

Long Range Plan 2021-2025

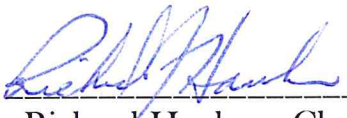


APPROVAL

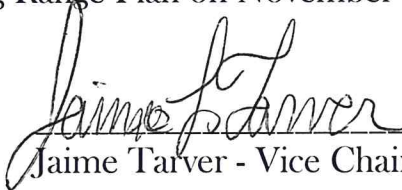
The Campbell County Conservation District (CCCD) develops a Long Range Plan every five years as required by the Wyoming Department of Agriculture and the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts. The plan serves as the guiding document for development of District programs and activities and is intended to respond to changing natural resource needs in Campbell County.

The CCCD sought local input for the plan through surveys distributed in the CCCD newsletter (1100) as well as being available on the CCCD website and social media. A summary was developed identifying goals and objectives. CCCD reflected the natural resource concerns of the local community, which identified water quality and quantity, and rangeland health as the top priorities. Natural Resource Outreach and Education remains an important service also.

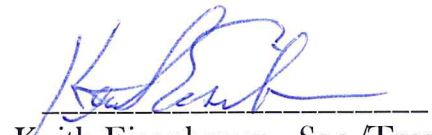
Following a 45-day public comment period, the Campbell County Conservation District approved the 2021-2025 Long Range Plan on November 10, 2020.



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MISSION AND HISTORY

Mission



To provide leadership for the conservation of Campbell County's soils and water, protect the agriculture resource base, promote the control of soil erosion, promote and protect the quality and quantity of Campbell County'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 this county through a "responsible conservation ethic".

History

Early conservation efforts in America began in the mid 1930's as America was recovering from the dust bowl. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), formerly the Soil Conservation Service, was formed in 1935 to provide technical and financial assistance to landowners for application of conservation practices. President Roosevelt recognized the need to address the impacts of soil erosion and developed a model Conservation District Law to encourage local coordination for conservation efforts.



In 1939, federal legislation was passed enabling Conservation Districts to participate and intervene with government agencies under the premise that no federal government agency should act in the area of private lands conservation without local citizen oversight.

In 1941, the State Legislature passed an enabling act, which established Conservation Districts in Wyoming. Conservation Districts were to direct programs protecting local renewable natural resources.

Intermountain Conservation District was established in 1950. The name was changed to Campbell County Conservation District (CCCD) in 1997.

INTRODUCTION

Structure

A Conservation District is responsible for providing leadership for the conservation of natural resources within its boundaries. The CCCD boundaries are defined as all of Campbell County. Locally elected District Supervisors are unpaid volunteers dedicated to providing local conservation guidance. They are responsible for determining priorities, annual plans, annual reports, budgets, and programs to meet natural resource needs.



Supervisors serve staggered four year terms. Under Wyoming State Statute, three positions are rural (residing outside city/town limits), one position is urban (residing within city/town limits), and one is at-large (residing anywhere within the district). Elected Supervisors may appoint Associate Supervisors for their expertise and interest in specific areas. Associate Supervisors provide valuable input, but are not voting members of the Board.

Funding for Conservation Districts varies statewide. Some Districts have voter approved mill levies while others rely on local funding through County appropriations, and others rely mostly on federal and state grant funding. The CCCD receives appropriations from the Campbell County Commissioners, the City of Gillette, and a variety of federal and state grants to fund specific projects and activities.

Purpose

The function of the CCCD is to coordinate technical, educational, and financial resources to meet the needs of the local land user.

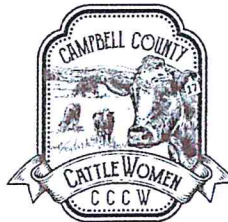
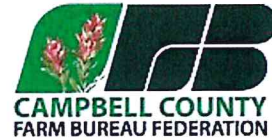
Conservation Districts develop local conservation programs based on the natural resource priorities of their respective communities. Programs vary from state to state, county to county, and district to district. Programs currently offered by the CCCD include:

- ◇ Water quality monitoring/assessments,
- ◇ Conservation (including watershed) planning,
- ◇ Conservation seedling tree sales and tree products,
- ◇ Natural resource outreach and education,
- ◇ Subdivision reviews (Wyoming § 18-05-306), and
- ◇ Forest management
- ◇ Others

PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships

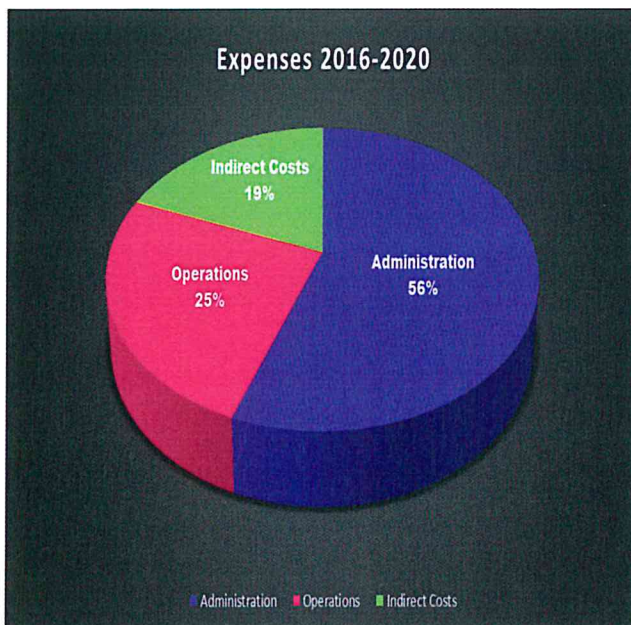
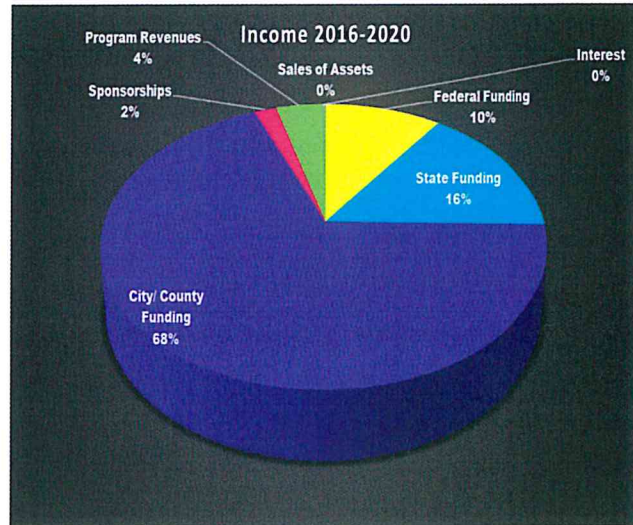
The CCCD also partners with other groups and organizations, including:



FUNDING

Funding

Funding for the CCCD is comprised mainly from Campbell County and the City of Gillette, state funding and federal funding. These three funding areas make up 94 percent of the district annual budget. Both federal funding and state funding are specific to grants. These funds are utilized for very specific projects that put conservation on the ground. Although funding from the City of Gillette and Campbell County do have some grant dollars that are project specific, the bulk of the funding goes to cover staff, and operations. This portion of the budget is extremely important as it provides the district with the ability to leverage funds in order to receive outside grant dollars that are put back into the community and aid in the implementation of quality conservation work.



Expenses for the CCCD is divided into three areas: administration, operations and indirect costs. The indirect costs are overhead costs needed for day to day operations. A quarter of the Districts expenses go to operations which consist of on the ground projects. Administrative costs are associated with wages, board expenses, of-ice supplies, and education supplies.



Population and Demographics

Campbell County has a rich heritage and culture in agriculture; however, its character is primarily defined by the economic influences of the mineral extraction industry. Surface ownership within Campbell County consists of approximately 2,514,835 acres private, 188,662 acres state, and 363,843 acres

federal. However, the subsurface estate (minerals) is primarily held in federal ownership (approximately 2,544,681 acres federal and 522,660 acres private) (Campbell County, 2015). This condition is referred to as a split estate mineral ownership and heavily influences land development patterns in Campbell County. Therefore, development of federal or state holdings can have significant impacts on residents of the County and impact to private property owners. Multiple, sustained, economically viable uses of public lands is of great importance to Campbell County (Appendix 1 and Appendix 4).

Campbell County is located in the Powder River Basin in northeastern Wyoming. Elevation in the County generally increases from north to south ranging from 3,500 feet in the north to 6,000 feet in the Pumpkin Buttes. West of Campbell County is the Bighorn Mountain Range, where peaks extend up to 13,000 feet (Campbell County, 2015).

Population in Campbell County was 46,140 in 2018, of which almost two thirds resided in the city of Gillette (US Census Bureau [USCB], 2014). The population density in the county averaged 9.6 people per square mile. Excluding Gillette, population density averages only 3.4 people per square mile (Campbell County, 2015).

Campbell County covers 4,761 square miles, or roughly 3 million acres. The lowest spot in the county is 3,400 feet above sea level at the Little Powder River in the northern end of the county. The highest point is 6,060 feet and is located at the top of North Pumpkin Butte on the western border. The climate is semiarid with an average of 15.75 inches of precipitation a year. May and June are the wettest months, while December and January are the driest. (Campbell County, 2019)

RESOURCE DESCRIPTION CONTINUED

Major land uses on state and federal lands in Campbell County include coal mining, uranium mining, oil and gas exploration, production and associated development, livestock grazing and recreation, which includes a broad spectrum from wilderness and primitive use to developed-area recreation, both motorized and non-motorized. It is these myriad uses that form the custom and cultural attributes of Campbell County. The traditions of its citizens are based in these land uses.

The 2017 Census of Agriculture, Campbell County Profile provides the following farming and ranching statistics for the area: number of farms 643, land in farms 2,901,210 acres and average size of farm 4,512 acres. The top crop in Campbell County is forage-land used for all hay and haylage, grass silage, and greenchop. Wheat for grain, winter wheat, and spring wheat are the top crops raised in Campbell County. Livestock inventory include cattle and calves (78,310), beef cows (50,609), and sheep and lambs (28,194), (US Census of Agriculture, 2017).



The Powder/Tongue River and Northeast Wyoming River Basins make up the drainage basins in Campbell County (Campbell County, 2015). Additionally, six watersheds exist within the County (Appendix 4) (Campbell County, 2015). The watersheds include: Upper Powder, Middle Powder, Little Powder, Upper Little Missouri, Antelope, Upper Cheyenne, and Upper Belle Fourche. The County is headwaters for the Belle Fourche River and Little Powder River drainages. Many other named and unnamed creeks and streams flow within the county (Campbell County, 2015). No major reservoirs exist within the County; however, a number of smaller water storage facilities do exist. Water has historical importance in the West and Campbell County for agricultural, domestic, and industrial needs. Native American tribes used natural water courses as landmarks and often as routes of travel. Early settlements and homesteads were located in close proximity to water sources.

Municipal and domestic water uses include public water supply systems and individual well and small water systems. These systems are supplied by ground water. Current high users of Campbell County's water resources include the municipalities of Gillette and Wright (WWDC 2002) (Campbell County, 2015). Municipal water use is fairly low in the Powder/Tongue River basin (surface 2,000 acre-feet/year; ground 500 acre-feet/year) and Northeast River basin (ground 9,100 acre-feet/year); domestic use is slightly higher in the Powder/Tongue River basin (4,400 acre-feet/year), compared to the Northeast River basin (3,600 acre-feet/year).

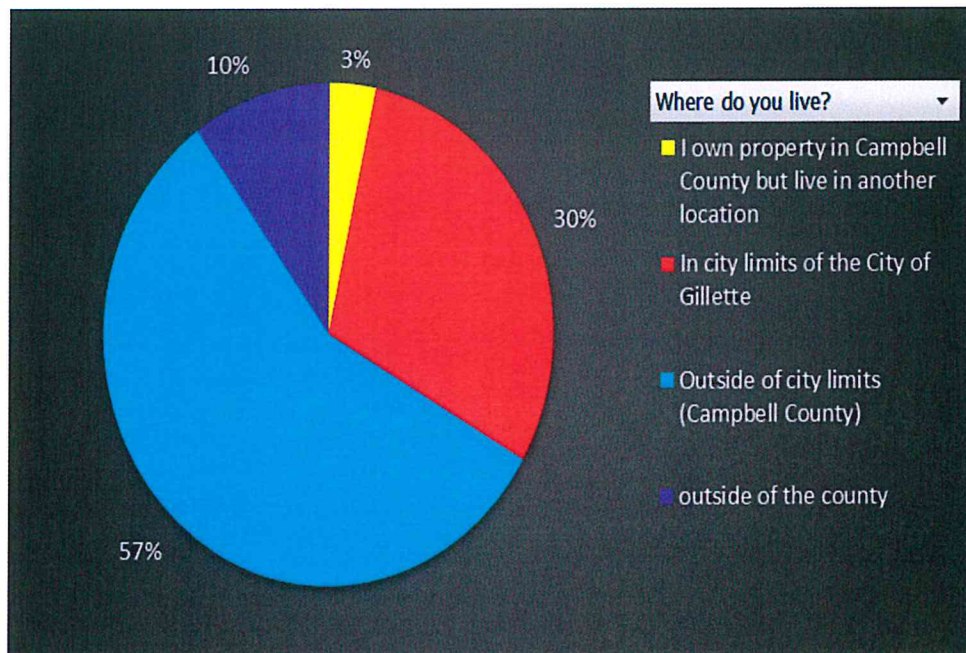
NATURAL RESOURCE PRIORITIES

The CCCD develops a Long Range Plan every five years to outline the long-term priorities and goals of the District. This plan serves as the guiding document for development of District programs and activities and is intended to respond to changing natural resource needs in Campbell County.

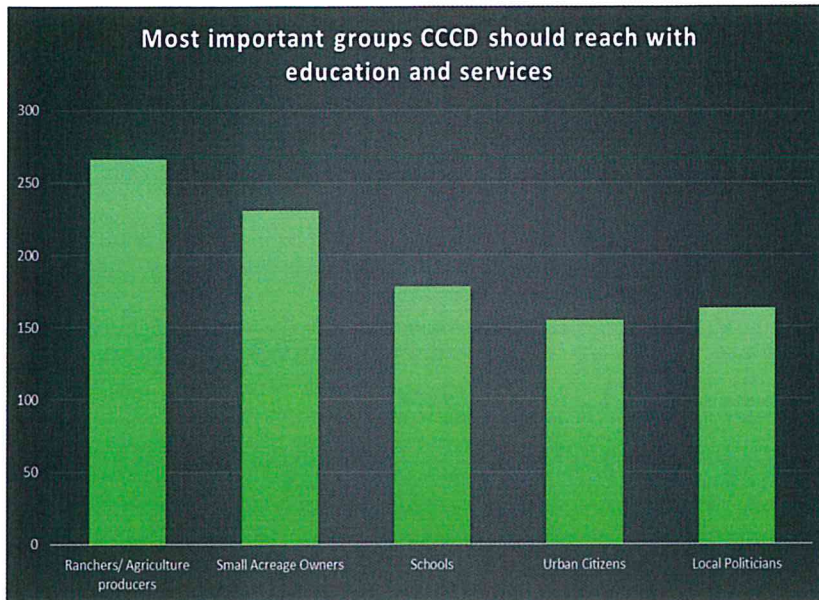
The Long Range Plan includes goals, objectives, and potential action items for three categories: District Operations, Natural Resource Programs and Natural Resource Information and Education . The potential action items for each category are not intended to be a complete list of activities and do not include on-going or existing programs. Action items include items that CCCD wanted to consider and/or emphasize over the next 5 years. Public needs can and do change over time, and the CCCD will strive to understand public concerns and respond according to those changing needs.

The CCCD sought local input for the plan through surveys distributed in the CCCD newsletter (1100+) as well as available on the CCCD website, Campbell County and City of Gillette websites and other social media in 2020. Comments were considered throughout the planning process. The plan was subject to a 45-day comment period required by the Wyoming Administrative Procedures Act (Wyoming § 16-3-101). Responses from 60 surveys were received.

After a 45-day survey period the CCCD received a total of 60 surveys, doubling previous years of Long Range Plan survey participation. Of those surveys the majority of respondents were residents of Campbell County and lived outside of city boundaries. The second largest group of responders lived within the City of Gillette.

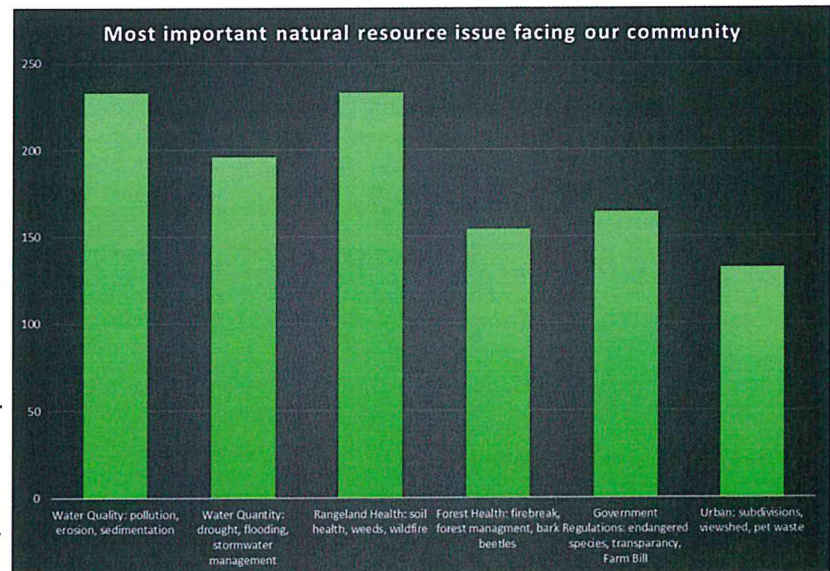


NATURAL RESOURCE PRIORITIES CONTINUED

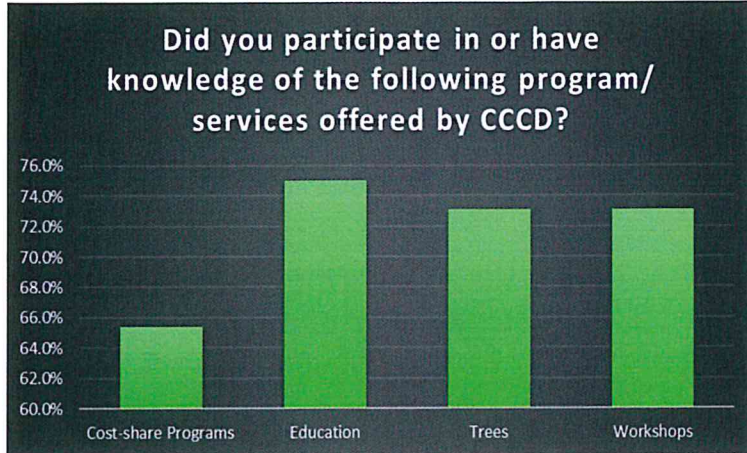


The CCCD board of supervisors was interested in learning more about the perspectives of the constituents that are familiar with the CCCD. The first question focused on the groups that the CCCD should be reaching with the work that they do. Not surprisingly most respondents selected agricultural producers and small acreage landowners. Throughout the years these groups have been the focus of the CCCD and will continue to be one of the primary customers of the district.

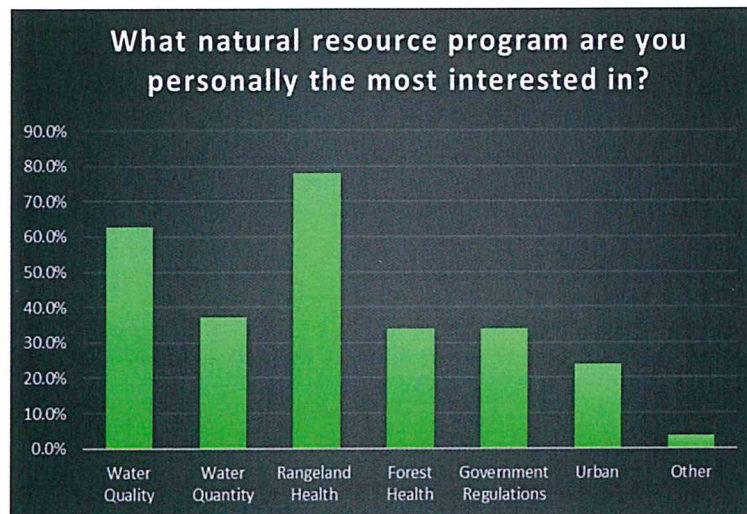
In order to better understand where the district should focus its time, funding and resources, the CCCD asked participants to identify the most important natural resource issue facing our community. The top three areas were identified as water quality, water quantity and rangeland health. Currently the CCCD spends a large portion of its time focusing on water quality issues facing our impaired watersheds. The water quality program has been active in the district since the early 2000's and has been well defined and funded. Based on survey results and resource concerns the district will work toward the development of a rangeland health program that can offer benefits to its' constituents over the next five years.



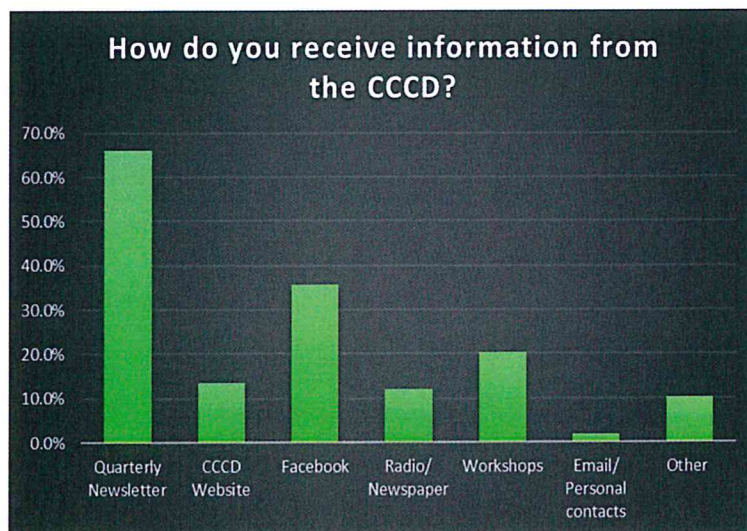
NATURAL RESOURCE PRIORITIES CONTINUED



From the responses to this survey question we can see that the CCCD is having a higher participation in our education program amongst survey participants. Although we have fewer respondents express a knowledge in cost-share that could be due in part to many of the cost-share opportunities being available for a specific area.



In this graph we can see that participants personal interests are very similar to what they feel is a major resource concern for the area. Again rangeland health is the highest ranked area with water quality being a close second.



The CCCD wanted to know how well the different ways they communicate with constituents was working, with the addition of social media and reduction of newsletters (from bi-monthly to quarterly). The survey showed that the district newsletter was still very popular and an effective means of communication. The second most popular way to receive information was through social media, Facebook.

PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

District Operations

Goal:

The CCCD will provide natural resource assistance to the community by continuing to improve the credibility, financial stability and recognition of the CCCD.

Objectives:

- ◆ Provide training and professional development to enable staff and board members to make informed decisions, develop policy, and convey a consistent message.
- ◆ Increase community involvement in conservation activities.
- ◆ Recognize opportunities to support and partner with local governments, state and federal agencies, and other entities.
- ◆ Promote the exchange of information between landowners and natural resource agencies.
- ◆ Pursue funding sources to expand and fulfill conservation needs in Campbell County.
- ◆ Increase District reserves to ensure stability.
- ◆ Enter into formal Memorandums of Understanding or other agreements with partners to establish collaboration in project implementation.

Potential Actions:

Professional Development:

- ◆ Participate in Water Quality Trainings, Employee Trainings and other workshops pertinent to job duties.
- ◆ Attend County Commissioner and City budget meetings and present.
- ◆ Review and update policies.

Memorandums of Understanding:

- ◆ Maintain existing agreements and promote future partnerships.

Partnerships and Committees:

- ◆ Collaborate with NACD, WACD, NRCS, G&F, BLM, WSFD, USFS, USFWS, WDA, Campbell County, City of Gillette and Wright, and local and regional entities.
- ◆ Advocate for local resource concerns on local, state, and federal committees/boards.

Funding:

- ◆ Continue to recognize and apply for funding opportunities with all applicable entities.
- ◆ Comply with all reporting requirements.

Outreach:

- ◆ Promote programs and relationships by hosting the Holiday Open House, and Legislative Breakfast.
- ◆ Provide updates for Campbell County agencies, City of Gillette and Wright, Campbell County School District and others.
- ◆ Maintain website and Facebook page.
- ◆ Provide and promote Barnyards & Backyards publications and CCCD quarterly newsletters.

PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES CONTINUED

Natural Resource Programs

Water Resources

Goal:

To promote and support voluntary land use management practices that when implemented will address water quality issues and improve overall watershed health.

Objectives:

- ◆ Partner with agencies to expand project funding and scope of work.
- ◆ Coordinate planning and implementation of projects with partners.
- ◆ Continue to monitor surface water quality by gathering data including physical, biological and chemical parameters. Monitoring will focus on impaired streams within Campbell County.
- ◆ Collaborate with private landowners and public land managers to promote health and functional watersheds.
- ◆ Encourage landowners to implement best management practices to reduce potential *E.coli* in Little Powder River and Upper Belle Fourche watersheds.



Potential Actions:

- ◆ Provide annual updates to watershed steering committees, City of Gillette, Campbell County agencies, and general public.
- ◆ Secure funding for cost-share opportunities and assist with implementation of best management practices to reduce bacteria concentrations.
- ◆ Implement watershed based plan and TMDL strategies.
- ◆ Monitor water quality in Little Powder River, Donkey Creek and Stonepile Creek.

PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES CONTINUED

Forest and Rangeland Resources

Goal:

To promote forest and rangeland health, through technical assistance and conservation practices that will result in resilient landscapes, increased vegetative quality and quantity and improved habitat.

Objectives:

- ◆ Provide technical assistance on rangeland projects, tree plantings for conservation purposes, and forestry projects.
- ◆ Encourage federal and state agencies to use scientific based methods to manage vegetation.
- ◆ To improve the quality and quantity of forage in Campbell County.



Potential Actions:

- ◆ Promote soil health principals, cover crop practices, and conservation tree plantings.
- ◆ Coordinate with partners to provide information and education about invasive grasses and weeds.
- ◆ Provide input on forestry and range projects with federal and state agencies.
- ◆ Seek funding opportunities for timber stand improvement, riparian restoration, and rangeland restoration projects.
- ◆ Promote seedling tree sales and 4th grade free tree program.
- ◆ Encourage improved grazing management by promoting and assisting livestock producers with fencing and water development.
- ◆ Promote the use of Ecological Site Descriptions in the development of vegetation objectives, considering desired and potential conditions, instead of single species management.

PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES CONTINUED

Habitat and Land Use Management

Goal:

Advocate for responsible use and management of lands in Campbell County to enhance their function and benefits for multiple use.

Objectives:

- ◆ Advocate for appropriate mitigation of habitat loss through on-site and off-site mitigation efforts.
- ◆ Encourage habitat improvement projects by providing technical assistance.
- ◆ Facilitate decision making through collaboration with local, state and federal agencies.



Potential Actions:

- ◆ Participate and promote the NRCS Local Work Group meetings to assist in the prioritization of Farm Bill programs.
- ◆ Provide subdivision reviews to Campbell County.
- ◆ Participate on the Campbell County Natural Resource Land Use Plan Committee.
- ◆ Promote quality projects and seek funding to assist in their implementation.
- ◆ Provide soils information to Campbell County.
- ◆ Work towards addressing specific conservation needs for urban and rural constituents.

PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Natural Resource Outreach and Education

Goal:

The CCCD will strive to improve the appreciation of natural resources and encourage responsibility and stewardship among land users and the public through outreach and education.

Objectives:

- ◆ Provide technical information on natural resources, land management practices, funding programs, through newsletters, website, workshops, and social media.
- ◆ Provide presentations on natural resources to youth, educators, parents, teachers and land users.
- ◆ Identify and address education needs for small acreage landowners.

Potential Actions:

Water Resources:

- ◆ Present natural resource educational activities during appropriate state/local events, Mallo Camp, Ag and Natural Resources Expo and Black Hills Natural Resource Youth Camp and as requested.
- ◆ Place storm drain stickers in City of Gillette.
- ◆ Initiate watershed focused newsletter.

Land Use Management:

- ◆ Organize and participate in Ag and Natural Resources Expo, Black Hills Natural Resource Youth Camp, 4th Grade Free Tree Program and Crayola Color Cycle Program.
- ◆ Participate in St. John Paul II Mallo Camp, Campbell County School District Mallo Camp, and other youth events.
- ◆ Advocate and participate in Project Learning Tree and Wyoming Agriculture in the Classroom activities.
- ◆ Provide educational activities and material as requested.

Distribution Sources:

- ◆ Utilize District newsletter, website, Facebook page; radio, workshops, informational brochures and Barnyards and Backyards publication.

CK TO REVIEW AND EDIT



REFERENCES

References Cited

Campbell County Commissioners. Amended Campbell County Natural Resource Land Use Plan. 2015.

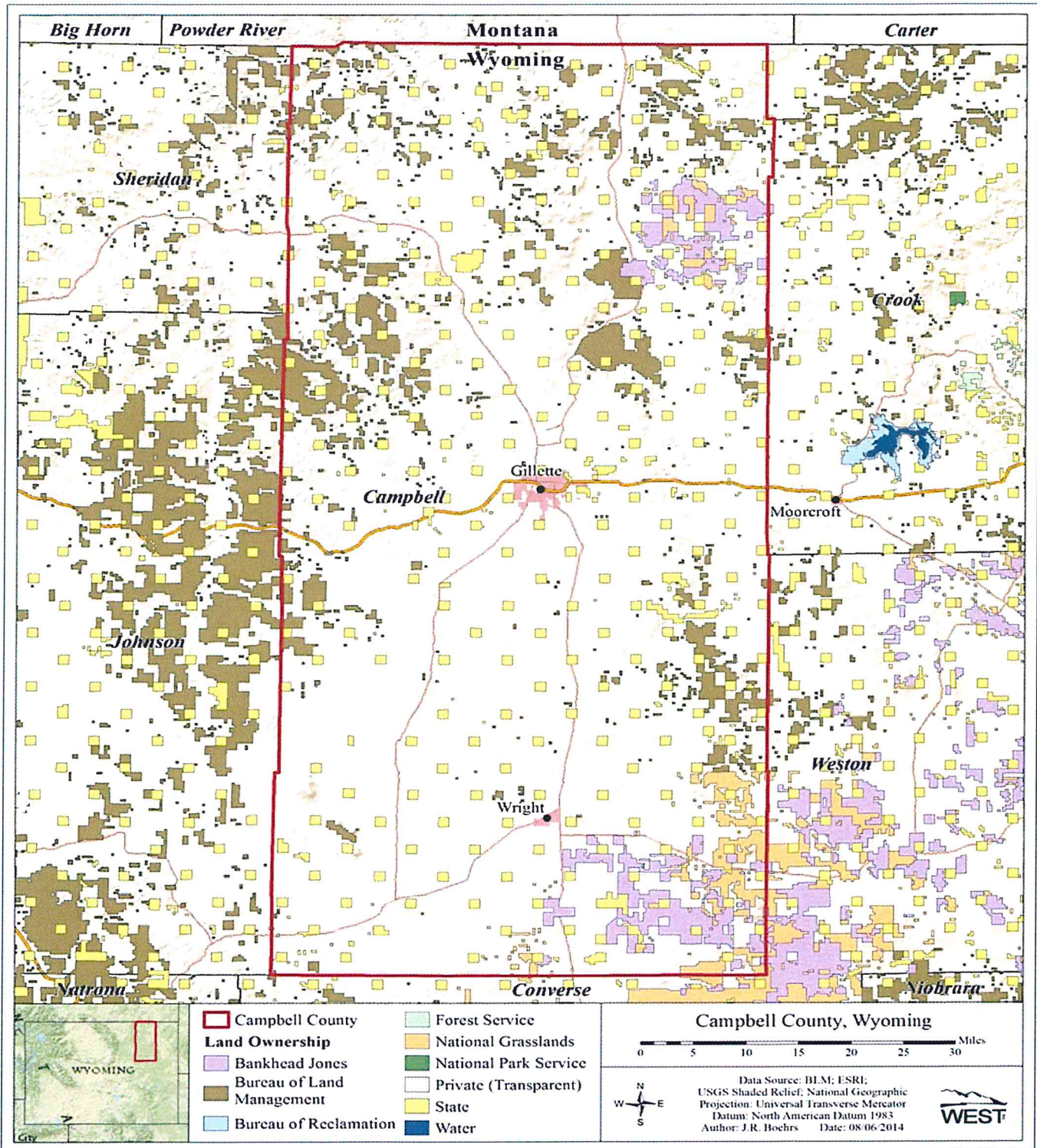
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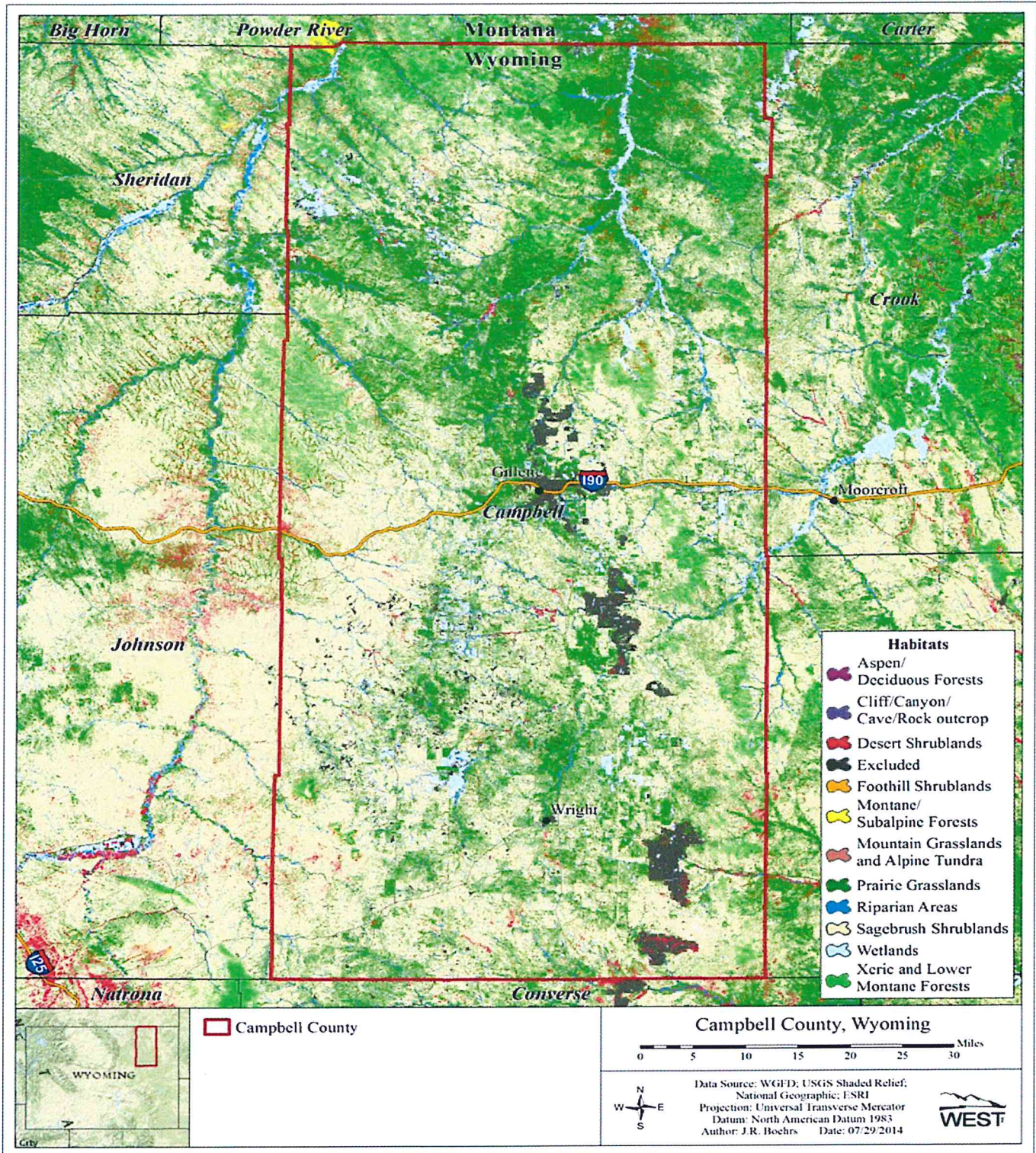
APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Surface land ownership of Campbell County, Wyoming (Campbell County, 2015)



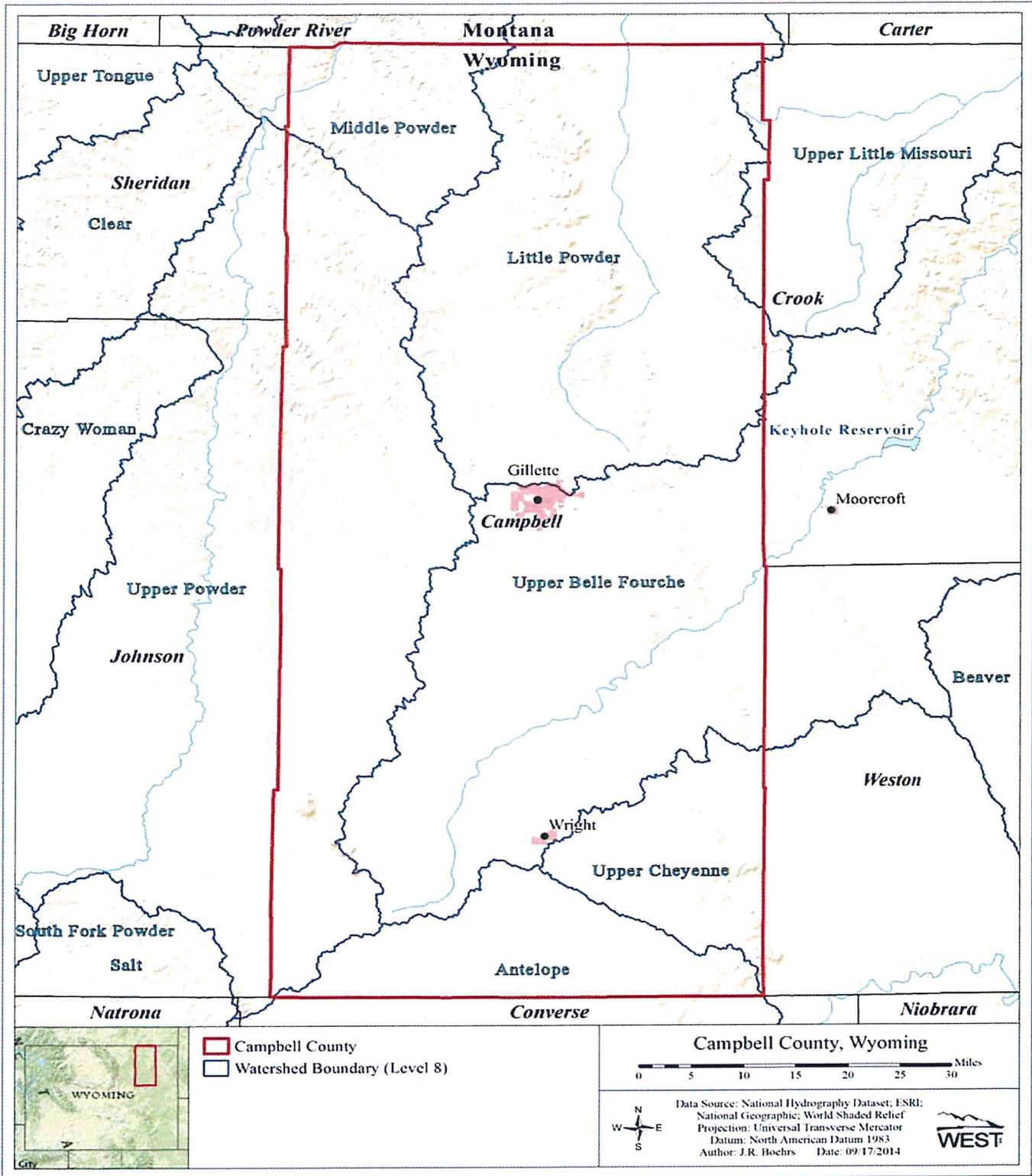
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Appendix 2: Habitat types in Campbell County, Wyoming (Campbell County, 2015)



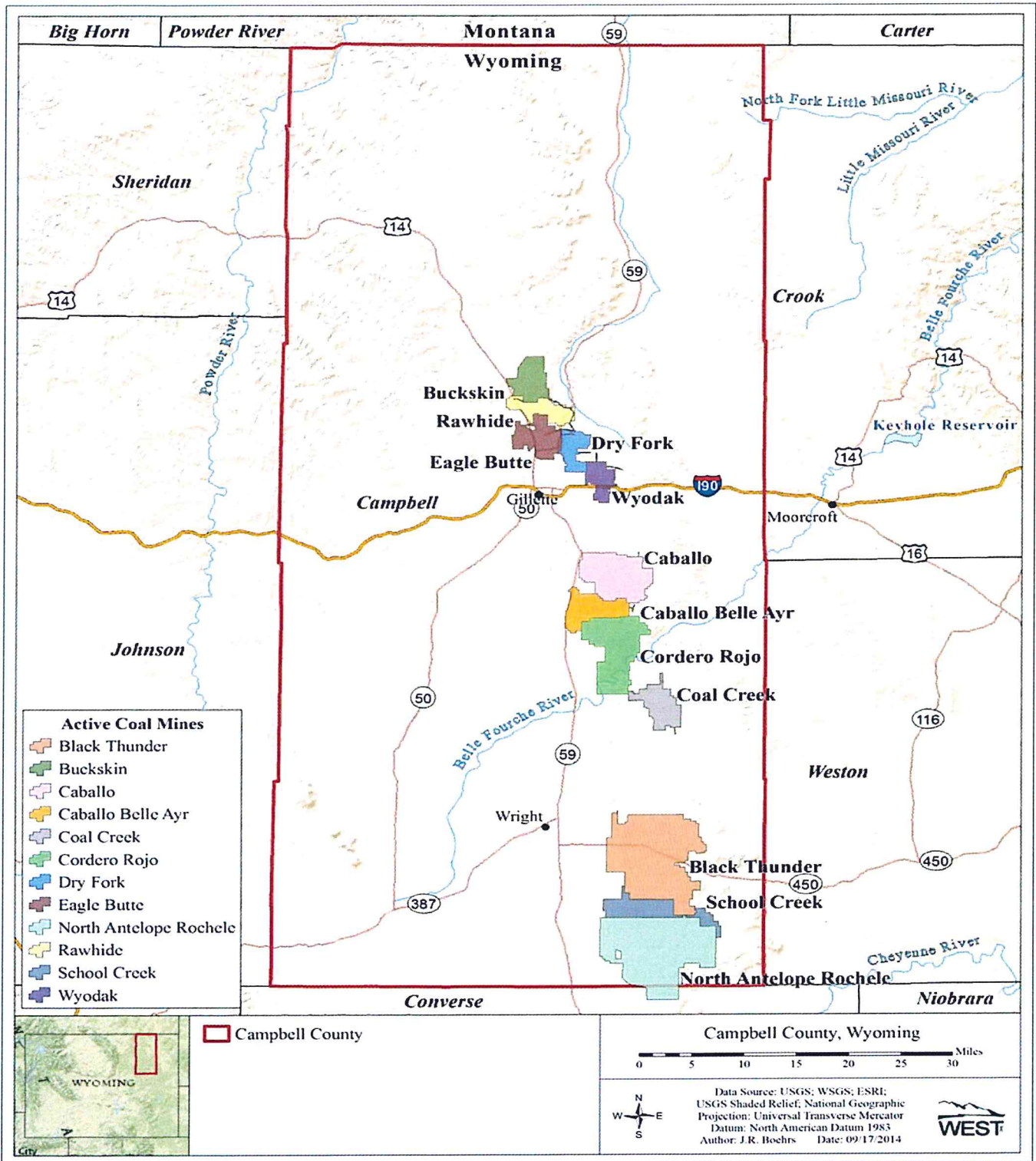
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Appendix 3: Watersheds in Campbell County, Wyoming (Campbell County, 2015)



APPENDICES

Appendix 4: Coal mine locations in Campbell County, Wyoming (Campbell County, 2015)



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