

Blaine Soil Conservation District

ANNUAL PLAN

FIVE-YEAR RESOURCE CONSERVATION

BUSINESS PLAN

ANTI-DEGRADATION PLAN

JULY 1, 2022 – JUNE 30, 2026

Forward

The Blaine Soil Conservation District is one of 51 Conservation Districts in Idaho. Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Districts are political subdivisions of state government but are not state agencies. Conservation Districts are charged with carrying out a program for the conservation, use and development of soil, water, and other natural resources.

Conservation Districts are the primary entities to provide assistance to private landowners and land users in the conservation, sustainment, improvement and enhancement of Idaho's natural resources. They are catalysts for coordinating and implementing conservation programs, channeling expertise from all levels of government into action at the local level. Programs are non-regulatory, science-based technical assistance, incentive-based financial programs and informational and educational programs at the local level.

Both by legislation and by agreement the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service provides technical assistance to landowners and land users through Conservation Districts. Each Conservation District in Idaho has a signed Mutual Agreement with the Secretary of Agriculture and the Governor of Idaho that establishes a framework for cooperation.

It is the goal of the Blaine Soil Conservation District elected officials to set high standards for conservation of natural resources within the district. The district developed an action plan for meeting these needs. The Blaine SCD acknowledges that among their role's as an elected board is the need to provide a service to the community, to assist in the economic stability of the area, to enhance the traditional way of life that is important to those we serve and to encourage the wise use of natural resources. The district further acknowledges the very important role our conservation partners play in the success of the Blaine SCD.

This plan was developed not only to guide the Conservation District, but also to encourage cooperation among landowners, government agencies, private organizations, and elected officials. Through knowledge and cooperation, all concerned can ensure a sustainable natural resource base for present and future generations in the Blaine Soil Conservation District.

This document identifies the resource needs in the Conservation District and presents a resource conservation action plan for meeting these needs.

Certificate of Adoption

The Board of elected supervisors of the Blaine Soil Conservation District this 16th day of March, 2022 does hereby approve the following document known as the Resource Conservation Business Plan. This Plan will be in effect for a five-year period ending June 30, 2026 during which time it will be updated annually and/or amended, as necessary.

Chris Johnson,	Chairman
Robert Simpson,	Vice Chair
Kathy Noble,	Sec/Treasure
Wade Prescott,	Supervisor
Chris Watson,	Supervisor
Kelsey Barg,	Administrative Assistant

Supporting Idaho Conservation Partners

Natural Resource Conservation Service – Jesse Fulmer
Administrator Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission – Loretta Strickland
Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts – Benjamin Kelley
Wood River RC & D – Terry Ruby

(note: the official signature page is housed in the Blaine SCD with the official plan)



Five-Year Resource Conservation Plan Business Plan (2022 to 2026) Blaine Soil Conservation District



For More Information Contact: Cassie Lundergreen, 309-0846, blainescd@gmail.com

Organization of the Blaine Soil Conservation District

The Blaine SCD was formed as a political subdivision of the State of Idaho, with its authorities, powers and structure contained in Soil Conservation District Law, Title 22, Chapter 27, Idaho Code

- Organized to provide voluntary land and water conservation technical and financial assistance to landowners and users within the Blaine SCD boundary.

Function of the Blaine Soil Conservation District

To make available technical, financial and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land manager with conservation of soil, water and related natural resources.

Who We Serve & Why

- We serve the people and natural resources in the Blaine County area, to conserve the natural resources for the beneficial and sustainable use by all.

Mission of the Blaine Soil Conservation District

- To Coordinate and deliver technical, financial and educational assistance for responsible natural resource management.

Vision of the Blaine Soil Conservation District

- *To establish and support efforts of effective natural resource conservation in Blaine County.*

Values of the Blaine Soil Conservation District

- Sustainable use of natural resources
- Support for agriculture activity that uses sustainable, economically feasible practices
- Value and respect for the Idaho Conservation Partnership
- Conservation education for adults and youth

Natural Resource Priorities and Goals

It is the goal of the Blaine Soil Conservation District, as elected officials, to set high standards of conservation of natural resources by developing a comprehensive action plan for meeting these needs. The top priorities for the Blaine SCD include:

1. Information and Education

Goal: To provide information and education to improve conservation practices in the district.

Objective: Have each individual in the district understand their ability to improve quality of life through best conservation practices.

- Blaine SCD will continue working with the Blaine County Schools and other entities to bring Agriculture Education into the schools.
- Consistently work with our conservation partners in providing programs, information and teaching workshops for urban and rural conservation issues.
- Continue to provide current snowpack levels, water levels and snow water equivalent levels to partners and the public during the winter months.

- Annually conduct youth environmental education programs and increase participation and public involvement in the IASCD speech contest, poster contest, Envirothon Competition, Blaine SCD scholarship programs, Blaine Bug Crew, University of Idaho Natural Resource Camp and others.
- Annually sponsor a fair booth.

2. Water Resources and Quality

Goal: To improve ground and surface water quality in Blaine County by conservation planning, funding, and promoting implementation of best management practices.

Objective: To increase awareness of water conservation and improve water quality.

- Make available technical and financial assistance for improved irrigation water management to at least 5 producers from July 2016 to June 2021 through various conservation programs.
- To provide yearly information to District irrigators on current Idaho water issues.
- Annually support water users, irrigation districts, and conservation partners in improvement of water quality and water resources.

3. Irrigated Cropland

Goal: To provide programs and educational information to land owners that will help them develop best use of lands within the county.

Objective: To promote best management practices for crop land within Blaine County.

- Provide soil and plant testing services to land owners at a low cost.
- Make available technical and financial assistance for improved cropland management through various conservation programs.
- Purchased rangeland drill and leased it out to several area farmers and drilled 1000 acres.
- Drill is serviced and ready to go hit the fields in spring 2020.

4. Rangeland and Pasture/Hayland

Goal: To provide programs and educational information to land owners that will help them develop best use of land within the county.

Objective: To promote best management practices for range, pasture and hayland within the district.

- Annually promote biological control of noxious weeds through various conservation partners.
- Seek NRCS conservation funding and technical assistance for private landowners to develop best grazing management practices.
- Provide data on drought tolerant, native and riparian plants available to land owners.
- Work with conservation partners on the sage grouse initiative and other conservation issues.

5. District Operations

Goal: Maintain district operations at optimum level of efficiency.

Objective: The Blaine SCD will provide leadership and business management of the highest quality.

- Make available 5Y-Plans Annual Reports Budget as needed for federal and state agency assistance.
- Provide information to landowners on current environmental issues and available conservation funding.
- Provide the opportunity for supervisors to complete Supervisor Training.
- Complete effective and efficient operations including accounting, personnel management, training and development, annual planning and reporting, district web site and administrative procedures.
- Provide a yearly low cost tree sale.
- Provide Workshops to local farmers and growers on soil health and water conservation management programs.

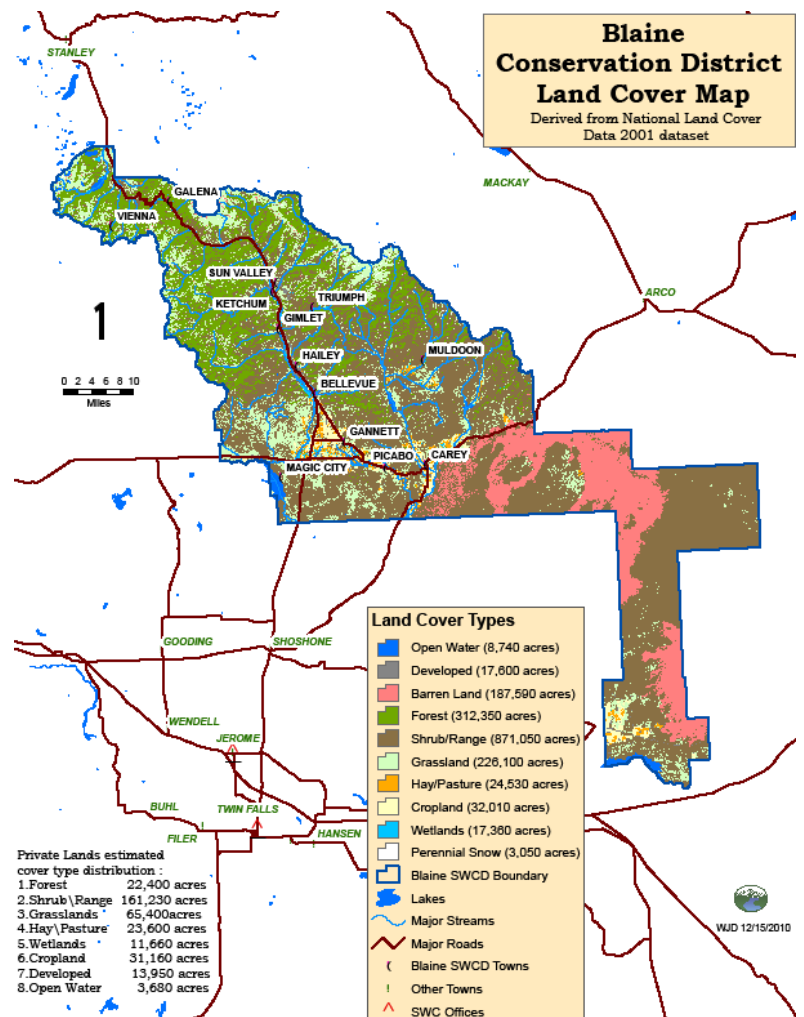
Physical Characteristics and Critical Geographic Areas (attached map)

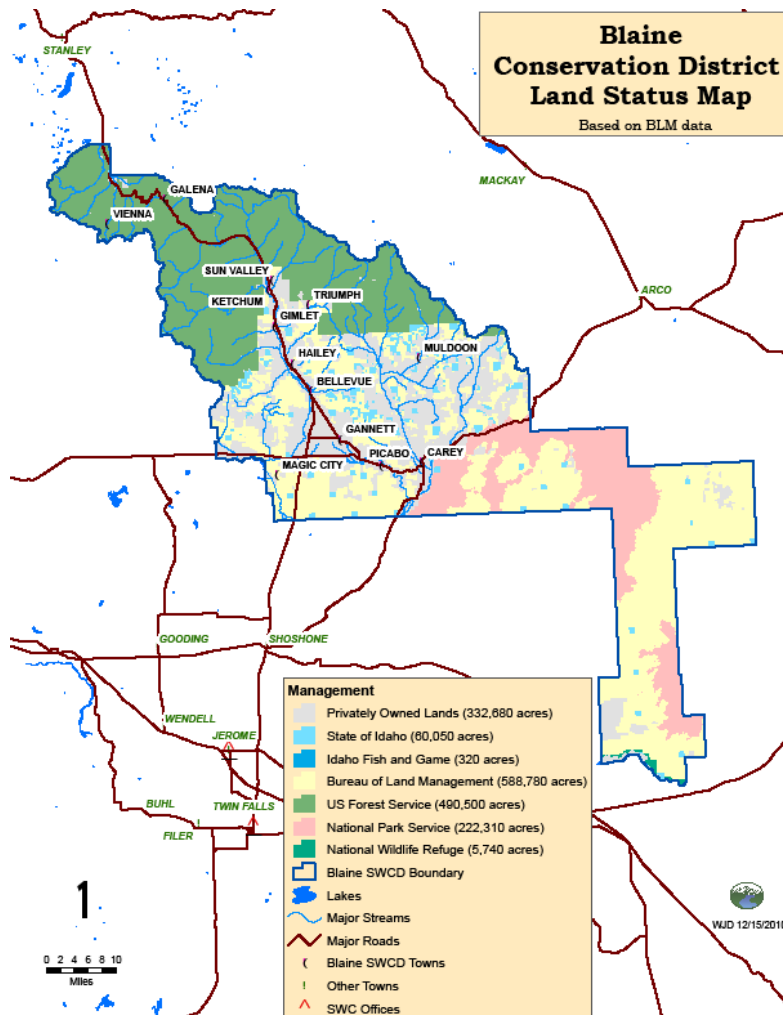
Blaine SCD jurisdiction correlates with the boundaries of Blaine County. Blaine County is a unique area that ranges from lava rock beds, to dessert landscapes, to fertile farms and ranches, to forested mountains. It includes 2,661 square miles on the North side of the Snake River Basin, stretching into the Sawtooth Mountains.

The Northern part of the county is covered with streams and beautiful forested mountains. The Wood River flows through the county from its headwaters in the Sawtooth Mountains southward through the county's population centers around Sun Valley, Ketchum, Hailey (county seat), and Bellevue into the Snake River Basin.

A long arm of the county extends to the southeast through the Snake River Basin and all the way to the Snake River. This area is covered with ancient lava flows and is relatively uninhabited. Much of it is included in the Craters of the Moon National Monument. The agricultural town of Carey lies at the base of the mountains on the northern edge of this arm.

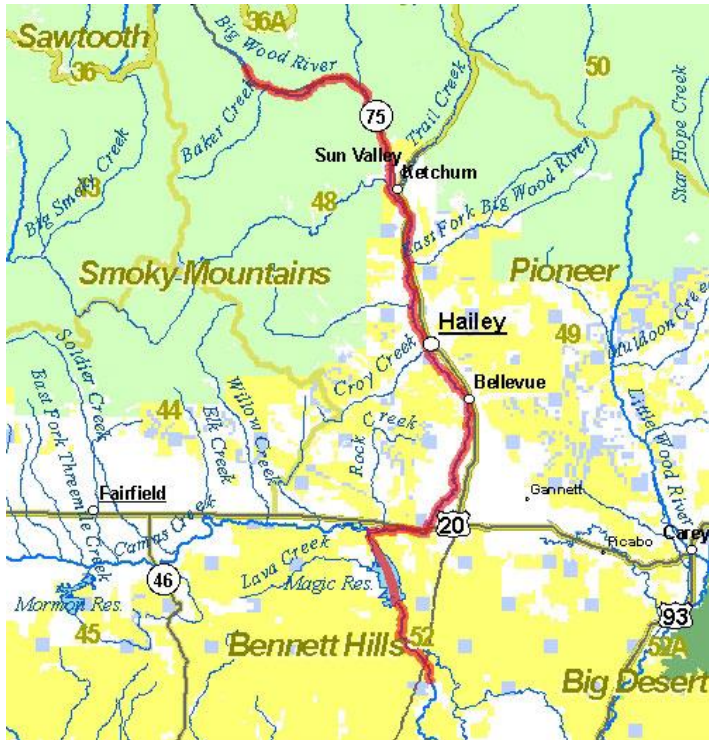
Hyndman Peak is the highest elevation at 12,009 feet, located near Trail Creek Road on the boundary of Custer County. The lowest elevation is 4,620 feet in the Snake River Basin.



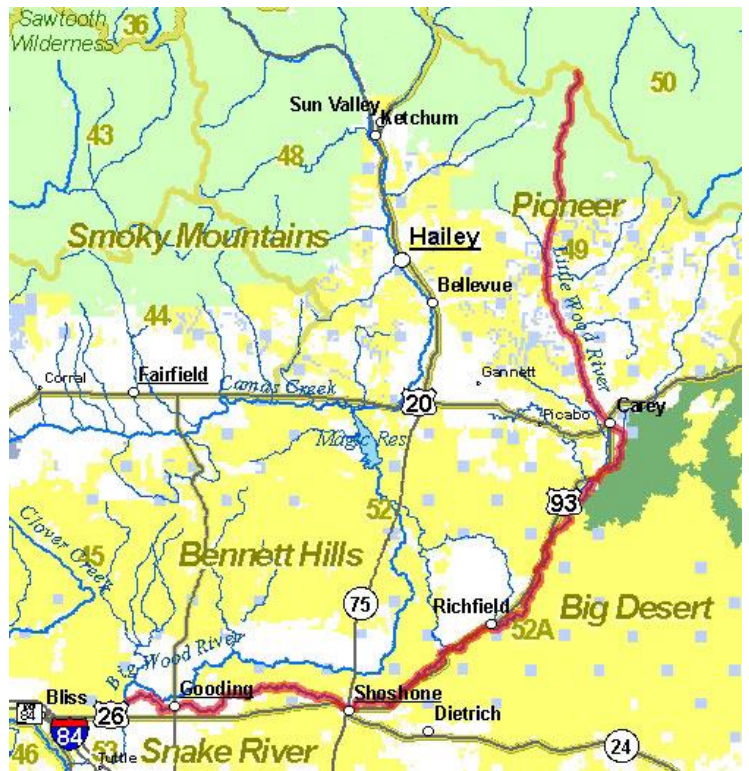


Critical Geographic Areas for Natural Resource Conservation in Blaine County

The Big Wood River and tributaries
(image from fishandgame.idaho.gov)

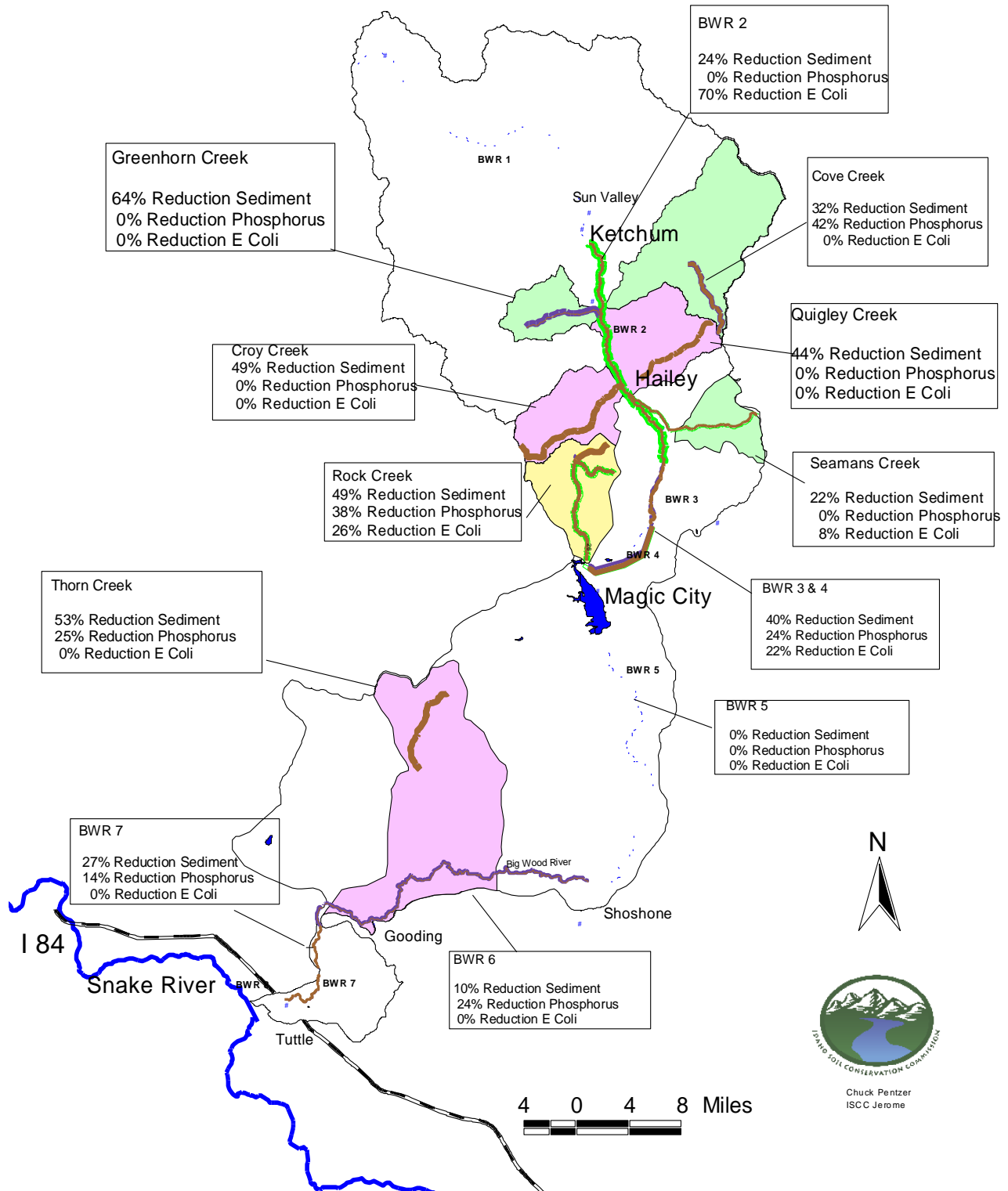


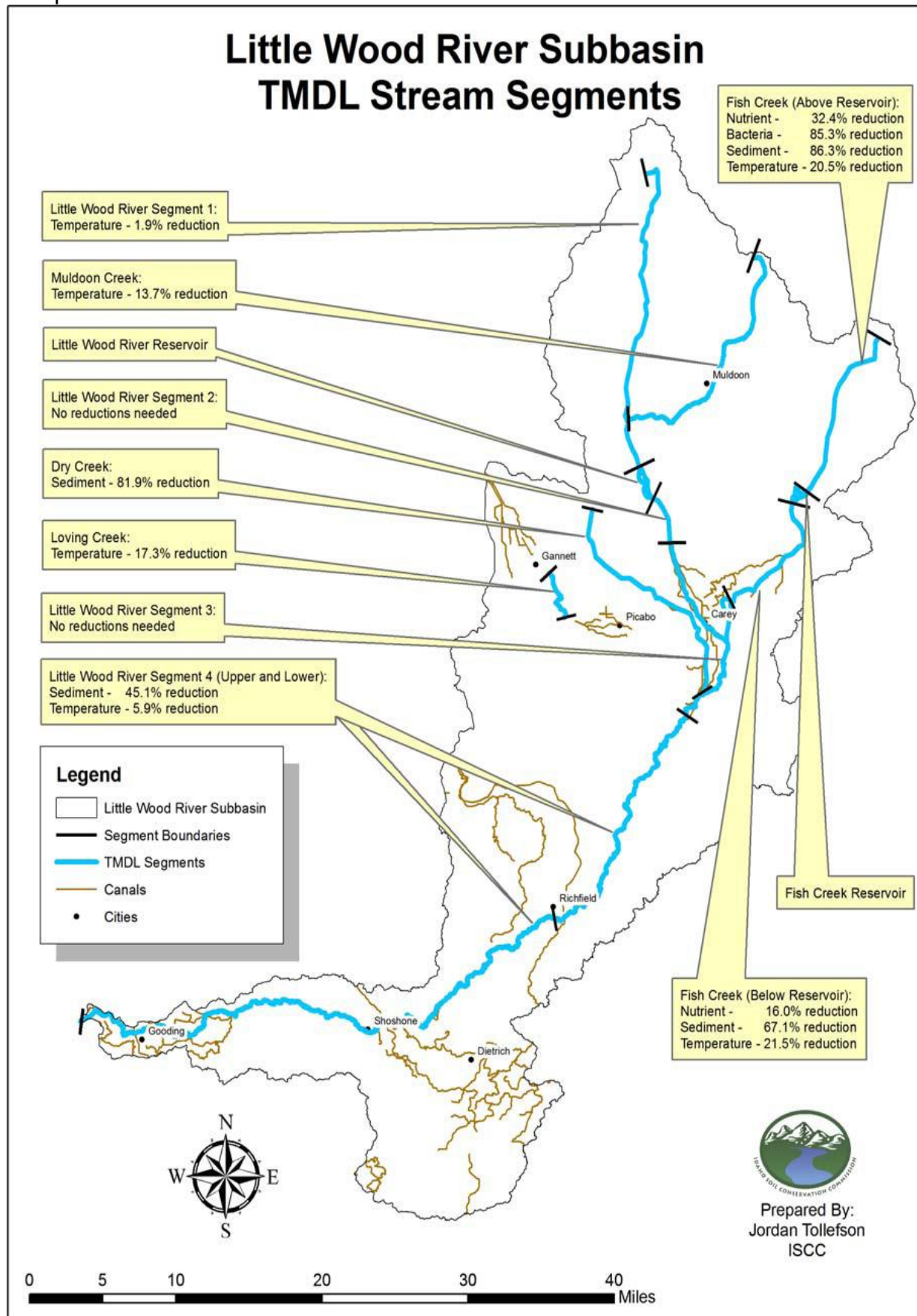
The Little Wood River and tributaries
(image from fishandgame.idaho.gov)



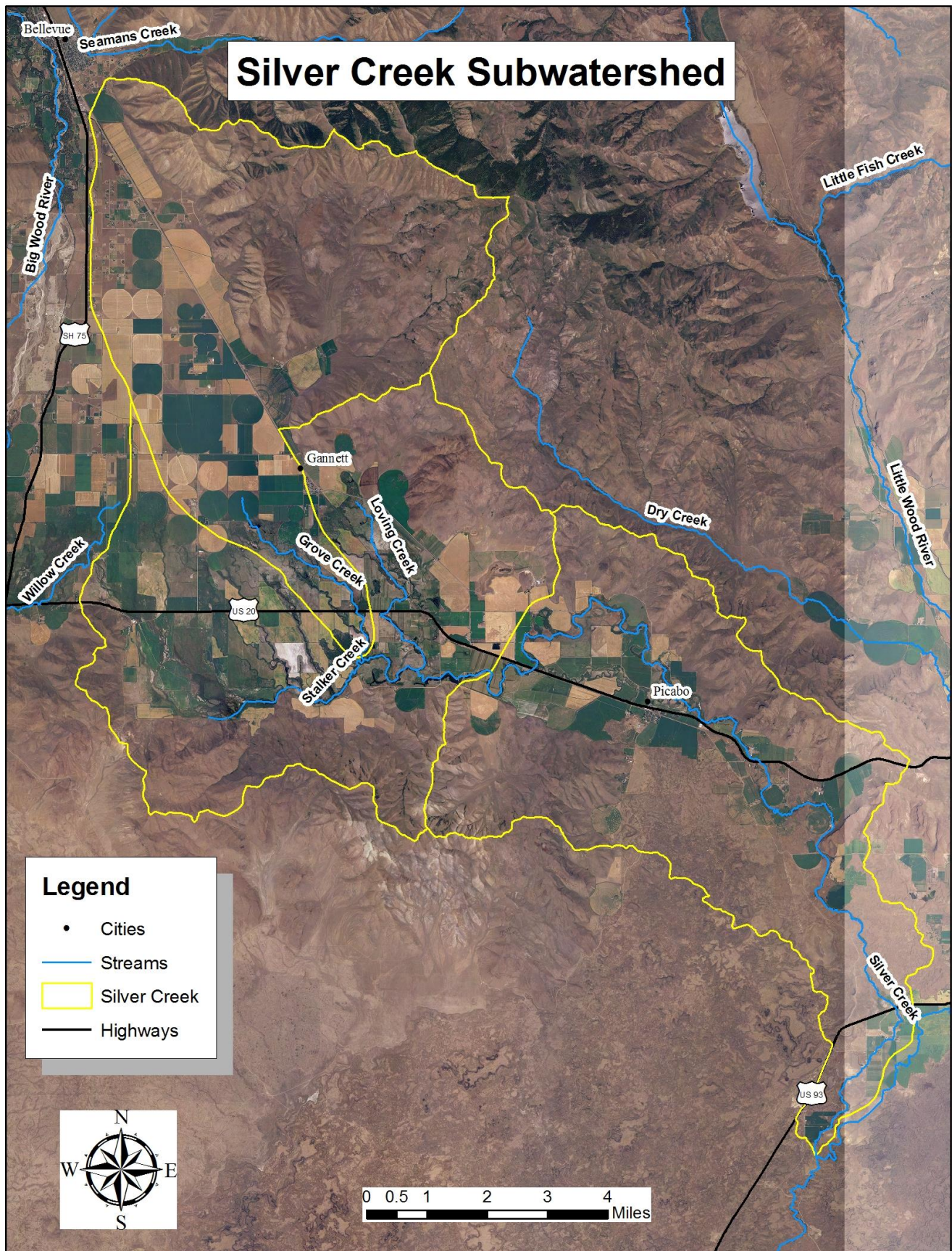
TMDL Implementation Plans and Reductions Estimates for Big Wood River

BWR Ag Implementation Plan TMDL Percent Reductions Map





Silver Creek



Blaine SCD 303(d)/305(b) Streams

Legend

• Cities

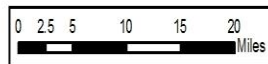
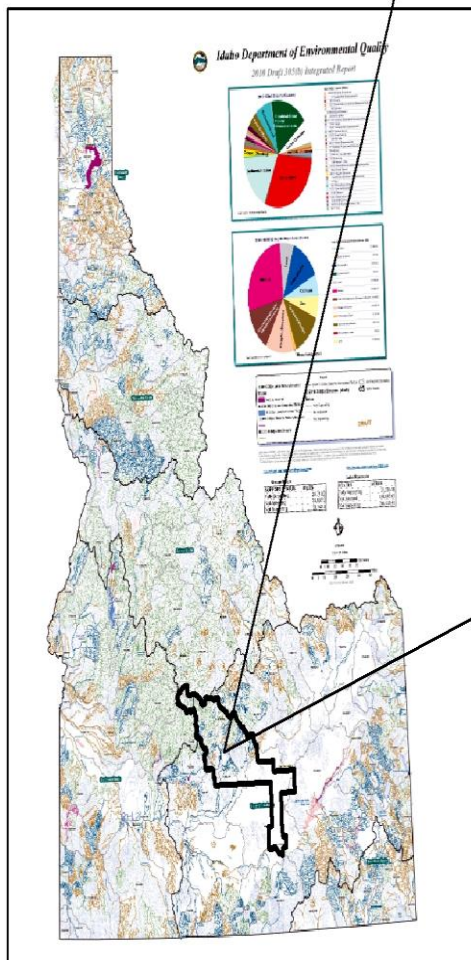
— 303(d) Listed

ID 2008 305(b) Streams

— Fully Supporting

— Not Assessed

— Not Supporting





Blaine County

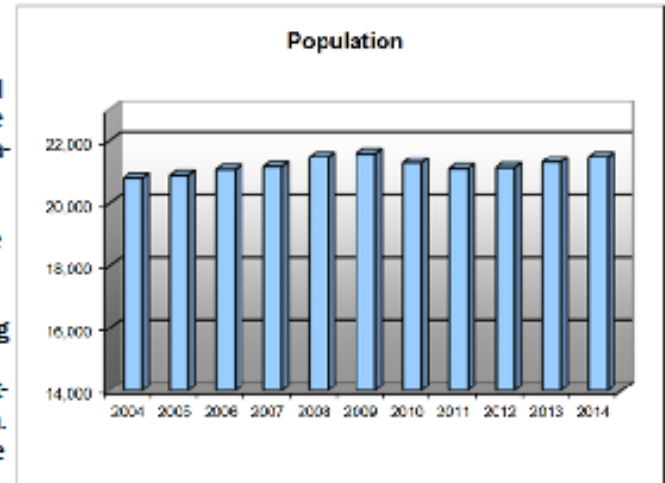
December 2015

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DEPT. OF LABOR

Workforce Trends

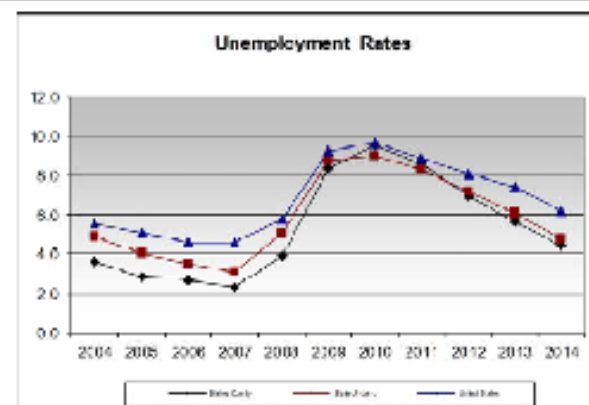
Population

Blaine County's population rose 3.2 percent from 20,811 in 2004 to 21,482 in 2014, slow growth in the second half of the decade eroded gains during the good economic times in the first half. Hailey is the county seat and largest town at 8,014. Beautiful mountains and virtually unlimited recreational opportunities make Blaine County a destination for visitors, both domestic and international. The world famous Sun Valley Ski Resort reported 358,717 skier days during the 2014-2015 season, up 3 percent from last year. Local leaders continue to try jump starting the economy. The recession was severe, dramatically cooling building activity in up-scale subdivisions and condominium projects. Ketchum, the commercial hub, has five approved hotel projects with just one starting construction in 2015. New attractions in recent years include an all-season gondola, another golf course, a Nordic ski lodge, an outdoor symphony pavilion and rodeo grounds, all enhancing tourism. Collaborative marketing is expected to bring more visitors to the area. New direct flights from major cities and regional jets should increase access, mostly supported by local option tax.



Labor Force & Employment

Blaine County's workforce has suffered from the construction and housing slump that hit many tourism and high-growth areas across the nation. The unemployment rate was fairly stable during the early part of the last decade. The continued expansion sent the rate plunging to 2.3 percent in 2007 before the recession pushed it up to 8.8 percent in 2010. Spring and fall recreation and conferences have eased some of the seasonal slumps. Most jobs are in the relatively lower-paying hospitality and retail sectors so the labor pool continues to be constrained by a lack of affordable housing. Efforts by communities to require affordable housing or to build their own have not fully solved the problem. The high cost of living more than offsets wages that are typically higher than elsewhere in Idaho. Routine traffic congestion between Ketchum and Bellevue and higher fuel prices has increased



Labor Force	Nov 14	Nov 15
Civilian Labor Force	11,280	11,802
Total Employment	10,898	11,189
Unemployed	482	415
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.1	3.5
State of Idaho % Unemployed	4.5	3.9
U.S. % Unemployed	5.8	5.0

public transportation ridership. A significant number of workers commuted to the county for higher-paying construction and landscape jobs before the Great Recession and those numbers are returning. A new airport was planned and then put on indefinite hold by the Federal Aviation Administration. Sun Valley has been approved as the first Nordic Olympic and Paralympic training site in the United States, the only one specific to Nordic skiing. Recently, it also was awarded designations for alpine, Nordic, freestyle, freeskiing and snowboarding.

Labor Force	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Civilian Labor Force	13,342	14,067	14,167	13,677	13,726	13,348	11,948	11,884	11,716	11,577	11,428
Unemployment	486	398	382	321	640	1,116	1,141	1,021	818	664	619
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.6	2.8	2.7	2.3	3.9	8.4	9.6	8.6	7.0	5.7	4.5
Employment	12,856	13,669	13,785	13,356	13,186	12,232	10,806	10,863	10,899	10,923	10,819

Prepared by Jan Roeser, Regional Economist, Idaho Department of Labor • 420 Falls Ave, Twin Falls, Idaho 83301

Phone: (208) 735-2500, ext. 3639 • email: jan.roeser@labor.idaho.gov • Labor Market Information website: lmi.idaho.gov

See <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/blainecountyidaho,id/PST045218> for additional County information.

Trends Impacting Conservation in the Blaine Soil Conservation District

- A forthcoming reduction in state funding which further reduces the district's efforts to be as effective in conservation.
- Endangered Species Acts requirements and enforcement
- Urban development and absentee landowners
- Poorly planned growth in agricultural areas
- Increasing small acreage farms, five acres or less
- Recreational use and its impact on agricultural management.
- Focus on water quality and quantity issues.

Strategies to Address Trends

- Develop legislative outreach program to address funding shortfalls from State funds.
- Secure funding to address agricultural mandates and landowner private property rights.
- Conduct more public education in partnership with existing organizations and cooperators who focus on protection of water and soil resources.
- Determine opportunities to coordinate outreach activities with traditional and non-traditional partners.
- Raise awareness of conservation values with state legislature and elected officials – help decision makers be better informed
- Strengthen locally led conservation efforts by partnering with existing agencies and organizations.
- Become more informed on current issues impacting working lands, Farm Bill programs, Information from agencies instead of relying on the NRCS District Conservationist
- Determine how to become involved with County Planning and Zoning issues impacting natural resources.
- Map noxious and invasive weeds to more effectively target weed control efforts
- Establish a data base to track resource conditions
- Solicit input to improve the Annual Plan/Five-Year Resource Conservation Business Plan
- Take a proactive approach to funding water delivery systems on irrigated cropland
- Sponsor project proposals with other districts
- Continue an active information and education program for landowners to address urban development.
- Work with public land users to educate and encourage cooperation among private recreational entities and public land users/permittees and landowners private property rights.

Staffing Needs

- Part-time Conservation District Administrative Assistant.
- Conservation District Technician via NRCS

Economic Condition and Outlook

The current economic condition of Blaine SCD is positive. Our budget is where it should be and we are able to complete the programs and projects that have been decided upon. However, the economic outlook is not great as our match percentage looks as if it will be dropping. The state of Idaho has a serious deficit. Monies received from Blaine County look to remain the same as they have been in the past. Blaine SCD is always looking for new projects that will generate funding for the district and its programs.

Key Decision Makers

- Citizens in Conservation District
- Blaine County Commissioners and Planning and Zoning Board Members
- Elected City Officials and Planning and Zoning Board Members
- State legislators representing Conservation District: Sally Toone, and Michelle Stennett
- U.S. Senators, Representatives and Staffers
- Conservation District Supervisors
- Key contacts for cities
- Blaine County School District #61
- Blaine County Weed Management

District Water Quality and Quantity

- District projects related to water resources, quality and quantity include continued efforts to provide irrigation improvements, riparian protection and management.
- The district will continue to work with area irrigation districts in decisions, goals, and planning.

Priority Actions – 6 Months

- *Summary of the priority actions needed to start the 5-year plan of the Blaine Soil & Water Conservation District.*

Action	Begin Date	End Date
▪ Seek public comments on Annual Plan/Five-Year Resource Conservation Business Plan	1/1/22	3/1/22
▪ Board of Supervisor review of Annual Plan/Five-Year Resource Conservation Business Plan priorities, actions, and public comment	1/1/22	3/21/22
▪ Complete written update of Annual Plan/Five-Year Resource Conservation Plan	12/1/21	3/21/22
▪ Identify budget and staff needs	7/1/21	3/21/22
▪ Develop, adopt and submit annual budget	Annually	Annually
▪ Adopt and submit Annual Plan/Five-Year Resource Conservation Business Plan	Annually	Annually



FY2022 (7/1/2022 – 6/30/2026) Annual Plan of Work Blaine Soil Conservation District

Conservation District Priority Number 1: Information and Education

Goal(s): To provide information and education to improve conservation practices in the district.

Objective: Help each individual in the district to understand their ability to improve quality of life through best conservation practices.

Actions	Target Date	Individual(s) Responsible
Work with the Blaine County Commission, School Board and other entities to bring back FFA & Agriculture to the Blaine County School System.	ongoing	Supervisors, Kelsey Barg, Admin. Assistant
Work cooperatively with the RC&D, NRCS, Wood River Land Trust, Trout Unlimited, Blaine Bug Crew, municipalities and others to provide urban water use, weed control, native and drought tolerant plant species and other workshops	ongoing	Kelsey Barg Adm. Assistant
Present snow surveys, snow water equivalent levels, water forecasts, and current water levels to irrigation districts, soil conservation districts, WAG and RC&D's on a monthly basis where applicable	ongoing	Aaron Andrews, Bob Simpson, Supervisor
Increase youth and public involvement and awareness through Annual Envirothon, field trips, speech contest, Natural Resource Camp, poster contest and annual scholarship program	ongoing	Supervisors, Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant
Provide a newsletter with current and pertinent information regarding conservation practices, water outlook, and other local programs	ongoing	Kelsey Barg Adm. Assistant
Provide information to the public about grants available, including NRCS, Blaine County LAB and private funders.	ongoing	Supervisors, Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant
In partnership with U of I Extension to support the Trout Friendly Lawn Program in their efforts in establishing and maintaining a community garden in Hailey, ID teaching soil and water conservation principles	ongoing	Supervisors Kelsey Barg, Adm. Asst.

FY2022 (7/1/2022 – 6/30/2023) Annual Plan of Work



Conservation District Priority Number 2: Water Resources and Quality

Goal(s): To promote programs that maximizes and educate about water conservation and quality in the

Objective: To increase awareness of water conservation and improve water quality in the district.

Actions	Target Date	Individual(s) Responsible
Support the proposed Little Wood River & Fish Creek Pressurized Pipeline projects and irrigation delivery systems.	ongoing	Supervisors, Kelsey Barg Adm. Assistant
Provide Urban water user workshops to promote awareness and best management practices	ongoing	Kelsey Barg Adm. Assistant
Support proactively the Fish Creek Reservoir Restoration	ongoing	Supervisors, Kelsey Barg, Admin. Assistant
Support the Wood River Land Trust and Trout Unlimited in the Water Conservation Fair and other water projects and issues	ongoing	Supervisors, Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant
1. Provide information to the public 2. Partner with local agencies and organizations in applying for available grants dealing with water conservation programs available from Blaine County LAB, NRCS and other grant agencies	ongoing	Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant, Supervisors

FY2022(7/1/2022 – 6/30/2023) Annual Plan of Work Blaine Soil Conservation District



Conservation District Priority Number 3: Irrigated Cropland

Goal(s): To provide programs and educational information to land owners that will help them develop best use of lands within the county.

Objective: To promote best management practices for crop land within the district.

Actions	Target Date	Individual(s) Responsible
Provide soil testing and analysis services to urban and agricultural users to meet the needs of organic and nutrient management practices	ongoing	Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant
Provide snow surveys and water outlook reports in partnership with the NRCS to land owners	ongoing	Aaron Andrews, and Bob Simpson, Supervisor
Provide plant and feed testing and analysis services to land owners, targeting Nitrate levels in soils and feed	ongoing	Supervisors, Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant
Assist and provide farmers with grant applications to meet best management practices	ongoing	Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant

FY2022 (7/1/2022 – 6/30/2023) Annual Plan of Work Blaine Soil Conservation District



Conservation District Priority Number 4: Rangeland and Pasture/Hayland

Goal(s): To provide programs and educational information to land owners that will help them develop best use of land within the county.

Objective: To promote best management practices for range, pasture and hayland within the district

Actions	Target Date	Individual(s) Responsible
Work with the NRCS in providing information and assisting in applying for grant funded programs to develop range and pasture land and increase best management practices, such as EQIP Sage Grouse and AWEPP funding	ongoing	Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant
Provide soil and forage testing services to increase better nutrient management practices	ongoing	Supervisors, Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant
Provide data on drought tolerant, native and riparian plants available to landowners	ongoing	Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant
Investigate opportunities and requirements to provide equipment supporting best management practices on Blaine County land.	ongoing	Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant
Support the Blaine Bug Crew with their program and encourage county wide participation	ongoing	Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant

FY2022 (7/1/2022 – 6/30/2023) Annual Plan of Work Blaine Soil Conservation District



Conservation District Priority Number 5: District Operations

Goal(s): Maintain District operations at optimum level of efficiency

Objective: The BSCD will provide leadership and business management of the highest quality

Actions	Target Date	Individual(s) Responsible
Maintain administrative procedures, compete annual work plan, conduct elections	Ongoing	Kelsey Barg Adm. Assistant
Hold 12 monthly conservation district meetings, support RC&D meetings, pay dues	ongoing	Kelsey Barg Adm. Assistant
Maintain comprehensive financial management system, using Quick Books, Conduct annual review, and submit all financial reports and budget to SCC	Ongoing	Kelsey Barg Adm. Assistant
Identify, secure, and administer funds for the conservation district's goals and actions	Ongoing	Kelsey Barg Adm. Assistant
Provide and maintain a website and newsletter providing current information, programs and practices	ongoing	Kelsey Barg Adm. Assistant
Work with the Wood River RC&D, NRCS and Blaine County LAB to develop grant opportunities	Ongoing	Kelsey Barg Adm. Assistant
Fund installation of a new SnoTel to the Ironmine area	Ongoing	Supervisors, Kelsey Barg Adm. Assistant
Provide a low cost tree sale.	ongoing	Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant
Provide a No Till Drill for Blaine County farmers	Ongoing	Supervisors, Kelsey Barg Adm. Assistant