

2016 Accomplishments

(Annual Report)

For

**High Country Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D)
Area, Inc.**

“From dreams to reality; improving quality of life one project at a time!”



*In 2016, High Country activities resulted in bringing
at least \$665,000 in grants & investments to the
region addressing key issues such as, water,
conservation, education, community development,
and public safety.*

High Country FY 2016 at a Glance

- *Employed 8 people for a total of \$114,000 in wages*
- *Brought \$251,000 into SE Idaho via grants written & awarded to support community projects and improve public safety.*
- *Contributed \$109,000 into the SE Idaho economy via payments to local contractors*
- *Coordinated and raised over \$86,000 for the Upper Snake River Cloud Seeding effort that resulted in about 190,000 acre feet of water in our rivers and reservoirs. **The worth of this “extra water” is estimated at \$2,090,000***
- *Assisted farmers and ranchers implement projects which resulted in over 1.2 million kWh of energy savings and 30,000 acre feet of water savings per year. **Energy saving measures annually are estimated to be \$61,270.25. Water Savings are valued at \$360,000. Matching funds as a result of this program = \$1,144,407.98.***
- *Enabled organizations in seven counties work across jurisdictions to share expertise and resources treating noxious and invasive weeds on **7,100 acres, which would not otherwise been treated***
- *Engaged over **600 landowners** in Wildfire Awareness & Defensible Space Programs*
- *Assisted **3 community groups/organizations** find the resources they needed to move their projects forward*
- *Supported **one community group** to incorporate and receive IRS 501 (c) 3 non-profit designation.*

Our Mission

We:

- Help people and communities find the expertise and resources they need to plan and implement projects that improve the quality of life

AND

- Assist communities and organizations to work across jurisdictional boundaries to address regional issues and take advantage of regional opportunities.

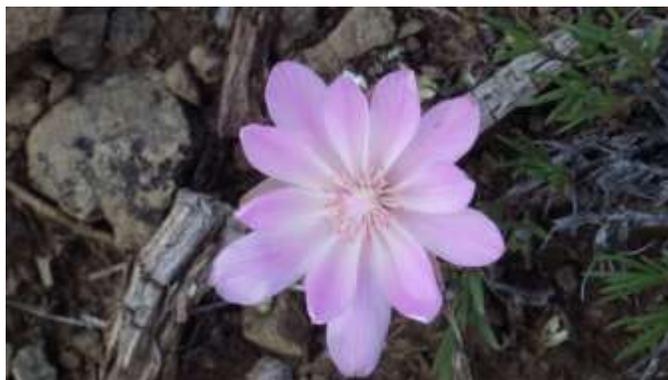


2016 Our Board

BONNEVILLE	Dave Radford	County Commissioner
BUTTE	Brian Harrell	County Commissioner
CLARK	Nick Hillman	County Commissioner
CUSTER	Doyle Lamb	County Commissioner
FREMONT	Lee Miller	County Commissioner
JEFFERSON	Brian Farnsworth	County Commissioner
LEMHI	John Jakovac	County Commissioner
MADISON	Kimber Ricks	County Commissioner
TETON	Cindy Riegel	County Commissioner
TETON, WY.	Boyd Bowles	Associate Supervisor, Teton, WY SCD

2016 Officers

President – Lee Miller
Vice President – Kimber Ricks
Secretary Treasurer – Brain Farnsworth



Who We Are

High Country RC&D is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization incorporated in the State of Idaho. We serve the people and communities of: Bonneville, Butte, Clark, Custer, Fremont, Jefferson, Lemhi, Madison and Teton County Idaho, and the Alta Area of Teton County Wyoming. We provide technical assistance and “know-how” to organizations; helping them to implement projects that improve quality of life in SE Idaho.

Many Thanks to Our 2016 Sponsors

Bonneville County

- Bonneville County Commission
- East Side SWCD
- West Side SWCD
- City of Iona
- City of Idaho Falls
- City of Ammon

Butte County

- Butte County Commission
- Butte SWCD
- Arco Business Incubation Center
- Moore Community Association

Clark County

- Clark County Commission
- Clark SWCD

Custer County

- Custer County Commission
- Custer SWCD

Fremont County

- Fremont County Commission
- Yellowstone SWCD
- City of St. Anthony
- City of Ashton

- Bank of Idaho

Jefferson County

- Jefferson County Commission
- Jefferson SWCD

Lemhi County

- Lemhi County Commission
- Lemhi SWCD

Madison County

- Madison County Commission
- Madison SWCD
- City of Rexburg
- City of Sugar City
- Shumway Academy

Teton County, ID

- Teton County Commission
- City of Driggs
- City of Victor

Teton County, WY

- Teton Conservation District

Bingham County

- City of Atomic City



2016 Project Review



Cloud Seeding Program: (On-going) With the application of new technology, made available by our Idaho Power partners, we were finally able to quantify the results of our program in acre feet of water. This season our efforts resulted: in an additional 190,000 acre feet of water stored as snow in the mountains. That's enough snow to fill Island Park Reservoir 1.5 times.



Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Community Assistance: (On-going)

We were involved with three on-going projects that help landowners reduce their risk from wildfire. Those projects are:

- **Bannock WUI** - working with homeowners in the Johnny Creek Watershed, in Pocatello, ID. Our project, which is funded by USDI Bureau of Land Management, provides homeowners with technical assistance and cost share to remove fuel hazards from their properties.
- **Jack Branch/Booth Canyon Community Protection Project** – Palisades Area of Bonneville County. We have partnered with the Bonneville County to manage and implement an Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) grant. High Country will be working with local landowners to establish fuel breaks on their property to protect those properties from fires started either in the National Forest or along Highway 26.
- **Island Park Sustainable Fire Community** - We have partnered with Fremont County and the Island Park Sustainable Fire Community to administer and implement an IDL grant which provides education about reducing landowners risk from wildfires. This project provided over 120 free Wildland Fire Risk Evaluations/Fuels Reduction Plans to land owners. Offered

cost-share program to landowners to implement their Fuels Reduction Plans (12 participated), hosts a Wildfire Awareness Week Event that provides general information and education to the public (250 attended), and a Slash Days Event which picked up slash piles from 110 participating landowners.



Upper Snake River Cooperative Weed Management Area (USRCWMA): a collaboration of individuals, organizations, county governments and agencies (state & federal) in Bonneville, and parts of Jefferson and Bingham Counties. High Country provided coordination, grant writing, and grant administration for this three county collaboration. This group treated about

3890 acres of noxious and invasive weeds which would not have been treated by the counties on their own.



Henry's Fork Cooperative Weed Management Area: a collaboration of organizations, individuals, organizations, local governments and agencies (state and federal) in Fremont, Madison, Teton Counties, ID, Yellowstone NP, and Teton County WY. High Country provided coordination, grant

writing, and grant administration for this three county collaboration. This group treated about 3178 acres of noxious and invasive weeds which would not have been treated by the counties on their own.



Hold the Line- Early Detection Rapid Response and Bio saturation Project: This was the final year of Hold the Line Project as most project goals have been achieved. Early

Detection surveys in Jefferson and Fremont Counties found several new infestations of rush skeletonweed. The Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee's EDDMapS-GYCC project, an online mapping and data management system that tracks new noxious weed invaders throughout the Greater Yellowstone Area, was also completed. Bio-saturation efforts for leafy spurge have been mostly completed, leafy spurge flea beetles and other biocontrol agents are now found almost everywhere in eastern Idaho. In most areas, the biocontrol agents are effectively controlling the density and spread of leafy spurge.



BLM Biocontrol Monitoring:

This is part of the long-term biological control agent monitoring program in Idaho. Fifty permanent monitoring sites were visited across nine counties in eastern Idaho. Monitoring consists of recording both biocontrol agent numbers and noxious weed density and vigor. The photo is of spotted knapweed biocontrol larvae in Teton County.



Ag Energy Efficiency Project: Assisting Farmers and Ranchers implement energy efficiency practices. Thanks to National Fish and Wildlife Foundation / Wells Fargo (\$54,999.80) and USDA Rural Development (\$100,000) for grants which allowed High Country to offer cost-shared energy audits to area farmers and small businesses. High Country works cooperatively with two local utilities.

- 15 irrigation system evaluations / audits were conducted in the service areas of Fall River and Lost River electric cooperatives, identifying 1,354,343 kWh in energy saving measures. Three more audits were conducted in the fall of 2016 (not included in these totals.)
- High Country RC&Ds energy program resulted in 1,225,405 kWh in energy saving measures implemented with an additional 214,045 kWh completed and pending final measure and verify as a result of this program. Value of annual energy savings to the landowner from this program = \$61,270.25.
- Water savings as a result of implementation of energy saving measures = 30,000.32 acre feet. Value of annual water savings is \$360,000.
- Matching funds from landowners, utility cost share and others through implementation of energy practices is \$1,144,407.98. These matching funds benefit our local communities.
- One volunteer project was conducted in October 2016 as a result of this program to remove an old fence in disrepair that is located in a big game migration area. That fence removal reduces the hazard of wildlife becoming entangled.

Cooperative Development Technical Assistance

This year we partnered with the Montana Cooperative Development Center to provide technical assistance to those wishing to form a cooperative, and to existing cooperatives. It was a “building” year, which set the stage for 2017.



Shumway Academy

The Shumway Academy is a small non-profit Christian school located just north of Rexburg, ID. They needed audio visual teaching aids and computers for their teachers. We assisted them in writing a grant to the CHC Foundation, Idaho Falls, Idaho. This fall the school was awarded \$4000 to buy 4-large screen TV/monitors and 3 computers.

No-Till Potatoes – Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)

Late in the year, we assisted the Madison Soil and Water Conservation District and a local farmer write a grant to support on-farm research. The research will determine if no-tilling potatoes is economically feasible. If so, the reduction in soil erosion, improvement in soil health, and reduction of costs for farmers will be significant. A \$20,000 grant proposal was submitted to Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (an agency of USDA).

Miscellaneous Assistance:

These groups and organizations received nominal (three hours or less) technical assistance this year:

- Madison County Fair Board –explore funding options for numerous fairground projects
- Lillian Valley School – explore additional funding sources
- Bonneville Fair Board – explore funding options for moving the existing fairgrounds
- Fremont County 4-H – review of grant application
- Heroes On-Wheels – explore funding options for providing motorized wheel chairs to veterans



*****Here's how we figured the \$665,000 in grants and investments on the front page.***

AWARDED GRANTS - written by High Country

- \$4,000 – CHC Foundation – Shumway School
- \$3,000 – Montana Cooperative Development Center – to provide technical assistance
- \$10,000 – USDI BLM – monitoring of bio-control insects
- \$50,000 – USDI BLM – Atomic City Fuel Break, private rangeland fire resiliency
- \$45,000 – Idaho State Department of Ag – Invasive Weed treatments – Upper Snake CWMA
- \$52,000 - Idaho State Department of Ag – Invasive weed treatments – Henry's Fork CWMA
- \$100,000 – USDA Rural Development – Ag and Small Business Energy Audits

OTHER GRANTS AWARDED – written by others, enabled or assisted by High Country

- \$240,000 – Idaho Department of Lands – Wildfire Community Protection – Bonneville County

COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS – related to High Country assisted projects

- \$86,000 - local cash donations – Upper Snake River Valley Cloud Seeding Project
- \$50,000+ - in-kind donations – Upper Snake River Valley Cloud Seeding Project – Idaho Power
- \$25,000+ – in-kind donations – Wildland Fire Risk Reduction – private landowners