LINGLE FORT LARAMIE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

LOCAL LAND USE AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

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2022-2027

Lingle Fort Laramie Conservation District

224 Main Street

Lingle, Wyoming 82223

307-534-5768 https://linglefortlaramieconservationdistrict.com

Lingle Fort Laramie Conservation District

2022-2027

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**2022-2027**

**District supervisors**

Don McDowell, Chairman—Rural

Linda Nichol, Vice-Chairman—At Large

Dave Johnson, Treasurer—Rural

Jenna Meeks, Secretary—Urban

Matt Teeters, Member—Rural

**district staff**

Karen Johnson, District Manager

**natural resources conservation staff (Goshen County)**

Ryan Clayton, District Conservationist

Jason Newhall, Range Management

Shade Frank, Soil Conservation Technician

Jamie Menuey, Soil Conservationist

**Lingle Fort Laramie Conservation District**

**2022-2027**

Executive Summary

The Long Range and Natural Resource Management Plan (Plan) for the Lingle Fort Laramie Conservation District (the District) is an updated five-year plan that serves as the basis for District Policy, available in our office for public inspection, and filed at the Goshen County Clerk’s Office located at 2125 East A Street, Torrington, Wyoming 82240.

This Plan is the District’s mission to provide guidance and policies for soil and water conservation practices. The District’s hope is this Plan will encourage comments and suggestions from agencies, landowners, and other stakeholders.

The District takes an active role in developing working relationships with various agencies and seeks cooperation on planning documents which impact the District.

The purpose of this revision is to update natural resource policy statements and amend outdated information in the previous Plan. The Board declares its interest in maintaining, protecting, and enhancing soil and water resources within the District, and intends to promote long term conservation and enhancement of our natural resources while contributing to the economic stability of the District.

The Lingle Fort Laramie Conservation District will adopt this plan pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) by formal resolution and will file with the Goshen County Clerk’s office. It will be titled “Lingle Fort Laramie Conservation District Local Land Use and Natural Resource Management Plan, 2022-2027.”

This publication was released for a 45-day public comment period from September 23rd to November 7th, 2022

The key points in this Plan include

* LFLCD strives to have functioning watersheds and promotes wise and sustainable uses of water for all needs.
* LFLCD promotes the sustainability of healthy wildlife populations and their contributions to economic stability.
* LFLCD recognizes the value of farming and ranching, and historical importance it plays in the economy and culture of the district, and desires a balance of economic, recreational, and conservation use of lands for growth and quality of life.
* LFLCD requests to be a part of all federal and state actions that include soil or water resources or any change in land use requiring National Environmental Policy Act documentation.
* LFLCD promotes soil health which includes erosion control and best management practices to control weed and pests, fertility, and ecosystem diversity.
* LFLCD wishes to achieve a sustainable balance between energy development, agriculture, and the environment.

**Introduction**

The Lingle Fort Laramie Conservation District is one of 34 conservation districts in Wyoming and one of three districts operating in Goshen County, Wyoming. The District was organized in 1946 by local farmers and ranchers. The District is a governmental subdivision of the Wyoming State Government with responsibility under State Laws to provide for the conservation, development, and use of basic natural resources. The District is administered by a board of five supervisors elected by the people located within the district boundaries. They receive no monetary compensation other than expenses to attend special area and state meetings. The Board holds regular monthly meetings on the second Tuesday of each month to conduct District business. The District employs a part-time District Manager to conduct business for the District. The office is located at 224 Main Street in the Town of Lingle which serves multiple purposes including a central records location, location for the NRCS staff to communicate with the District constituents, and local presence for constituents. Funding for the District comes from a county mill tax levy, Wyoming Department of Agriculture base funding, and grants.

**MISSION**

To provide leadership and education towards the utilization of natural resources for current needs while developing good stewardship practices to enhance natural resources for future generations.

**VISION**

* To develop and promote a comprehensive approach to resource management.
* To monitor and share technology to address production of food and fiber.
* To develop working relationships with other districts, agencies, organizations, and the public.
* To develop and maintain collaborative programs to promote public involvement.
* To develop collaborative efforts between private and public sectors.
* To serve as natural resource counselors and/or mentors for the entire District.

**History**

The District consists of approximately 784 square miles which is nearly 515,618 acres and is located in the northwest corner of Goshen County. It is bounded on the east and south by the North Platte Valley Conservation District; on the west by Platte County Conservation District; and on the North by Niobrara Conservation District. US Highway 85 bisects the district from north to south and US Highway 26 from east to west along the North Platte River. Most of the land located within the District boundaries is involved in agriculture. Lands near the North Platte River and Rawhide Creek comprise a majority of the irrigated acres within the District.

The Interstate Canal, operated by Pathfinder Irrigation District, is located north of the North Platte River. The Fort Laramie Canal, operated by Goshen Irrigation District, is located south of the North Platte River. Both canals are under jurisdiction of the Bureau of Reclamation. The Whalen diversion for both canals is just west of the District and Platte County boundary. The Grattan and Lucerne ditches also divert irrigation water from the North Platte River. There are presently five active watershed districts within the District: Pine Ridge, Case Bier, London Flats-Bovee, Angell Draw, and Spring Canyon.

The District houses three small historical towns within its borders. The Town of Lingle was incorporated in 1918 and was formerly known as Wyncote. The Wyncote railroad section house was relocated and the town of Lingle, named for promoter and financier Hiram D. Lingle, was platted. In 1922, the city installed an electric light power plant. The rich history and pilgrimage can be seen with several markers located near Lingle including the Mormon Pioneer Trail Marker, Old Texas Trail Marker, and Oregon Trail Marker.

The Town of Fort Laramie is the second largest community in the District. The Town is named after the old Fort Laramie Military post and located about approximately 3 miles east of it. It was established in early 1900’s along the expanding Burlington Railroad. The railroad and homesteading brought permanent settlers to the area. The town grew to having had several stores including a hotel, a bank, and an elevator. It is now a quite community of 243 residents and “6 sore heads.” Now having an up-to-date community center, saloon/café, two churches, and is a busy oil pipeline depot.

Old Fort Laramie began as a fur trade post in 1834 and developed into a supply stop for fur trappers, traders, Indians, and emigrants bound west. In 1849 the post was purchased by the U.S. Army, and became an important supply, logistics and communications center for the Indian Wars campaigns of the next four decades. Permanent settlers constructed an intricate irrigation system to water gardens where they grew produce to trade. Between 1842 and 1869, a half million people passed through Fort Laramie as they traveled west along the Oregon, Mormon, and California Trails. History includes the Bozeman Trail, Pony Express Route, Transcontinental Telegraph Route, the Deadwood and Cheyenne Stage Route and the Fort Laramie-Fort Robinson Trail.

Jay Em, founded about 1905, is located on the historic Texas Trail and in the early 1900’s served as a service center for travelers. Once a bustling community, Jay Em was used by homesteaders for supplies and to sell cream and eggs. The original community is now included in the Jay Em Historic District and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Today, visitors may walk among the well-kept buildings in the Jay Em Historic District or arrange for a personal tour inside the buildings.

Policy Statements, Objectives, and Goals

To develop broad issue policies, the Plan recognizes priority issues of concern with the following resource categories. Current policies of the District are provided, recognizing that significant programmatic overlap does occur.

* Water
* Soil
* Range
* Development
* Community Services
* Wildlife

**WATER**

Protection of water resources (quality, quantity, and demand) was identified as the most important issue within the LFLCD in a survey conducted in 2015. The concerns about agricultural sustainability and local economy affected by current droughts, demands of water users, and effects of flood and pivot irrigation concerning ground water recharge and sediment movement. The Board gives serious consideration to the interest of protecting, preserving, and sustaining our water supply.

**Water Policy:**

1. LFLCD opposes the use, sale, or lease by the State, of any Wyoming basin water to out of state entities. LFLCD does not support trans-basin diversions.
2. LFLCD advocates protecting existing water rights and water uses with long term conservation and enhancement of our natural resources which contribute to the economic stability of the district and its constituents.
3. LFLCD encourages the development of water storage facilities to meet the district water needs.
4. LFLCD opposes interstate water transfers due to the adverse impacts on Wyoming water laws.
5. LFLCD supports water quality monitoring as a part of all energy and right of way development projects to ensure groundwater and surface water quality is not degraded.
6. LFLCD supports Wyoming State Water Laws and the States right to administer water. The District is opposed to any federal government action which adversely affects the states’ rights where water laws are concerned.
7. LFLCD encourages sustainable use of high-capacity wells drawing from finite aquifers.
8. LFLCD encourages rural households to monitor and test water quality for human and animal consumption.

**Water Objectives:**

* To strive to maintain and improve the quality and quantity of the district’s waters through education, technical assistance, Best Management Practices, and coordination, and increase the efficient use of water.
* To participate in watershed studies and plans to maintain and improve the ecological health and quality of water within the District.
* To develop in conjunction with local, state, and federal partners, strategies to maintain and improve watershed conditions to address the availability of water for critical needs, including municipal uses and agriculture, while attaining stream bank stability, habitat, and riparian health.
* To support constituents to participate in well-water testing events and opportunities.
* To monitor and assist with information and upkeep of watershed dams for flood control.

**SOIL**

Soils meeting their range of eco-system requires a combination of physical, chemical, and biological properties that are a reflection of the forces that form the soil, including the climate, parent material, topography, and vegetation over a long period of time. Soil evaluation and management contributes to agricultural economics. A soil survey for southern Goshen County was completed in 1971 and completed in Northern Goshen County in 1981.

**Soil Policy:**

1. LFLCD promotes to retain farming and ranching as the preferred land uses within the district.
2. LFLCD encourages promotion of best management practices of all lands.
3. LFLCD supports the uniform use of ecological site descriptions developed by the NRCS as the foundation for the inventory, evaluation, setting of monitoring objectives, and management of rangelands.
4. LFLCD encourages the innovative farming and ranching practices that promote improved soil health.

**Soil Objectives:**

* To promote public awareness and understanding of local agriculture, and conservation measures employed by local farmers and ranchers who are good stewards of the land.
* To facilitate efforts to participate in natural resource management planning to provide for the economic stability and to protect local cultures.
* To protect prime and statewide lands in agricultural production.
* To support multiple land uses to maintain continuity in the local economy, and the sustainability of existing agricultural, recreational, and industrial interests while improving the present environmental quality of life.
* To support the increase or stabilization of soil organic matter to prevent net loss through wind or water erosion.

**RANGE**

Agriculture is the foundation of Goshen County. Wyoming ranks 11th in the nation for total land in farms and ranches. Goshen county is ranked first in agricultural production and first for all cattle production. The land north of the interstate canal to the northern Goshen County boundary is mostly hard grass

prairie as well as the area south and west of the Fort Laramie Canal, described as rangeland. There remains dry land farming, but much has been enrolled in CRP.

**Range Policy:**

1. LFLCD supports landowners’ rights to manage grazing lands and supports and encourages proper and appropriate livestock grazing practices as a tool for the sound management of private, state, and federal lands.
2. LFLCD supports maintaining and improving existing grazing conditions to promote optimum production of forage for continued ecosystem and economic functions.
3. LFLCD supports and encourages the control of noxious weeds and pests by owners, managers, and users of all lands.
4. LFLCD acknowledges that prescribed fire can be beneficial when properly used.

**Range Objectives:**

* To encourage all landowners to use the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to attain proper seeding mixes of legumes, grasses, and forbs to improve soil structure and build organic matter.
* To encourage landowners to use assistance from the NRCS to gain knowledge of proper grazing practices and stocking rates to promote grazing systems to build soil, rangeland health, and improve watershed conditions.
* To encourage landowners to utilize the expertise of Goshen County Weed and Pest to reduce the distribution of noxious, invasive, and chemical resistant weeds.
* To work with agriculture producers to facilitate alternative and innovative methods for rangeland improvements.
* To support and encourage long time successful landowners to mentor and share their knowledge of failures and successes in sustaining the land.

**DEVELOPMENT**

As the world changes and technology allows for us to experience happenings as they occur, it is increasingly hard to hold firm to the local culture of a quiet society with strong values yet needing to keep pace with new technologies and growth. Land development is one of the most controversial areas of this plan, yet one of the most important.

**Development Policy:**

1. LFLCD supports residential development and commercial sites in areas currently zoned as residential and commercial zoning and concurs with the Goshen County Zoning Resolution.
2. LFLCD strives to achieve a balance between the needs of the community, energy development, agriculture, and the environment.

LFLCD supports constitutional private property rights in local, state, and federal agency policies, regulations, rules, and actions.

1. LFLCD supports utilizing legal remedies when federal or state government action operates to take property rights or some portion of the property right.
2. LFLCD supports local, state, and federal agencies in requiring construction, maintenance, and reclamation of transportation corridors such as access roads, pipelines, transmission lines etc. to prevent resource deterioration.

**Development Objectives:**

* To provide education opportunities to residents of all ages to encourage awareness of natural resources.
* To support the minimization of ground disturbance associated with development, and to locate outside of important habitats.
* To support the restriction of surface occupancy to already disturbed areas or habitats so impacts on native plants and wildlife will be minimal.
* To support reseeding disturbed areas with native species, develop weed management plans, and work with agencies to provide soil and reclamation information to development projects.

**COMMUNITY**

Natural assets such as rivers, forests, grasslands, and wetlands benefit society through the ecosystem services they provide, including water purification, air quality, and flood protection. However, the general public does not have an adequate understanding of agriculture and conservation measures that farmers and ranchers already utilize. The lack of understanding has increased greatly and can lead to misperceptions about the agricultural industry and the environmental impacts and can contribute to communication gaps between the agricultural community and urban environmental interests. This reduces their ability to work together to address environmental concerns.

**Community Policy:**

1. LFLCD recognizes the importance of balance between local economic growth and the quality of life, and community stability of customs and cultures.
2. LFLCD will review subdivision reviews and make recommendations on soil suitability, and soil erosion during and after construction, potential flooding, and/or wetland concerns to the Goshen County Commissioners Planning Office.
3. LFLCD will provide constituents with information regarding the selection of a variety of trees for the intended use.
4. LFLCD will participate in Local Work Groups to address resource concerns and NRCS programs.
5. LFLCD will work with educators to provide natural resource presentations to enhance students natural resource knowledge and provide agriculture education in public schools, in youth organizations, and other venues where youth and children receive a formal education.
6. LFLCD will provide educational opportunities to the public on natural resource issues through seminars events, workshops, tours, and hands on experiences.

**Community Objectives:**

* To participate in educational opportunities to gain knowledge and skills for resource issues and to provide information to constituents within the District.
* To expand education resources, technical assistance and funding availability information through newspapers, radio, social media, newsletters, and posters.
* To provide guidance, information, and education to elected government officials on conservation and natural resource management issues and supply educational materials to schools, organizations, and landowners.
* To support the educational benefits of trees and make available affordable trees to provide for improved natural resource conditions within the district.

**WILDLIFE**

Wildlife represents a national treasure in terms of opportunities to view and hunt. Management is required to ensure a balance of species without undue burden on landowners.

**Wildlife Policy:**

1. LFLCD promotes wildlife conservation, sustainability of healthy wildlife habitats and populations, and their contributions to the local economy.
2. LFLCD supports the Wyoming Game and Fish Department being the sole agency responsible for managing all wildlife species in Wyoming.
3. LFLCD supports proactive management of sensitive species.
4. LFLCD encourages using livestock and other tools to improve wildlife habitats.
5. LFLCD will focus on species recovery by improving ecosystem health instead of single species listings.
6. LFLCD recognizes the contributions landowners contribute to sustaining, feeding, and protecting all wildlife.
7. **Wildlife Objectives:**

* To maintain cooperative efforts with federal and state wildlife agencies on their projects to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to wildlife species and habitats.
* To promote the critical role agriculture producers, play in providing habitat for wildlife within the District.
* To support wildlife habitat improvements and wildlife friendly fencing and highway crossings.
* To encourage the use of tools such as grazing, plantings, water development, fire, and other best management practices to improve wildlife habitat.

RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION

The Lingle Fort Laramie Conservation District Board of Supervisors is committed to providing its constituents solid, principled natural resources management leadership, and promoting practical conservation methodology. The Board encourages a comprehensive coordination effort between landowners, operators, this district, and cooperating organizations to ensure long-term benefits to our land, water quality and quantity, and air.

Therefore, be it resolved, the Lingle Fort Laramie Conservation District Board of Supervisors adopts this Local Land Use and Natural Resource Management Plan for 2022-2027.

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Don McDowell, Chairman

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Linda Nichol, Vice-Chair

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Dave Johnson, Treasurer

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Jenna Meeks, Supervisor

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Matt Teeters, Supervisor

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Date of Meeting