

# Conservation the Idaho Way

ISSUE 102 IDAHO SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION DECEMBER 2021



"Before" pic, left, shows the need for tree-thinning and fuel-reduction projects in the Lewis District. Six landowners participated and 343 acres of private land were treated. (photos courtesy Lewis District)

## LEWIS DISTRICT WORKS ON FUELS-REDUCTION, WATER QUALITY, EDUCATION AND SOIL HEALTH

By Steve Stuebner

The Lewis Soil Conservation District has been busy working on water-quality conservation projects to reduce sediment runoff into streams, education projects with local students, timber fuels-reduction projects on private lands, and soil health education outreach with local farmers in Northern Idaho's Camas Prairie.

The Lewis District is located in Neperce, Idaho, on the south side of the Clearwater River. The District serves grain farmers and rural landowners with timber and cattle pasture in nearby communities of Winchester and Craigmont.

All of the projects have been popular, says Lewis District Chairman Eric Haselstrom, a grain farmer and soil health practitioner. The timber fuels-reduction project, for example, "had people in line to do it before we applied for grant funding," he said.

Conservation Commission staffer Eileen Rowan helped the District secure a \$240,000 grant from the Idaho Department of Lands for the timber fuels-reduction project. Six landowners participated to reduce tree density, remove ladder fuels, and reduce the threat for a crown fire on about 343 acres. The landowners grazed livestock to reduce fuels, applied herbicide treatments and seeded lands post-fire with native grass seed mixes to reduce the chance of noxious weed invasions as part of the treatments, officials said.

Janette Mendenhall, administrative assistant for the Lewis District, explained that landowners are concerned about the potential for wildfires in the steep, forested canyons that lie adjacent to farmlands, rolling hills and mountains in the Camas Prairie. "The greatest fire threat in this area

is from human starts, accounting for over 90 percent of the fires that have occurred," Mendenhall said. "Some of the fires have escaped agricultural field stubble burns that were intended to remove crop residue. When fires align with the wind, they are nearly impossible to control and can burn hundreds of acres in a day, destroying homes, watersheds, and crops in their path."

With nearby Winchester State Park, which can see about 350 recreationists and campers per day, and the current trend of human-caused fires in the area, landowners are concerned about campers who may not be "fire savvy," she said.

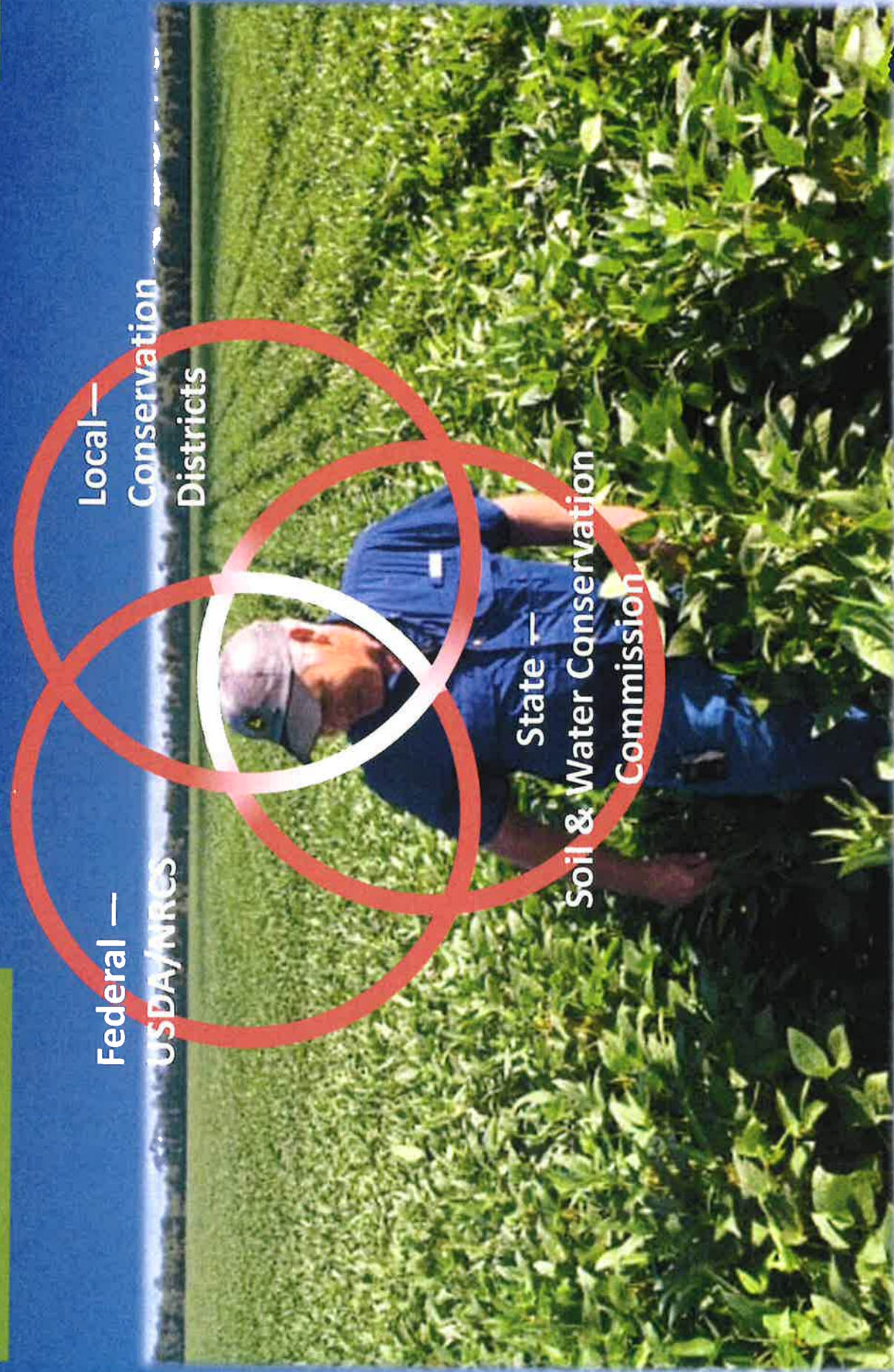
"This project focused on thinning forests to increase crown canopy distances while simultaneously removing ladder fuels within the stands to substantially reduce the potential for crown dominated fire, while also improving fire response effectiveness and safety for public and

# SENATE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## FY 2021 PERFORMANCE REPORT

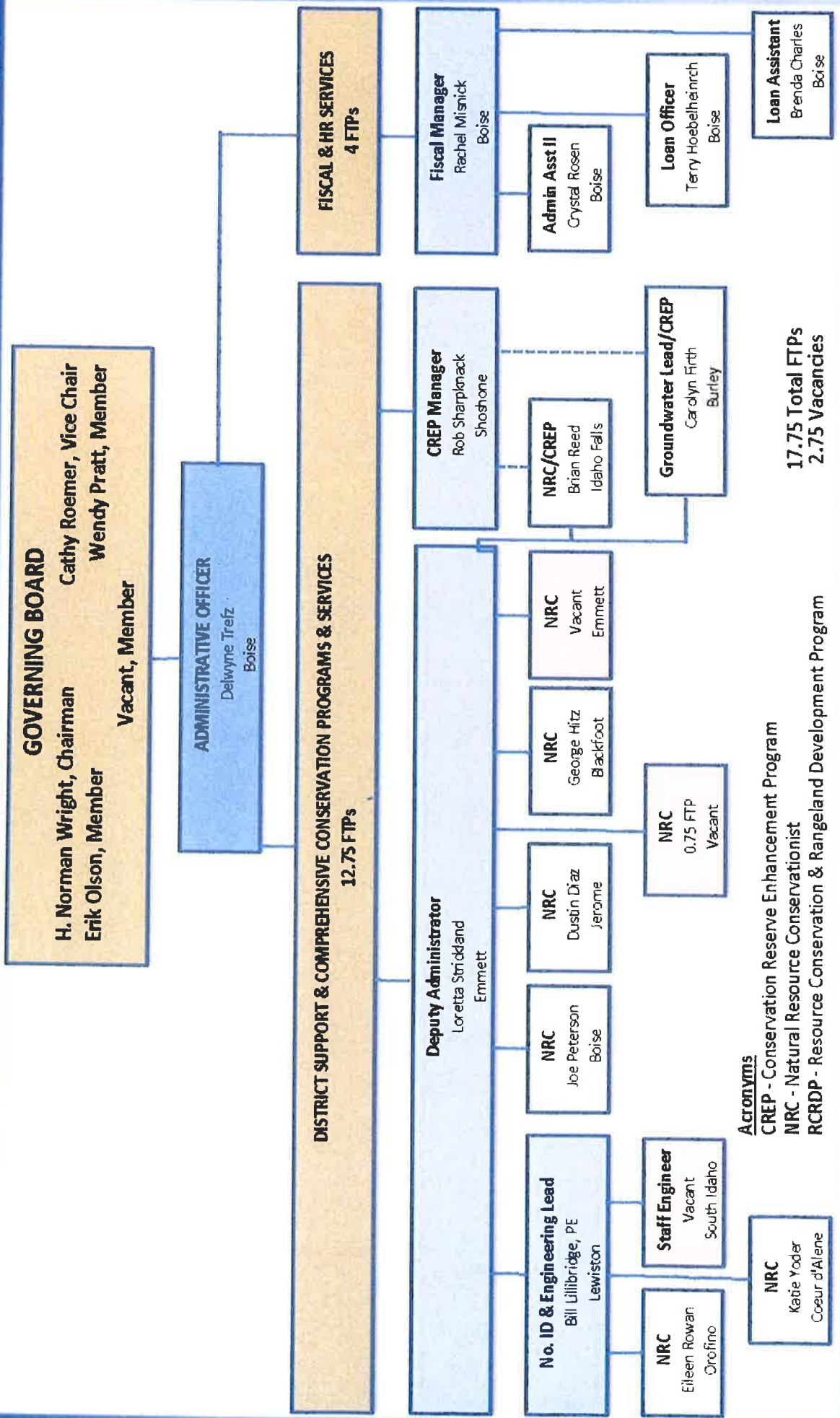
### Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission





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





**Acronyms**  
 CREP - Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program  
 NRC - Natural Resource Conservationist  
 RCRDP - Resource Conservation & Rangeland Development Program

17.75 Total FTPs  
2.75 Vacancies



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

## CURRENT VACANCIES

- 1 FTP NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATIONIST (NRC) IN EMMETT AREA TO REPLACE THE NRC PROMOTED TO DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR—IN PROCESS
- 0.75 FTP NRC IN SE IDAHO TO REPLACE THE NRC PROMOTED TO CREP MANAGER—IN PROCESS
- 1 FTP ENGINEER IN S IDAHO TO REPLACE THE ENGINEER WHO TOOK A JOB WITH ANOTHER STATE AGENCY IN OCTOBER, 2020—IN PROCESS

## OUR CORE FUNCTIONS

- PROVIDE SUPPORT TO IDAHO'S 50 LOCALLY LED CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
- PROVIDE NON-REGULATORY CONSERVATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
- ADMINISTRATION
- CONDUCT OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATIONS TO EDUCATE & INFORM PARTNERS, DECISION MAKERS, AND THE PUBLIC ON THE VALUE OF CONSERVATION IN SUSTAINING AND IMPROVING SOIL, WATER, AIR, PLANT AND ANIMAL RESOURCES AS WELL AS IN ENHANCING THE ECONOMIC PRODUCTIVITY OF OUR STATE

## REVENUES

	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
General Fund	2,759,200	2,659,200	2,723,600	2,695,800
Receipts	33,400	11,100	0	2,006
RCRDP Loan Program	889,100	722,600	937,439	745,910
SRF Loan Program	92,300	92,300	77,282	78,408
Federal Grant Funds	170,900	201,800	193,144	12,149
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,944,900</b>	<b>3,687,000</b>	<b>3,931,465</b>	<b>3,534,273</b>

## EXPENDITURES

	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Personnel Costs	1,368,500	1,620,127	1,343,950	1,255,777
Operating Expenditures	329,800	341,802	317,968	252,924
Capital Outlay	111,200	3,425	0	0
Trustee/Benefit Payments	1,253,200	1,253,200	1,240,700	1,166,700
RCRDP Loan Disbursements	939,100	305,800	486,077	349,169
DEQ Loan	79,700	104,700	134,800	79,147
Federal Grant Funds	136,600	270,000	179,881	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,218,100</b>	<b>3,899,054</b>	<b>3,703,376</b>	<b>3,103,717</b>

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



## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

		FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
<b>District Support and Services</b> Percentage of Conservation Districts satisfied with services and programs provided	actual	-	-	-	78	
	target	-	-	-	90	90
Percentage of Conservation Districts satisfied with the effectiveness of the communications received from the Commission	actual	-	-	-	89	
	target	-	-	-	90	90
Percentage of Conservation District requests for Technical Assistance that received the assistance requested	actual	-	-	-	93	
	target	-	-	-	90	90

PROFILE OF KEY SERVICES PROVIDED

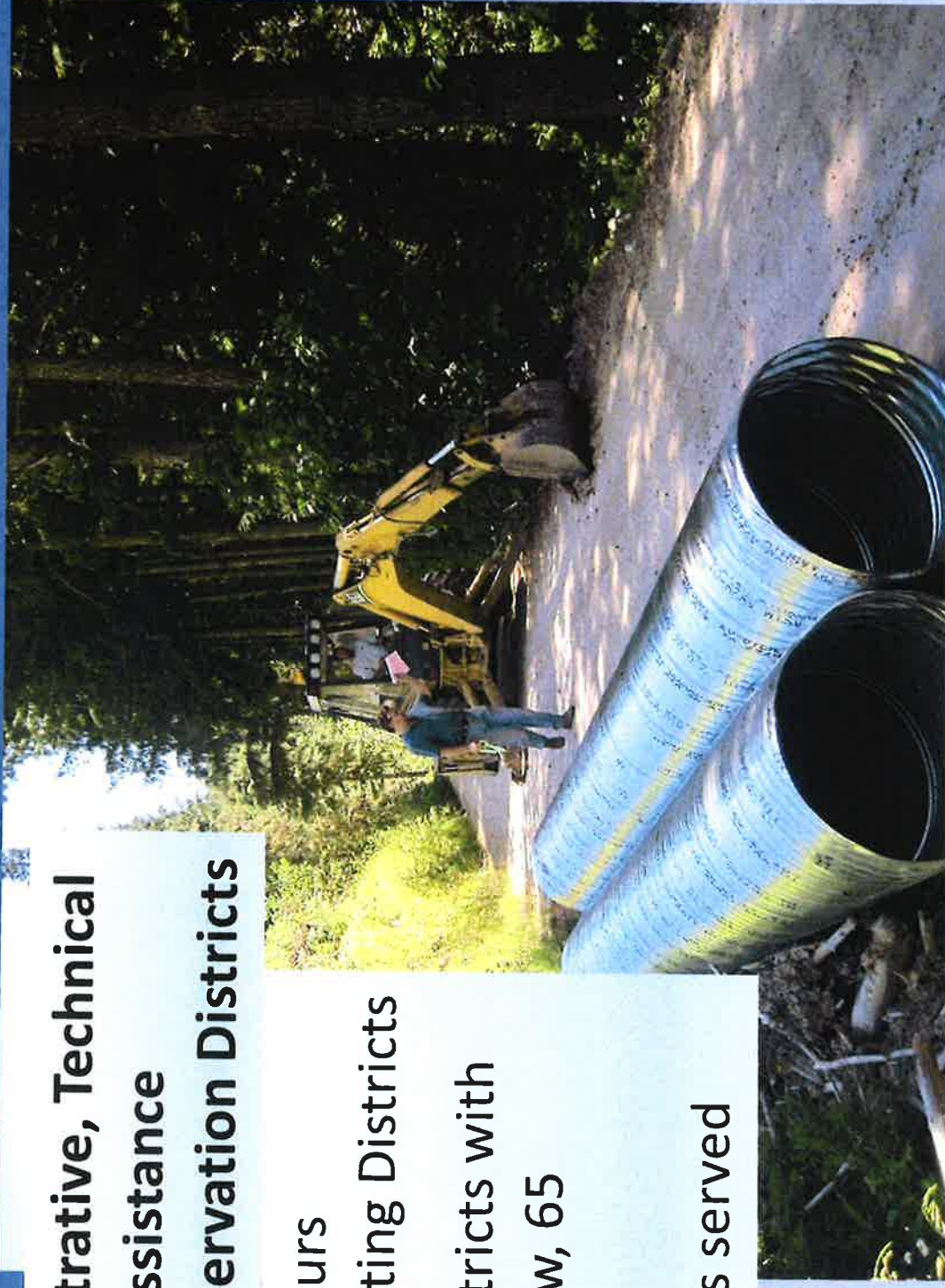
Key Services	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Landowners assisted in their conservation efforts (number)	407	536	436	328
Administrative, technical & engineering assistance provided to Conservation Districts (staff hours)	10,167	9,947	10,791	10,860
Technical assistance provided to landowners enrolled in the USDA Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (staff hours)	3,250	3,250	3,620	3,230
Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Agricultural Implementation Plans developed (number)	7	5	12	7





## **FY 2021 Administrative, Technical & Engineering Assistance Provided to Conservation Districts**

- 10,860 Staff hours expended assisting Districts
- Assisted 43 Districts with projects (33 new, 65 ongoing)
- 328 landowners served



## FY 2021 STATE GENERAL FUND DISTRICT SUPPORT

\$ 1.17 million from Trustee & Benefits Fund

Distributed to Districts per statute & rule--

- \$10,500 /District (\$525,000, total) base & operations funding
- Balance (\$641,700) divided proportionately as match for the local support each District received
  - Local support ranged from \$0 - \$60k/District, totaling \$561k
  - State match ranged from \$2,456 - \$50,000/District
  - \$12,834/District, median State match
  - State match-to-local support ratio, 1.2:1
- No project funding

**PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

<b>Conservation Programs &amp; Services</b>		<b>FY 2018</b>	<b>FY 2019</b>	<b>FY 2020</b>	<b>FY 2021</b>	<b>FY 2022</b>
Number of Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) acres for which technical assistance was provided	actual	-	-	-	18,432	
	target	-	-	-	20,000	15,000
Acres improved with conservation practices financed by Resource Conservation and Rangeland Development Program (RCRDP)	actual	-	-	-	331	
	target	-	-	-	600	600
Acres with Best Management Practices (BMPs) implemented to maintain and improve Ground Water Quality	actual	-	-	-	47,264	
	target	-	-	-	54,000	50,000
Percentage of Total Maximum Daily Load implementation plans completed on schedule	actual	-	-	-	90	
	target	-	-	-	100	100

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



## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

		FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
<b>Communication &amp; Outreach</b> Increase the number of newsletter subscribers	actual	-	-	-	22	
	target	-	-	-	20	20
Increase annual percentage of social media reach, likes, and follows	actual	-	-	-	6	
	target	-	-	-	10	10
Increase number of additional partner projects in Tracker.	actual	-	-	-	7	
	target	-	-	-	6	6



# FY 2021 Newsletters



**Conservation of Idaho Way**

**SOIL CONSERVATION**

Soil is the foundation of our food system and the lifeblood of our economy. It is also one of our most precious natural resources. Unfortunately, soil is being lost at an alarming rate. In Idaho, we lose an estimated 1.5 million tons of topsoil every year. This is a significant loss, as it takes 100 years to replace just one inch of topsoil. The Idaho Department of Agriculture is working to address this issue through a variety of programs and initiatives. One of the most important is the Soil Conservation Program, which provides technical assistance and financial incentives to help farmers and ranchers adopt soil conservation practices. This includes things like cover cropping, no-till farming, and conservation tillage. By protecting our soil, we can ensure that we have a sustainable and productive agricultural sector for the future.



**Conservation of Idaho Way**

**MANAGING RISK FOR THE FUTURE**

As the climate continues to change, the risks to our agricultural sector are increasing. Drought, flooding, and other extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and severe. This is a significant challenge for farmers and ranchers, as it can lead to crop loss, soil erosion, and other damage. The Idaho Department of Agriculture is working to help agricultural producers manage these risks through a variety of programs and initiatives. One of the most important is the Risk Management Program, which provides technical assistance and financial incentives to help farmers and ranchers adopt risk management practices. This includes things like crop insurance, diversification, and conservation practices. By managing risk, we can ensure that our agricultural sector is resilient and able to withstand the challenges of the future.



**Conservation of Idaho Way**

**PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE**

As we look to the future, it is important to have a clear plan in place. This is especially true for our agricultural sector, which is facing a number of challenges. The Idaho Department of Agriculture is working to help agricultural producers plan for the future through a variety of programs and initiatives. One of the most important is the Planning Program, which provides technical assistance and financial incentives to help farmers and ranchers develop long-term plans. This includes things like business plans, marketing plans, and conservation plans. By planning for the future, we can ensure that our agricultural sector is sustainable and able to meet the needs of the future.



**Conservation of Idaho Way**

**PROTECTING OUR WATER RESOURCES**

Water is one of our most precious natural resources, and it is essential for our agricultural sector. Unfortunately, water is being lost at an alarming rate due to drought, overuse, and other factors. The Idaho Department of Agriculture is working to help agricultural producers protect their water resources through a variety of programs and initiatives. One of the most important is the Water Conservation Program, which provides technical assistance and financial incentives to help farmers and ranchers adopt water conservation practices. This includes things like drip irrigation, mulching, and conservation tillage. By protecting our water resources, we can ensure that we have a sustainable and productive agricultural sector for the future.



**Conservation of Idaho Way**

**MORNING FOX CREEK**

It's a success for man and dog! The Morning Fox Creek project is a partnership between the Idaho Department of Agriculture and the local community. The project involves the construction of a new water treatment facility for the Morning Fox Creek area. This will provide clean, safe water for the community and help protect the local environment. The project is a great example of the power of public-private partnerships and the importance of community involvement in infrastructure projects.



**Conservation of Idaho Way**

**THE STATE OF IDAHO'S WATER RESOURCES**

Water is one of our most precious natural resources, and it is essential for our agricultural sector. Unfortunately, water is being lost at an alarming rate due to drought, overuse, and other factors. The Idaho Department of Agriculture is working to help agricultural producers protect their water resources through a variety of programs and initiatives. One of the most important is the Water Conservation Program, which provides technical assistance and financial incentives to help farmers and ranchers adopt water conservation practices. This includes things like drip irrigation, mulching, and conservation tillage. By protecting our water resources, we can ensure that we have a sustainable and productive agricultural sector for the future.



**Conservation of Idaho Way**

**THE STATE OF IDAHO'S WATER RESOURCES**

Water is one of our most precious natural resources, and it is essential for our agricultural sector. Unfortunately, water is being lost at an alarming rate due to drought, overuse, and other factors. The Idaho Department of Agriculture is working to help agricultural producers protect their water resources through a variety of programs and initiatives. One of the most important is the Water Conservation Program, which provides technical assistance and financial incentives to help farmers and ranchers adopt water conservation practices. This includes things like drip irrigation, mulching, and conservation tillage. By protecting our water resources, we can ensure that we have a sustainable and productive agricultural sector for the future.



**Conservation of Idaho Way**

**THE STATE OF IDAHO'S WATER RESOURCES**

Water is one of our most precious natural resources, and it is essential for our agricultural sector. Unfortunately, water is being lost at an alarming rate due to drought, overuse, and other factors. The Idaho Department of Agriculture is working to help agricultural producers protect their water resources through a variety of programs and initiatives. One of the most important is the Water Conservation Program, which provides technical assistance and financial incentives to help farmers and ranchers adopt water conservation practices. This includes things like drip irrigation, mulching, and conservation tillage. By protecting our water resources, we can ensure that we have a sustainable and productive agricultural sector for the future.



**Conservation of Idaho Way**

**BALANCED ROCK DISTRICT: KEEPING SOIL IN PLACE**

Soil is the foundation of our food system and the lifeblood of our economy. It is also one of our most precious natural resources. Unfortunately, soil is being lost at an alarming rate. In Idaho, we lose an estimated 1.5 million tons of topsoil every year. This is a significant loss, as it takes 100 years to replace just one inch of topsoil. The Idaho Department of Agriculture is working to address this issue through a variety of programs and initiatives. One of the most important is the Soil Conservation Program, which provides technical assistance and financial incentives to help farmers and ranchers adopt soil conservation practices. This includes things like cover cropping, no-till farming, and conservation tillage. By protecting our soil, we can ensure that we have a sustainable and productive agricultural sector for the future.



**Conservation of Idaho Way**

**THE STATE OF IDAHO'S WATER RESOURCES**

Water is one of our most precious natural resources, and it is essential for our agricultural sector. Unfortunately, water is being lost at an alarming rate due to drought, overuse, and other factors. The Idaho Department of Agriculture is working to help agricultural producers protect their water resources through a variety of programs and initiatives. One of the most important is the Water Conservation Program, which provides technical assistance and financial incentives to help farmers and ranchers adopt water conservation practices. This includes things like drip irrigation, mulching, and conservation tillage. By protecting our water resources, we can ensure that we have a sustainable and productive agricultural sector for the future.



**Conservation of Idaho Way**

**THE STATE OF IDAHO'S WATER RESOURCES**

Water is one of our most precious natural resources, and it is essential for our agricultural sector. Unfortunately, water is being lost at an alarming rate due to drought, overuse, and other factors. The Idaho Department of Agriculture is working to help agricultural producers protect their water resources through a variety of programs and initiatives. One of the most important is the Water Conservation Program, which provides technical assistance and financial incentives to help farmers and ranchers adopt water conservation practices. This includes things like drip irrigation, mulching, and conservation tillage. By protecting our water resources, we can ensure that we have a sustainable and productive agricultural sector for the future.



**Conservation of Idaho Way**

**THE STATE OF IDAHO'S WATER RESOURCES**

Water is one of our most precious natural resources, and it is essential for our agricultural sector. Unfortunately, water is being lost at an alarming rate due to drought, overuse, and other factors. The Idaho Department of Agriculture is working to help agricultural producers protect their water resources through a variety of programs and initiatives. One of the most important is the Water Conservation Program, which provides technical assistance and financial incentives to help farmers and ranchers adopt water conservation practices. This includes things like drip irrigation, mulching, and conservation tillage. By protecting our water resources, we can ensure that we have a sustainable and productive agricultural sector for the future.

**THANK YOU**

**FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT**

**DELWYNE TREFZ  
ADMINISTRATOR  
208-322-1790**

