

***621 West Fetterman Buffalo, WY 82834 (307) 684-2526 ext. 3001***

**NATURAL RESOURCE COST SHARE**

**APPLICATION GUIDELINES**

**Mission Statement**

*The Lake DeSmet Conservation District is dedicated to the development and implementation of programs to provide leadership and technical assistance for the conservation of Johnson County’s natural resources, agricultural heritage and resource base, to promote the control of soil erosion, to promote and protect the quality and quantity of Wyoming’s waters and all other natural resources, to preserve and enhance wildlife habitat, to protect the tax base and to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the residents of this County through responsible conservation planning.*

**General Program Objectives**

The Lake DeSmet Conservation District (LDCD) created the ***Natural Resource Cost Share*** program to financially assist producers and residents of northern Johnson County in addressing natural resource concerns that will make a positive difference on the land and benefit multiple users. The focus of the program is to implement priorities identified by a Local Work Group (LWG) as well as LDCD’s Long Range Plan (LRP) and LDCD Mission Statement, these priorities include:

1) **Watersheds**: Improve lands associated with LDCD’s watershed planning efforts;

2) **Rangelands**: Assist in rangeland improvement by developing dependable livestock water systems that will implement or enhance grazing systems,

3) **Irrigated lands:** Increase efficiency of water conveyance and control or reduce soils erosion on Highly Erodible Land (HEL) soils and associated lands showing evidence of soil erosion,

4) **Regulatory Compliance:** Assist landowners in complying with state and environmental federal laws such as, species at risk, AFO/CAFO, etc.

5) **Integrated Pest Management:** Assist in the implementation of Integrated Pest Management plans in coordination with grazing plans to address noxious weeds, invasive species, and pests.

**Specific Goals of Program**

* Compliment LWG priorities
* Maintain District LRP Goals & Objectives
* Improve wildlife habitat (removal of fish barriers, riparian, wetlands, uplands)
* Improve rangeland health (dependable water, grazing systems)
* Reduce producer risk for regulation (AFO/CAFO, water quality, species at risk)
* Improve irrigation efficiency (conveyance systems, buried pipelines, water to fields)
* Provide technical assistance to address specific goals of the program
* Assist in keeping agricultural operations viable

**Funding Criteria**

* The amount of cost share available for each project will be a maximum of 50% cost-share. The LDCD Board of Supervisors will determine the amount of cost-share for each project on a case-by-case basis and requires that the landowner invest a minimum of 50% match (cash or in-kind) for each project. The LDCD Board reserves the right to adjust the cost-share final payment based upon actual amount of the project. Cost reimbursement will be based upon actual costs. If the actual costs exceed the estimated costs, the applicant will be responsible for the difference. Cost share dollars will be on a reimbursable basis. Invoices and copies of receipts ensuring payment will be a requirement for cost share dollars. Project designs need to follow NRCS or other Professional Engineers standards and specifications. The **LDCD Board will have final say & discretion to increase / decrease application requests.**

**General Application Criteria**

* Additional points will be awarded to multi-user, multi-benefit applications;
* Only one application, per applicant, per year;
* Applications will need to include a map of the project area;
* Projects must compliment Annual Plan of Work and Long Range Plan priorities and must be conservation based;
* Engineering services will be the responsibility of the applicant (may be included in budget);
* NRCS Standards & Specs will be the guide for project implementation;
* No single project / producer will be funded more than 20% of the annual cost-share budget;
* LDCD Board will have final say & discretion to increase / decrease application requests.

**Selection Process and Timeline**

Applications will be received once a year and are due by **October 1st, 2017**. Receipt of application notices will be sent to applicants. Grant selection and payment decisions will be made by the LDCD Board of Supervisors during their board meeting on the third Tuesday of the month in September.

All projects must be approved before being initiated and must be certified upon completion by NRCS or other Professional Engineer.

For more information, please contact Zach Byram at 684-2526, ext. 3001.

**APPLICATION QUESTIONAIRE**

Will the project address one or more of the following (mark all that apply) and give a brief explanation for each category marked?

1. Range/Grazing efficiency/distribution

1. Irrigation efficiency or water availability

1. Endangered or Threatened Species

1. Preservation of soil and arable lands

1. Erosion or Flood Control

1. Invasive Species or Noxious Weeds

1. Wildlife/Fisheries habitat preservation/enhancement

1. Prevention of ag land conversion to non-ag use

1. Meeting Government Regulatory requirements

1. Repair and/or replacement of key infrastructure damaged or destroyed by a natural disaster