

## **Laramie Rivers Conservation District**

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# **Long Range Plan**

2004-2009

## **LRCO Supervisors**

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## **Mission Statement**

The Laramie Rivers Conservation District (LRCD) shall provide leadership for the conservation of Albany County's soil and water, promote and protect the quality of Albany County's waters, and promote sustained use of Wyoming's water and all other natural resources. LRCD shall also preserve and enhance wildlife habitat, protect the tax base, and promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of Albany County through a responsible conservation ethic.

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Specific objectives for meeting these goals are described in this plan of work. We, the Supervisors of the Laramie Rivers Conservation District, duly authorized by the Wyoming Conservation District Law, do hereby adopt the Long Range Plan for the years 2004-2009 as the guide for work priorities in this Conservation District.

We also acknowledge our special working relationship with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), with whom we share offices and cooperate regularly, both formally and informally, on most conservation issues.

# Summary of Goals

- 1. Maintain a dialog with the public:** Continually seek and incorporate public input for program development, implementation, and assessment; allow ample opportunity for constituents to voice concerns about natural resources so that LRCD may better address those concerns.
- 2. Locally led conservation:** Champion services related to conservation needs unique to the citizens of Albany County.
- 3. Natural resource conservation education:** Offer personnel and resources to promote an accurate and balanced understanding of natural resource issues.
- 4. Water quality and water conservation:** Foster the wise use of water resources, monitor water quality, and promote activities that improve water quality in Albany County.
- 5. The use of trees and shrubs to conserve soil and water:** Promote the planting of trees and shrubs as conservation tools by providing information, low-cost plant material, and technical expertise.
- 6. Range quality and soil conservation:** Encourage range and pasture improvements through technical assistance, outreach programs, and equipment rental.
- 7. Wildlife and wildlife habitat conservation:** Encourage wildlife habitat conservation and improvement while maintaining wildlife viability through education and cooperation with private and public stakeholders.
- 8. Promote the general well-being of the citizens of Albany County:** Explore new ways to foster the welfare of Albany County citizens with respect to natural resources and the environment.
- 9. Develop and foster partnerships:** Seek new professional collaborations and nurture current relationships with state, local, federal, and non-profit organizations to better meet the natural resources needs of the community.
- 10. Technical development of staff and supervisors:** Augment expertise of staff and board members to meet education outreach and technical services to the community.
- 11. Upgrade facilities and staffing to meet needs of our constituents:** Pursue adequate facilities and personnel to meet administrative needs of the District and to provide education outreach and technical services.

# Strategies for Meeting Goals

**1. Maintain a dialog with the public:** Continually seek and incorporate public input for program development, implementation, and assessment; allow ample opportunity for constituents to voice concerns about natural resources.

- Conduct all programs and services in compliance with non-discrimination policies and with full regard for the civil rights of customers and employees.
  - Include non-discrimination statement in all correspondence and publications.
  - Maintain detailed records of interactions with the public to ensure accountability.
  - Notify public of all LRCD public meeting through the website.
- Comply with all open meeting laws and encourage public participation in Board meetings.
  - Submit meeting notices to local newspaper.
- Provide opportunities for community input regarding District programs and services.
  - Invite public comments with quarterly newsletters.
  - Conduct bi-annual surveys to obtain written comments.
  - Conduct interviews with a cross section of knowledgeable Albany County citizens every five years.

**2. Locally-Led Conservation:** Champion services related to conservation needs unique to the citizens of Albany County.

- Provide support to citizens and businesses of Albany County through the LRCD cost share program.
- Support local open spaces initiatives, such as the Laramie Greenbelt.
- Support the sustainable use of natural resources on private and public lands in Albany County.
- Assist the County Planner with subdivision reviews and maintain an ongoing dialog with planning officials in the county.
- Review and provide input on proposed actions of state and federal agencies pertinent to Albany County.

- Review proposed Forest Service actions and provide input as needed.
- Review proposed Department of Environmental Quality permitting actions and provide input as needed.
- Provide input to state and federal agencies on land management policies as needed.
- Support the development of sustainable and renewable energy resources in Albany County.

**3. Natural resource conservation education:** Offer personnel and resources to promote an accurate and balanced understanding of natural resources.

- Develop and conduct programs for K-12 schoolchildren.
  - Conduct a minimum of ten school programs per year.
  - Participate in the annual Albany County Ag Expo.
  - Sponsor students interested in conservation camps.
  - Judge state and local science fairs as requested.
  - Participate in National Water Quality Monitoring Day.
  - Promote annual Soil Stewardship Week.
  - Provide support for the Wyoming Children’s Museum and participate in their Conservation Kids programs as needed.
  - Consult with LRCD’s partners for technical assistance as needed.
- Work with teachers in the Albany County School District to help develop their own natural resources conservation programs.
  - Make the Conservation District teaching materials available for examination and loan.
  - Plan outreach programs with teachers and provide follow-up materials so that LRCD programs may be incorporated into curricula.
- Develop and conduct programs for adult residents of Albany County.
  - Conduct a minimum of six programs per year.
  - Work with LRCD’s partners for technical assistance as needed.
- Keep local and state officials a informed of District programs and conservation issues.
  - Conduct a “legislator’s field day” biannually.

- Offer input to legislators for pertinent pending legislation.
- Maintain a dialog with pertinent city and county officials.
- Promote general awareness of natural resource conservation issues.
  - Publish and distribute a quarterly newsletter.
  - Inform local newspaper of pertinent conservation issues.
  - Sponsor media campaigns as needed.
  - Maintain a District web presence.
- Accommodate persons with handicaps or disabilities in all educational programs.

**4. Water quality and water conservation:** Foster the wise use of water resources, monitor water quality, and promote activities that improve water quality in Albany County.

- Work to conserve and use the water supply wisely.
  - Maintain communication and offer input to local and state officials for conservation and development of water resources.
  - Work with the Wyoming Water Development Commission on small water development projects as needed.
  - Offer assistance to public for water-wise practices.
  - Maintain a xeriscape demonstration plot.
  - Develop and participate in other water conservation programs as needed.
- Continue to monitor surface water quality in the Laramie Basin.
  - Conduct basic water quality sampling and analysis during spring runoff and base flow seasons.
  - Conduct benthic macroinvertebrate sampling every other year.
  - Conduct trace metal, nutrient, and hydrocarbon sampling and analysis as needed.
  - Maintain ongoing relationship with Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality to ensure that credible data are obtained.
- Offer assistance to private and public sector for implementing practices that reduce non-point source pollution and improve surface water quality.

- Act as a liaison between NRCS and cooperators in implementing best management practices.
- Help provide funding for implementing these practices through federal grant programs.
- Work with local government entities to educate public on ways to reduce pollution to surface and ground water.
- Communicate water quality and quantity issues to the public and work to bring stakeholders together to improve the watershed as a whole.
  - Hold public meetings to report on water quality and quantity status.
  - Convene watershed advisory groups to improve watershed conditions cooperatively.

**5. The use of trees and shrubs to conserve soil and water:** Promote the planting of trees and shrubs as conservation tools by providing information, low-cost plant material, and technical expertise.

- Promote tree and shrub plantings as conservation tools.
  - Include articles about tree and conservation plantings in the newsletter.
  - Plant and maintain high-profile living snow fences and wind breaks as examples.
- Provide trees and shrubs for conservation planting.
  - Hold annual sale for low-cost plant materials.
  - Offer low-cost larger trees for conservation plantings and ensure that discounted larger trees are not used for landscaping.
- Provide technical assistance for tree and shrub plantings.
  - Assist public with selection of species.
  - Assist with insect and disease problems of trees and shrubs.
  - Design and install living snow fences and windbreaks for the public.
  - Design and install water-efficient drip irrigation systems.

**6. Range quality and soil conservation:** Encourage range and pasture stewardship through technical assistance, outreach programs, cooperation with the NRCS, and equipment rentals.

- Cooperate with the NRCS in recruiting cooperators and implementing Farm Bill programs.
- Provide outreach programs and technical assistance to the public.
  - Offer educational programs for small acreage land owners.
  - Assist land owners with technical questions as needed.
- Maintain and rent equipment for range improvements.

**7. Wildlife and wildlife habitat conservation:** Encourage wildlife habitat conservation and improvement while maintaining wildlife viability through education and cooperation with private and public stakeholders.

- Work with NRCS in recruiting cooperators and reviewing applications for programs that preserve and enhance wildlife habitat.
- Work with US Fish and Wildlife Service and land owners to find solutions to challenges related to threatened and endangered species.
- Conduct and support wildlife education and outreach programs.
  - Support wildlife programs through the Wyoming Children’s Museum.
  - Conduct and assist with wildlife programs in the Albany County School District.

**8. Promote the general well-being of the citizens of Albany County:**

Look for new ways to foster the welfare of Albany County Citizens as issues with natural resources and the environment arise.

- Provide support for City/County beautification efforts in order to enhance economic development and quality of life in Albany County.
- Provide logistical support for addressing special health concerns, such as West Nile virus.
- Provide assistance for fire prevention efforts at the wildland-urban interface.
- Promote sustainable use of natural resources on private and public lands.
  - Work with state and federal agencies to promote sustainable grazing on public lands.
  - Work with state and federal agencies to promote sustainable forestry practices on public lands.
  - Work with private land owners to keep ranching viable and to foster open spaces.

- Provide funds and/or grant writing support to address community issues related to LRCD's mission as needed.

**9. Develop and foster partnerships:** Seek new professional collaborations and nurture current relationships with state, local, federal and non-profit organizations to better meet the natural resources needs of the community.

- Serve as a liaison for our constituents with local, state, and federal agencies, and private organizations to address natural resource issues in Albany County.
- Offer technical assistance to neighboring Conservation Districts as needed.
- Offer technical and networking assistance to local, state and federal agencies as needed.

**10. Technical development of staff and supervisors:** Augment expertise of staff and board members to meet education outreach and technical services to the community.

- Review training needs during budget sessions and employee reviews.
- Attend State and Area meetings of Conservation Districts.
- Discuss training opportunities at Board meetings as they arise.
- Budget funds for staff and board member training.

**11. Upgrade facilities and staffing to meet the needs of our constituents:** Pursue adequate facilities and personnel to meet administration needs, education outreach, and technical services in a fiscally responsible manner.

- Explore options for procuring adequate facilities to house District and NRCS operations when the current lease expires in 2007.
- Add one staff position once adequate facilities are procured.