CRM GUIDELINES

1. CRM is strictly a VOLUNTARY program.

2. It should be LANDOWNER initiated. It is imperative that local landowners accept and support natural resource management strategies, goals and objectives, and if possible, landowners take the leadership. If this does not happen, CRM will not be successful.

3. All interested or concerned agencies, organizations and interest groups must be INVOLVED. They must have ownership and be part of the CRM committee. If these entities are not involved, they will create roadblocks and shoot at your plan.

4. FACILITATION. The CRM committee should be facilitated by a neutral party who is knowledgeable about natural resource management and facilitation. The facilitator must constantly focus on common goals and neutralize "big mouths, aggression and arguments."

5. GROUND RULES need to be established by group consensus, before the team starts working together and can be modified or revised at any time to help establish a safe environment and allow for a fair process. GROUND RULES establish guidelines of behavior for the group and can be considered as "rules of conduct" for participants.

6. COMMON GOALS must be developed at the very beginning of the CRM process. Focus on goals before tools. Talk about what you want from the area (such as clean water, healthy vegetation, wildlife, etc.) before you talk about how to obtain them (i.e. fences, roads, livestock, etc.). This allows you to open the lines of communication and create middle ground.

7. All agency and organization representatives must have the AUTHORITY to speak and make decisions for their respective entities. If not, a lot of time is wasted getting approval and much confusion is created due to misunderstanding.

8. MANAGEMENT BY CONSENSUS. All CRM committee members should agree on management decisions. This prevents "stacking the deck" such as an interest group constantly voting against an individual or other interest groups to get their way. Every resource manager deserves respect regardless of differences of opinion, goals or objectives. We must focus on our common goals and work to achieve them.

9. NEEDS VERSUS POSITION. Focus on what management practices are currently needed to improve the natural resource and not the agency policies or positions that have been implemented in the past. Laws and regulations are always flexible enough to implement practices that are needed or will provide the biggest benefit to the resource.

10. Create a TEAM. Develop an understanding among committee members and build trust. This is probably the hardest goal to achieve and usually requires team building training.

11. COMMITMENT. All CRM committee members must be committed to the process. They must fell needed and have something to contribute. There must be respect among committee members and everyone must have ownership in the plan. There must be a sense of accomplishment and progress.

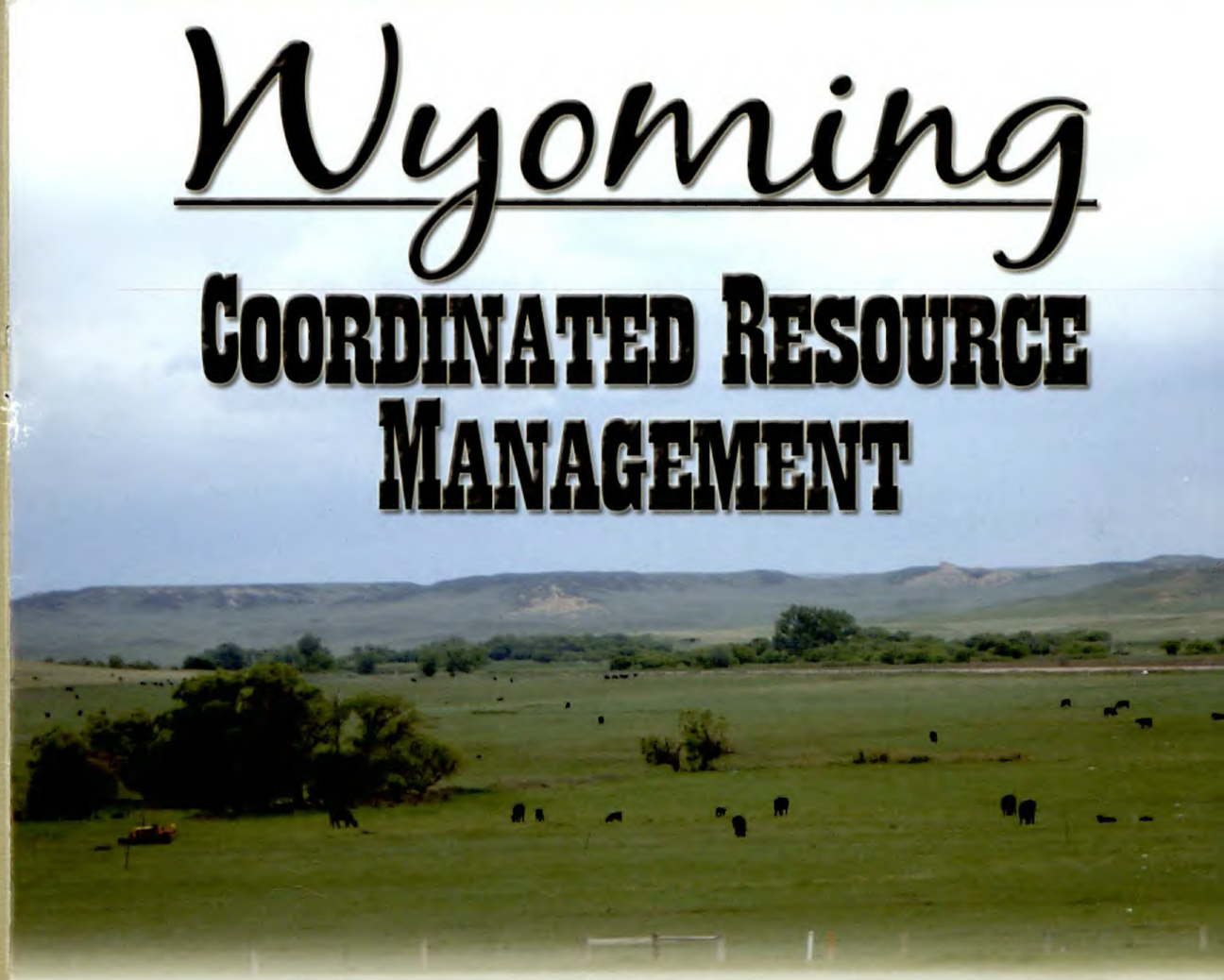
12. MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES must be developed and prioritized. Objectives should be measurable, attainable and strive toward accomplishing common goals. An ACTION PLAN should then be prepared to identify who, when, where and what will be accomplished. Assignments should be given to individual committee members and subcommittees should be formed to accomplish separate tasks.

13. MONITORING is very important to provide baseline data and to provide direction in accomplishing goals and objectives. If monitoring indicates downward trends, then replanning can take place to get back on track.

14. FLEXIBILITY must be in the CRM plan to allow for drought, floods, ownership changes, declining range conditions, etc.

Wyoming

COORDINATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



LOCAL PEOPLE ADDRESSING LOCAL ISSUES

DAVE FREUDENTHAL
GOVERNOR

THE STATE OF WYOMING

STATE CAPITOL
CHEYENNE, WY 82002

Office of the Governor

Dear Friends,

Wyoming Coordinated Resource Management helps folks work together in effectively managing natural resources – at the local level.

We in Wyoming have been leaders in developing, implementing and promoting CRM in the West. The partnership approach envisioned by the CRM process brings our environmental values – agriculture, fish and wildlife species, habitat, forests, livestock production, recreation, soil condition, water quality, culture, economics, energy, history – to bear on finding solutions to questions of resource management.

This brochure spotlights several of the many successful CRM projects that have improved our land, providing for short- and long-term sustainability. I hope you find this instrument for conservation and sustainable growth to be a useful tool in your efforts.

Preserving our past and investing in our future require committed teamwork, from landowners, managers and users, in developing proper stewardship policies for Wyoming's natural resources. The CRM process provides the framework to achieve that goal.

This publication is designed to serve as a catalyst for your own CRM project. Please consider CRM as you work toward enhancing the lands of Wyoming.

Sincerely,

Dave Freudenthal
Governor

TTY: 777-7860 PHONE: (307) 777-7434 FAX: (307) 632-3909

More CRM Information

For more information, contact the Wyoming Department of Agriculture Natural Resources and Policy Division 307-777-7323 wycrm@state.wy.us

To obtain an application, you may call the number listed above or download one from http://wyagric.state.wy.us/divisions/nrp/crm

For more detailed information on CRM, you may peruse through the Wyoming CRM Workbook at http://wyagric.state.wy.us/divisions/nrp/crm or call the number listed above.

The CRM Executive Committee provides support and guidance for the program. The nineteen members represent a wide variety of interests and prospectives. Representation includes:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Land Management
- Landowners (3)
- Oil and Gas Industry
- Public Lands Council
- Resource Conservation Special Interest Group
- State Grazing Board
- State Lands and Investments
- University of Wyoming
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Forest Service
- Weed & Pest Districts
- Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust
- Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts
- Wyoming Department of Agriculture
- Wyoming Game & Fish Department
- Wyoming Wildlife Federation

A Word from the WDA Director

The Wyoming Department of Agriculture is very proud of the success the CRM planning process has achieved. Local people identifying and developing management plans to solve local issues is a formula that has worked well for Wyoming citizens. Through open communication, healthy dialogue, and management by consensus, the CRM process has given private, as well as, public landowners and land managers the opportunity to work together to enhance and improve Wyoming's natural resources.

Jason Fearneyhough

Steps to getting a CRM Started

1. CRM program request to Wyoming Department of Agriculture from private or public entity.

2. Private and public landowners and managers, resource managers and others in the general planning area invited to initial meeting.

3. Following the initial meeting, consensus must be reached by the landowners present to continue.

4. Define specific planning area; list issues problems and concerns; list goals and objectives.

5. Determine information available and needed, including maps and resource data.

6. List all problems on one sheet and all objectives on a separate sheet.

7. Use checklist to make sure all resources have been considered.

8. List each objective on a separate sheet. List all actions needed to accomplish it. Identify priority of each action item.

9. For each action, list the who, what, when and how long information; organize it into a logical sequence to meet the objective.

10. Decide by consensus when and where to start action items.

11. Reevaluate the plan to determine if it will really solve the problems listed.

12. Set up a system to maintain and monitor actions.

13. Implement the Plan and locate funding sources.

14. Schedule annual reviews of progress, accomplishments, problems, new objectives and layout the coming year's work.

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Coordinated Resource Management Origin and Purpose

The Wyoming CRM program was initiated and developed by a wide variety of agencies, groups, and individuals interested in the wise use of natural resources in Wyoming. Our state consists of large amounts of public lands intermingled with private lands which makes resource planning difficult. Wyoming CRM was formulated and designed as an approach to improve cooperation and coordination of landowners, users, and managers in making decisions about how natural resources can best be used and managed. It was designed to increase communication and trust among the decision-makers of Wyoming's natural resources.

Governor's Forum on CRM. January, 1998

This approach uses the best efforts and knowledge of everyone involved - private landowners, interested federal and state management agencies, and other specialists. As a group they inventory the planning area, analyze the information available, and identify and define common goals and objectives. Next, they evaluate management alternatives and opportunities, arrive at management decisions which are acceptable and suitable, prepare a written plan, implement the decisions, monitor results and revise as necessary.

Coordinated resource management is a **voluntary, private landowner-initiated and driven**, planning process that establishes resource goals by consensus.

CRM emphasizes the importance of resource management for the landowner or manager who must make responsible land management decisions. At the same time it provides for the maximum use benefits of local and national interest. CRM is an approach to natural resource management conducted by local people familiar with the planning area. Specialists from outside the local area may assist by providing information, but only those people involved at the local level can make lasting decisions that remain in effect because of mutual trust in each other and faith in the value of the process.

Primary CRM Fundamentals include:

1. Voluntary, private landowner initiated and perpetuated.
2. Multiple use issues among at least two different landowners.
3. Invitation for participation/attendance at CRM meetings is requested by the landowner(s) driving the process.
4. Membership on the local CRM steering committee is composed of decision makers on the CRM issues.
5. Consensus among the members of the steering committee is a goal, but not a requirement.
6. CRMs must include internal and/or external processes for periodic evaluation of progress and of technical and economic feasibility of proposed decisions on the issues.

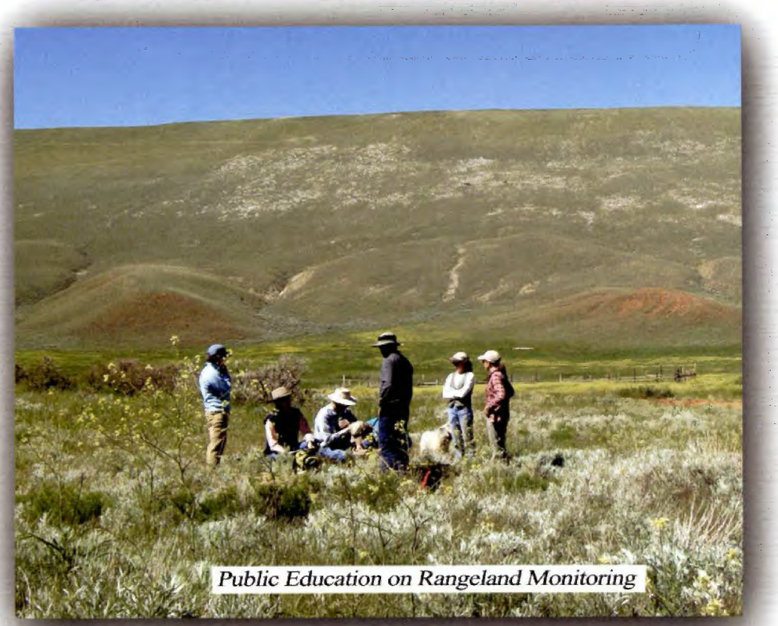
Red Canyon Ranch Resource Management Project

ture and riparian areas. Grazing is viewed as a key ecological process that is used as a tool to maintain or improve habitat for target plant and wildlife species.

Moose, beaver, elk, mule deer, bobcats, weasels, antelope, mountain lions, black bears, and birds of prey are among the many wildlife species found on the ranch. Seventy-seven species of neotropical songbirds migrate to Red Canyon Ranch to nest and rear their young. Sage grouse and mule deer have been identified as key species for specific management efforts to increase numbers and improve habitat.

The Red Canyon area is the only place in the world where Barneby's clover (Trifolium barnebyi) is found. Other rare plants include Wyoming townsendia, Rocky Mountain twinpod, Beaver Rim phlox, Fremont's bladderpod, Payson's beard-tongue and persistent sepal yellowcress.

Ecological monitoring and scientific research are important components of the Red Canyon Ranch CRM. Numerous monitoring sites have been established to track ecological trends. Ongoing studies assess effectiveness of rangeland monitoring methods, impacts of livestock grazing on riparian and in-stream habitat, post-fire spread and control of invasive weeds and dynamics of hydrological systems on the ranch.


Public Education on Rangeland Monitoring

An integral part of Red Canyon Ranch is education. Courses and programs are conducted both in the natural landscape and at the Red Canyon Ranch Learning Center. Field trips to the ranch are common and internships and volunteer oportunities are available.

Red Canyon Ranch Coordinated

Red Canyon Ranch is a project of The Nature Conservancy dedicated to enhancing biological diversity and protecting native plant and animal species while continuing sustainable livestock production.
Red Canyon Ranch, located 15 miles south of Lander, consists of approximately 5,000 acres of deeded land and 30,000 acres of federal and state lease land. The area was homesteaded by several families in the mid-1800s and still remains in agricultural production. The ranch was acquired by The Nature Conservancy in 1993.

A working CRM group has been an integral part of ranch management decisions since 1994. The Red Canyon Ranch CRM group consists of TNC, two additional federal grazing permittees, interested community members and federal, state and local government agencies. Short-term and long-term management decisions concerning grazing, riparian areas, biological diversity, wildlife habitat, research and outreach are guided by the CRM process. The existence of the CRM group has allowed for flexibility and continuity through a large wildfire, severe drought and several changes in ranch staff.

Implementing Grazing Plan

The Nature Conservancy's management philosophy on Red Canyon Ranch focuses on balancing revenue generation, conservation of biological diversity and quality of life. To that end, Red Canyon Ranch remains a working cattle operation that demonstrates responsible, economically viable livestock grazing can co-exist with high quality wildlife habitat, healthy ecosystems and rare plants.

The CRM implements a rotational grazing system which utilizes 21 pastures, and includes Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, state lands and deeded lands. The rotation focuses on intensity, duration and season of use to conserve sensitive pas-

History

Anytime there is something to manage, there will be opposing views as to the proper methods. The challenge lies in the analysis of opposing views by all who have a say in the management duties and coming to a consensus on how management should proceed to accomplish the established goals. The negotiation, education, and cooperation of the various people that have a say in the management sometimes becomes the limiting factor in moving forward. Management of the vast natural resources in Wyoming creates many management conflicts among those users of the resources. Successful management can work through these conflicts and work to overcome the delicate balance of resources when landowner-driven collaborative efforts are engaged. This is where CRM comes to play.

CRM is a rich blend of cooperative and collaborative management techniques that have evolved over the past fifty plus years. By name, the CRM approach to land management originated in the early 1950s when "Speed" Agee and "Chet" Cleary of the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) established a model program in northeast Nevada. E. William Anderson, also working for the SCS, simultaneously pioneered a similar approach in Oregon.
In the early 1970's, the increasing demand for natural resources and their by-products intensified the conflicts between interest groups, land users, and agencies. This prompted the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between SCS, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service (FS), and Cooperative Extension Service (CES) which sanctioned and encouraged CRM nationwide. The MOU has been updated several times since its inception.

CRM was first initiated in Wyoming in 1982 when the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Soil Conservation Service (now the Natural Resources Conservation Service), and the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service entered into a MOU designating CRM as the natural resource planning process for Wyoming.

Wyoming then initiated the Stewardship Program in 1983 and 1984 to implement the process. Four landowners enrolled in the program initially: Bill Taliaferro, Rock Springs; Bob Grieve, Savery; Sun Ranch, Rawlins; Hamilton Ranch, Hyattville. State and federal agencies and other interested parties were directly involved in the planning process. Although many of the stewardship plans succeeded and some are still ongoing, those involved felt a need to revise the program.

The Wyoming Department of Agriculture assumed leadership for the CRM/Stewardship Program in 1990. The original concepts were strengthened with over 40 representatives of governmental agencies, agricultural and environmental organizations and other interests met to improve the process and restate its objectives. Under this newly formed Executive Committee, the Stewardship Program and Coordinated Resource Management were combined. CRM training was conducted at the local level with support from landowners, governmental agencies and private organizations. Much of Wyoming's CRM success can be attributed to the advice of the broad-based Executive Committee.

The Wyoming Department of Agriculture continues to fully support the CRM program. "In today's social and political climate, it is more important than ever that local landowners work collaboratively to establish a plan for resource management issues," said Leanne Stevenson, chair CRM Executive Committee and WDA representative. The committee recognizes that there are other collaborative processes that work in some cases, but believes that it is vitally important to remain faithful to the core CRM fundamentals for continued success when implementing a CRM plan.

Coordinated Resource Management Goals, Objectives and Benefits

Goals

The goal of a CRM is to:

Develop and implement an individual management plan that will improve natural resource values for all users and promote quality natural resource management through collaborative efforts.

Objectives

The stated objectives of CRM are to:

1. Encourage coordination and cooperation of natural resource management efforts between local land owners and permittees and local land management agencies and personnel;
2. Provide for optimum public and private benefit from the land and its resources;
3. Improve or maintain natural resources for the benefit of domestic livestock and wildlife, watershed values, water quality improvement, wetland and riparian management, recreational opportunities, and other uses important in the CRM area;
4. Provide for more locally-focused public involvement on public land natural resource management decisions;
5. Allow decisions to be made focusing on what is good for the resource, rather than what is good for a single interest; and
6. Improve natural resource values for all users.

Potential benefits to landowners/producers

- Increase the opportunity to facilitate project authorization
- Increased availability of outside funding
- Increased availability of human resources (more help)
- Reduce risk of lawsuits and appeals through increased monitoring, involvement of outside people and increased exposure and recognition of good management
- Flexibility to use sound judgment as a management tool
- Management of invasive species

Proven resource benefits

- Fishery habitat improvement
- Wildlife habitat improvements
- Forage increase for domestic livestock
- Increased profitability of ranching operations
  1. Increased resistance to drought
  2. Stabilized stocking rates
  3. Stabilized conception rates
- Increased understanding, communication, and involvement
- Economic gains to all land users
- Drainage outflow reduction
- Fire hazard reduction
- Agricultural crop improvement
- Watershed enhancement
- Improved water quality and quantity
- Improvement of irrigation systems
- Range improvement
- Timber improvement
- Improved recreation opportunities

d Resource Weed Management Project

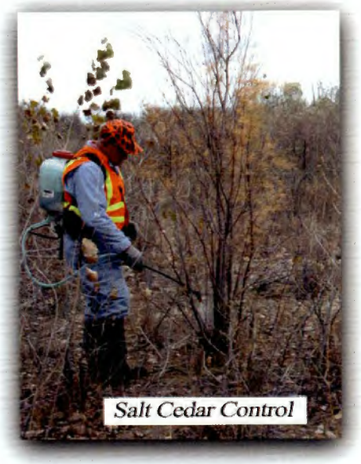
Funding sources over the fifteen year period includes $111,000 from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, $6,000 from the Wyoming Private Grazing Lands Team of which $5,000 was used towards controlling noxious weeds outside the perimeter of the project and $1,000 towards the Wyoming Stock Growers Tour, $1,000 from the Two Shot Goose Hunt for education, $5,000 from Dow Agro Science for the initial inventory, $20,000 in-kind services from the Goshen County Weed Board, $100,000 from the Wyoming Wildlife & Natural Resource Trust, $179,000 from the Wyoming State allocation committee, and matching funds from state, federal and private land managers, including over $190,000 from the BLM.

The success of this project was attributed to a strong commitment to work together by county, state, federal and private individuals using grant money as cost share funding to help reduce the costs Also contributing to this remarkable success was the attainment of results exceeding projected goals sooner than planned and the education of the public to gain a better understanding on how noxious weeds can be so detrimental to our quality of life.

The most exciting part of the project is receiving the "2002 Environmental Stewardship Award" from the Wyoming Stock Growers Association. This included a plaque and a Stock Growers sponsored tour of the weed management area on June 26, 2002. This project has also been involved in a second Environmental Award in Goshen County.

Benefits Realized:

- Goals were set and reached sooner than planned.
- Cooperation between partners has strengthened relationships for benefits outside the CRM.
- State and national attention has been over-whelming.
- The GCCRM has served a "blueprint" for many other CRMs across the nation and around the world.
- Protecting and increasing water resources, wildlife, wildlife habitat, and native species.
- Stopping or slowing the spread of the invasives.
- Helping to maintain an "open" river channel to assist in minimizing potential flooding.



Salt Cedar Control

This award went to Thaler Land and Cattle Company managed by Dennis Thaler. They went on to receive top honors in the Region and were named as the 2006 National Environmental Stewardship Award Program Award winner.

A lot of time has been spent on this project - hard work and a commitment by all to accomplish something good for our community. There is a mutual interest in keeping it going and expanding as long as the problem exists and resources are available.

Other collaborators: National Fish & Wildlife Foundation,Wyoming Wildlife & Natural Resource Trust, Wyoming State Allocations Committee, Wyoming Department of Agriculture, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, Wyoming Department of Transportation, University of Wyoming & University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service, Goshen County Conservation Districts, Goshen County Weed & Pest Control District, U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Fort Laramie National Historical Site, U.S. Department of the Interior, Northern Great Plains Exotic Plant Management Team, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, APHIS, Platte River Invasive Species Task Force, National Wild Turkey Federation, Private Sportsmen's Clubs, Goshen County Landowners, Industry, other interested individuals & county agencies

Goshen County, Wyoming Coordinate

Increasing populations of noxious and invasive plants in Goshen County, Wyoming led to the formation of the Goshen County Coordinated Resource Management Project (GCCRM) in 1994. Goshen County is located in the south eastern part of Wyoming about 85 miles north of Cheyenne, WY.

Pulling Russian Olive Trees

Private landowners joined forces with other land management agencies and partners to set goals and objectives for the GCCRM where they were implemented as an IPM plan to meet the challenge. Protecting and increasing water resources, wildlife, wildlife habitat, and native species; checking the spread of the invasives and helping to maintain an "open" river channel to help minimize potential flooding are all part of the plan.

The GCCRM has been expanded to include 4 areas covering over 150,000 acres of rangeland, crop, non-crop, hi-ways, county roads, irrigation ditches and some of the best habitat and recreational land in Wyoming and the United States. Over 250 county, state, federal personnel and private land managers are working together to improve the quality of life in Goshen County, Wyoming.

Initial salt cedar management was started in 2006 on the North Platte River and its tributaries, with over 172 miles of river area covered. Initial Russian olive management was started the summer of 2007 and continues today with over 600 acres treated. Maintenance / follow-up treatments will be continued to manage these invasive species. Once the initial work on the North Platte River has been completed, the tributaries that feed into the North Platte River, other ponds, and riparian areas throughout the county where Russian olive and salt cedar are problematic will be treated as well.

There are now over 168 private land managers signed up to participate. Others partners involved include the Wyoming Game and Fish, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), irrigation districts, railroads, Wyoming Department of Roads and various county agencies.

The CRM started with four objectives.

1. Develop a county-wide commitment to control noxious weeds.
2. Reduce weed acreage by 20% in five years (of which over 50% was reached in two years).
3. Develop a long-term plan including prevention, early detection, public awareness, education and training.
4. Up-date and refine the noxious weed inventory, starting with the initial inventory of Area I then II and III plus survey and inventory all areas every other year.

The weeds first controlled included musk thistle, Canada thistle, field bindweed, and Russian knapweed. The GCCRM has now expanded to include the complete Wyoming designated noxious weed list.

The GCCRM committee is committed to:

a. improve and maintain the health and productivity of range and pasture grazing lands,
b. improve and maintain the economic viability of agriculture production in the county, and
c. improve and maintain the health of the riparian areas and public lands for wildlife and public use.

The Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach is used to accomplish the goals. This includes chemical control (using backpacks, airplanes and ground rigs to spray herbicides specific to the weed species), biological control (bio-agents specific to the weed species), mechanical (mowing), cultural (competitive grass seeding) and education including public meetings, youth involvement, newspaper and magazine articles and production of a training video.

Kirby Creek CRM

The Kirby Creek Coordinated Resource Management (CRM) is a watershed based CRM plan located in eastern Hot Springs County. It covers more than 128,000 acres, of which 60% is BLM, and 40% is state and private.

The Kirby Creek area was settled in the 1880's when Kris Kirby brought 2,000 head of cattle from western Oregon into the area. Later Lucy Moore "The Wyoming Sheep Queen" located her headquarters along Kirby Creek.

In 1999, several of the Kirby Creek ranchers and land managers became concerned over the Department of Environmental Quality's proposed listing of Kirby Creek as impaired due to e-coli. After several meetings, the planning group decided that the CRM process was the proper tool needed to establish best mangement practices that would address needed management changes in both livestock and wildlife use of the watershed.

The Kirby Creek CRM membership consists of:

- 80% of the private landowners owning 95% of the private land
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Three Pipeline Companies
- Hot Springs Conservation District
- Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Wyoming Game & Fish Department
- Wyoming Department of Agriculture
- Hot Springs County Weed & Pest
- Hot Springs County High School
- UW Cooperative Extension Service

The CRM planning group decided to have a Level One Study done by the Wyoming Water Development Commission. The study identified several off-site developments and in-stream projects to help in the effort to reduce e-coli loads to the stream.

One project restored irrigation water to 190 acres through an in-stream structure that also stopped an eight foot head cut that would have eventually taken out a portion of a county road. Several other projects include spring developments, water pipelines, reservoirs, and cross fencing riparian pastures.

Keeping the ranching operations economical was a goal of the CRM so funding became an issue. The CRM planning group obtained funding from several sources including NRCS (programs such as EQIP, AMA, and others), the Wyoming Wildlife & Natural Resource Trust, DEQ 319 Funding, WWDC Small Water Project Funds, a WDA Grant and other sources.

Between the matching grants and private funds, over two million dollars have been spent by the CRM partners on projects to improve the watershed. When at all possible, money was spent using local contractors and suppliers to contribute to the local economy.

Lucy Moore Stream Restoration Project before

Lucy Moore Stream Restoration Project after

Jones Irrigation Dam

Willow Creek Coordinated Resource Management Plan

Willow Creek Coordinated Resource Management Plan (WCCRMP) Team Members began working together in 1994. Currently, four permittees and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) remain active. The original members are still held in reserve to consult and assist with resource and educational projects.

The existing long-term benefits are:

- The key long term benefit that has evolved with this CRM is the basic level of trust between the permittees and the BLM that allows flexibility of management based on resource condition
- The ability to use adaptive management practices to respond to annual weather and market fluctuations
- The ability to use flexibility in grazing schedules to accommodate mid-season variations in vegetative conditions and moisture levels
- Actual use billing privileges payable at the end of each season
- Supportable and defensible management decisions based on increased and established monitoring data and recognition of good management
- Increased funding opportunities
- Stabilized stocking rates
- Increased availability of human resources for education and resource projects
- A showcase of biodiversity for educational tours and programs

Long term resource/economic benefits realized from the WCCRMP are:

- Increased upland water storage
- Increased volume and diversity of plant species
- Increased stream bank stabilization
- Increased resistance to drought
- Improved water quality and quantity
- Increased diversity in seral stages of sagebrush
- Vegetative projects and management activities near water sites attract strutting sage grouse
- Increased wildlife numbers and species diversity
- Sizeable increase in density of bitter brush for fall and winter wildlife forage
- Improved Colorado Cutthroat Trout fishery (Catch and release)

The WCCRMP area covers approximately 23,025 acres inside the Willow Creek drainage area. A small portion of the area belongs to the State of Wyoming, with the rest split between BLM and private ownership. It is located on the North Slope of the Uinta Mountains in southwestern Wyoming with elevations between 7615 and 8500 feet. Livestock grazing is permitted from May 15th to October 15th.

WY State Forester with Green River 7th Graders

Over a period of several years beginning in 1975 a variety of successful management techniques, some experimental, were tried and tested on 4392 acres of the area.

The techniques included in this permittee's Allotment Management Plan were:

- Development of upland reservoirs to relieve pressure from the creek bottoms
- Some disking and seeding with crested wheat, dry land alfalfa and alsike clover

This innovative combination, along with an enlarged stock pond, has become excellent wildlife habitat. This location is one of the most observed sage grouse strutting sites in Bridger Valley. A quote from our local area game warden, "That is a wonderful lek to visit because it is close to town and right next to the road. The birds are easy to see and you are very likely to see other wildlife on the trip especially moose, elk, mule deer, and pronghorn."

- Flexible stocking rates to allow for vegetative and economic variations
- Changing salting patterns to distribute livestock and minimize impact to an area (spike / Tebuthuron)
- Manipulation of sagebrush with 2-4-D and fire to increase plant species diversity
- Establishment of a deferred rotation grazing schedule through fencing

In the late 1980s Willow Creek began showing signs of stream bank erosion due in part to an unregulated beaver population and to the deterioration of their abandoned beaver dams. The elevated sediment levels created a threat to an existing native Colorado River cutthroat trout population.

In 1994 neighboring permittees and landowners inside the Willow Creek drainage area, along with the Uinta County Conservation District, applied for and received an EPA 319 grant. The Willow Creek working group was formed and with the help of the BLM the Project Implementation Plan (PIP) was completed in1995. The WCCRMP was completed in 1999. The twofold goal of the WCCRMP team was to improve water quality and to improve habitat for Colorado River cutthroat trout.

BLM approved management options included intensive herding, salting, fencing, changing season of use, redistributing livestock use and changing stocking rates and animal types (cow/calf to yearling). Also, manipulating sagebrush to achieve diverse seral stages and to increase plant species diversity and volume was recommended. Ultimately, one of the most effective options was to develop watering sites on the upland areas to pull cattle and wildlife from creek bottoms and better utilize available forage. Those options included:

- Stock water ponds/reservoirs
- Pipelines and wells
- Spring development
- Water gaps and small dams

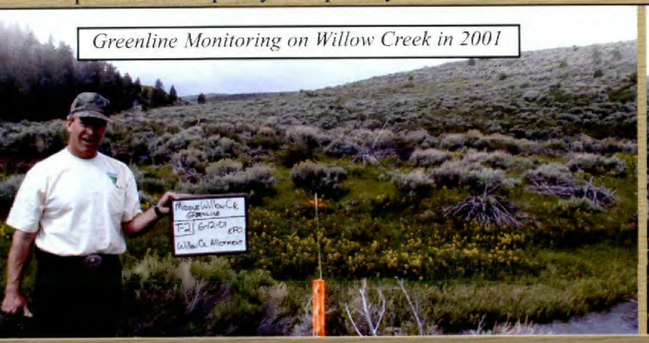
The WCCRMP team has achieved a high degree of success in improving the health of upland ranges and stabilizing stream banks on Willow Creek. These successes have been achieved primarily through deferred rotation grazing, sagebrush manipulation and creation of new upland reservoirs and spring developments. The allotment continues to provide habitat for antelope, elk, deer and moose and the existing sage grouse leks are stable. There is now a small beaver population and the Colorado River cutthroat trout population is stable and flourishing. Willow Creek is functioning in an upward trend moving toward meeting Water Quality and Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) standards.

ORIGINAL WCCRMP TEAM

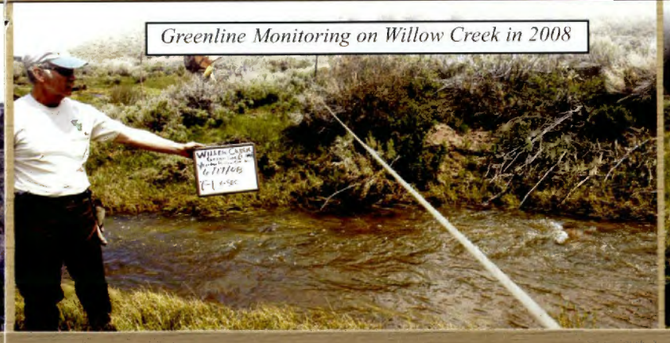
Adjoining landowners and neighbors
Bureau of Land Management
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Permittees (five)
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Uinta County Conservation District
Uinta County Cattlewomen
Uinta County Extension Office
United States Forest Service
Wyoming Dept. of Agriculture
Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Wyoming State Forester

Current projects include lining existing water pits with bentonite to help prevent leakage and erecting snow fences near these pits to capture more moisture. The BLM continues to monitor the area with an open invitation to WCCRMP team members to participate. The team will reconvene in the near future to accompany the WY Dept. of Environmental Quality when they revisit the creek to see what, if anything, needs to be done to meet PFC standards.

The WCCRMP team has fostered community involvement and, over the years, they have hosted several educational events. One of the most memorable events took place when a brave seventh grade teacher from Green River brought her 46 students to Willow Creek to learn about the CRM process. Their participation in the process included planting 150 willow cuttings and two quaking aspen and performing water quality tests. An early fall blizzard hit just as they started down the steep 800-foot incline from the edge of the ridge to the creek bottom. Having completed their projects they trekked back to the top of the ridge with frozen hands and feet. As they stood by their bus looking back down the ridge they enthusiastically and irrevocably christened the site "Killer Hill."


Greenline Monitoring on Willow Creek in 2001

Greenline Monitoring on Willow Creek in 2001


Greenline Monitoring on Willow Creek in 2008

Greenline Monitoring on Willow Creek in 2008