



Natrona County Conservation District

2011 - 2015

Long Range Strategic Plan



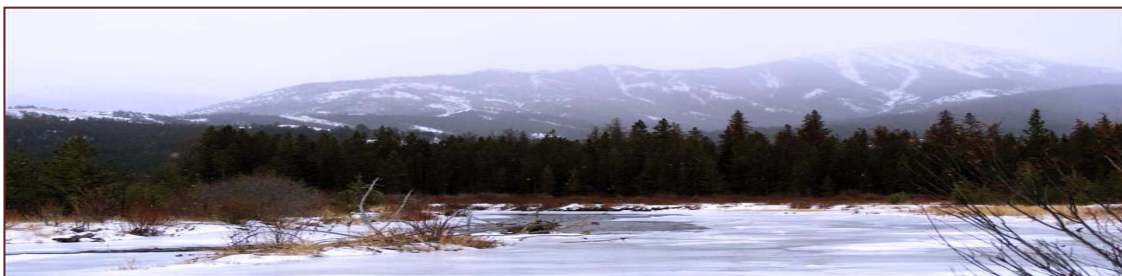
Midwest h/o.

Egerton Creek Oil Field Wyoming

CASPER, WYOMING. View southeast from center and First Street.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements & Partnerships	3
Preface	3
Natural Resource Perspectives	4
Natrona County Conservation District Mission	5
Legislative Authority.....	5
History of Natrona County Conservation District.....	6
Natrona County Conservation District Vision	6
Natrona County Conservation District Board of Supervisors	7
Natrona County Conservation District Staff	8
Natural Resource Conservation Service Partners	8
Core Values of the District Board	8
Strategic Goals & Objectives	9
District Operations & Administration.....	9
<i>Water Quality, Conservation & Management Goals</i>	9
<i>Range Management & Quality Goals</i>	11
<i>Public Education & Outreach Goals</i>	12
<i>Pursuit of Funding Resources</i>	14
Public Comment.....	15
Resolution Adoption	16



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A special thank you goes to Mary Schrader, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) District Conservationist, for her support and contributions to the projects and goals of Natrona County Conservation District.

We also thank these cooperating agencies who will provide us guidance and support to help carry out this plan:

Casper Alcova Irrigation District

City of Casper *

Farm Services Agency

Historic Trails Resource Conservation & Dev't

Kendrick Watershed Steering Committee

National Association of Conservation Districts

Natrona County Commissioners *

Natrona County Fair Board

Natrona County GIS Department

Natrona County Rangeland Mgt. CRM

Natrona County Weed & Pest

Natrona County Wildfire Mitigation

Natural Resource Conservation Service

Rural Living Team - Casper

University of North Dakota

University of Wyoming

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

UW Agricultural Resource & Learning Center

Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts

Wyoming Department of Agriculture *

Wyoming Dept of Environmental Quality

Wyoming Division BLM

Wyoming Game & Fish

Wyoming State Forestry

Wyoming Water Development Commission

*** Financial Contributors**

PREFACE

This publication is intended to describe the Natrona County Conservation District's values, vision, mission, and plan of action to conserve the District's natural resources through people involvement and the collaboration with various other organizations. The District's responsibility is to provide leadership in natural resource management programs, which will encourage improved stewardship of all resources as well as to enhance the environmental quality of our surroundings. This long range plan was reviewed and updated in December 2010 to become Natrona County Conservation District's Long Range Plan for 2011-2015.



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

All programs and assistance of the Natrona County Conservation District are available without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



NATURAL RESOURCE PERSPECTIVES



The Natrona County Conservation District plays a major role as a steward of the conservation of Natural Resources. Since the use of Natural Resources is such an integral part of our economy and culture, the Conservation District must focus not only on our Natural Resources, but also on the people and communities who are dependent upon them. **Natural resources include, but are not limited to, soil, water, land, trees, forest, grasses/range lands, wildlife and agriculture.**



If the concept of stewardship is understood and practiced in both rural and urban communities, it can become the bridge that reduces conflict and redirects attention toward common goals. Our most important common goal is "sustainable resource use". Our Natural Resource base is the foundation for a high-quality of life and healthy economy. Before we can become effective stewards of our Natural Resources, we must be aware of both the costs as well as the benefits of utilization of new conservation techniques, and be committed to new behaviors that support healthy Natural Resource systems and economies now and into the future.

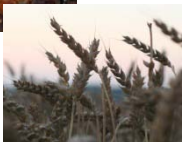
New information and research is changing environmental policies and a broad environmental ethic is emerging. Individuals, government, business, and industry are recognizing their responsibilities to sustain our Natural Resources. Our public is less tolerant of "no choice" exposure to environmental risks. They want more information about specific impacts and are demanding changes in environmental policies to minimize that risk. Everyone needs to make choices that will aid in improving the environment. Even though many of our environmental problems are worldwide in nature, we need to find solutions here at home, and strive to protect our environment for future generations.



Historically, agriculture has claimed a strong environmental ethic; however, much of our public no longer accepts this claim. The agricultural community is being inspected for verification of environmental consequences, and new technologies are being utilized to minimize agricultural contributions to degradation of the environment. Potential problem areas include possible degradation of riparian areas, soil erosion, water pollution and noxious weed infestations.



Natrona County Conservation District works closely with the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, Natrona County Weed & Pest, the University of Wyoming, and many others, to ensure that wise practices are utilized in farming, ranching and range management. **Agriculture bases its very existence on sustainable use of our Natural Resources, while the world's human population bases its existence on sustainable agriculture.** If you eat, you are a part of agriculture. Communities, organizations, institutions, and agriculturalists will have to work together managing renewable Natural Resource systems to ensure sustainability.





NATRONA COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT MISSION

The Natrona County Conservation District Board of Supervisors is committed to the wise use and conservation of our natural resources. The district will provide collaborative leadership, education and technical assistance to the people of Natrona County.



LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Wyoming's Conservation Districts were created in 1941, through Title 11, Chapter 16 of state statute, which states:

11-116-103 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 the deterioration of soil and its fertility and the silting and sedimentation of stream channels, reservoirs, dams, and ditches; that to conserve soil, and soil and water resources, and prevent and control soil erosion, it is necessary that land use practices contributing to soil erosion be discouraged and 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 soil and water resources of this state, and for the control and prevention of soil erosion and for flood protection or the conservation, development, utilization, and disposal of water, and thereby stabilize ranching and farming operations to preserve natural resources, protect the tax base, control floods, prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs, preserve wildlife, protect public lands, and protect and promote health, safety and general welfare of the people of this state.

~ 5 ~



HISTORY OF NCCD

During the 1930's and the Dust Bowl days it became very apparent that there was a need to conserve our soil, water and other natural resources in rural America. The President requested that all states pass legislation authorizing local conservation districts to be formed as local units of state government to direct programs for protecting local resources.

Congress passed the Soil Conservation Act in 1935, which created the Soil Conservation Service, which today is called Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The NRCS is a federal agency that provides personnel to work with local conservation districts in conservation planning and other technical matters.

Nationally, the first conservation district was formed in 1937 and today nearly 3,000 districts are working to conserve our natural resources.

Wyoming passed the Soil Conservation Act in 1941. Wyoming Conservation Districts started forming later that year. The original Casper-Alcova Conservation District was formed in 1946 with the boundaries of the newly created Kendrick Irrigation Project. That same year the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) placed an office in Casper to serve the new Conservation District.

There are 34 districts in Wyoming. Each has specific boundaries and is governed by elected people who live within those boundaries. Their responsibility is to conserve our soil, water and other natural resources.

After many boundary changes, the Casper-Alcova Conservation District has evolved to include all of Natrona County including the City of Casper. In order to reflect the broad responsibility of the District, the name was changed in 1993 to the Natrona County Conservation District.



NATRONA COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT VISION

We are in the midst of continuing a revolution in our society that is spawning changes as profoundly important as any born during the industrial revolution a century ago.

We recognize that the only constant is change and that change itself is nothing new. What is different now is the speed at which it overtakes us.

Rapid change challenges traditions. We must do more than simply adapt to what is happening all around us. To achieve the future we hope for, we must be proactive to influence the course of change.

The District's Board of Supervisors' vision for the future provides both a direction in which the District should move and the energy to begin that move. From that vision, the Board will develop necessary procedures and operations to create a future that is consistent with the goals of the people and within the capability of the resources.

Natrona County Conservation District is a leader in resolving Natural Resource Conservation issues such as water quality, watershed planning, efficient irrigation practices, community education, value added agriculture products and range management. The District also provides technical staff and equipment.

The District is providing Natural Resource Conservation learning opportunities to urban and rural people by sponsoring and promoting visits to field sites where successful practical applications of conservation practices can be seen.

The District is respected for its commitment, leadership and innovations in the wise use of our Natural Resources.

DISTRICT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

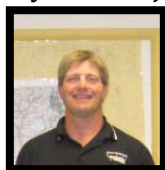
The Natrona County Conservation District is governed by an elected board of supervisors who meet monthly to provide leadership in the delivery of programs. The Board of Supervisors consists of three rural, one urban, and one at-large member. They serve staggered four year terms, with two positions available at a general election one year and three positions available at the next general election. 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 second Tuesday of each month at the NCCD office and are open to the public.

Current supervisors include:

Tom Walters, Chairman - Tom is a Wyoming Native. Tom has served on the Board of Supervisors for eight years. He grew up in Wyoming, graduated from the University of Wyoming with a Bachelor's Degree in Animal Science with a Minor in Agri-Business. Currently, Tom manages a cattle ranch south of Casper, Wyoming. The ranch is a cow/calf operation, and he raises hay to provide supplemental feed during the winter months. Tom is active in the County and the State Republican Party, as well as a member of the Central Wyoming Fair and Rodeo Board of Directors. Tom married Kade in 2009.



Tyrone Fittje, Vice-Chairman - Tyrone is a 9th Grade Physical Science teacher at Dean Morgan Junior High School. He has taught at Dean Morgan for 18 years and coached athletics during this time. Tyrone has served on the NCCD Board as Vice-Chairman for two years, and has been on the board for six years. Tyrone graduated from the University of Wyoming with a Bachelor of Science in Earth Science and Physics, as well as a Masters of Science in Natural Science. Tyrone has been married to Linda for fourteen years and has three children, Emilie, Diana, and Will. Tyrone is also active in the Lion's Club.



Kelly Burch, Secretary/Treasurer - Kelly, a Wyoming Native, grew up on a ranch in northeast Wyoming. He attended Campbell County Schools in Gillette, Casper College and the University of Wyoming, receiving an Associates of Science, Bachelor of Science, and Master of Science Degrees. Kelly taught high school vocational agriculture in Burns, Wyoming, for five years and served as the Livestock Judging Team coach at Casper College for 28 years. Kelly retired in 2006 and works on his ranch northwest of Casper. Kelly has been married to Gena for 35 years, and has two sons, Brock and Kolby.



John Bentley, Member - John is a Wyoming Native that is a member of a Wyoming pioneer family going back to Cy Iba, one of the founders of the Salt Creek Oil Field. For all his life, John has been involved in the family beekeeping and ranching, and has been a farmer in the Kendrick Project area since 1956. John has been married to Sandra for thirty-five years. John also serves on the County Committee for the Farm Services Agency.



Richard Hallingstad, Member - Richard is the newest member of the NCCD Board. Richard worked for Natural Resource and Conservation Service in Casper until he retired in December of 2008. While employed by NRCS, his main work entailed engineering of conservation projects, sprinkler systems, pipelines, pumping plants, etc. Richard attended college in Montana, and graduated with an Associate of Science in Mechanical Engineering Technology.



NCCD STAFF



Lisa Ogden, District Manager – A Wyoming Native, Lisa has lived in Wyoming for the majority of her life. She lives in Natrona County with her husband, Randy, of twenty years, and her boys, Ryan and Michael. Lisa has a Bachelor of Science in Zoology from the University of Wyoming, with a minor in Psychology.

NRCS & FSA PARTNERS



Adam Dossett – NRCS Area Civil Engineering Technician
Brian Jensen – Wyoming Game and Fish Department - Habitat Extension Biologist
Mary Schrader – NRCS District Conservationist
Cindy Stewart – Ultima Employee for NRCS
Deena McDaniels – FSA Program Technician
Shelly Anderson – Historic Trails RC&D Coordinator
Wanda McClain – FSA Program Technician
Shantel King – NRCS Natural Resource Specialist
Sue Willey – FSA County Executive Director

CORE VALUES OF THE DISTRICT BOARD

The following statements serve as the guiding philosophic foundation of the Natrona County Conservation District Board of Supervisors. We value:

- The wise use of all of our natural resources.
- Preservation of a way of life focusing on open spaces.
- Maintenance of professional production agriculture.
- The concept of Sustainable Agriculture.
- Voluntary participation in all District programs.
- Free access (or minimum cost) to District programs and services.
- Conservation of renewable natural resources for livestock use and ultimately food and fiber production.
- Conservation of natural resources for wildlife and improved wildlife habitat.
- The District's responsibility to learn and thus teach effective practical ways to conserve our natural resources, improve the land and instill a conservation ethic in the public.
- The importance of carefully locating and designing all conservation projects and being accountable for the outcomes of our work.
- The fact that urban and rural development should employ conservation strategies that will yield a "clean", prosperous environment by minimizing damage to soil and water resources.
- Education of the public about the goals of the Natrona County Conservation District.

~ 8 ~



STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Based on our investigation of District values, vision, mission and input from surveys and public meetings, the following persistent issues and opportunities emerged.

DISTRICT OPERATIONS & ADMINISTRATION

Goal #1: Natrona County Conservation District will be accountable for all public funds and ensure that all district programs are accomplished responsibly.

Objectives: *Operate and administer Natrona County Conservation District efficiently and accurately.*

- Prepare an accurate budget for good fiscal accounting.
- Meet all Wyoming Department of Agriculture and Wyoming Association of Conservation District state funding criteria.
- Hold monthly public board meetings.
- Attend Area Meeting and State Convention.
- Prepare and submit all quarterly and annual reports in a timely manner.
- Prepare an Annual Report and Plan of Work.
- Prepare a Long Range Strategic Plan every five years.

WATER QUALITY, CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT GOALS

Goal #1: The Natrona County Conservation District will serve as a leader in Watershed Planning efforts throughout the county.

Objective: *Provide assistance to small acreage farmers and subdivision developers with regards to watershed planning.*

- Utilize the Barnyards and Backyards publication to reach the small acreage landowners and developers.
- Work with homeowners associations to efficiently target larger numbers of the public.
- Provide assistance with developing and amending regulations with the county planning department to ensure proper water and wastewater design and use.
- Identify existing water use problems and possible solutions, utilizing NRCS as an active partner.

Objective: *Provide assistance to professional farmers in with regards to watershed planning.*

- Educate the professional farmer about efficient irrigation systems and practices.
- Obtain ownership and participation in planning steering committees.
- Promote alternative farming techniques.

Objective: *Develop watershed plans for Natrona County.*

- Continue to implement watershed plans that are currently in progress.
- Develop new plans as needed.
- Increase involvement with partners to enhance development of plans.

Objective: *Develop partnerships within the Kendrick irrigation project area.*

- Educate the public via the small acreage program.
- Partner with RC&D on Irrigation Water Management in Kendrick area.
- Partner with RC&D on a Renewable Energy Pivot Demonstration site.



Goal #2: The Natrona County Conservation District will serve as a leader in Watershed Implementation efforts throughout the county.

Objective: *Engage and support professional farmers and ranchers in their efforts to implement conservation plans.*

- Assist professional farmers and ranchers with conversion of irrigation systems.
- Support interest in alternative farming and ranching practices.

Objective: *Monitoring and Prevention.*

- Actively participate in the development of TMDL regulations.
- Continue water and soil quality monitoring.

Objective: *Utilize and increase partnerships.*

- Collaborate with local groups, organizations and individuals to share resources and strategies.

Objective: *Develop partnerships within the Kendrick irrigation project area.*

- Work with steering committees to meet goals set in Kendrick Watershed Plan.

Goal #3: Minimize damage and erosion in Natrona County from storm water and decrease storm water pollution.

Objective: *Promote proper landscaping to reduce the potential impacts of damaging storm waters.*

- Continue to promote tree and polymer sales.

Objective: *Develop storm water management plans.*

- Implement a proactive approach to prevent or minimize storm water pollution.
- Support and implement best management practices.
- Address animal waste pollution.
- Utilize Central Wyoming Fairgrounds and Nancy English Park as models for future storm water plans.

Goal #4: Address Legislative issues.

Objective: *The District will serve as a leader to help increase water conservation efforts among Natrona County Residents.*

- Support local, state and federal efforts.

Objective: *The District will stay current on private and public land issues and protection of rights.*

- Support local, state and federal efforts.

Objective: *Natrona County Conservation District Board will remain well informed on current natural resource issues.*

- Maintain high level of communication with current partners.



RANGE MANAGEMENT & QUALITY GOALS

Goal #1: Monitor conversion of agriculture lands.

- Objective:** *Track, document and make recommendations on urbanization and exurban sprawl throughout the county.*
- Review and comment on subdivisions.
 - Collaborate with County Planning Department.

Goal #2: Promote use of bio-solids for soil enhancement.

- Objective:** *Assist landowners with incorporation of bio-solid usage into farming and ranching practices.*
- Partner with NRCS to provide technical assistance to landowners.
 - Provide equipment to landowners.
 - Coordinate with Casper Public Utilities to effectively utilize bio-solids products.

Goal #3: Reduce soil erosion throughout Natrona County.

- Objective:** *Partner with NRCS to produce conservation plans.*
- Educate private producers about the benefits of conservation plans.
- Objective:** *Provide assistance with evaluation of development impacts on soil erosion.*
- Offer solutions or alternative practices to reduce soil erosion.

Goal #4: Preserve and promote healthy habitat for wildlife.

- Objective:** *Increase habitat options for wildlife.*
- Promote wildlife habitat with private property partners.
 - Promote native tree and shrub plantings for wildlife habitat.
 - Implement alternative water resources in isolated range lands.

Goal #5: Coordinate with and assist county partners to control prairie dog growth.

- Objective:** *Assist with prairie dog control and land restoration.*
- Assist with prairie dog population control.
 - Assist with reseeding the natural vegetation to encourage native growth of perennials and control annual weed growth.

Goal #6: Address Legislative issues.

- Objective:** *The Natrona County Conservation District will serve as a leader to help monitor rangeland quality in Natrona County.*
- Support local, state and federal efforts.
- Objective:** *The District will stay current on private and public land issues and protection of rights.*
- Support local, state and federal efforts.
- Objective:** *Conservation District Board will remain well informed on current natural resource issues.*
- Maintain high level of communication with current partners.



PUBLIC EDUCATION & OUTREACH GOALS

Goal #1: Educate Public Regarding Water Quality, Conservation & Management.

Objective: *Educate public about conserving water resources.*

- Host workshops and seminars for irrigators and small acreage land owners.
- Host workshops, seminars and festivals for general public.

Objective: *Educate the general public about personal impacts on storm water and storm water pollution.*

- Develop public service announcements (radio and T.V.) that target local storm water issues.
- Partner with the City of Casper and assist with their current and future storm water education efforts and campaign.
- Distribute literature containing information about storm water and storm water management.

Objective: *Provide Urbanization and Exurban Sprawl Educational Publications.*

- Generate educational publications for distribution to this emerging audience.
- Provide resources to local and state development authorities.

Objective: *Instruct Professional Farmers on new farming and ranching practices.*

- Educate professional farmers about irrigation systems and practices.
- Educate professional farmers about alternative farming and ranching techniques.

Objective: *Meet educational goals and requirement of Watershed Plans and Projects.*

- Implement educational requirements as outlined in Kendrick Watershed Grants.

Goal #2: Range Management & Conservation Education

Objective: *Inform land owners of cost-share programs for water development.*

- Partner with NRCS and FSA to provide newsletter articles about cost share opportunities related to water development on rangelands.
- Conduct informational meetings during the winter on how to access cost-share dollars.
- Meet with FSA to encourage more irrigation cost-share information in their monthly newsletter.
- Meet with the BLM and other public land management agencies.

Objective: *Educate landowner/users about the latest technologies available to develop water supplies on rangelands.*

- Conduct both winter and summer tours of successful water development and distribution projects.
- Provide information on water distribution tips.
- Conduct educational meetings to share the latest water development technology.
- Collect data on irrigation projects in Natrona County.

Objective: *Build coalitions with public land management agencies to coordinate water and animal distribution on rangelands.*



Goal #3: Strive to increase public awareness of NCCD and the resources offered by the District to the community.

Objective: *Implement a campaign to enhance public awareness of the District.*

- Develop public service announcements (radio and T.V.) that connect the District with local resource conservation issues.
- Develop and deliver power point presentations.
- Distribute Conservation District materials (pencils, bumper sticker, bookmarks, magnets etc.) to all children who participate in classroom education programs.
- Expand marketing effort at the Home and Garden show. Distribute litterbags, pencils, cups, magnets etc. with the Conservation District logo, name and mission.
- Expand literature, mailings lists and materials beyond agriculturalists to include rural subdivision residents, small acreage owners and all community leaders.
- Update and maintain district web site.
- Provide District highlights to partners for inclusion in partner outreach efforts.

Objective: *Foster strong communications with both current and new local partners.*

- Attend council, commission and planning meetings.
- Update council and commission annually on District accomplishments.

Objective: *Maintain visibility in the community.*

- Present at local clubs and service groups when possible to educate the community about the District and what it has to offer.

Goal #4: Adult Education and Outreach.

Objective: *Distribute educational materials throughout the community regarding conservation issues.*

- Distribute brochures, flyers, and publications with information about endangered species, trees for conservation, soil and water information, and proper planting techniques, as well as any local or pertinent information.

Objective: *Host training seminars for current and emerging technologies.*

- Facilitate community meetings for distribution of information on new conservation implementation options (i.e. solar panel utilization, high tunnel gardening).



Rural Living Team

Goal #5: Youth Education and Outreach.

Objective: *Educate youth to be good stewards of Natural Resources.*

- Participate in Ag in the Classroom activities.
- Participate in World Water Monitoring Day each September.
- Develop and host NACD Stewardship week activities.
- Present EnviroScape demonstrations activities in the schools.
- Present the Healthy Watersheds, Casper Mountain GIS and other PowerPoint presentations to school groups.
- Prepare PSA's for TV and radio directed at youth about District activities and natural resource stewardship.



Goal #6: Educate elected officials and leaders.

Objective: *Host Elected Officials function each year.*

- Educate elected officials on past, present and future District accomplishments.
- Sponsor and mail subscriptions of the Barnyards and Backyards publication to elected officials to keep them current on agricultural activities.
- Maintain open communication with elected officials on current natural resource issues.



PURSUIT OF FUNDING RESOURCES

Goal #1: Garner sufficient funding to support District activities with attention paid to an ever-increasing workload.

Objective: *Maintain State Funding from Wyoming Department of Agriculture.*

- The District will be diligent about supplying State funding criteria to the WACD and WDA in order to maintain State Funding.

Objective: *Pursue local funding.*

- Present District accomplishments and request local funding from the Casper CPU Advisory Board annually.
- Present District accomplishments and request local funding from the Natrona County Commissioners annually.

Objective: *Ensure proper grant management.*

- The District will be diligent in its management of grants that are written and maintained by the District.
- Proper administrative fees will be allocated to grants written and maintained by the District.

Objective: *Encourage sales of seedling trees for conservation, as well as rain barrels and composters.*

- Promote sales of seedling trees to local landowners for wind breaks, bio-filtration berms, or erosion control.
- Encourage use of rain barrels and composters for conservation



Public Comments



Resolution of Adoption

This Long Range Strategic Plan, as developed and prepared by the NCCD Board of Supervisors, in cooperation with individuals and other organizations, is hereby adopted as the official work program of the Natrona County Conservation District.

We believe that this plan will provide a comprehensive means of coordination of the efforts of landowners, operators and natural resource users in Natrona County.

Thus, we hope to ensure proper use of all lands and natural resources to meet objectives through the application of proper conservation principles and practices.

Tom Walters, Chairman

Date

Tyrone Fittje, Vice-Chairman

Date

Kelly Burch, Treasurer

Date

John Bentley, Supervisor

Date

Richard Hallingstad, Supervisor

Date

