD Business Activities

The LCD business and conservation activities were directed by Erick Esterholdt, Chairman, Kenny Petersen, Vice Chairman; Robert Peternal, Secretary and Treasurer; Shirley Ulrich, Member; and Barbara Aimone, Member. Change is inevitable although, Barbara Aimone had a change in her work schedule which conflicted with her ability to attend board meetings. With her resignation this past spring, Paula Bowling was approached by board members and asked to fill Barbara's vacancy as urban position on the board. Paula accepted the appointment. Paula comes from a ranch background growing up on a ranch in the Upper Hams Fork Drainage that her mother still operates today. Her knowledge of agriculture and with a ranch work background, she will be a great asset to the LCD board. Her current banking responsibilities will also prove helpful when transacting LCD financial obligation and responsibilities.



LCD board members (left to right) Paula Bowling, Kenny Petersen, Robert Peternal, Brenda Lazcanotegui, Erick Esterholdt, and Paul Clark

Along with the urban position being changed, Shirley Ulrich, board member for over twelve years, decided to resign from the board of supervisors due to personal and health reasons. It was a difficult decision for Shirley to leave, but she was needed at home with Carl, her husband, and she had accomplished most of the goals and objectives that she wanted to do as a board member. Shirley's tenure on the board consisted of several years being board chairperson in addition to political liaison. Her institutional knowledge of Lincoln County was very valuable to the LCD board when making decisions.



LCD board members plant several Spruce trees at Shirley Ulrich's home to commemorate her service

The LCD board members celebrated Shirley's service to the Lincoln Conservation Service by planting three burlapped balled spruce trees at her residence on September 8, 2011. Shirley loves trees and flowers and board members felt giving her a living gift was very appropriate. A small commemorative dinner was held after the planting of the trees. Shirley, Carl and board members reminisced about her time on the board and the many conservation activities and programs she helped implement. It was a bitter sweet time to see Shirley as she left the board; however, she did promise to keep in contact over the next several years to make the transition go smoothly.

Board members, once again, searched for a person to fill the member-at-large position that Shirley vacated. It was not too long when board members approached Paul Clark, rancher on the Upper Smiths Fork River, northeast of Cokeville, Wyoming to fill the vacancy. Paul accepted the

appointment. Paul brings a wealth of knowledge about ranching in southern Lincoln County. He has extended knowledge of working on public rangelands in conjunction with his federal leases. He brings a younger generation's view point to the board and will bring new vitality and energy to the board.

It has been a long time since the LCD board has had so much change, but overall, a lot was accomplished this past year.

LCD'S NATURAL RESOURCE ACTIVITIES

Grass Land Management

Rangeland management throughout the LCD continued to be a major point of emphasis this past year. The LCD board members have recognized over the years how important public rangelands are to the operation of local ranches and farms in Southern Lincoln County. Many times decisions are made by personnel of federal land management agencies who place agricultural operations in jeopardy of foreclosure. In order to help remedy the situation, board members placed LCD financial resources aside to hire a private rangeland consultant to help with rangeland resource evaluations on public lands and to give input on the types of conservation practices that need to be installed to correct resource degradation.



Patrick Netherly has been retained by the LCD to provide rangeland assistance

This past year, the LCD hired Patrick Netherly, retired Bureau of Land Management (BLM) rangeland specialist, to help complete greenline and

riparian evaluations on several BLM allotments in the LaBarge area. Several common allotments will be looked over the next couple of years to evaluate the rangeland resource concerns. Patrick will keep LCD board members aware of the rangeland so a proactive approach may be taken to keep the landowners in business.

The LCD is cooperating with the Kemmerer U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Office to complete a Rangeland Health Assessment Program for the LaBarge Creek USFS Allotment the next couple of years. Rangeland assessment funding will be provided to the LCD through a Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) grant to complete the survey. Consultants will be hired by the USFS to complete the survey and determine if the allotment is being grazed properly. This will give baseline data for the allotment that is lacking at the present time.

The LCD was also recently approached by the Uinta Development Company (UDC) in Southeast Lincoln County to develop a Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP) for the Granger BLM Allotment. Due to proposed oil and gas development in the allotment, livestock grazing could be severely impacted. The LCD will work closely with the WDA and UDC to get a conservation plan put together to address resource concerns and find the financial resources to install the needed conservation practices.



Location of new electric transmission lines and gas/oil pipelines concern LCD board members

The LCD concerns are never ending when it comes to rangeland management throughout the district. The LCD continued its efforts with the Coalition of Local Governments (CLG) to address

electric power transmission lines and gas and oil pipeline line locations on district land. Robert Peternal does an excellent job representing the LCD with the CLG. He spent many hours attending meetings to keep board members aware of federal and private rangeland concerns. Robert was also elected as an Area V Councilman for several conservation districts during the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) annual meeting in Baggs, Wyoming. It has been a long time since the LCD has had a councilman among its ranks.



Robert Peternal was elected as a councilman for the WACD Area V, Southwest Wyoming

The LCD continued its involvement with the local Cokeville NRCS Field Office to implement its Farm Bill financial incentive programs for rangeland conservation practices. The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) was used by several ranchers in the LCD to install rangeland conservation practices. Some of the major rangeland conservation practices installed this past year were 22,757 feet of cross fences, 12,549 acres of prescribed grazing, four livestock water wells and four livestock watering facilities. All rangeland EQIP dollars allocated to the LCD were used except Sage Grouse EQIP Initiative funding. Cooperators who would like to do Sage Grouse conservation type practices on their private and state leased rangelands need to contact the Cokeville NRCS Field Office. There are a number of conservation practices that may be applied to private and state leased rangeland that can be financially assisted to help Sage Grouse. Currently the LCD has only two Sage Grouse Initiative

contracts that are up and running. The opportunity exists for several more contracts if cooperators are interested.



Sage Grouse populations are extremely important to maintain within the LCD

Water Quality

The district has always taken a proactive approach to address water quality issues throughout the district. Rather than collecting water samples in rivers and streams this year, LCD board members decided to sponsor a program this fall to evaluate private landowners' domestic wells and springs for drinking water. The LCD provided test kits to interested cooperators for collecting water samples to be evaluated for fecal coliform, e-coli, and minerals etc. The LCD elected to pay for the fecal coliform and e-coli samples due to the health dangers that can result if present in drinking water. The LCD also paid 50% of the cost for combination testing of coliform, e-coli, and minerals with participants paying the remaining 50%. The LCD worked with an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) certified lab in Riverton, Wyoming, to complete the water quality analysis on the water samples. Thirty-five district cooperators participated in the program. Most samples had no problems; only five samples had positive hits for fecal coliform. Those who had positive hits were able to resolve the problem quickly by disinfecting their wells and springs by following recommendations from the Lincoln County Public Health Department and the EPA certified lab in Riverton. Due to the success of the program this fall, the LCD will sponsor the well and spring water sampling program again next year. Please visit the LCD website at lincolnconservationdistrict.org to keep

informed of on-going district activities. Domestic water testing dates will be posted on the website and local newspapers. By testing ground water, it will help identify water quality concerns on an area wide basis. Currently, nothing significant exists.

Water Conservation

Water conservation may not have taken a top seat this past fiscal year due to the heavy moisture received. It is, although, an important resource concern to continually address. Currently there are areas throughout Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona that are experiencing Dust Bowl Era type droughts. Weather conditions can change rather quickly in the LCD. It is therefore very important to have conservation measures in place to conserve and distribute irrigation water. Basically, the LCD works very closely with the Cokeville NRCS Field Office to promote and install water saving type conservation practices. Some of the NRCS' major water conservation practices installed last year were 6,293 feet of irrigation pipeline, 99 acres of irrigation sprinkler systems, and four major structures for water control. Also, under the EWP program, the NRCS repaired two large irrigation water control structures.



Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) repaired two water control structures

Conservation Easement Type Programs

It was the first in the district that several LCD cooperators took interest in conservation easement type programs offered by the NRCS. There were five requests received by the Cokeville NRCS Field Office for the Farm and Ranch Land Protection

Program (FRPP). Three of the requests were able to secure a sponsor and are in the process of being funded. Basically, the FRPP provides matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farm and ranch land in agriculture uses. Contact the Cokeville NRCS Field Office for additional details.



Conservation easements are an alternative to keep scenic agriculture land from being developed

Wildlife Concerns

Once again, the local NRCS and LCD offices worked with Trout Unlimited (TU) to install a couple of fish friendly water diversion structures on the Smiths Fork River. Since the Bonneville Cut Throat Trout in the Bear River Drainage is a state sensitive species, efforts are being taken so the trout does not get listed as a Threatened or Endangered species by the EPA. If listed, it could have major regulatory implications for LCD landowners.

Other District Accomplishments

It was a very productive year for the LCD. With the changes to the LCD board members, it took some extra effort to get programs running. The district once again assisted the Lincoln County Weed and Pest by helping distribute chemicals to local cooperators for weed control. The LCD also helped the US Forest Service Kemmerer Field Office by selling firewood, pole, and Christmas tree permits during 2011. 910 seedling trees and shrubs and 29 large burlapped wrapped spruce trees were sold through LCD's annual tree sales program to help with windbreaks and hedge plantings. The 2012 seeding tree and shrub program is already available. Anyone wanting applications or information on the program may contact the LCD office in Cokeville at 110 Pine Street or by calling

(307) 279-3256 to have applications mailed. Information will also be available on the district website.



Brenda Lazcanotegui was honored by the WACD as Area V Outstanding District Employee

One of the highlights for the past year was the WACD and LCD honoring Brenda Lazcanotegui as the Area V outstanding district employee. She also received recognition for 30 years of service with the LCD. Brenda has had numerous accomplishments over the years, including keeping all financial transactions, records and reports in excellent condition. She has promoted the LCD's seedling tree program, assisted with water quality monitoring for rivers and streams, helped with other land management activities, and recently organized the domestic water well and spring testing for rural drinking water. Brenda is a real asset to the LCD's programs and activities.

This was the year for the Cokeville NRCS and LCD Field Offices employee awards with DeMont Brad Grandy, NRCS District Conservationist, being selected as the Outstanding Conservationist for the State of Wyoming. This honor was bestowed during the Annual WACD State Convention held on Wednesday, November 16, 2011, in Lander, Wyoming. DeMont was honored for over 32 years of outstanding leadership in promoting natural resource conservation programs and practices on private and public lands throughout the LCD and the State of Wyoming. His knowledge and expertise reach all aspects of natural resources conservation and conservation application. He has used his knowledge and skills to train many younger NRCS employees, many of whom were in attendance at the awards ceremony and paid tribute

to DeMont for his assistance in preparing them for their positions in the NRCS. It was with sincere appreciation and deep admiration that DeMont was nominated for this award by the Lincoln Conservation District, the Uinta County Conservation District and the Sweetwater County Conservation District.

Appreciation is once again expressed to all county, state, and federal agencies, along with the diligence of district cooperators who installed conservation practices this past year. The LCD is also appreciative of the support and financial assistance the Lincoln County Commissioners give to district programs and activities.

The LCD also wishes to extend a special thanks to Wade R. Payne, NRCS Civil Engineering Technician, for all the assistance he provided to the LCD this past year by designing and installing conservation practices on district lands.



DeMont B. Grandy was honored by the WACD as the Outstanding Conservationist for the State of Wyoming

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Balance on Hand July 1, 2010	\$53,586.64
Receipts for FY 2010 - 2011	76,021.96
Expenditures for FY 2010-2012	61,266.58
Balance on Hand June 30, 2011	\$68,441.02

The Lincoln Conservation District is an equal opportunity employer, and offers all programs, services, and assistance on a non discriminatory basis, without regard to age, creed, marital status, national origin, physical or mental handicap, politics, race, religion, or sex.