

## Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts 2007 Conservation Funding Priorities

### **USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service- Farm Bill Conservation Programs**

Wyoming's priorities for allocation of EQIP funding is based on recommendations from the Wyoming State Technical Committee. The State Technical Committee is made up of representatives from various producer groups, conservation organizations, agribusinesses, and federal, state, and tribal government agencies. The two most critical natural resource concerns facing Wyoming producers are complying with AFO/CAFO regulations and surviving the cycle of drought. These state priorities support the national priorities of reducing non-point source pollution in impaired watersheds, conservation of water resources, reduction of soil erosion and sedimentation and conservation of at-risk species habitat.



**EQIP priority for Wyoming is helping producers address animal feeding operation issues.**

### **USDA NRCS- Conservation Operations**

Conservation Technical Assistance: Most of the assistance NRCS provides is accomplished through the Conservation Technical Assistance Program (CTA). When NRCS employees work with land managers, they provide planning assistance through the development of a conservation plan. After soil, water, air, plant and animal resources on the property are inventoried and evaluated, the NRCS conservationist reviews several alternatives for the land manager's consideration. The land manager is the final decision maker concerning which alternatives he/she chooses to implement. The alternatives are recorded in a conservation plan. The voluntary, tailor made plan becomes an important tool for better management of the natural resources on the property. Financial assistance programs, such as those available through the Farm Bill, can help land managers implement the conservation systems and practices contained in the Conservation Plan.

Conservation Operations also includes funding for Grazing lands initiative, soil surveys, snow surveys and Plant Materials Center.



**NRCS technicians measure water applied by the center pivot this effort is part of the overall cooperative Irrigation Water Management Program by the Eden Valley Irrigation and Drainage District and NRCS.**



**The Bridger Plant Materials Center in Bridger, MT is co-owned by the Wyoming & Montana Assoc. of Conservation Districts and operated by the USDA NRCS.**

**Environmental Protection Agency - Non Point Source Section 319 Watershed Management**

The section 319 funding is utilized extensively by the conservation districts in Wyoming, to assess water quality, develop watershed plans and implement management practices to address water quality issues.

**WACD does NOT believe there is an overlap in the purposes of section 319 funding and Farm Bill funding such as EQIP and both are being utilized effectively and efficiently in addressing water quality issues in Wyoming.** These funds are necessary in order to proactively address water quality issues and eliminate the need for regulations and demonstrate action in litigation.

WACD recently participated as an intervenor in litigation brought by environmental groups against the US Forest Service for violating the Clean Water Act by allowing livestock grazing in the Pole Mountain unit in the Medicine Bow Forest west of Cheyenne. The local conservation districts, Forest Service and grazing permittees worked together to initiate a local watershed planning and implementation effort to address water quality impairments via management practices. The end result was a favorable ruling from the Court recognizing that the efforts occurring were meeting the intent of the CWA. Section 319 funding was key in getting projects implemented. There are approximately 27 of these watershed efforts occurring in Wyoming.

**Forest Service- Urban & Community Forestry**

Urban & Community funding has resulted in grants over \$1 million being provided to over 100 communities and organizations for tree planting and community forestry program development. These federal funds have been matched with over \$2 million in cash and in-kind contributions and have resulted in the planting of thousands of trees in Wyoming's cities and towns.

**Please see attached for National Association of Conservation Districts recommendations for funding.**



**Laramie County Conservation District personnel monitoring water quality on Pole Mountain grazing allotment.**



**EQIP offered this producer the opportunity to install several miles of livestock watering pipeline and 14 watering tanks to provide water for cattle. Due to drought conditions the creek and ponds on the ranch dried up making it necessary for his cattle to walk two miles to nearest available water.**



**Over 7500 volunteers have been involved with tree planting and program development grants. Additionally approximately 150 Wyoming citizens currently serve on local Tree Commissions and Boards.**