

SHERIDAN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ANNUAL PLAN OF OPERATIONS FOR 2008

PURPOSE: The Annual Plan of Operations is to serve as a Guide to the District Supervisors, office personnel, employees and cooperating agencies for conservation activities to be carried out in the District in 2008. The major purpose of this plan of work is to set forth goals, needs, and activities which will result in reduced erosion and increased long term productivity of the district lands. These goals will be attained through the programs consistent with the environment, resources stewardship, water quality and economics of the time.

DISTRICT COMMITTEES:

LEGISLATURE _____ Tim Holte and Jeff Wivholm
YOUTH EDUCATION _____ Associate Supervisor, Steve Hove
RANGE, FORESTRY & PUBLIC LANDS _____ Kent Nathe
NATURAL ENVIRON. & WILDLIFE _____ Todd Marsh and Manuel Vazquez
WATER RESOURCES _____ Tim Holte
RESOURCE CONS. & DEVELOPMENT _____ Jon Bolstad
PUBLIC RELATIONS _____ Todd Marsh
RESEARCH _____ Rom Hedges
DISTRICT OPERATIONS _____ Jeff Wivholm

I. SOIL EROSION

OBJECTIVE: To reduce Sheridan County's wind and water erosion, to maintain air and quality and the productivity of the resource base.

GOAL: Reduce wind and water erosion on all soils within the district to a sustainable level of soil loss, and to maintain or increase organic matter. Reduce the erosion rates of other resources such as stream banks, roadside construction sites, etc.

1. Furnish rental of grass drills and tree planter, aerator and facilitate the use of mesh layer.
2. Support County Weed Board on both biological and chemical noxious weed control.
3. Encourage tree plantings, grass row barriers, waterways, alternative cropping systems, residue management etc., in erosion control measures. Work with NRCS on more total eco system planning, including economic analysis and follow-up prior to EQIP applications or approval.
4. Support Clean Water Act legislation to control water quality. Continue resource inventory and develop a plan within District watershed. Pursue CREP application along Big Muddy Creek to encourage grass seeding for buffers.
5. Continue information campaign through local media, radio and district newsletter concerning practices and ways of controlling soil erosion.

II. WATER CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVE: To promote the efficient and effective management of water and encourage optimum use with emphasis on sustaining Sheridan County's agricultural community for all residents.

GOAL: To efficiently and effectively monitor the use of the District's water supply, both urban and rural.

1. Apply for additional ground water. Continue to monitor Groundwater Study information to provide maximum use of quality water for all. Request yearly status reports on monitored aquifers.
2. Maintain records of Brine Study as it relates to groundwater supply in the district.
3. Utilize grant process to continue to maintain base of knowledge for oil site cleanup to demonstrate techniques and assist land owners.
4. Continue to monitor irrigation and water reservations so that aquifers are protected.
5. Work with DNRC and USFWS to enable water reservations to become operational. Utilize NRCS personnel to assist with process.
6. Continue to maintain records on baseline study.
7. Encourage Saline Seep control along with implementation of resource management plans, including cooperative efforts between adjacent producers.
8. Work with NRCS and other resource agencies in mitigation, restoration and replacement of wetland values. Emphasize value of wetlands in a water quality role. Utilize Wetland Reserve Program through NRCS.
9. Encourage water storage facility construction, emphasis on water for livestock utilizing grazing systems and economic analysis.

10. Stress the importance of using chemicals and recycling used containers according to label instructions to protect groundwater. Pursue alternatives to chemical use, with legumes.
11. Improve efficiency of water spreading and irrigation systems when economically feasible; encourage use of buffers to prevent downstream pollution and control erosion. Continue to encourage monitoring practices and provide equipment for measuring use.
12. Support Dry Prairie Rural Water Authority.
13. Assist in irrigation sprinkler efficiency testing and utilize flow meters to measure water use more accurately.
14. Provide technical assistance on state water rights.

III. GRAZING LAND IMPROVEMENT

OBJECTIVE: To reduce soil erosion, protect or improve water quality, and improve rangeland resources in the district.

GOAL: To reduce erosion on grazing and rangeland to acceptable levels by promoting grazing systems, rangeland restoration and water storage facilities.

1. Support wildlife habitat enhancement which fits producer's objectives and conservation plans.
2. Encourage rangeland renovation through EQIP, Rangeland Improvement Loans or without cost share, which is a part of a long range plan. Make available a range renovator to local operators.
3. One supervisor is a member of County Range Committee. Plan range tour. Tour topics prioritized by range committee.
4. Continue to stress the importance of the biological or chemical control of noxious weeds on range and grasslands as well as crop land.
5. Promote grazing systems with special emphasis on water or shelter developments which provide some protection of sensitive areas, such as riparian.
6. Support CRP renewal and sign-up on acres which would be of most benefit.

IV. LAND USE

OBJECTIVE: To assist local cooperators in development and implementation of conservation practices to protect important farm lands, range lands, wetlands, flood plains and direct programs to preserve an economic, but healthy agricultural community in the district.

GOAL: To work with NCRS and cooperators with resource management plans for the installation of conservation cropping systems, CRP, grazing and rangeland,

saline seep area, wetlands, etc. to fulfill the objective of protecting our lands.

1. Promote a variety of conservation practices that are economically feasible through the newsletter, radio and media to work toward erosion rates which are sustainable. Special emphasis on stewardship of the land.
2. One supervisor is a member of the County Planning Board and will work with the planning board.
3. Support tree planting on all croplands, rangelands, or wherever they may furnish habitat for wildlife or improve the country side. Encourage living snow fences by providing trees and mesh for new plantings and making the fabric mesh available for older plantings.
4. Continue to support planned youth tree projects for community beautification as well as erosion control and wildlife habitat. Follow-up on past years tree plantings.
5. Promote and encourage other more economic and environmentally friendly uses for land (including CRP or grass seed production) rather than sod busting. Use economics, long range resources plans, cost share promote best case uses of land.
6. Support continuing use of alternative crops for increased organic matter, nutrients, economic development, and long range sustainability.
7. NRCS will promote Integrated Crop Management (ICM) to educate and inform producers about insects, diseases, fertility, and crop management practices.
8. Pursue status and information regarding Carbon Sequestration.

V. SALINE SEEP

OBJECTIVE: To apply soil moisture management for salinity control to reduce loss of valuable cropland or rangeland to saline seep area and to improve water quality.

GOAL: Develop plans for cooperators with NRCS assistance through the Montana Salinity Control Association and follow-up on seep areas already identified by the association.

1. Continue to monitor seep areas drilled by the association for district cooperators.
2. Continue to support Montana Salinity Control Association. (MSCA).
3. Furnish information concerning saline seep formation and identification, causes and effects on water quality.

4. Recommend seeding in seep areas, even small ones that will reduce saline seep from spreading and/or control it.
5. Utilize Plant Material Center resources for experimental plantings.

VI. DISTRICT OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVE: To meet goals set forth in the Plan of Operations, provide information on conservation of natural resources within the district and to operate the district as a non-profit business organization.

GOAL: Cooperate with local, state and federal agencies to promote the conservation of natural resources with special attention to wind and water erosion, water quality, and the economical production of food and fiber. At the same time conduct the business of the district in an orderly manner and show support for all who make their living here.

1. Restructure the District Board of Supervisors at the first of the year.
2. Appoint committee chairman, and members for the following committee: Legislature; Youth Education; Range; Forestry and Public Lands; Natural Environment & Wildlife; Water Resources: Resource Conservation & Development; Public Relations; Research & District Operations.
3. Do Annual Plan of Operations early, January or February.
4. Submit Annual Report to required agencies, publish in the newsletter.
5. Primary report to MACD meeting in Oct-Nov.
6. Annual Report and new 2008 Plan of Operations by March 1, 2008 to MACD.
7. Review financial status of District, submit budget.
8. Review Memo of Understanding with FSA, NRCS.
9. Support membership in following:
 - a. Ag in Montana Schools
 - b. MACD
 - c. NACD
 - d. Mt. Salinity Control Association
 - e. Plant Material Center
 - f. Eastern Plains RC&D
10. Continue to support the following:
 - a. Research Farm
 - b. Youth Tree Program
 - c. Conservation Farmer Award
 - d. Youth Envirothon
 - e. Range Camps
 - f. Teacher Workshops, Mini-grants
 - g. Soil Study Programs

- h. Work Study Programs
 - i. NRCS trainee program
 - j. Volunteer program
 - k. Radio program and newsletter
11. Review Plan of Operations regularly to keep planned projects timely.
 12. Plan tours, informal workshops on timely topics.
 13. Support state and federal legislation concerning the welfare of the district and its citizens.
 14. Hold monthly meetings, attend area and state meetings, support local meetings, and hold special meetings when necessary.
 15. Continue Big Muddy monitoring, develop watershed plan and formulate watershed group.
 16. Continue to monitor wells and accept applications for water permits.
 17. Complete Capacity Building Funds grant.
 18. Run the District as a business and meet all deadlines in a timely manner.

Approval of Supervisors:

Chairman

Date: _____

Jeff Wivholm

Judy A. Benson, District Administrator