

Tongue River Watershed Annual Newsletter



Tongue River 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 urban or residential areas, stormwater consists of concentrated flows accumulated from various impervious surfaces that enter local streams via storm drains. Impervious surfaces, such as parking lots and paved or unpaved streets 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 the street or ground surface 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 drainages
- ◆ 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

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TONGUE RIVER WATERSHED STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

The annual Tongue River Watershed Steering Committee Meeting will be held on **Thursday, March 8th, at 6:00 p.m. at the Ranchester Town Hall (next to the Tongue River Branch Library)**. The Tongue River Watershed Steering Committee, which is comprised of landowners and interested parties, provides input and recommendations to the SCCD for implementing resource programs within the Tongue River Watershed.

The meeting is open to anyone living in or interested in the Tongue River Watershed.
Please come join us on March 8th, your input is always welcome!

Pet Waste Stations in the Tongue River Watershed



Pet waste on trails and in recreation areas is not only unsightly, but it can also impact local water quality. When pet waste is left on the ground, runoff from rain or snowmelt can transport it to creeks and other nearby waterbodies. **The waste, which contains bacteria, viruses, and parasites, is deposited into the same streams and reservoirs that are used for fishing, swimming, and boating.**

The easiest, most effective way to minimize water quality issues from pet waste is to clean up after your pet.

Local communities have made this task easier by maintaining pet waste stations along trails and in public areas.

In 2017, SCCD installed four pet waste stations at Ranchester Park, Kleenburn Recreation Area and Tongue River Canyon. SCCD and the Town of Ranchester will install four additional pet waste stations in 2018 at various sites in and around the Five Mile Creek drainage.

