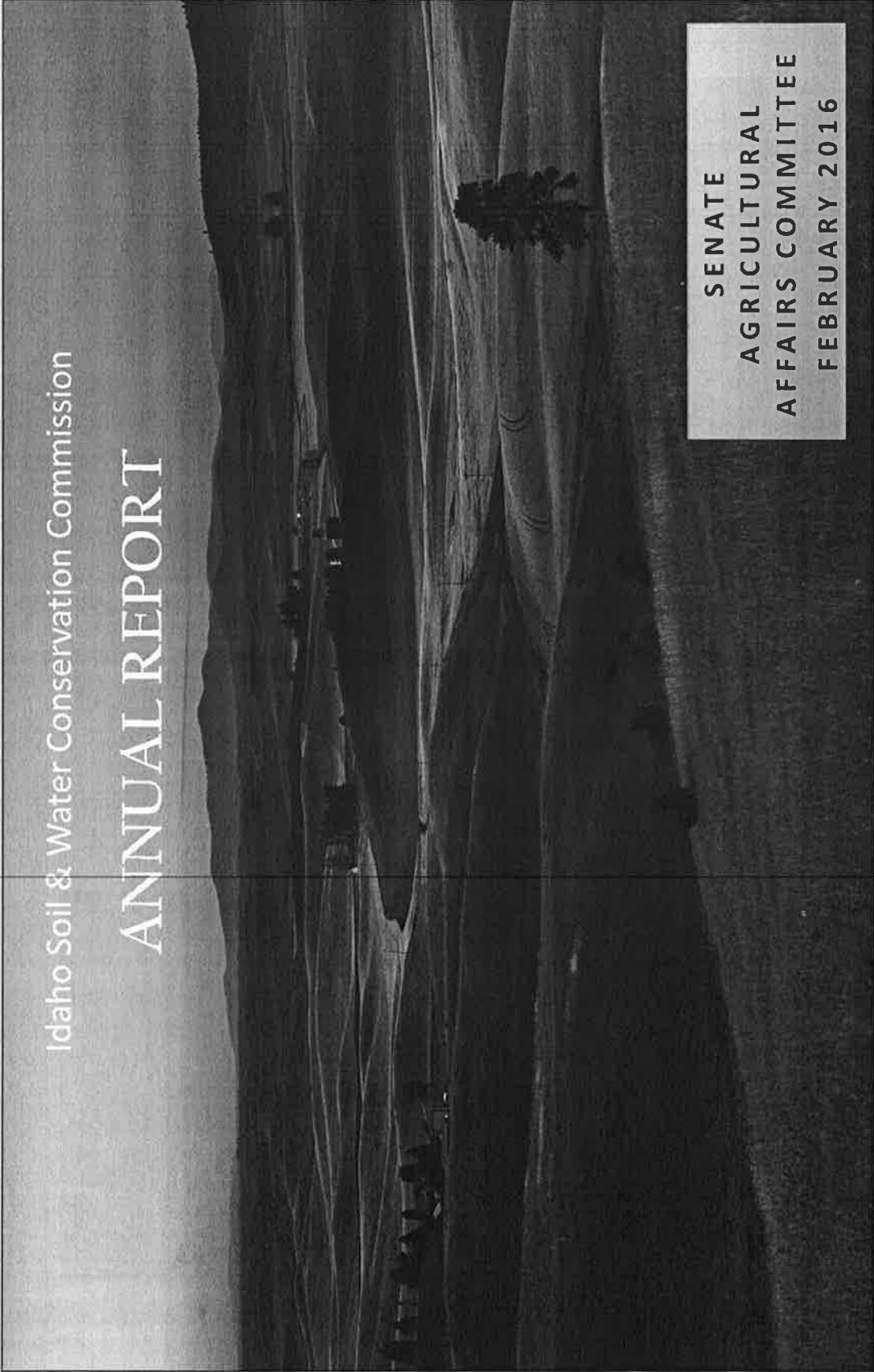


established  
**1939**

Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission

# ANNUAL REPORT



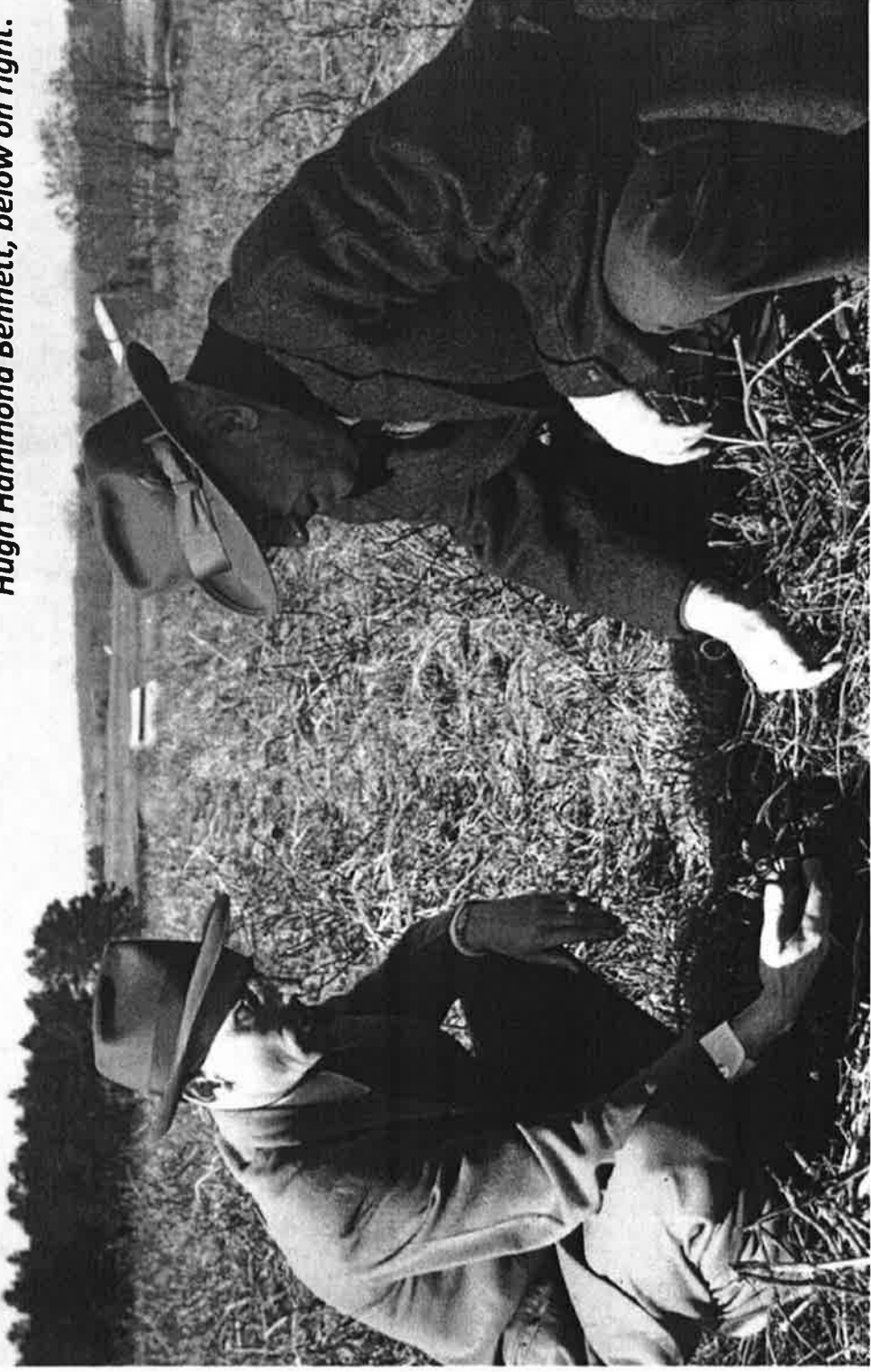
SENATE  
AGRICULTURAL  
AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
FEBRUARY 2016



SOIL & WATER  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

*Conservation the Idaho Way: Sowing the Seeds of Stewardship*

***A national conservation movement started with soil erosion concerns in the 30s:  
Hugh Hammond Bennett, below on right.***



*Conservation the Idaho Way: Sowing the Seeds of Stewardship*



**Conservation the Idaho Way**  
SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION




**BRUSH-TRIMMING PROJECT CREATES SAFE ZONES, IMPROVES FOREST HEALTH**

As the brush-trimming project progresses, the forest will be healthier and safer for the future.

... (text continues) ...

**Conservation the Idaho Way**  
SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION



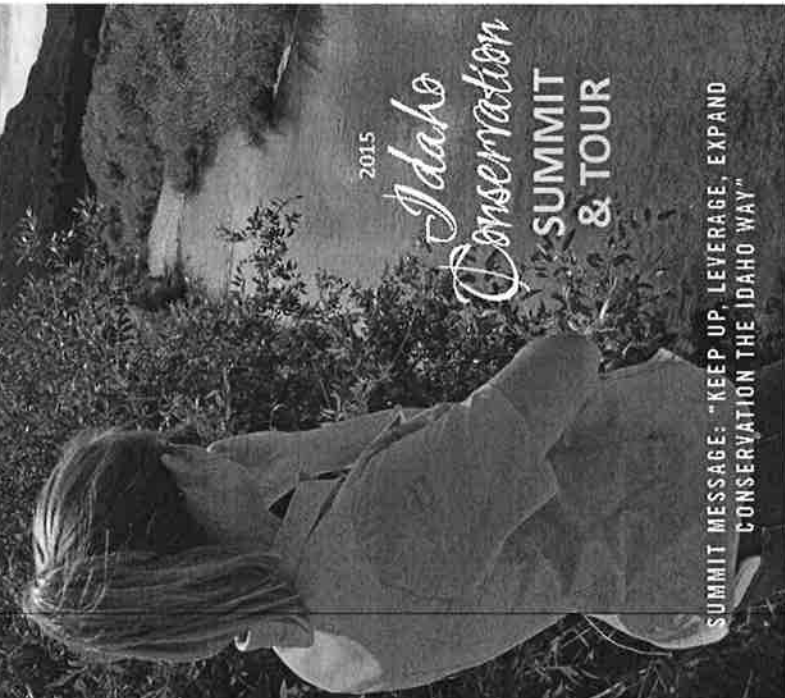
**MADISON COUNTY FARMERS DIP THEIR TOES IN TONNAGE OF DIRECT-SELL FARMING AND USE OF COVER CROPS**

... (text continues) ...

**Conservation the Idaho Way**  
IDAHO SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

ISSUE TWENTY-SIX

AUGUST 2015



**2015 Idaho Conservation Summit & Tour**

**SUMMIT MESSAGE: "KEEP UP, LEVERAGE, EXPAND CONSERVATION THE IDAHO WAY"**

**Conservation the Idaho Way**  
SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION



**REISER RIVER CONSERVATION DISTRICT HELPS DIE RISERS IN REISER, BRAGEE RIVER WATER QUALITY**

... (text continues) ...

**Conservation the Idaho Way**  
SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION



**LIGHTNING FIRMS SPAWN IDAHO INFERNO**

... (text continues) ...

*Conservation the Idaho Way: Sowing the Seeds of Stewardship*



SOIL & WATER  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Senate Ag Affairs  
February 2016

established  
1939



*Conservation the Idaho Way: Sowing the Seeds of Stewardship*



SOIL & WATER  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Slide # 4

## CORE FUNCTIONS

### 1. Technical & Other Support Services

- Technical & capacity building assistance
- Distribute trustee and benefit funding

### 2. Conservation Programs

- Incentive-based
  - CREP, RCRDP
- General programs
  - TMDL, Ground Water, etc.

### 3. Administration

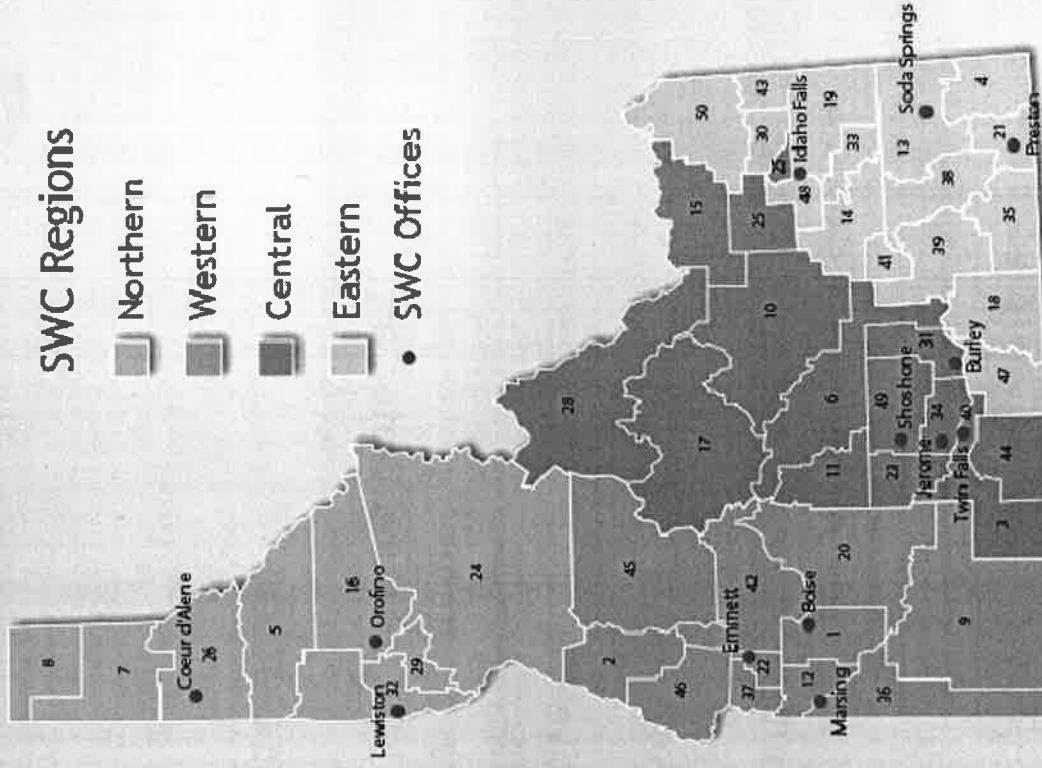
*Conservation the Idaho Way: Sowing the Seeds of Stewardship*



## CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

1. Ada
2. Adams
3. Balanced Rock
4. Bear Lake
5. Benewah
6. Blaine
7. Bonner
8. Boundary
9. Bruneau River
10. Butte
11. Camas
12. Canyon
13. Caribou
14. Central Bingham
15. Clark
16. Clearwater Bingham
17. Custer
18. East Cassia
19. East Side
20. Elmore
21. Franklin
22. Gem
23. Gooding
24. Idaho
25. Jefferson
26. Kootenai Shoshone
27. Latah
28. Lemhi
29. Lewis
30. Madison
31. Minidoka
32. Nez Perce
33. North Bingham

34. North Side
35. Oneida
36. Owyhee
37. Payette
38. Portneuf
39. Power
40. Snake River
41. South Bingham
42. Squaw Creek
43. Teton
44. Twin Falls
45. Valley
46. Weiser River
47. West Cassia
48. West Side
49. Wood River
50. Yellowstone



## RCRDP LOAN PROGRAM

- FY 2015**
- 85 outstanding loans
  - \$3,365,719
  - 48 inquiries
  - 20 applications rec'd
  - 7 applications approved (\$392,517)
  - 5 in process
  - 5 denied
  - 3 withdrew/no response

Celebrating 75 Years Conserving the Idaho Way

## LOW INTEREST LOANS FOR IDAHO SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION

Sprinkler Irrigation, No-Till Drills, Fences  
Livestock Feeding Operations  
Solar Stock Water Pump Systems



**LOAN  
PROGRAM**

2.5%-3.5%  
Terms 7-15 Years  
Up to \$200,000

swc.idaho.gov | 208-332-1790

*Conservation the Idaho Way: Sowing the Seeds of Stewardship*

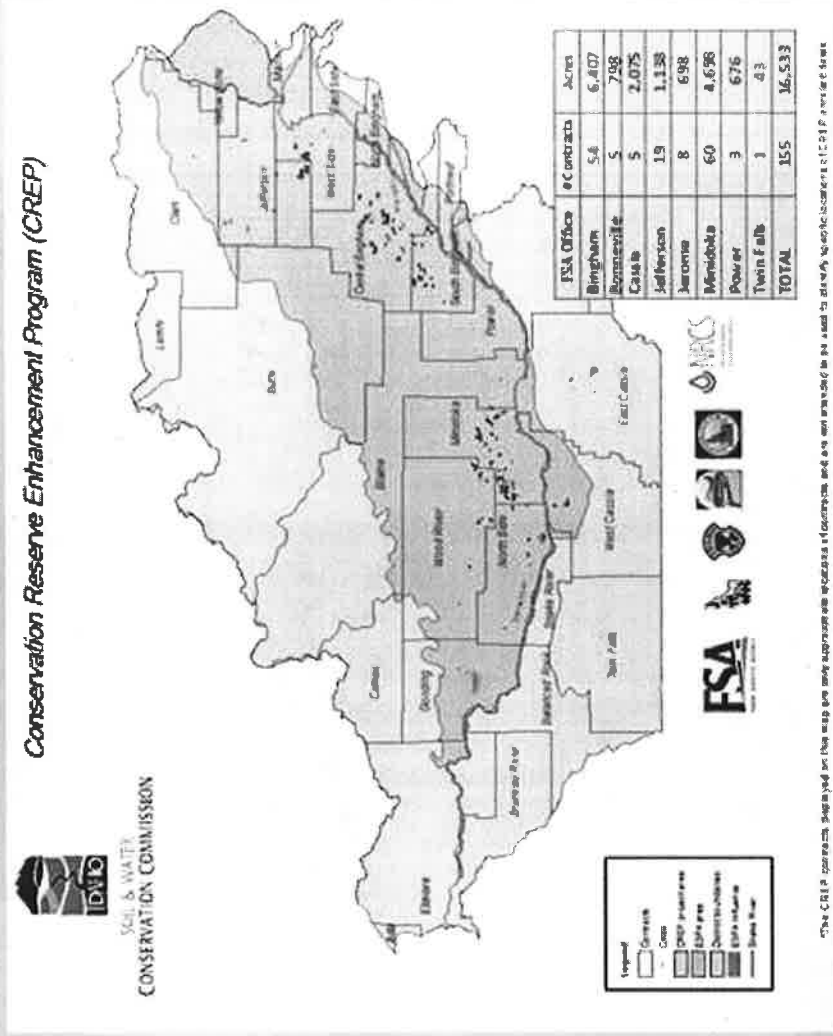


SOIL & WATER  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

## CREP in FY 2015

155 Contracts, 16,533 acres enrolled  
Conserving:

- ~ 66,132 AF water equiv. ave. use for 317,000 people saved
- ~ 132,260 T soil erosion savings
- ~ 3 to 4 million lbs. fertilizer savings





FY 2015

Completed plans

8

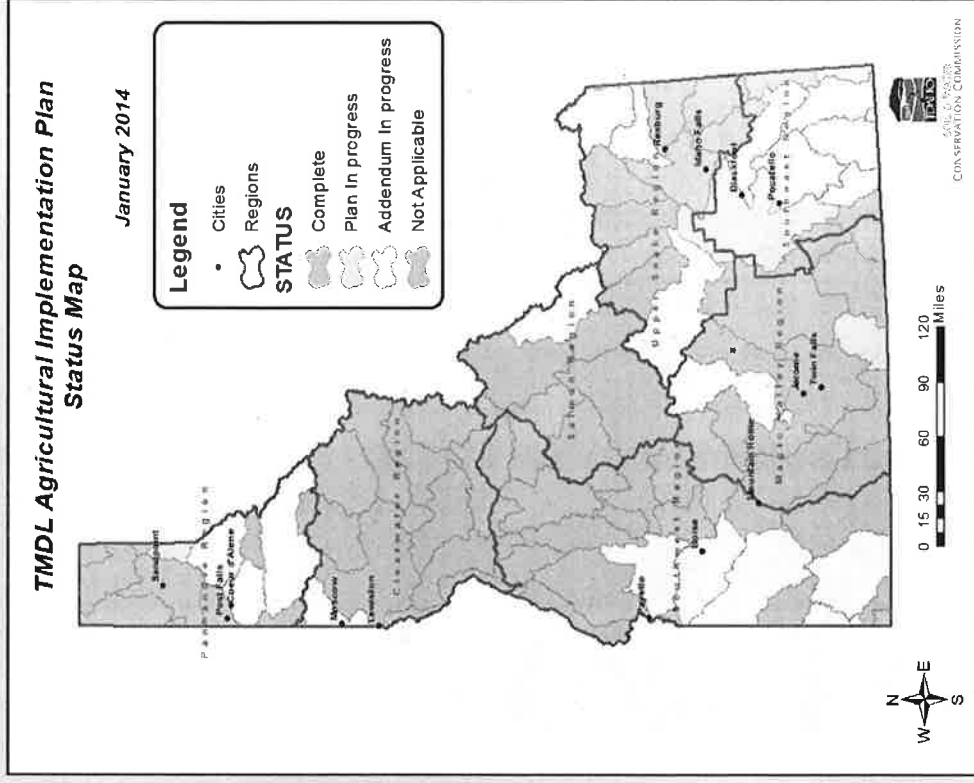
Plans in progress

16

## TMDL IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

Plans pending review,  
addendums

18

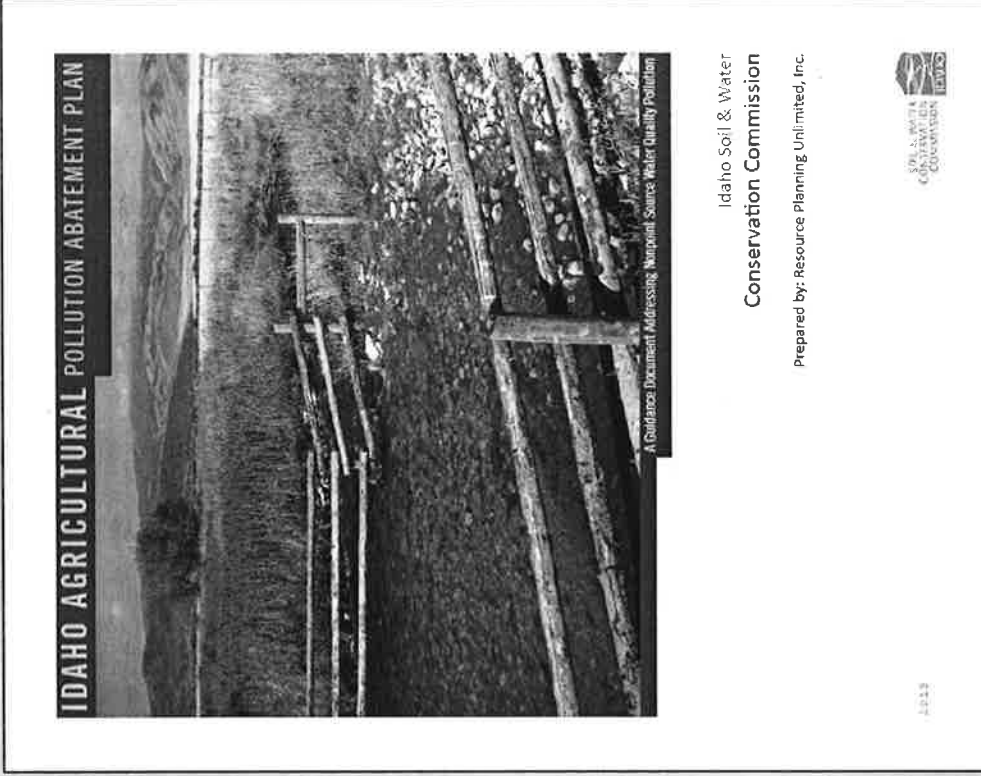


Senate Ag Affairs  
February 2016

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**1939**

## AG PLAN UPDATE

19 stakeholders  
certified by Governor



IDAHO AGRICULTURAL POLLUTION ABATEMENT PLAN

A Guidance Document Addressing Nonpoint Source Water Quality Pollution

Idaho Soil & Water  
Conservation Commission

Prepared by: Resource Planning Unlimited, Inc.

SOIL & WATER  
CONSERVATION  
SERVICE

AP118

*Conservation the Idaho Way: Sowing the Seeds of Stewardship*



SOIL & WATER  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Slide # 10



*Conservation the Idaho Way: Sowing the Seeds of Stewardship*

Slide #11

Senate Ag Affairs  
February 2016

**Legislative District 10**  
**Chairman Jim Rice**

- Canyon SCD

### Canyon Soil Conservation District Fact Sheet

**General Information:** Organized in 1965, the Canyon Soil Conservation District focused on farm-related soil and water problems. Farmers receive irrigation pipelines, leveling ditches, installing cropping systems and designing conservation residues for better soil and water conservation. Irrigation companies receive help upgrading their canals and diversions along the Boise River.

**Mission (or Function):**


- Provide quality leadership, information, education, technical assistance and financial assistance for the conservation and wise use of natural resources.

**FY 2015 Accomplishments:**

- Conservation Technical Assistance was provided to 40 different producers on approximately 682 acres. Assistance consisted of site visits, conservation planning and system engineering for improved gravity systems, sprinklers and drip systems.
- Canyon SCD/319 project tour included best management practices, with an emphasis on soil health. There were 55 attendees.
- Participated in the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Soil Health Symposium with 200 participants.
- The District sponsored an Environment team from Homedale who placed 1<sup>st</sup> in the 2015 Idaho Environment, making them eligible to participate in the National/International Environment.
- Canyon SCD and A&S SCD partnered to present the No-Till Organic Cover Crop and Roller Crimper Day in July, where more than 70 attendees gained valuable information.

**Future Plans and Projects:**

- Continue to seek future projects for Agricultural Best Management Practices for water quality improvements.
- Numerous 319 projects have been submitted for consideration, including center pivot sprinkler, wheel lines, annual drip systems and permanent drip systems.
- Partner with agencies and organizations to seek additional funding with which to address resource concerns.
- Promote natural resource conservation through outreach and education programs for youth and adults.



319 Tour BMPs—Sand media filters for a drip irrigation system.

**FY 2015 District Funding**

State	Quantity	Amount
319 Grant Funds & TA		\$74,942
319 Landowner Match		\$10,000
319 Landowner Match		\$25,000
Non-Federal A&S		\$55,236
NRCS CTA Grant Funds		\$7,800
NRCS IPAD Grant Funds		\$50,000
Dist Volunteer Eff.		\$2,500
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$319,480</b>

Mike Swartz-Chair  
208-454-6194

Prepared by Soil and Water Conservation Commission

Canyon SCD  
2209 E CHESTER AVE  
CALDWELL ID 83405

## Legislative Districts 16, 18, 21 & 22

- Vice Chair Clifford Bayer
- Senator Lori Den Hartog
- Senator Janie Ward-Engelking
- Senator Grant Burgoyne
- Ada SWCD

### Ada Soil and Water Conservation District Fact Sheet

**General Information:** The Ada Soil and Water Conservation District has achieved over 60 years of successful conservation implementation and is fully engaged in meeting present day conservation needs. They work cooperatively with area farmers and ranchers and have adapted and evolved to work actively within the urban and suburban areas of the district.


**Mission for Erection:**  
Our vision is to become the leader of natural resource conservation and project implementation in Ada County.

**FY 2015 Accomplishments:**

- Continuing management of a 632 acre foothills conservation easement in partnership with Avimor Planted Community.
- This past spring the District received another 319 grant to help purchase a smaller 7 1/2 Ft Sunflower 9312-07 drill and a roller/crimper for small acreage landowners and organic farmers. Both drills have been rented almost continuously this season. 21 producers have used the big drill and 10 landowners have used the small drill. About 1,200 acres were planted using these drills.
- Participated with informational tabletop display in the Strip and Ag Pavilion during the Western Idaho Fair.
- Sponsored 3 high school teams to attend and participate in the Idaho Canon Environment competition in Challis.
- Held three 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Conservation Field Days for 750 students from 12 schools. The 1st and 2nd days were held at Boise Urban Garden School for the Boys schools. The 3rd was held at Glen Edwards' farm for the Kuna schools. There were

**7 stations at both events, including wildlife, soils, water, cider press, wildlife, and hay.**

The District received a NRCS OIG Grant for \$7,500. The project is titled "Treasure Valley Soil Health Connections". This allowed the District to hold a Demonstration Field Day at Pleasant Belly Organic Farm. Gay Erskine demonstrated the small drill and the roller/crimper. Marlon Winger and James Eller, NRCS, demonstrated rain and water infiltration using the Rain Simulator. They also spoke on soil health and the use of cover crops. Jennifer Miller, NCAP, talked about pollinator plant species and how to incorporate them into a farm.



**5<sup>th</sup> Grade Field Day at Glen Edwards Farm**

**Future Plans and Projects:**  
A bitterbrush planting project is scheduled for fall of 2016 on the 632 acre foothills conservation easement. We have received a \$5,000 grant from the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation to help with the purchase of the plants.

**FY 2015 District Funding:**

State	County	Amount
Ada	Ada	560,330
Avimor	Ada	646,000
No-Till Drill Rental	Ada	35,000
SWCD RCLB Admin Assistance	Ada	216,000
5th Grade Field Day	Ada	51,700
Conservation Improvement Grant	Ada	57,500
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$1,516,530</b>

Ada SWCD  
9173 W Barnes Dr.  
Boise, ID 83709

Glen Edwards-Chair  
206-378-5779  
www.adaswcd.org

Prepared by Wade Soil and Water Conservation Commission

Conservation the Idaho Way: Sowing the Seeds of Stewardship



## Legislative District 25 Senator Jim Patrick

- Balanced Rock SCD
- North Side SWCD
- Snake River SWCD
- Twin Falls SWCD

### Balanced Rock Soil Conservation District Fact Sheet

**General Information:** The Balanced Rock Soil Conservation District was organized in 1961 to provide educational, technical and financial assistance to local landowners and operators, and conserve soil, water and related natural resources within the District's boundaries. Although cropland provides the majority of income for the District's landowners, the bulk of the resource base is



### Snake River Soil and Water Conservation District Fact Sheet

**General Information:** The Snake River Soil and Water Conservation District was organized in 1966. The District's boundaries follow the Snake River line to Filer, Idaho from the eastern county primary resource concern.

- Mission (or Function):**
- Work with small landowners to reduce the potential for surface and ground water contamination.
  - Help cooperators adopt more intensive nutrient and irrigation water management practices through the Twin Falls Nitrate Priority Area Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative.
  - Continue to provide assistance to USDA Agricultural Research Service with the ongoing Conservation Effects Assessment Program.

#### FY 2015 Accomplishments:

- Sponsored a poster contest for over 195 students (theme this year was Local Heroes, your Hardworking Pollinators).
- Sponsored the Kimberly FFA Environment team.
- Sponsored the 5th graders.
- Sponsored the Harrington Fork Educational day for Hansen and Murrain 3<sup>rd</sup> graders.
- Provided two full scholarships to Natural Resources Camp in Ketchum.
- Participated in the 2014 Ag Pavilion at the Twin Falls County Fair.
- Provided two \$1,500 scholarships to college students pursuing a degree in agriculture or natural resources.

Enhanced irrigation management includes sophisticated technology.

FY 2015 District Funding:	
State Funding	
County Funding	
Other (donations, tree sales, 319 grant funds etc)	
<b>Total</b>	

**Future Plans and Projects:**  
Snake River SWCD  
1-441 Fillmore SE STE A  
Twin Falls, ID 83301

Matt N  
2016  
www.ifscrc.org

Prepared by Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission

### North Side Soil and Water Conservation District Fact Sheet

**General Information:** The North Side Soil and Water Conservation District was organized in 1946. They assist farmers and residents with soil and water conservation and are now branching out to address other natural resources needs of Jerome County.



- Mission (or Function):**
- Educate the public and assist landowners in the implementation of sound land management practices... [www.nsscrc.com](http://www.nsscrc.com)

### Twin Falls Soil and Water Conservation District Fact Sheet

**General Information:** The Twin Falls Soil and Water Conservation District was organized in 1951. Much of the District is irrigated or grazing land. Approximately 20,000 acres of cropland is irrigated by the Salmon River Canal Company.



The plot on the left was grazed in the fall of 2015, while the one on the right was not. Cows have also cover crop seedlings.

- Mission (or Function):**
- Promote conservation practices on every acre in the district which will build a more stable and prosperous agricultural community.
  - Encourage cooperation among landowners, Government agencies, private organizations, and elected officials to ensure a sustainable natural resource base for present and future generations.

#### FY 2015 Accomplishments:

- The District completed a two year multi-species cover crop demonstration project. Through this project, multi-species cover crop mixes were planted across the Magic Valley to determine viability in a range of soil and climatic conditions. Some fields were grazed and some were not.
- Supported the approximately 215 students from three schools who participated in the 2015 post-Resources Camp in Ketchum.
- Provided two full scholarships to Natural Resources Camp in Ketchum.
- Sponsored the Harrington Fork Educational Day for Hollister 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students.
- Participated in the Ag Pavilion at the 2015 Twin Falls County Fair.

#### FY 2015 District Funding:

State Funding	\$21,293
County Funding	\$6,000
Federal Grants	\$19,965
<b>Total</b>	\$47,258

Twin Falls SWCD  
1-441 Fillmore SE STE A  
Twin Falls, ID 83301

Prepared by Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission

Barry Buhler  
2016  
www.ifscrc.org

## Legislative District 4 Senator Mary Souza

- Kootenai-Shoshone SWCD

### Kootenai-Shoshone Soil and Water Conservation District Fact Sheet

**General Information:** The Kootenai-Shoshone Soil and Water Conservation District was formed in 1941 to assist the farmers in applying conservation practice and improving their land. Just a few years later the District was actively promoting conservation cropping systems, contour farming, crop residue use, pasture and woodland improvements, grassed waterways, farm ponds and drainage improvement.

**Mission (or Function):**


- Partner and lead other government agencies, private landowners and users, and the public in promoting voluntary, non-regulatory, locally-led conservation and wise stewardship of the natural resources with which our area has been so richly blessed.

**PY 2015 Accomplishments:**

- The District completed 250 ft of stream bank stabilization at the lower end of Mica Creek. Working with the Mica Bay Property Owners Association, a comprehensive sediment reduction plan is being developed. Notably, kokanee salmon have returned to Mica Creek and are actively spawning.
- Complete an 319 project on Wolf Lodge Creek at three separate sites. The project utilized one rock, almost a dozen rock bars, and hundreds of willow plantings along 500 feet of streambank.
- Participated in a forestry tree sale program administered by the Idaho Forest Owners Association, selling over 51,000 seedlings.
- Received funding for an Idaho Dept of Land grant, which will be used to complete the original proposal to assess and plan restoration in the Wolf Lodge/Bluff/Herman Creek watershed.

**Future Plans and Projects:**

- The District continues to work with the Coeur d'Alene Tribes/Water Conservation District on implementing BMPs and watershed planning. This coordinated effort has led to IDEQ finding extra 319 funds to do projects in Wolf Lodge Creek.
- Outreach throughout the community to promote District programs and Western Competitive Grant project efforts.



"Reassemble the Creek Inspector" West final approval on the Mica Creek project.

State Funding	\$10,130
Idaho Water Resources Grant	\$9,000
319 grant	\$53,054
Tree Sales	\$20,930
Growers meeting Support	\$2,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$95,724</b>

Kootenai-Shoshone SWCD  
7830 Meadows Way C-1  
Coeur d'Alene ID 83815

Prepared by Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission  
Fran Hughes-Chair  
208-762-4939  
[www.idahoswcd.com](http://www.idahoswcd.com)

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established  
**1939**

Senate Ag Affairs  
February 2016

# Legislative District 9

Senator Abby Lee

- Adams SWCD
- Canyon SCD
- Payette SWCD
- Weiser River SWCD

**Adams Soil and Water Conservation District Fact Sheet**

**General Information:** Organized in 1966 to provide voluntary land and water conservation technical and financial assistance to landowners and users within the Adams Soil & Water Conservation District boundaries. The District supports diverse land uses.

**Future Plans and Projects:**

- Co-sponsored the Council Education Red Cross (CERC), a grant-funded summer camp that gives local teens an opportunity to earn credit by completing courses in Adams county.

**Canyon Soil Conservation District Fact Sheet**

**General Information:** Organized in 1951, the Canyon Soil Conservation District focused on helping solve their land, living, and irrigation problems. Farmers receive irrigation practices, developing conservation cropping systems and learning to utilize crop residues for better soil and water conservation. Irrigation companies receive help upgrading their canals and diversions along the Boise River.

**Mission (or Function):**

- Provide quality leadership, information, education, technical assistance and financial aid for the conservation and wise use of natural resources.

**FY 2015 Accomplishments:**

- Conservation Technical Assistance was provided to 40 different producers on approximately 652 acres. Assistance consisted of site visits, conservation planning and system engineering site-to-site.
- Canyon SWCD/SLP project tour included best practices, irrigation systems, sprinklers and health. There were 55 attendees.
- Participants in the 8<sup>th</sup> annual Soil Health Symposium with 230 participants.
- The District sponsored an Environ team from Homestead who placed 1<sup>st</sup> at the 2015 Idaho Envirothon, making them eligible to participate in the National/International Envirothon.
- Canyon SWCD and Adams SWCD sponsored to Roller Crop Day in July, while more than 70 attendees gained valuable information.

**Future Plans and Projects:**

- Continue to seek funding for technical assistance.
- Numerous SLP project consideration, individual wheel lines, windbreaks, and soil health.
- Partner with agricultural and ranching resource center.
- Promote natural resource outreach and educational activities.

**FY 2015 District Funding:**

State	518,792
County	57,500
City (New Plymouth and Payette)	51,000
Total	627,292

319 Tour BMs—Soil Health and Irrigation systems

**Payette Soil and Water Conservation District Fact Sheet**

**General Information:** The Payette Soil and Water Conservation District was organized in 1958. The district contains 259,130 acres, of which 147,014 are in farmland. Soil erosion associated with concerns. The district continues to be the main natural resource landowners of the Payette SWCD in an effort to meet their conservation needs related to soil, water, and other resources.

**Mission (or Function):**

- Educate the public, teachers, and students about natural resources conservation, increasing their public awareness of the importance of conserving their natural resources.
- Meet state water quality rules, regulation, and requirements.
- Work with cooperators to plan and implement BMs to conserve Soil and Water.

**FY 2015 Accomplishments:**

- Partnered with several other Districts and annual Soil Health Symposium. Present the 6<sup>th</sup> Growers shares knowledge of tillage, cover crops and grass. There was an intensive half-day cover crop workshop. There were a total of 25 local sponsors and visitors, and over 200 people attended the workshop, and over 100 people attended the 319 grant for the Lower Payette, Blch Company, assisting landowners in applying for assistance, ranking projects and providing technical assistance. A grant program which involved converting a gravity irrigation system to a sprinkler system was completed.
- County Fair display booth.
- Supervisors attended Division 3 meetings, and attended the state IASCD convention.

**Payette SWCD**  
501 N 16<sup>th</sup> St, Ste 102  
Payette ID 83461

319 project - pivot and pump house

**FY 2015 District Funding:**

State	518,792
County	57,500
City (New Plymouth and Payette)	51,000
Total	627,292

**Weiser River Soil and Water Conservation District Fact Sheet**

**General Information:** The Weiser River Soil and Water Conservation District was organized in 1941. Originally the Weiser River SCD included only the area in Washington County drained by the Weiser River. In 1971 the remaining area was annexed into the Weiser River SWCD.

**Future Plans and Projects:**

- Continue to research funds available for districts to use for conservation planning and implementation.
- Use the information from projects that address the total maximum daily load requirements and the total maximum daily load requirements.

**Future Plans and Projects:**

- Begin producing and distributing a District newsletter.
- Continue to provide landowner and entities in Payette County with projects to improve water quality in the TMDL-listed Payette and Snake Rivers and their tributaries.
- Administer 319 Grant Middle Snake-Payette Clean Water Project phase 2.
- Organize and present the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Soil Health Symposium and continue educational programs and outreach.

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SOIL & WATER  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Slide #15

Prepared by Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission  
Abby Lee  
208-642-4409  
abby.lee@idafo.org

Prepared by Soil and Water Conservation Commission  
Loree Stevens  
208-753-5651  
lorree@idafo.org

Chamberlain  
200 E Chicago St. E  
 Caldwell ID 83405

## Legislative District 32

Senator Mark Harris

- Bear Lake SWCD
- Caribou SCD
- East Side SWCD
- Franklin SWCD
- Oneida SWCD
- Teton SWCD

### Bear Lake Soil and Water Conservation District Fact Sheet

**General Information:** The Bear Lake Soil and Water Conservation District was organized in 1940. They have addressed cooperators in land leveling, rebuilding irrigation systems, or usage of semi-wet cropland and applying other soil and water conservation practices.

**Mission (or Function):**

- Set high standards for the natural resources in the area.
- Make technical, financial

### Teton Soil and Water Conservation District Fact Sheet

**General Information:** The Teton Soil and Water Conservation District was organized in 1950 to

- Promoted windbreak tree and shrub sales to reduce soil and water erosion. In 2014, 462

### Oneida Soil and Water Conservation District Fact Sheet

### East Side Soil and Water Conservation District Fact Sheet

**General Information:** The East Side Soil and Water Conservation District was organized in 1942 to provide educational, technical and financial assistance to local landowners and operators, and within the District's boundaries.

**Mission (or Function):**

- Promote management practices and natural resources to ensure sustainable resource base in perpetuity.
- Promote voluntary, non-regulatory conservation practices.
- Make technical, financial and educational resources available, coordinate services and needs of the local land manager.

**FY 2015 Accomplishments:**

- Helped fund and seedling through Country, RCD.
- Hosted a Soil Health and Weed Science event with 85 landowner participants about current cover crop technology and management strategies.
- Worked with NRCS and other partners to improve soil health, improve irrigation efficiency and nutrient management to enhance on-land productivity.
- Worked with Trout Unlimited and partners to stabilize streambanks and fish-friendly habitat that will improve and rearing sites for the Yellowstone Trout in Palisades Creek.

East Side SWCD  
1120 Lincoln St  
Idaho Falls ID 83401

### Caribou Soil Conservation District Fact Sheet

**General Information:** The Caribou Soil Conservation District was organized in 1951 to provide educational, technical and financial assistance to local landowners and operators, and within the District's boundaries.

**Mission (or Function):**

- Dedicated to promoting wise land and water use, providing information and education and giving assistance to anyone looking for ways of conserving and improving our natural resources.

**FY 2015 Accomplishments:**

- Completed 3 water quality projects – animal feeding operation, and installing solar panels and an off-stream watering system. The old dairy facility and day lighting Whiskey Creek.
- The Trout Creek SRP project removed an old dairy and outbuildings, along with stream restoration.
- The Upper Blackfoot 319 project fenced off a portion of the Blackfoot and installed a solar pumping station.
- Working on a Pebble Creek 319 project – a ditch-to-pipeline conversion and diversion consolidation.
- Sponsored poster and speech contests.
- Held a project tour and catered tour, Idaho, Environment.
- Annual tree sale program

**Future Plans and Projects:**

- Continue ongoing projects.
- Sponsor annual tree sales program.

Caribou SCD  
300 E Hooper Ave  
Soda Springs ID 83276

Prepared by Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission  
[www.idahoswcd.com](http://www.idahoswcd.com)



Wide Hollow Project sediment basin



Bear River / Whiskey Creek 319 Project has fish running up the newly daylighted stream

Upper Blackfoot 319 - Solar pumping station

FY 2015 District Funding:	
State	\$15,053
County	\$10,000
City	\$10,000
Tree sales	\$2,000
319 Grants	\$516
Participatory Grant	\$271,248
Value of Volunteers & In-Kind Support	\$8,737
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$351,454</b>

Written/John-Chair  
208-242-4336

Prepared by Soil and Water Conservation Commission  
[www.idahoswcd.com](http://www.idahoswcd.com)



Wide Hollow Project sediment basin



Foot Inspection and Decomposition Station

FY 2015 District Funding:

State Funding	\$30,791
County Funding	\$17,500
City Funding	\$1,500
319 and other grant funds	\$12,900
ID Dept of Ag	\$36,336
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$103,107</b>

Dillon Holder - Chair  
208-766-4748

Water Conservation Commission





Senate Ag Affairs  
February 2016

established  
**1939**

## Restoring Whiskey Creek, near Grace



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SOIL & WATER  
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Slide # 17



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Conservation  
Commission

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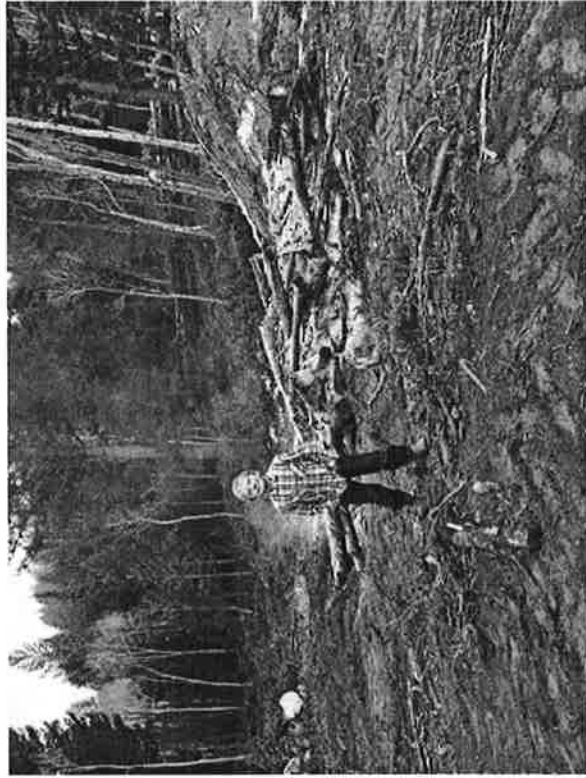
[www.swc.idaho.gov](http://www.swc.idaho.gov)



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#iswccnews

## Conservation the Idaho Way

ISSUE TWENTY-NINE | IDAHO SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION | NOVEMBER 2015



A proud helper mugs for the camera in 2014. The brush is now gone, and the forest is healthy and growing again.

### BRUSH-THINNING PROJECT CREATES SAFE ZONES, IMPROVES FOREST HEALTH

By Steve Stuebner

The Bear Lake Soil & Water Conservation District posted this quote recently on its Facebook page: "Conservation is the state of harmony between man and the land." If we substitute the word "people" for "land," it seems that the district's forest and brush-thinning projects aimed at reducing the danger around homes and private property generally may create more harmony between property owners

and the forest that surrounds them in the future.

In a fine example of proactive cooperation between the Caribou-Targhee National Forest and the Bear Lake Soil & Water Conservation District, there are two forest and brush-thinning projects going on in Bear Canyon that complement each other on forest service and private land. The Caribou-Targhee is treating about 230 acres in its thinning project called

"The Hollow," and the Bear Lake SWCD is treating 80 acres of land that is surrounded by the national forest project.

The Bear Lake SWCD secured two Forest Service grants totaling \$495,000 to do the thinning work. Wilcox Logging, Inc., based in Rexburg, is the contractor performing the work.

"I am very pleased with how it's going so far," said Lisa Trautman, District Manager.

[brush.thinning.com](http://brush.thinning.com), on Page 2



# Conservation the Idaho Way

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## YOUTH EDUCATION EVENTS INSPIRE IDAHO KIDS TO LEARN, CRAFT CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUES



Students hard at work building a model of their plan for sage grouse management during the Range Skillathon at the Schwenkfelder Ranch.

By Steve Stuebner

At the first-ever Rangeland Skillathon in Cambridge, FFA teams were presented with this scenario: Greater sage grouse, a candidate for listing as an endangered species, are occupying a 200-acre pasture on a ranch. The pasture is bordered by roads and power lines. How would you enhance wildlife habitat for the sage grouse in the pasture?

Five FFA teams created a sage grouse management plan for this scenario and built a small-scale model that embodied their plan in a cardboard box.

Virginia Harness, 17, who was on the first-place team of high school juniors and seniors from the Canyon County Trailblazers FFA club, said her team received the sage grouse scenario 30 days before the Skillathon, giving them time to write a management plan. They studied the Sage Grouse Initiative web site and others to learn about sage grouse and came up with a plan.

"We knew that the biggest threat to sage grouse is fire, so we planned firebreaks around the pasture," Harness said. "The sage grouse were raising their young in

the pasture, and we assumed that we had more pastures on the ranch, so we rotated the cattle out of that pasture while the sage grouse were using it. We also tagged the top wire of the fences around the pasture to make it visible to sage grouse."

"To keep the cattle away, we placed mineral blocks in the alternative pasture to keep them there," she continued. "We placed those mineral blocks near juniper trees and power lines, because the sage grouse wouldn't want to use those areas because of predators perching there. We also saw education being an important component, so we notified the neighbors that the sage grouse were using the pasture, and posted signs around the field."

Harness' team crafted a winning management plan that mirrors the best practices used by ranchers across the West. But they had to explain their plan in a verbal presentation, with all the team members participating.

"They were all very articulate," said Neil Rimbey, a University of Idaho economist at the Caldwell Research and Extension Center who helped judge the event. "All

of the presentations were well-done and well-researched. It was difficult to pick the winners."

May is a busy month for youth education events in Idaho. The 2015 Envirothon in Challis, sponsored by the Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts, attracted 18 teams, with a team from Homedale High School capturing first place under the guidance of seasoned advisor Sue Poland.

Four-hundred students participated in the Idaho State Forestry contest held in Careywood, located midway between Coeur d'Alene and Sandpoint. The Careywood Eager Beavers 4-H team swept the first-place senior team honors and first-place senior individual award, with Joseph Spencer winning a \$100 cash prize for placing first in the senior individual division, and his brother, Daniel winning the senior second prize and \$50 cash. The forestry contest is co-sponsored by the Idaho Department of Lands, Bonner Soil and Water Conservation District and the U.S. Forest Service.

Also in N. Idaho, the Lewis Soil Conservation District sponsored the Winchester Environmental Days, attended by about

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*Identifying soil layers at the North Idaho Forestry Contest.*

95 students. Multiple agency officials educated the kids via a nature trail by the National Park Service, canoeing by the Lewis Soil Conservation District, air quality by the NezPerce Tribe, fishing by Idaho Fish and Game, the life cycle of salmon by NRCS, fire control and forestry by IDL, and soils and geology by the Conservation commission.

At Orofino Earthday Education Days, about 160 kids participated in the two-day event by touring the Dworshak Fish Hatchery, learning about soils with the Conservation Commission, forestry with IDL, air quality, weeds and biocontrol with the NezPerce Tribe, forest fires with the Forest Service, and wildlife with the National Park Service.

About 400 5th graders participate in the Pend Oreille Water Festival in late May. The kids go on an outdoor field trip and learn about water -- our most precious resource-- and the Clark Fork-Pend Oreille Watershed. Students learn about the dynamic world of water as they rotate through five instructional stations -- fisheries, watersheds, water quality, animal tracks and Northwest explorers.

The West Cassia and East Cassia Soil and Water Conservation Districts host the Idaho State FFA and 4-H Land & Soil Evaluation Event in the fall, with 17 FFA teams and two 4-H teams participating. Rigby FFA took first place, followed by Jerome FFA and Preston FFA. Regional contests leading up to the state competition involved 450 kids and 50 advisors.

"It's really impressive to see such a great turnout at these youth education events. These kids represent the next generation of conservation in Idaho," said Teri Murison, administrator of the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission, one of the many co-sponsors of the Envirothon. "Clearly, the students really enjoy learning about our state's natural resources with true hands-on activities. It also shows how local conservation districts are putting a lot of effort into education and outreach, with the assistance of many co-sponsors and state and federal agency professionals."

Exposing kids to natural resource issues in high school can potentially pique their interest in potential career paths, notes Kathy Weaver, a supervisor on the East Side Soil and Water Conservation District in Idaho Falls, who helped with the Idaho Envirothon event.

"Anytime we have an opportunity to give students an opportunity to interact with natural resources pros is a real plus," Weaver says. "They get some hands-on experience, and they get to experience what the real world is all about. For some, it can be a game-changer. There's that interaction



*Congratulations to this year's winner of the Envirothon: Homedale High School. Back row, L-R, Alec Egurolla, Jason Buenrostro, Sue Poland (teacher). Front row, L-R, Delaney Pharis, Jennifer Bautista, and Justine Cornwell.*

**CAN YOU HELP?**

The Canyon County Trailblazers FFA club is trying to raise \$6,000 to cover travel expenses to attend the National Wildlife Habitat Education Program in Alabama, August 2-5, 2015.

Donations can be made at:  
[www.gofundme.com/IdahoWHEP](http://www.gofundme.com/IdahoWHEP)

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with people you don't learn in a textbook." Virginia Harness agreed. "One of my team members wants to be an advisor for FFA in rangelands education and another would like to be a wildlife biologist," she said. "I know I want to work in rural areas with rural people. I still want to learn more about rangelands -- people don't realize how livestock and wildlife can co-exist."

"Our goal is to pique the students' interest in forestry and natural resource management," adds Karen Robinson, coordinator of the forestry contest for the Idaho Department of Lands. "Who knows? It could become a lifelong passion for them."

In the Envirothon, high school students had to design an urban park on top of an old landfill, complete with recreation fields, trees, playground equipment, etc. The old landfill had been "declared clean" by the EPA, but the students had to be ready to explain to a local city council and soccer moms that the park would be safe for children to use.

Sue Poland's students from Homedale High came to the event ready to discuss the issues anticipated. Each student on the team represented different sides of the issue, including the viewpoint of a concerned parent, Poland said. "They had to answer the question, how is this going to be safe for my kids?"

At the Envirothon, students went through

five stations: wildlife, soil and land use, forestry, aquatic ecology and urban forestry. The teams were tested on all five of those areas and graded accordingly. The Homedale kids' scores on those five subject areas is what carried them to the top prize, Poland said.

By winning the event, the kids earned a berth to the 2015 National Conservation Foundation Envirothon competition in Springfield, Mo., July 27-Aug. 2. Their travel expenses and registration fees will be paid by the Idaho Envirothon.

"The Envirothon is a very powerful step forward in the lives of these students, one that they will never forget, and neither will I," said Norman Wright, chairman of the Conservation Commission. "I remain in awe of not only the talent of the students participating, but also the dedication and hard work of the many volunteers that it takes to pull off an event of this magnitude. The whole event is a home run for the kids, advisors, volunteers and co-sponsors involved. It makes me really proud to be part of Conservation the Idaho Way."



*Bill Love, founder of the state forestry contest and MC for this year's contest looks on from behind while winners the Careywood Eager Beavers 4-H team show off the coveted crosscut saw award. L-R, are Joseph Spencer, Daniel Spencer, Magnolia Fry, Doug Bradetich, 2015 Honorary Chair, and Ethan Spencer.*



*Students learning basic forestry and resource management skills. Pictured above is the tree health station.*

By coming out on top of the Rangeland Skillathon, the Can-

yon County Trailblazers FFA club is now in fund-raising mode to compete in the National Wildlife Habitat Education Program competition in Alabama, Aug. 2-5. The Skillathon was sponsored by the Adams County Soil & Water Conservation District, Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission, UI-Extension in Adams County and the Conservation Commission.

In the Idaho State Forestry Contest, participating teams had to research and prepare for being tested in a diversity of natural resource topics, such as plant and tree identification, soils, water quality issues, forestry tools of the trade and much more. Students attend the contest from all corners of Idaho, including Priest River, Bonners Ferry, Meridian, Boise, and Potlatch.

There were four stations that all of the students visited as part of the contest:

- Timber cruising
- Timber scaling
- Compass and pacing
- Tree identification

Students in the junior and senior divisions

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are tested in six additional areas: silviculture, soils and water quality, map reading, noxious weeds, forest insects and disease, and forestry tool identification.

Janet Benoit, advisor for the Careywood Eager Beaver 4-H Club, begins to prepare her kids for the state forestry contest in the fall. "My kids love this stuff," she said. "They really want to win!

"We work on all the things they need to know. We go for walks in the woods and identify plants and trees. We practice using the forestry instruments. They study, and read and work at it until they get it down."

Some of the more challenging topics are

identifying different kinds of soil, and map-reading, she said.

"In the contest, they have to identify the soil layers and soil horizons," Benoit explains. "They also have to put their hand in a bucket of dirt, squish it around in their hands, and indicate if it's sandy, loamy, clay, what kind of soil it is ... that can be hard."

The winner, Joseph Spencer, is a junior who is homeschooled by his parents Vern and Amy Spencer. He's won 1st place before in the senior division, and taken 2nd place twice. The whole family is "really into forestry and environmental education," Benoit said. The Spencers raise organic produce on their farm for a business called "Vern's Veggies." Joseph's brother Daniel came in 2nd place in the senior division this year, their younger brother Ethan competed in the rookie division, and their younger sister Hannah is anxious to compete when she's old enough to do so.

"Vern helps coach all of the kids," she said. "It's all good, they really enjoy it, and they have a lot of fun."

The Careywood Eager Beavers won a traveling chrome-plated cross-cut saw for taking first place. The team is hoping to compete in the National 4-H Forestry Invitational competition in Weston, West Virginia in late July.

"I'm hoping to compete at nationals this



*Learning about soil and geology at this year's Winchester Environmental Days.*

year," Joseph Spencer said. "We're still talking to our team-mates to see if we can travel to nationals as a team."

Joseph's favorite part of the forestry contest is tree and plant identification, and the most challenging parts were compass and pacing, map-reading and silvaculture. Daniel Spencer said his favorite part of the contest "was the awards ceremony. I also enjoyed plant and tree identification because the other kids didn't know as much about that."

Joseph, who is a junior in high school, is interested in natural resources but he's doesn't necessarily want to be a forester as a profession. "I'm still not certain about what I want to do," he said. □

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