

# Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District

84 East Baseline Road

Rupert Idaho 83350

208 436 4202

[minidokaswcd@gmail.com](mailto:minidokaswcd@gmail.com)

Annual Plan

1July 2022-30 June 2023

Five-Year Plan

1July 2022-30 June 2027

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**FORWARD**

The Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District is one of 50 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 the catalysts for coordinating and implementing conservation programs, channeling expertise from all levels of government into action at the local level. Programs are nonregulatory, consisting of 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 Services (NRCS) and the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission (ISWCC) provide technical assistance to landowners and land users through Conservation Districts. Each Conservation District in Idaho has a Mutual Agreement with the Secretary of Agriculture and the Governor of Idaho that establishes a framework for cooperation. This Annual Plan/Five-year Resource Conservation Business 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 Minidoka Soil and Water 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 for the Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District this 10<sup>th</sup> day of March 2022, do hereby approve the following document known as the Resource Conservation Business plan or Annual plan and 5-year plan. This Plan will be in effect for a five-year period ending 30 June 2027, during which time, it will be updated annually and or amended as necessary.

As evidence of our adoption and final approval, we do hereby affix our signatures to this document.

Brian Kossman, Chairman 

Dusty Wilkins, Vice Chairman 

Aaron Firth Treasurer 

Reid Bowen Supervisor 

Russ Suchan, Alternate Supervisor  
Justin Hunter, Alternate Supervisor

Supporting Idaho Conservation Partners: (as applicable) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission (ISWCC), Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts (IASCD) Minidoka County Extension

# CONSERVATION DISTRICT HISTORY

Homesteaders began moving to southern Idaho's Minidoka County in 1904 with government assurance that there would soon be water for irrigated farming. Southern Minidoka County was opened for homesteading after the Minidoka Dam on the Snake River was completed and Lake Walcott was formed east of Rupert in 1907. The Minidoka Irrigation District now administers water in this area.

In the late 1940s, well driller Julion Clausen tapped into the Snake River Plain aquifer in central Minidoka County. The Bureau of Reclamation then drilled wells there, and finding adequate underground water, opened the Northside Pumping Division of the Minidoka Project to homesteading.

Homesteads were mostly limited to veterans; thousands applied. Public drawings for the homesteads were held from 1953 to 1959, with 637 families taking up land in the project. They cleared sagebrush, leveled ground, laid out ditches, dug wells for drinking water, and built barns and homes. The only assistance homesteaders received came from two University of Idaho Extension county agents in Rupert.

Many of the settlers had lived in a soil conservation district elsewhere, and in 1954, some of them formed The Homestead Committee. Their goals were to address local public concerns such as roads, telephones, fire protection, weed and pest control, and to establish a soil conservation district in Minidoka County. A public hearing was held March 8, 1955. Supporters of the district decided to limit the district boundaries to land in the Northside Project, known today as the A&B Irrigation District. A public referendum passed, and the Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District was officially organized July 1, 1955.

The Walcott Soil and Water Conservation District was organized for the original Minidoka Project area in 1961. Since their area had been settled nearly fifty years earlier, the primary concerns did not include roads and basic public facilities, but rather to educate, inform, and assist farmers in improving their farming practices to prevent soil and water erosion. The two districts shared office space and staff. In 1969 they merged as the Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District.

The Minidoka SWCD spent most of its first five years helping farmers level land, build irrigation structures, and develop proper crop rotations. Land-leveling equipment was in great demand, so the District obtained a government surplus TD-18 International track-tractor and purchased a land plane and carryall, which it leased to cooperators.

The Minidoka SWCD has assisted farmers in converting to sprinkler irrigation, which lessens soil erosion on sandy or steep ground and also helps curb high water table problems. The district also promotes conservation practices to reduce erosion of surface-irrigated land. In many areas of the county, concrete ditches, cablegation, gated pipe, and pump back systems make efficient use of water while reducing energy costs.

Over the years, there have been major changes in the duties and priorities of Minidoka District. Foremost was the 1985 Food Security Act bill that required farmers receiving any form of federal funding to obtain a Conservation Plan of Action for all actively farmed property. The District board was given the responsibility of approving and monitoring these plans for effective implementation.

In 1990, the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act (FACTA) expanded the government mandates and included water quality.

In addition to the FSA and FACTA, water quality has been a major concern of state and local special-interest groups. The district has attempted to address these concerns. Today the District is engaged in water quality, soil health, and educational activities.

In 2015 The Minidoka SWCD joined forces with the two Cassia SWCD's and purchased two Direct Seed/No-Till Drills to assist in planting of cover crops to prevent wind and water erosion as well as encourage practices that improve soil health. These two 'drills' have been rented out and proceeds aid in funding soil workshops and field tours for growers from as far away as Washington, Oregon, Utah and all over Idaho- we even had people online from Belgium one year.

In 2021 the office for the Minidoka SWCD moved to the Minidoka County Fair Grounds 85 East Baseline Road Rupert Idaho 83350. This has been a good move with a good place to park the Direct Seed Drill when it is not in use, and a good partner with 4-H and the U of I Extension office programs.

## **Minidoka SWCD Administration and Financing**

The northern three-fourths of Minidoka County was issued a certificate of organization on July 1, 1955, as the Minidoka Soil Conservation District. The remaining southern part of the county was issued a certificate of organization as the Walcott Soil and Water Conservation District on April 18, 1961.

The two districts were consolidated into one, and a certificate of organization was issued by Pete Cenarusa, Idaho Secretary of State, on April 16, 1969, to the Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District. The Minidoka County boundaries make up the district boundaries. However, we do encourage hobby farmers or gardeners to attend any of our education events.

The District receives financing provided from the general fund of Minidoka County and the State of Idaho. The county is authorized by State law to provide the district with financial or other assistance. In addition to providing base funding to the District the State is also authorized to match the county funds.

The District is administered by up to a five-person board of supervisors elected by the local residents. The board members serve four-year terms. They receive no salary but are entitled to reimbursement of expenses when carrying out responsibilities for the District. The elected members select associate supervisors to assist them. A regular meeting is held the second Thursday monthly, barring weather or ag related issues (such as spring planting or fall harvest) with special meetings called as needed.

## **Minidoka SWCD Policies**

The Minidoka SWCD is governed by Title 22, Chapter 27 of the Idaho Code. The Idaho Administrative Procedures Act (IDAPA) Rule 60.05.02 and IDAPA Rule 60.05.04 direct Soil Conservation Districts to establish a Five-Year Plan and an Annual Work Plan to identify natural resource concerns within their boundaries and formulate strategies to address these concerns.

Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission (ISWCC) oversees the MSWCD through its powers and responsibilities. The MSWCD is a grassroots organization that has accepted the responsibility of overseeing the wise use and conservation of our natural resources.

The Board of supervisors also enlists the support of local, county, state, and federal agencies to assist them with their goals.

A monthly meeting along with an annual meeting of a Local Work Group advisory committee is held to address local, state, and federal issues that directly affect the conservation resources of this community.

The MSWCD willingly accepts the responsibility inherent to districts to address agricultural non-point source pollution as set forth in the 1987 Water Quality Act – Section 319; the Safe Drinking Water Act 1986; and the Clean Water Act of 1972 – Antidegradation Program. The MSWCD accepts this responsibility in order to preserve a locally administered voluntary approach for control and abatement of agricultural non-point source pollution to protect and enhance the quality and value of water resources of the State of Idaho.

# Physical Characteristics

## Land and Topography Climate

Minidoka County is located in South Central Idaho. It is made up of the Snake River Plain section of the Columbia Plateau province. The County is bordered on the south with the Snake River and the northern part of the county is lava flow. The County is approximately 160 miles east of Boise, 160 miles northwest of Salt Lake City, Utah and 90 miles west of Pocatello. The county contains approximately 480,000 acres, of which 42% is in production agriculture. The county has a unique topography and elevation. Its southern portion, which runs along the Snake River, was originally part of the riverbed. Its northern portion runs over a somewhat higher table and is called the North Side Project. Its extreme northern and eastern boundaries consist of lava flows with large and small areas of usable land. Water stored in reservoirs created by dams on the Snake River provides the means of irrigation for the diversified farming on the original Minidoka Project. Water was first delivered to the Minidoka Project in 1907 with the completion of Minidoka Dam. The old project consists of 72,221 acres. Deep wells provide the water for the new Governmental Homestead Project consisting of 89,000 acres. Additional acres have been developed by private enterprise since the first Veteran Homestead drawing in 1953. Today there are approximately 160,000 acres of rich sagebrush land under irrigation by pumping.

The topography of Minidoka County ranges from nearly level, very low terraces adjacent to the Snake River to a very gently rolling, loess (rich dust like soil)-covered basalt upland in the northern part of the county. The elevation ranges from 4,139 feet at the Snake River to 5,104 feet on Bear Den Butte. There is everything from well drained silt loams on Basalt Plains, and gentle to strongly sloping plains, and well drained sands, well drained fine sandy loams, to silty clay loams to poorly drained loamy sands and clay loams along with the Alluvial terraces (also known as built terrace; drift terrace; fill terrace; stream-built terrace; wave-built platform; wave-built terrace). Farming can be a challenge here as some of those conditions can be combined in one field or growing area.

The climate of Minidoka County corresponds in general, with that of the semi-arid valleys of Southern Idaho. The annual precipitation is 9.48 inches coming primarily in the form of snow during the months of November through February. The mean temperature for Rupert is 62.2 degrees -- with highs of 105 degrees Fahrenheit recorded and minus 35 degrees Fahrenheit for the low. Average length of frost-free days is 125-130.

## ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND OUTLOOK

*From The Ag CENSUS*

*Minidoka county ranks No. 4 in the sheep industry in the United States, according to the 2017 Census of Agriculture.*

*Minidoka County, ranks No. 3 in Idaho in terms of total farm-gate receipts and No. 8 in total farm revenue when livestock is included.*

*According to the 2017 census, the county's farmers and ranchers brought in \$354 million in farm-gate receipts during the 2017 census year.*

*According to the ag census, there were 50,351 acres of sugar beets grown in the county in 2017, 48,697 acres of forage crops, including hay, 47,296 acres of barley, 31,969 acres of wheat and 29,174 acres of vegetables, including potatoes.*

*The county also had 103,660 sheep and lambs, 42,141 cattle and calves, 783 goats, 354 broilers and other meat-type chickens and even a few dozen turkeys.*

*The county's dairy farmers brought in \$64 million in farm-gate revenue in 2017, making Minidoka the state's ninth largest milk-producing county.*

*"We can grow almost anything here and we do," says Johnson, who serves as the Minidoka County Farm Bureau president.*

*But sugar beets are king in Minidoka County and the Amalgamated Sugar Co. processing facility in Paul processes about 18,000 tons a day at full capacity, according to Brad Griff, executive director of the Idaho Sugar-beet Growers Association.*

*"No doubt about it, Minidoka County is a big sugar beet county," Johnson says. "They are the big dog." Agriculture itself is big in the county and underpins its economy and way of life, says LaNae Nalder, who raises cattle on irrigated pasture near Rupert.*

*Minidoka County is home to several potato processing companies, several cheese processing companies and a lot of other big agribusinesses, she says.*

*When it comes to economic activity, everything of significance in the county "all comes from ag commodities," Nalder says. "Agriculture is the lifeblood of the county. Minidoka County agriculture is very well diversified and successful."*

*According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, there were 620 farms in Minidoka County in 2017 and 267,567 total acres of land in farms.*

*The average sized farm in the county was 432 acres, just under the statewide average of 468 acres. But the average farm in the county brought in \$572,000 in total farm-gate receipts during 2017, well above the statewide average of \$303,000.*

## **Population/Employment**

Based on Economic times report for 2021

Minidoka County population in 2021 is 21,679 this is a 1.50% annual growth rate, Minidoka is the 19<sup>th</sup> largest county in the state of Idaho, which is comprised of 50.04% female, 49.96% male, of which 4.5% are senior citizens. The overall poverty rate is 6.72%; labor force participation is 64%; employment rate is 61.7%, and the current unemployment rate is 2.8%

The most common jobs held by residents of Minidoka County, by number of employees, are Office & Administrative Support Occupations (1,077 people), Farming, Fishing, & Forestry Occupations (979 people), and Production Occupations (884 people).

Compared to other counties, Minidoka County, has an unusually high number of residents working as Farming, Fishing, & Forestry Occupations (15.8 times higher than expected), Installation, Maintenance, & Repair Occupations (2.03 times), and Transportation Occupations (2.02 times).

The highest paid jobs held by residents of Minidoka County, by median earnings, are Health Diagnosing & Treating Practitioners & Other Technical Occupations (\$66,071), Architecture & Engineering Occupations (\$60,481), and Healthcare Practitioners & Technical Occupations (\$59,464).

The most common industries in Minidoka County, by number of employees, are Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting (1,530 people), Manufacturing (1,491 people), and Health Care & Social Assistance (885 people).



Compared to other counties, Minidoka County, has an unusually high number of Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting (13.6 times higher than expected), Wholesale Trade (2.63 times), and Utilities (1.77 times) industries.

It is predicted that the economy will remain strong through 2022, but inflation will continue to climb. The cost of fuel and the availability of workers and if we will have enough water are the main concern for our local farmers

### MAP of Minidoka County which is also the District Boundary

There are only a few towns in Minidoka the largest is the county seat – Rupert with 6,201 people, Heyburn 3,553 people, Paul 1,479 people, Acequia 136 people and the town of Minidoka with 113 people there are 21,679 in the county.

## Proposed Budget

INCOME	Actual	7/1/2021-6/30/2022	EXPENSES	Actual	7/1/2021-6/30/2022	Public events/mtgs	Actual	7/1/2021-6/30/2022
County Appropriations		\$12,000.00	DUES			Banquet		\$400.00
State Alloc.			Division IV		\$80.00	Board mtg lunch	\$243.16	\$600.00
District Base	\$8,500.00	\$8450.00	IASCD	1,800.00	\$1,800.00	Division IV Mtgs		\$150.00
State Match	\$16,074.60	\$3,000.00	IDEA		\$80.00	Picnic	\$715.38	\$150.00
Dist. Bldg. Cap		\$10,000.00	NACD	\$190.00	\$190.00	Tours/workshop/Demos		\$1,000.00
Dist. Operation	\$6,000.00	\$1,900.00	High Country RC&D		\$50.00	Local Work Group	\$46.10	\$150.00
GRANTS			Mid Snake RC&D		\$80.00	<b>Total these expense</b>	<b>\$1,004.64</b>	<b>\$2450.00</b>
AdminFees/D. S.	\$2,219.00	\$1600.00	Memorial/funerals		\$150.00			
Tree Sales		\$1,900.00	Idea Raffle		\$100.00	Utilities		
Other Income	\$56.17	\$350.00	County Fair Expense		\$250.00	<b>PMT</b>	\$332.49	\$1,100.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$32,849.77</b>	<b>\$39,200.00</b>	<b>Total these Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,990.00</b>	<b>\$2,780.00</b>	<b>Total Utilities</b>	<b>\$332.49</b>	<b>\$1,100.00</b>
<b>Public OUTREACH</b>			Office and other expenses			Payroll Expenses		
Ag in the Classroom		\$150.00	ICRMP Insurance	\$1715.00	\$1850.00	Payroll	\$7,457.50	\$15,000.00
Banquet Awards		\$200.00	District Employee Travel			NRCS grant employee		\$3,545.00
Envirothon		\$50.00	Meals/lodging		\$350.00			
Forestry Contest		\$50.00	Mileage		\$100.00	Quarterly taxes	\$1,824.90	\$3,300.00
IASCD Door Prize		\$100.00	Registrations		\$300.00			
KYG		\$250.00	Supervisors Travel			CPA		\$250.00
LSEE(Land Judging)	\$100.00	\$100.00	Meals/lodging		\$200.00	PERSI	\$1,681.25	\$2,700.00
Water Quality PSA	\$33.00		Mileage		\$50.00	<b>Total Payroll expenses</b>	<b>\$10,963.74</b>	<b>\$24,795.00</b>
Poster Contest	\$145.60	\$550.00	Registrations		\$650.00			
Scholarships		\$1,000.00	Office and Supplies equipment					
NRC (camp)		\$200.00	Equipment/software	\$99.99				
ICF	\$50.00	\$50.00	postage	\$58.00	\$55.00			
Stewardship award	\$104.99	\$150.00	Visa – misc.		\$200.00	<b>Total all expenses</b>	<b>\$17,273.10</b>	<b>\$40,055.00</b>
Special project		\$1,000.00	Office supplies	\$100.65	\$150.00	<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>\$15,576.67</b>	<b>(\$855.00)</b>
FFA	\$500.00	\$500.00						
Soil Testing U of I		\$475.00						
Speech Contest	\$175.00	\$175.00						
<b>TOTAL these Expense</b>	<b>1,108.59</b>	<b>\$4,840.00</b>	<b>TOTAL these expenses</b>	<b>\$973.64</b>	<b>\$3,255.00</b>			

# 1 Year or annual plan



a) The SWCD plans to continue to host our ad on social media, there are still people clicking on the ad. The ad is also on our joint webpage (with the two Cassia SWCD's)

[www.minicassiaswcd.com](http://www.minicassiaswcd.com), we have been told the ad will or is available on the Idaho Soil Commissions website also.

b) The SWCD will continue with the deep soil project – this is a five-year project. We currently are in the 4<sup>th</sup> year with the tests to determine the health of the soil using cover crop and other nutrient management and reduce tillage

practices.

- c) The SWCD will continue to maintain the Direct Seed Drill, and promote soil health and cover crop programs.
- d) Programs that The SWCD will be involved in for FFA and 4-H are the state land judging event, KYG (know your government) Envirothon, and Forestry Contest. Along with other programs such as, the

Minidoka County Fair, and for our school children the ever-popular poster and speech contest. (The theme for 2022 is Healthy Soils Healthy Life.)

- e) Minidoka and Cassia SWCD will host a workshop February 3<sup>rd</sup>. This one will be some different information but with a little bit different perspective; it will be more of a “boots on the ground” approach.
- f) As a continuation from last year; jointly held with East and West Cassia Soil Health Districts the Soil Conservationist that the three districts hired to assist with Soil Health Projects in the two counties, she will assist with the deep soil testing, “soil your undies project”, and locating abandoned wells that need to be addressed.
- g) We anticipate assistance with the two T.A. people, we have one through SWCC and the other is the joint Districts employee who will continue seeking grants or other funding to assist with locating abandoned wells and assist with the extreme cost of capping said wells. It was noted that in 2017, when there was extreme flooding in the county, water was running through corrals, off the desert, over roadways, through yards and farm land. Some of that water found its way into old wells and was said that it looked like water swirling down a drain. Other water has percolated through the soil into the aquifer. Recent tests have shown that the nitrate levels have risen in Minidoka County. Minidoka SWCD feels that a possible solution to mitigating future pollution of the water would be to assist landowners in the capping of abandoned wells so the great concentration of water is not pushed into the aquifer. If flood waters can seep in through the soils, aggregate, and rocks, it can be better filtered before reaching the aquifer. *From DEQ report in 2001: Concentrations of nitrate in ground water are not uniform across the state. Contamination levels are generally higher in agricultural and populated areas of the state. The South-central, Southwest, and the southern and eastern edges of the Eastern Snake River Plain areas have the highest percentage of impacted sites. This is consistent with Neely and Crockett's (1999) findings of nitrate levels in*

*agricultural regions of the state. Finally, septic systems have caused nitrate pollution in high-density unsewered subdivisions and urban runoff is an increasing source of nitrogen in populated areas of Idaho.*

**5- YEAR PLAN**  
**Minidoka Soil and WATER CONSERVATION**  
**DISTRICT**  
**85 East Baseline Road**  
**Rupert Idaho 83350**  
**208-436-4202 [minidokaswcd@gmail.com](mailto:minidokaswcd@gmail.com)**

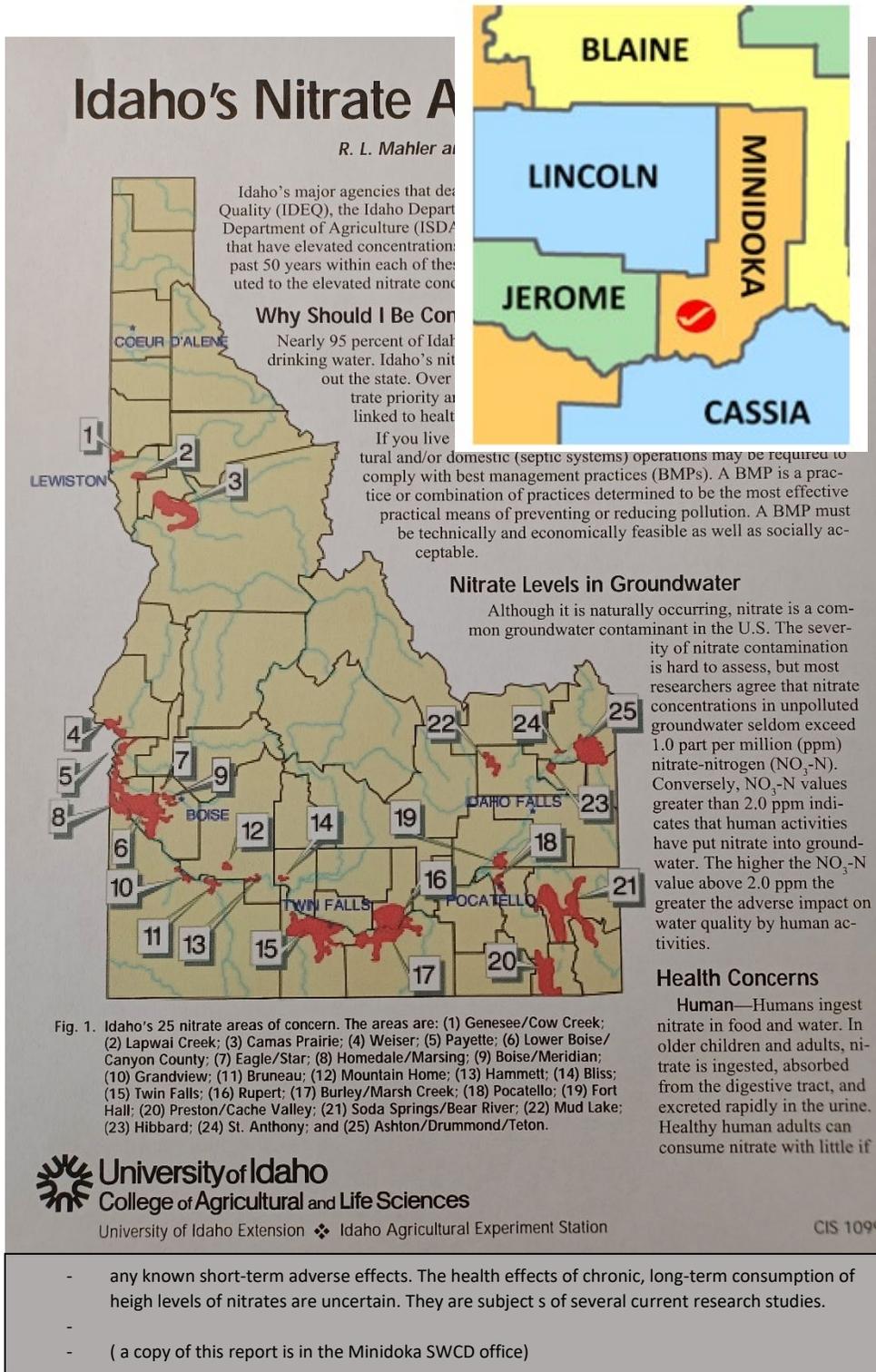
**Trends and Issues impacting conservation in the Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District**

- a) Water quality and quantity. This is a huge concern due to the drought of 2021 and nitrate levels.
- b) Erosion due to blowing dust continues to be a concern due to various crop rotation and tillage practices that leave fields unprotected during the non-growing season. Erosion due to wind and runoff causes the loss of precious topsoil that we cannot sacrifice.
- c) Urban impact on agriculture production. We have seen an upward trend of city dwellers in agricultural areas, and they do not always understand the needs and practices of agriculture.

**PRIORITY AND PLAN OF ACTION**

Our number one priority and plan is WATER, water quality and water quantity. Currently the biggest influencer on water quality in our area is nitrate levels, we do not like the trend that we are seeing.

Minidoka County and parts of Cassia County are considered a nitrate priority area. That means that more than 25 percent of wells in those areas have nitrate levels of five parts per million. If water gets higher than 10 parts per million it becomes dangerous for infants. The University of Idaho College of Agricultural and Life Sciences have been conducting studies on nitrates in Idaho and gathered information over the past 50 years.



We are seeking advice on the appropriate action in contacting well owners to assist them in possible capping of abandoned wells that may assist with diminishment of possible contaminated water seepage into the aquifer. Currently all of southern Minidoka County is designated as area of concern.

We will work with our T.A.'s to research and locate abandoned wells, and find funding to assist with this project.

**Projects planned, coordinated or managed by the Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District**

a) To assist with the mitigation of the blowing dust, Minidoka SWCD will continue to work closely with East and West Cassia SWCD's to provide trees for wind breaks at a reasonable cost, and promote soil health through cover crops which in turn slow the erosion of the soil by the wind. Minidoka and the two Cassia District own no-till drills, and will continue the maintenance and upkeep to

- provide the use of the drills at a nominal fee to aid in the no-till or less tillage practices and teaching the benefits of cover crops, not only to lessen wind and water erosion but also to promote soil health.
- b) Continue to air on Social media, and possible other venues the commercial created through the aid of local students and partners showing the concerns of water quality issues.
- c) Water quality is a huge concern; the Minidoka SWCD is working on a long-term project of finding ways to assist in capping abandoned well and properly assisting in clean ways to recharge the aquifer.
- d) Continue promoting soil health through the Mini-Cassia Direct Seed and Cover Crop Project.

As noted in the annual plan, the ongoing projects through the District will include the following: involvement with the local Ag Advisory committee to encourage participation in the district and state activities, such as land and soil evaluation events, Envirothon, Fire-Wise plant program, forestry contests, speech contest and scholarship program; sponsoring a booth at the Minidoka County Fair to show and highlight the projects that are ongoing; sponsor students to Know Your Government Conference and Natural Resource Camp along with the poster contests; coordination with East and West Cassia District to work with the Soil Conservationist who was hired jointly with the three districts to assist in projects and Soil Health Education.

**Funding Sources for District Operations and Projects Coordinated – State and County funds, grants and other funding sources that may be available.**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Minidoka County                                       | Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission |
| USDA – NRCS   | NRCS Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)    |
| Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game                          | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service               |
| Pheasants forever                                     | Mid-Snake RC&D                               |
| Local endowment funds                                 | Local Corporations.                          |
| National Association of Conservation Districts grants |  |

**MINIDOKA SWCD Soil Health Project**

The Minidoka and 2 Cassia Soil and Water Conservation Districts have been promoting soil health workshops, tours, training, and the use of the no-till drills since 2015. We need proof of what we are doing is what we say it is so for the past three years the Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has been actively involved in a multi-county soil health project in cooperation with the University of Idaho Extension (UI), the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission (ISWCC) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) This is a 5-year project and we are in the fourth year; with several objectives. 1) Evaluate the health of the soils in our area by testing their chemical, physical, and biological properties. 2) Assess the effects of various agricultural practices on soil health, such as planting cover crops, using no-till or reduced tillage, integration of livestock, using manure or compost in addition to or in place of commercial fertilizer, and other practices. 3) Educate producers about the importance of soil health. 4) Track our progress in improving the health of our soils for 5 years.

We are looking forward to the results of these tests in two years to see where we are, and determine what more we can or should do, and are we on the right path.

We will again ‘plant’ undies in the fields for the “Soil Your Undies” project, which is a quick way (one or less growing season) to show results of the microbial activity in the soil. Our area farmers like the see it now/hands on approach. This is underwear recovered from a field in 2021 after being buried for 10 weeks. Notice that the cotton is almost completely gone. All that remains is the nylon waist band and the elastic around the leg openings. This producer routinely uses cover crops and when possible, he practices no-till or reduced tillage. This underwear was some of the most degraded underwear in all of the counties participating in this project. That would indicate high biological activity of this soil, and a healthy soil as well.



**Priority Area number 1: Education of urban landowners as to their responsibility to water quality.**

Commercial is on social media with a target audience of ‘urban farmers’ in the Mini- Cassia area. This has been expanded into the Boise area also.	On going	MSWCD, U of I Educator
Posted on the websites of our tri-district MiniCassia.org, and ISWCC site	On going	MSWCD, ISWCC
Start planning and working on commercials that will target, the abandoned wells, and water quality	On going	MSWCD, U of I Educator, ISWCC

**Priority Area number 2: Soil Health preservation and education**

Continue the Jointly hired Soil Conservationist individual project with East and West Cassia SWCD who is assisting with soil testing, collecting data and putting it into a format that is usable for local producers and the Soil Health workshops, evaluate cover crop production and value as an aid to soil health and increased cash crop production. Along with working on the abandoned well project.	On going	MSWCD, East and West Cassia SWCD, NRCS, ISWCC
Continue with the no-till drill project with maintenance, renting it out, education of the benefits of cover crops.	On Going	MSWCD, Supervisors and staff, NRCS, ISWCC.

**Priority Area number 3: Water quality capping of abandoned wells**

Identify local wells that could be or are abandoned	1-5 years	Joint Soil Con, MSWCD, DEQ, IDWR, Local Irrigation companies
Acquire a grant to assist in capping wells	1-5 years	ISWCC-TA, MSWCD Admin
Prepare a script to use to visit with landowners about their abandoned wells and the potential for	1-5 years	Joint Soil Con, MSWCD Supervisors and Admin, Local

contamination, and what can be done to mitigate the issue,		Irrigation Companies, Ads on radio and T.V.
Assist with the cost of capping the wells through a grant process	1-5 years	CIG grant, NRCS, DEQ, IDWR, MSWCD, Local Irrigation Companies.
Cap 5 to 7 of the discovered or designated wells	1-2 years	MSWCD, IDWR, DEQ, NRCS Well Drillers, land owners.

**Priority Area number 4: Outreach and Education**

Sponsor poster contests, speech contests, KYG students, Land Judging students, booths at the County fair with information on conservation, Farmer Appreciation Days	annually	MSWCD Admin, and Supervisors
Jointly sponsor the Soil Health Workshop for producers throughout the state and northern Idaho	On going	MSWCD, East and West Cassia SWCD Admin, and Supervisors

**Priority Area number 5: Soil Testing in Division IV**

Soil testing with Division IV Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Three places in each of the counties were selected for the diversification of farming practices and the location of the farms for testing for soil health. The tests were first implemented in 2019 for a base to determine with future testing the value of different farming practices on the soil health.	Every year	U of I researchers, Soil Conservationist and Supervisors as needed, ISWCC
Information will be gathered and tabulated for the benefit and use of the Districts involved in teaching soil health to the area producers.	1-5 years	U of I researchers, Soil Conservationist, MSWCD Admin, and Admins from other Districts, ISWCC

**Minidoka Conservation District’s Elected Officials and Office Staff**

Title	Name	Phone
<b>Chair</b>	Brian Kossman	208 431 5699
<b>Vice Chair</b>	Dusty Wilkins	208 670 1641
<b>Treasurer</b>	Aaron Firth	208 650 6794
<b>Supervisor</b>	Reid Bowen	208 431 3209
<b>Supervisor</b>		
<b>Assoc. Supervisor</b>	Russ Suchan	208 260 1155
<b>Assoc. Supervisor</b>	Justin Hunter	208 650 0188
<b>Admin. Assist.</b>	Sharon Hardy	208 430 3259

Minidoka SWCD is a political subdivision of the State of Idaho – authorities, powers, and structure contained in Soil Conservation District Law, Title 22, Chapter 27, Idaho Code. Organized July 1<sup>st</sup> 1955 to provide voluntary land and water conservation technical

and financial assistance to landowners and uses with the Minidoka SWCD boundary. Minidoka SWCD is in Idaho District 27 being represented by Senator Kelly Anthon, Representative Scott Bedke and Representative Fred Wood.

VISION: To better co-ordinate and unify with our partners and other districts to provide a higher level of assistance to the landowners and producers in each of our particular areas.

VALUES: Sustainable use of natural resources, support for agriculture activity that uses sustainable, economically feasible practices, value and respect for the Idaho Conservation Partnership, and Conservation education for adults and youth.

Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District; assisting land managers with their conservation choices.