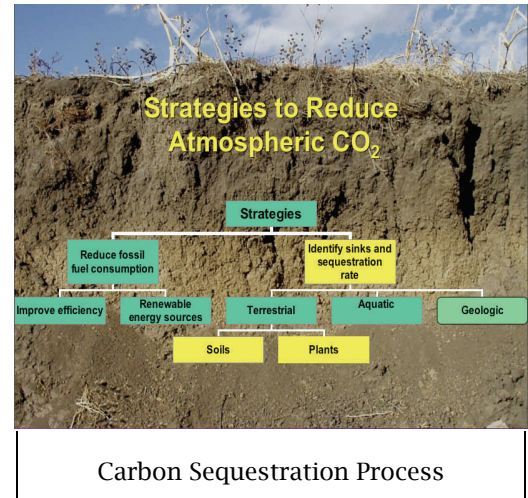


Project Name: Carbon Credit Trading

Location: Southeastern Wyoming RC&D Council

Project Goals:

- Increase landowner awareness regarding the value and benefits of carbon credit trading
- Improve soil structure and quality
- Improve soil productivity through increased organic matter
- Reduced erosion through improved soil structure
- Improved water quality through reduced erosion
- Increase financial opportunity and stimulate local economies
- Position the landowner to participate in carbon credit trading



Background:

Terrestrial carbon sequestration is essentially the process of transforming carbon in the air (carbon dioxide, or CO₂) into stored soil or plant carbon. Carbon dioxide is taken up by plants through the process of photosynthesis, and incorporated into living plant matter. This is not a static process and change occurs daily as plants grow removing carbon from the atmosphere, then die and incorporate a portion of their biomass into the soil.

Management practices that increase plant production also increase the amount of carbon that is stored in plants and soil. Carbon that is stored through improved land management practices can potentially be marketed by landowners through carbon credit trading programs. Companies, individuals or other entities that release carbon into the atmosphere may purchase these carbon credits through a trading system to offset emissions. The financial opportunities of selling carbon credits will assist local economies and producers.

The Chicago Climate Exchange (CCX) quantifies credits and sells greenhouse gas credits and sells greenhouse gas credits derived from conservation practices. The credits are aggregated, or pooled, from landowners in order to sell them to CCX members that have made voluntary commitments to reduce their greenhouse gas contributions. In addition to the potential for payments for sequestering carbon there are significant environmental benefits for agricultural producers as well.

Project Partners:

- North Dakota Farmers Union
- University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service
- SE Wyoming Landowners
- SE Wyoming Conservation Districts
- USDA ARS

Project Sponsors:

- University of Wyoming
- Platte County Resource District
- Goshen County Conservation Districts
- Converse County Conservation District
- Goshen County Commissioners
- Town of Wheatland
- Wyoming Livestock Roundup
- Albany County Conservation District

Project Name: Carbon Credit Trading

Project Strategy:

The Southeastern Wyoming RC&D Council has formed a Southeastern Carbon Credit Trading Advisory Committee to inform and educate landowners about the benefits of carbon credit trading. Lands that are eligible for carbon credit trading include no or minimum till, seed grass or forage stands, native rangeland, and forestry. The committee consists of landowners, agencies, and organizations and has assisted Conservation Districts in conducting 6 workshops in Platte, Converse, Johnson and Goshen Counties. Over 200 landowners have attended the workshops and approximately 40 landowners have applied for carbon credit trading through the Chicago Climate Exchange.



The Council has worked closely with the North Dakota Farmers Union to aggregate or “block up” lands for trading purposes (pictures are of eligible rangelands). Wyoming counties with annual rainfall in the 14 to 40 inch range are eligible for enrollment in the carbon credit trading program and include Big Horn, Converse, Goshen, Johnson, Lincoln, Park, Sheridan, Teton, Weston, Campbell, Crook, Hot Springs, Laramie, Niobrara, Platte, Sublette and Uinta. Landowners who enroll must commit to maintain soil carbon storage levels resulting from the establishment of a verified conservation practice. The amount of carbon credits earned are based on below ground carbon sequestration rates established for designated land resource regions (in metric tons CO₂/acre/year). The price per acre is negotiable based upon the current trading rate for carbon credits on the CCX.

Project Accomplishments:

- Organized a Carbon Credit Advisory Committee to develop a locally led program
- Conducted six (6) workshops with over 200 landowners in attendance to explain the application process and the types of conservation practices that are eligible for carbon credit trading
- Over 40 landowners have applied and have been accepted for carbon credit trading
- Conducted one (1) in-depth rangeland management workshop to explain to landowners what types of rangeland management practices are eligible for carbon credit trading
- SE Wyoming landowners are beginning to position themselves to take advantage of the financial and environmental benefits of carbon credit trading to offset potential higher energy costs

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