

Laramie Rivers Conservation District

Annual Report 2013-2014

Laramie River near Jelm - Spring 2014

LRCD Board of Supervisors:

- Nancy Bath - Board Chair
- Larry Munn- Vice-Chair
- Jim Rogers - Secretary/Treasurer
- Kelly Kennedy
- Ruth Shepherd



LRCD Staff

- Tony Hoch - Director
- Trish Penny - Education Co-ordinator
- Martin Curry - Resource Specialist/Bookkeeper
- Laura McGinley - District Clerk



69

YEARS

of Service to the Albany County Community

2200

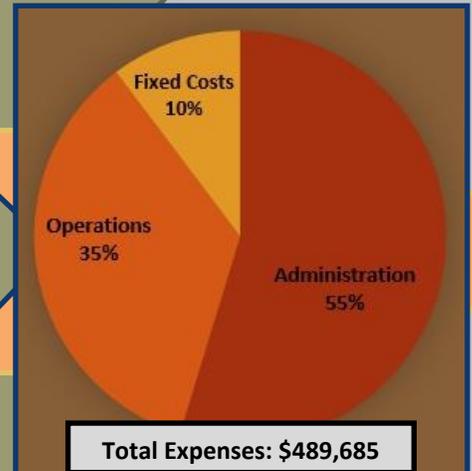
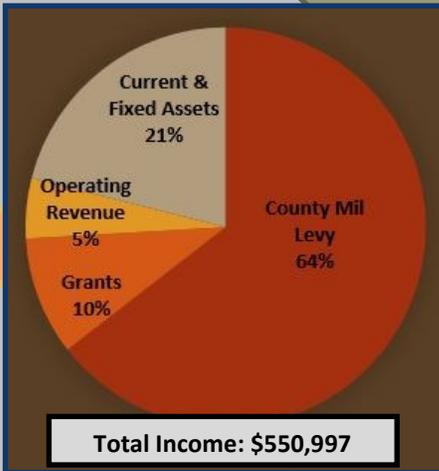
Adults participated in LRCD sponsored workshops and events.

3115

K-12 children participated in LRCD Conservation Education programs

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide leadership for the conservation of Albany County's soil and water, promote and protect the quality of Albany County's waters, and promote sustained use of Wyoming's water and all other natural resources. Preserve and enhance wildlife habitat, protect the tax base and promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of Albany County through a responsible conservation ethic.



4700

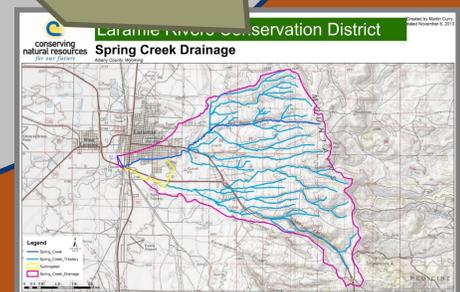
Trees & shrubs sold at the Annual Tree Sale

\$49,000

Cost Share program grants awarded for
 Solar livestock pumps
 Erosion Abatement
 Living Snow Fence
 Riparian Fencing
 Beautification
 Junk Removal
 Education
 Xeriscapes

55,000

Acres of land mapped for range plans, weed management, and watersheds.





Community Enhancement

The “ruins on Cedar” are the crumbling remains of the Midwest Oil Refinery built in 1920. This 5.3 acre industrial site ceased operation in 1932 and housed a variety of other businesses over the years, including a yttrium plant and auto repair shop. But it was the unofficial use as a junkyard and canvas for graffiti that made it into an eyesore and health hazard.

LRCO saw that we had the unique knowledge, skills and resources to take on this remediation and community enhancement project. We purchased the property in 2012 and have since, made great strides in seeing the site cleaned up for future use. We were awarded an EPA Targeted Brownfield Grant to assist with costs of the Environmental Assessments and we enrolled in WYDEQ Volunteer Remediation Program that oversees that the work is done legally and safely. A partnership with the City of Laramie secured a \$330,525 Community Development Block Grant that helped pay for the costs of the demolition and as of the end of our 2013-14 Fiscal Year, local contractor Stonehouse Construction was awarded the project and had most of the old buildings razed.

Living Snow Fence Program

A Living Snow Fence (LSF) is a valuable tool that provides wind protection, hydrates dry soils with stored precipitation in the form of snow, creates wildlife habitat and beautifies the landscape. The Living Snow Fence program began 28 years ago and offers landowners help with snow fence designs, irrigation plans, installation labor and financial assistance.

In 1986 LRCO planted their first LSF at the Albany County Fairgrounds. This began a long-term relationship that has resulted in a beautification of the Fairgrounds landscape as well as provide an “outdoor laboratory” for district staff to test tree varieties for this region. This past spring LRCO planted the 7th LSF on the west side of the Fairgrounds, which will provide shelter for the RV spaces.

The number of Living Snow Fences installed each spring has grown over the years and is one of the District’s most successful programs. This year, a total of 7055 feet of trees and shrubs were planted and \$7575 awarded through our Cost Share program to help owners with planting costs.



Conservation Kids

The Conservation Education curriculum for kids is a great way to incorporate science, math, writing, history and even visual arts with lessons that connect our upcoming generations with the land and all it provides for our survival. One teaching tool that is gaining popularity with teachers and kids alike is the educational garden. These gardens, usually consisting of multiple raised wooden beds, are planted with vegetables, fruit bearing shrubs and flowers that provide food for pollinator insects like bees and butterflies. Kids learn how to make fundamental connections from where food comes from, how it is grown and how it fits into the cycle of life on our planet. Kids also learn that growing food is fun and helps them see that food production and agriculture is a livelihood they could pursue and enjoy.

This year the District secured funding for gardens through grants, designed and planted garden beds, and provided volunteer labor for the construction of raised beds for gardens at Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Feeding Laramie Valley, Lincoln Community Center, and Bietel, Indian Paintbrush and Centennial Elementary schools.

Education & Outreach

In recent years, people have seen the term “green” used to describe everything from the food they eat to the homes they live in, yet, for many, they are not certain what “green” means or how it affects their lives. In 2006 the District organized the first Conservation Expo designed to answer questions about what it means to be green and live sustainably in our world. This past year LRCO continued their relationship with the UW Haub School of Environment & Natural Resources with an “Expo Kickoff” presentation of the documentary film: “Tiny - A Story About Living Small”. The film explored the trend toward building smaller houses and with over 150 attending, it was the most successful Expo Kickoff film event to date. The Conservation Expo followed the next day and saw over 500 people visit with local businesses, agencies and organizations about wildlife preservation, alternative energy, local food production, water-wise gardens, resource conservation and much more.

