



**Star Valley
Conservation
District**

Long Range Natural Resource Plan

2022 - 2027

STAR VALLEY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

61 E. 5th Avenue

P. O. BOX 216

AFTON, WYOMING 83110

(307) 885-7823

Star Valley Conservation District

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of STAR VALLEY CONSERVATION DISTRICT to pursue the conservation, wise use and protection of our natural resources and encourage Star Valley residents to do the same in order to preserve our quality of life.

2022

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Rollin Gardner- Chairman
Shane Crook - Vice Chairman
Jeff Johnson- Secretary/Treasurer
Daniel Erickson- Board Member
Cole Helm- Board Member

The Star Valley Conservation District governed by five member Board of Supervisors who are elected in the general election. Each supervisor serves a four term and are unpaid. Of the five positions, three are rural, one urban and one is at-large. Each Supervisor is committed to providing conservation in their community by volunteering countless hours of their valuable time.

These supervisors meet at 7:00 p.m. the second Wednesday of every month in the Star Valley Conservation District office, located at 61 E.5th Avenue, Afton, Wyoming. These meetings are open to the public.

District STAFF

Kay Lynn Nield, District Manager, has worked for the Star Valley Conservation District since March 2017.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

FIELD OFFICE STAFF

Adam Clark - District Conservationist
Janessa Julson-Range Management Specialist

HISTORY OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

In 1937, President Roosevelt urged states to grant authority to landowners to organize for the purpose of conserving soil and water, especially on private ground. Legislatures of 22 states passed such laws that year. Since that time, all 50 states have passed legislation which permits the establishment of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Conservation Districts are a political subdivision of state government that acts as a local governing body, representing the people of the District through a variety of natural resource conservation management programs. They provide leadership, direction and priorities for the delivery of conservation programs from a local perspective. A guiding philosophy of Conservation Districts is that local perspective and direction is critical to the success of any natural resource program. Districts often act as a bridge between agencies and natural resource users. Long Range Plans, such as this one, serve to focus and organize local conservation concerns and objectives so that the District can carry out its responsibilities.

Wyoming Legislative Authority

Wyoming's Conservation Districts were created through legislation in 1941.

Title 11, Chapter 16 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 that 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 prevention or the conservation, development, utilization, and disposal of water, and thereby to 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 the health, safety and general welfare of the people of this state.

History of Star Valley Conservation District

STAR VALLEY CONSERVATION DISTRICT was organized on December 3, 1941 by the farmers and ranchers of Star Valley to deal with their agricultural problems efficiently, collectively and according to a plan. It was the purpose of these people to develop and improve the agriculture of Star Valley so that future generations might enjoy the same opportunities and inherit their land in as good, or better condition than it was when the valley was first settled.

Since 1941, seventy-four dedicated ranchers, farmers, teachers, and community members have served as District Supervisors. STAR VALLEY CONSERVATION DISTRICT's first board of supervisors was elected in

March of 1942.

The Star Valley Conservation District covers all of North Lincoln County from the South End to the middle of the Hoback on the boundary with Teton County. We border Sublette County to the east and the Idaho border on the west. Parts of the Bridger-Teton and Caribou National Forests are in the district boundaries.

STAR VALLEY CONSERVATION DISTRICT receives no federal or state funds to carry out its workload, except on a project specific, competitive grant type basis which requires local matching funds. Administrative financial funding for the District is provided by the Lincoln County Commissioners and Wyoming Department of Agriculture. Technical assistance is provided to the District by USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service and other interested federal, state and county land management agencies.

Community Profile

Star Valley Wyoming is located in north Lincoln County. It includes the communities of Afton, Thayne, Alpine, Star Valley Ranch, Freedom, Etna, Grover, Bedford, Smoot, Fairview, Osmond, Auburn & Turnerville, Wyoming. Star Valley is bordered by three National Forests, the Bridger-Teton National Forest, the Targhee National Forest, and the Caribou National Forest. The Salt River runs the length of the valley as does U. S. Highway 89. The Snake River, Salt River and the Greys River meet near Alpine. Wyoming. Star Valley is facing unprecedented growth. The population is increasing as people move here for retirement, job opportunities, access to national forests, and recreational opportunities.

Elevations in Star Valley extend from a low of 5,570 feet at the Salt/Snake/Greys River confluence at the northern end of the lower valley to the 7,600-foot Salt River Pass at the southern end of the Valley. The average elevation of the valley floor is around 6,000 feet with 10,750 feet peaks on the eastern and southern boundaries of the valley.

Afton,

Pop. 2,058, Elev. 6,134

Alpine

Pop. 639, Elev. 5,700

Thayne

Pop. 514, Elev. 5,950

Star Valley Ranch

Pop. 1,961, Elev. 6,253

Turnerville

Pop. 106, Elev. 6,407

Bedford

Pop. 289, Elev. 6,263

Smoot

Pop. 217, Elev. 6,619

Etna

Pop. 200, Elev. 5,815

Fairview

Pop. 101, Elev. 6,207

Grover

Pop. 438, Elev. 6,148

Auburn

Pop. 481, Elev. 6,053

Osmond

Pop. 669, Elev. 6,329

DISTRICT RESOURCES

WILDLIFE

An abundance of wildlife is one of the main reasons many people enjoy Star Valley. Bridger-Teton National Forest lists the numbers of native species as six amphibians, six reptiles, seventy-four mammals, two hundred eight birds and twenty-five fish. Big game includes elk, mule deer, moose, black bear and mountain lion. Waterfowl abound and upland game birds include ruffle, blue and sage grouse. Other predator and large mammals include lynx, bobcat, fox, coyote, mountain lion, bears, and wolves. Beaver, muskrats, sandhill cranes, blue heron, Canada geese and trumpeter swan can be spotted in riparian areas. Crows, ravens and magpies are other common birds. We also have bald and golden eagles and different species of hawks. Fish include brown, brook, cutthroat and rainbow trout.

Water

The Salt River is a major tributary of the Upper Snake River. The Salt River watershed is 592,538 total acres in size and is divided by the Idaho and Wyoming state line. Approximately 325,896 acres (55%) are contained within Wyoming and approximately 266,642 acres (45%) are contained in Idaho. About 68% of the watershed, (402,926 acres) is federally owned and managed by either the U.S. Forest Service or the Bureau of Land Management. The remaining 189,612 acres (32%) is privately owned with some limited state ownership.

The headwaters of the Salt River are located at the southern end of the Star Valley and flow northward to the confluence of the Snake, Salt and Greys rivers near Alpine, Wyoming.

The main tributaries originating from the east of the Salt River are Cottonwood Creek, Dry Creek, Swift Creek, Willow Creek, Strawberry Creek, and Cedar Creek. The main tributaries originating from the west of the Salt River are Spring Creek, Crow Creek, Stump Creek, Tincup Creek, and Jackknife Creek. These streams are long, moderately falling, meandering streams in the valley bottoms on which alluvial flats and marshy areas have developed. There are also many springs and sloughs throughout the watershed.

Cultural Resources

The Lander Cut-off of the Oregon Trail passed through the valley and has been memorialized by a sign at the state line near Auburn. Most traces of the trail have been destroyed by cultivation. However, wagon ruts are still visible along the routes in the National Forests.

The old rock church in Auburn, Wyoming is one of the oldest buildings in Star Valley. In the late summer and fall of 1889, the rock church was built on the public square in the center of the new town site. The Rock Church was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in December 1985.

The Salt River Hydroelectric Powerplant, constructed in 1938, is located along the valley floor of the Salt River in Lincoln County, Wyoming. The Powerplant was built along the Salt River to take advantage of a steady supply of water. The hydroelectric plant remained in operation until 1967, and for 30 years it served as the principal source of electricity for the entire area. The Powerplant was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in December of 1993.

Land

Agriculture use is decreasing in Star Valley as the population increases. More land is taken out of production for residential and subdivision use. Resource concerns are the loss of open space, wildlife habitat, water quality and protective vegetation. Other important resource uses include logging, mining, manufacturing, food processing and recreation. Major employers include Aviat airplane manufacturing company, Star Valley Hospital, Simplot Smoky Canyon Phosphate Mine, Lincoln County School District No. 2, Lower Valley Energy, and SilverStar Communications. Many people in the valley commute to Jackson, Wyoming to work.

Star Valley agriculture primarily includes livestock, hay/grain (corn) crops, and rangelands. Crops have traditionally been limited, because of the climate to hay, pasture, and spring grain. Horse and beef herds are increasing, while dairy farming, once the mainstay, and sheep have declined. Some goat, pig, poultry and small animal husbandry takes place on some operations. A few exotic animals like llamas, alpaca, yaks, and buffalo are also present in the valley.

Pasture and hayland is the dominant private land use in the District. Dairy quality alfalfa hay and grass hay from native and introduced varieties are produced. Generally, only two cuttings are possible. Yields vary widely depending on management, soils and whether the field is dryland or flood, sprinkler or subirrigated. Grain varieties may also be grown as a hay crop or grain crop.

Many of the deeper soils in the foothills are used for cash grain production though these fields may be rotated into pasture or hayland periodically just as hayland includes spring grain in long-term rotation. Spring barley is the principal grain crop. Summer fallow may or may not be used depending on the producer. Fallow is used more for weed control than moisture conservation.

There is also range or native pasture in the foothills. Introduced varieties of grasses have spread into much of this area. Some private woodland and woodland grazing exists.

Recreation

Recreation represents a major resource use in Star Valley. This primarily occurs on National Forests land but there are several Game and Fish access areas on private ground throughout the valley. Recreational uses include camping, water sports, backpacking, hunting, fishing, hiking, horse packing, country skiing, and snowmobiling.

District Programs

Administration and Operations

The Star Valley Conservation District will be fiscally responsible and abide by financial procedures and records maintenance as required by the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts, the Wyoming Department of Agriculture, and the State of Wyoming. The SVCD District Manager will provide accurate and legal district budget, monthly cash reconciliation, yearly review or audit as required, reports and budgets.

District staff will produce an Annual Budget, Annual Plan of Work, Annual Report, and Long-Range Plan, as needed, for approval by Board of Supervisors. Special reports will be produced as required by programs and grants.

The district will continue to seek other funding sources, in addition to current financial support.

Communications

The Star Valley Conservation District will provide conservation news and information to citizens of Star Valley through newsprint, website, brochures, and other means.

The SVCD will provide information about natural resources and water quality to the public, local and state agencies through news releases, water quality workshops, and other educational opportunities.

District staff will keep local, state, and national elected officials informed of conservation issues in the district.

Water Conservation

District will promote and provide water conservation education and practices for towns, rural developments, individual, and agricultural water users.

District will continue to support water conservation efforts by providing workshops and presentations, publishing water supply forecasts, and evapotranspiration charts. SVCD will work with irrigators to find financing for irrigation improvements and water conservation best management practices.

District will provide technical assistance for water resources and irrigation.

Water Quality

The Salt River and Stump Creek are listed on Table C (Water Bodies with Water Quality Threats) of the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ) 2014 Section 303(d) List. The Salt River and Stump Creek do not support the designated use for contact recreation use due to elevated levels of fecal coliform bacteria. Crow Creek has been listed on Table C (Water Bodies with Water Quality Threats) of the WDEQ 2014 Section 303(d) List. Selenium levels in Crow Creek exceed standards set by WDEQ.

The Salt River Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and Salt River Watershed Restoration Plan completed in 2016. The TMDL has been accepted by WDEQ and Environmental Protection Agency.

The Star Valley Conservation District will implement tasks in the Salt River Watershed Restoration Plan and work with other agencies to improve water quality in the Salt River.

District will assist landowner and operators to reduce nonpoint source and point source pollutants.

The district will work with National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to promote Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and other cost share programs.

The district will promote the use of state and federal water quality grants to landowners for cost share money to implement best management practices.

The district will assist small acreage landowner conservation programs regarding point source and non-point source pollutants, including fertilizer, care and disposal of hazardous waste, stormwater run-off, animal feeding and small acreage grazing.

The district will promote and provide technical and financial assistance for off stream watering and riparian protection projects.

District will continue long-term sampling and analysis for E. Coli and other parameters as called for in the Salt River Watershed Restoration Plan.

District staff will keep the public, Board of Supervisors, local and state elected officials and state agencies informed of the state of the rivers and streams within the district.

The SVCD will support Lincoln County Planning and private landowners in protection of flood plain and riparian zones. We will apply for grants and providing technical support to help this effort. The SVCD will work with all entities to maintain and improve integrity of riparian zones and streambeds.

Education

The Star Valley Conservation District will continue to provide education and outreach programs.

District Staff will teach and promote natural resource conservation education through local schools, home-school groups, and other community organizations.

The district will organize and sponsor informational and educational seminars, tours, and workshops for the public.

District staff will participate and conduct classes with local elementary schools through the Enrichment Express program and work with high school science teacher to conduct water quality field trips.

District staff will be available to conduct workshops throughout the state on water quality, septic systems, and other topics.

Inter-Agency Cooperation

The district will work to promote cooperation and collaboration between local, state, and federal agencies.

The district will maintain partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies.

The District will act as a liaison between local landowners and state and federal agencies on natural resource issues.

The District will participate in local working groups, Resource Advisory Committees, and other groups making decisions on public lands.

Wildlife Habitat

District will assist local, state and federal agencies in wildlife habitat conservation, development and management.

District will provide input on threatened and endangered species issues.

District will promote better understanding of wildlife resources and management needs.

RANGE, PASTURE & HAYLAND

District will provide information on range, pasture, and cropland management.

District will continue to cooperate with Cooperative Extension Service on management practices, promoting adoption of Best Management Practices (BMP's) such as planned/rotational grazing and cross fencing for range improvement.

District will provide technical assistance for water resources, irrigation, weed control, grazing management, soil erosion, plan resources to small acreage landowners.

District will participate and co-sponsor community activities that promote noxious weed awareness.

Subdivision Reviews

The district will review each subdivision with the Star Valley Conservation District Checklist, conduct a site visit, complete a groundwater well survey of all wells within a 1320-foot radius of property, conduct groundwater cuts and soils inspection as needed to provide accurate and useful information, provide comment on groundwater considerations for basements or no basements and slope limitations for roads and buildings.

The district will assist with NPDES permits if requested.

The District will work with Lincoln County Weed and Pest to conduct weed inventory in proposed subdivisions and increase education efforts on weed management practices with subdivisions.

RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION

This District Program, as previously outlined and stated, is hereby adopted as the official Long Range Natural Resource Plan of STAR VALLEY CONSERVATION DISTRICT.

We believe that the implementation of this comprehensive program, along with the cooperative efforts of the many and diversified stewards of the land, will lead to the proper use of all our natural resources, thus helping to ensure their use and enjoyment for future generations.

This Long Range Plan for STAR VALLEY CONSERVATION DISTRICT, Lincoln County, Wyoming has been approved and adopted by the Board of Supervisors on March 30, 2022.

Rollin Gardner, Chairman

Shane Crook, Vice-Chairman

Jeff Johnson, Secretary/Treasurer

Daniel Erickson, Supervisor

Cole Helm, Supervisor