

Prairie Dog Creek Watershed Annual Newsletter



Prairie Dog Creek Watershed Group — 2018 — Sheridan County Conservation District

What is Stormwater?

Stormwater runoff is a product of rain and snowmelt that flows across the land surface. This overland flow picks up pollutants, such as trash, oils, excess sediment, and animal waste, and deposits them in local waterways. In residential or developed areas, stormwater consists of concentrated flows accumulated from various impervious surfaces that enter local streams. Impervious surfaces, such as parking lots, driveways, and roads, have the potential to deliver much more runoff to streams than natural landscapes. The same is true for heavily grazed areas or bare ground where vegetative cover is poor or non-existent.

Stormwater runoff can contribute excess sediment that can physically degrade the conditions of our waterbodies, including aquatic life and fisheries.

The bottom line is that contaminants, on roads and ground surfaces, have the potential to end up in our streams and rivers during a runoff event.



What Can You Do?

- ◆ Retain topsoil and prevent material at building sites from entering drains
- ◆ Dispose of pet waste using plastic bags or by burying at least five inches deep, away from gardens, waterbodies, or wells
- ◆ Use only suggested amounts of fertilizers or pesticides
- ◆ Use oil recycling facilities at the City of Sheridan Landfill or the SCCD tanks located at the Towns of Dayton Clearmont
- ◆ Upgrade irrigation systems to improve efficiency
- ◆ When possible, locate new corrals or feeding grounds away from the stream or flood plain
- ◆ If feed grounds are located along streams, maintain a well-vegetated buffer between the feed ground and stream
- ◆ Maintain vegetated buffers between waterways and closely cropped, mowed, or burned areas
- ◆ Monitor the effects of grazing on upland and riparian areas

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE FOR QUALIFIED PROJECTS

Through federal and state grants, the SCCD offers financial assistance for projects that benefit water quality in impaired watersheds. Typical projects include installing fencing or stockwater systems to minimize livestock access to waterbodies, relocating corrals or animal feeding areas away from waterbodies, and replacing eligible septic systems to eliminate sewage discharges. Descriptions of select projects are available on SCCD's website (www.sccdwy.org).

If you would like to apply for cost-share funds through one of SCCD's many water quality improvement programs, we encourage you to contact SCCD to determine if the project is eligible and to learn more about the application process. Batching deadlines for project applications are March 1st and July 1st.



Sheridan County Conservation District
1949 Sugarland Drive, Suite 102
Sheridan, WY 82801
(307) 672-5820 ext. 3
www.sccdwy.org

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Sheridan, WY
Permit No. 21

PRAIRIE DOG CREEK WATERSHED STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

The annual Prairie Dog Creek Watershed Steering Committee Meeting will be held on **Tuesday, March 27th, at 6:00 p.m. at the Prairie Dog Community Center (702 Highway 14, East of Sheridan)**. The Prairie Dog Creek Watershed Steering Committee, which is comprised of landowners and interested parties, provides input and recommendations to the SCCD for implementing resource programs within the Prairie Dog Creek Watershed.

The meeting is open to anyone living in or interested in the Prairie Dog Creek Watershed.

Please come join us on March 27th, your input is always welcome!

2017 Prairie Dog Creek Water Quality Monitoring

If you were out and about this summer on the Prairie Dog Creek watershed, you may have caught a glimpse of the SCCD vehicle parked on the side of the road. You may have even gotten lucky and saw us trudging around in our waders.

SCCD monitored seven sites during the 2017 season; five stations on the mainstem of Prairie Dog Creek and two tributary stations on Meade Creek and Jenks Creek. Benthic macroinvertebrate collections and habitat assessments were also performed at three of the stations in October. The parameters monitored include water temperature, pH, conductivity, dissolved oxygen, discharge, turbidity, and *E. coli*. Continuous water temperature loggers were used to monitor instream temperatures at four stations.

Interim monitoring has occurred every three years since 2011. The purpose is to document changes in water quality over time. While bacteria concerns continue to exist and it may seem like we aren't gaining anything, collected data is useful for us to prioritize projects and efforts as conditions change. The 2017 Prairie Dog Creek Interim Monitoring Report is currently in the works. Preliminary results indicate bacteria levels are typically higher in the early season corresponding to runoff. An increase in bacteria concentrations was observed at most stations from 2014 to 2017.

