ONEIDA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

137 North 100 West
Malad City, Idaho 83252

FIVE-YEAR RESOURCE CONSERVATION PLAN

July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2027

Forward

Five Year Resource Conservation Plan

The Oneida 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 catalysts for coordinating and implementing conservation programs, channeling expertise from all levels of government into action at the local level. Programs are non-regulatory, providing 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.

This Five-Year Plan / Annual 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 Oneida Soil and Water Conservation District.

Background and brief history

Landowners in the Pocatello Valley area were the first to show interest in organizing a soil conservation district in southeastern Idaho's Oneida County. They believed a district could help them protect a section of the valley that was often inundated by heavy spring runoff. The idea caught on throughout the county and on May 22, 1941, the Oneida Soil and Water Conservation District was formally organized. The City of Malad joined the District on June 11, 1975.

Members of the first Oneida SWCD board were James Williams, Samaria; O.W. Browder and Colen Sweeten, Holbrook; and John Blaisdell and Ruel Ipsen, Malad. Governor C.A. Bottolfsen appointed Oneida County rancher Joe M. Isaacson to the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission in 1939. Isaacson held this position until 1945, helping organize the first conservation districts in the State of Idaho.

Oneida County provided $1500.00 per year to help the new district carry out programs. In the 1950's the district became self-supporting through the sale of grass seed, renting equipment for conservation work, and by selling items such as irrigation pipe and head gates. The first farm conservation plan was completed June 10, 1942 on Charles E Thomas' land.

The District operated without an office until the 1950's, when the board was granted two abandoned barracks used by the Civilian Conservation Corps in Downey, Idaho. Personnel of the Soil Conservation Service designed a remodeling plan for the barracks. Supervisors invested about $4000.00 and many hours to move the building to Malad and remodel it. The District then offered the Soil Conservation Service free office space.

The District took great pride in having their own office and the barracks were used until 1964, when supervisor Ray Eliason loaned the District money to build an office building.

Although many changes have occurred over the past eighty-one years, one thing remains constant – every day all of us count on the care and skill of farmers and ranchers to conserve our most precious resources. We must all work to ensure that for those who come after us will have the same bounty that we enjoy. We will set our goals high and make it a record-breaking conservation year!

Current Supervisors and Associate members include:

Loyd Briggs- Chairman
Doug Mills- Vice-Chairman
Cory Daniels- Secretary/Treasurer
Doug Fuhriman- Supervisor
Carsey Eliason- Supervisor

Function of the Oneida Soil & Water Conservation District

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

Who We Serve & Why?

- The people and natural resources in the Oneida Soil and Water Conservation District, to conserve the natural resources for the beneficial and sustainable use by all.

Mission of the Oneida Soil & Water Conservation District

- To develop county solutions to sustain, conserve and improve our natural resources and promote sound management practices that protect the environment and are economically feasible and productive.

Vision of the Oneida Soil & Water Conservation District

- Oneida Soil and Water Conservation District will safeguard soil and water within the county. We are committed to quality leadership, customer service and the preservation and conservation of our natural resources for present and future generations.

Values of the Oneida Soil & Water Conservation District

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

Physical Characteristics

Oneida County, with a population of 4,531, sits on the Idaho/Utah border nestled against the stately peaks of the Rocky Mountains. The county is heavily dependent on agriculture. Government and trade provide most of the jobs in the county with most of those in education. Mining and manufacturing, while small, are vital parts of the county's economy. Many residents work along the Utah Wasatch front and have located in Malad and the surrounding area for the relaxed lifestyle it provides and to take advantage of the area's wide-open spaces and recreational activities. There are 768,800 acres within the boundaries of the Oneida Soil and Water Conservation District. A large part is owned and operated by the Bureau of Land Management and the US Forest Service. The remaining land is owned by the State of Idaho, Oneida County, Malad City, and private groups and individuals.

Major land uses have not changed a great deal. Federal land is used mainly for watersheds, grazing and wildlife. The next biggest land use is for production of dryland grain and alfalfa, irrigated grain, hay and pasture. The third major land use is private range and permanent pasture. Remaining areas are used for recreation, roads, town sites and etc.

Cropland acres total about 220,000 which is located primarily in the valley bottoms. About 28% of the county is dryland and used mainly for the production of winter wheat, spring wheat and barley. With the creation of the Conservation Reserve Program, the county has been at the cap of 55,000 acres. This has been a great benefit by reducing soil erosion from about 20 tons per acre to about 1 to 2 tons per acre. Irrigated land is approximately 4% and used to produce wheat, barley, alfalfa hay and small amounts of potatoes, silage, corn, and pasture. Much of this land was surface irrigated and then starting in mid-80s, canal companies started converting ditches to pipeline. This opened the door for landowners to convert to sprinkler irrigation.

Oneida County enjoys a four-season climate, but often experiences unpredictable weather conditions especially in the higher elevations. Average annual precipitation is around 15 inches of rain, and 46 inches of snow. The average high temperature is 88, and average low is 14.

Economic Conditions and Outlook

Oneida County has a diverse and skilled labor force. The unemployment rate stands at 3.5%, which is low compared to the U.S. rate at 6.6%. The county's location on the Utah border provides additional employment opportunities across the state line. Businesses in Malad City, the county seat, take advantage of trade with Utah residents, who drive to Idaho for state lottery tickets and recreation. The industry mix has changed slightly with an influx of professional, business, education and health services. Mining had a significant job loss in the last 10 years, while agriculture, trade, financial services and leisure and hospitality posted notable increases.
Malad City is the site of several local festivals including a popular Welsh Heritage Festival, Oneida County Rodeo, and Classic Car Shows. Oneida County is located on the northern end of the Great Basin. A leisurely lifestyle and spectacular scenery combine with affordable land and housing to encourage residents to stay if they can find suitable work. The county boasts wide open spaces, scenic canyons with interesting rock formations, springs, streams and reservoirs for year-round recreational activities.

Assessment

Trends Impacting Conservation in the Oneida Soil & Water Conservation District

- Limited availability of State funds and increased competition for grants.
- Market outlets for agricultural production are outside of the area.
- Focus on water quality/quantity compared to other conservation and environmental issues.
- Increased paper work to getting the job done.
- Trends to regulate agriculture and ranching.

Strategies to Address Trends

- Collaborating with other partners to obtain funding to complete projects.
- Determine opportunities to coordinate outreach activities with traditional and non-traditional partners.
- Raising awareness of conservation values with State legislature and elected officials – help decision makers be better informed.
- Strengthen local working group and get them even more involved in District Operations.
- Supervisors become more informed on current issues impacting working lands and cost-share programs.
- Determine how to become more 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.
- Host an open house to make public aware of goals.
- Solicit input to improve Annual Plan/Five-Year Resource Conservation Business Plan.
- Identify the information methods to communicate with small land owners.
- Sponsor project proposals with other districts.
- Training for Conservation District Supervisors and staff.

Identify and Prioritize Objectives

1 Soil Quality/Erosion
2 Water Quantity/Quality
3 Plant Condition
4 Education
5 Invasive Species
6 Fish & Wildlife

1. Soil Quality

- Use various programs to help owners and operators meet the objectives of the Oneida Soil and Water Conservation District for soil quality.
- Focus on new projects that include promoting soil health.
- Evaluate opportunities and apply for grants and other funding pertaining to soil quality.
- Continue to promote Environmental Quality Incentive Program, CRP, 319 projects etc.

2. Water Quantity/Quality

- Use various programs to help landowners and operators meet the objectives of the Oneida Soil and Water Conservation District for water quantity and quality in Oneida County.
- Focus on new projects that include the Little Malad tributaries and Bear River TMDL in cooperation with the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission and Department of Environmental Quality.
- Evaluate opportunities and apply for 319, Bureau of Reclamation grants etc.
- Continue to promote Environmental Quality Incentive Program, Fish and Wildlife grants.

3. Plant Condition

- Continue to promote Environmental Quality Incentive Program.
- Seek opportunities for funding BMP implementation.
- Encourage land owners and land managers to create and implement grazing management plans.

4. Education

- Provide opportunities for public outreach and education programs throughout Oneida County.
- Provide daily precipitation and temperature to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.
- Yearly display during Idaho legislative session, Oneida County events, and various conservation activities.
- Host Education Days at the Elementary School with the current theme NACD promotes.

5. Invasive Species

- Control invasive vegetative species throughout Oneida County. Reach contract holders and stress the need to control invasive vegetative species.
- Seek opportunities to work in conjunction with the Oneida County weed department supervisor and federal and state agencies to control invasive vegetative species.
- Participate in weed school with Oneida County.
- Continue to operate the Aquatic Invasive Species program through the Idaho State Department of Agriculture to protect Idaho's natural resources and educate the public.

6. Fish & Wildlife

- Seek and obtain project funding to improve habitat for sage grouse, sharp-tail grouse, and Bonneville cutthroat trout.

Water Quality Component

Streams within the Oneida Soil and Water Conservation District boundaries are impacted by *E. coli*, sediment, nutrients and temperature. The Oneida SWCD identified streambank modifications, sheet and rill erosion, classic and ephemeral gully erosion, overgrazing & livestock impacts, and streambank erosion as problems in the watershed. They also identified critical erosion periods as spring rains and runoff as well as summer thunderstorms.

Beneficial Uses Affected:
Cold water aquatic life, salmon spawning, domestic and agricultural water supply, primary and secondary contact recreation.

This is the most current list of Category 5 and 4a Streams (Impaired – Not Supporting for 1 or more Designated uses).

Bannock Creek
Birch Creek
Campbell Creek
Dairy Creek
Devil Creek
First Creek
Henderson Creek
Jenkins Hollow
(Newton Creek)
Rock Creek
South Fork Hawkins Creek
Spring Creek
Steel Canyon
Third Creek
West Cherry Creek
Weston Creek
Weston Creek Reservoir
Wright Creek
Deep Creek
Elkhorn Creek
Evans Creek
Hill Creek
Little Malad River
Malad River
Meadow Brook Creek
North Canyon
Sheep Creek
South Fork Rock Creek
South Fork Sublett Creek

Identify and prioritize projects

Oneida Soil and Water Conservation District assisted many producers with 319 grants to increase irrigation water efficiency, providing containment for animal feeding operations, installing practices on dry land agriculture to reduce water loss and improve soil quality.

Past projects:

*Daniels Reservoir nonpoint sediment reduction 319 project
*Wide Hollow SAWQP
*Dairy Creek SAWQP
*Daniels SAWQP
*St. John's Irrigation Group project (ditch to pipeline conversion)
*Installation of wheel lines and pivots
*Wrights Creek stream restoration 319 project
*Sandridge Lateral Pipeline- Bureau of Rec and NRCS
*Curlew Watershed 319 Project Phase 1

Current projects:

*Watercraft inspection station at the Malad Cherry Creek Rest Area-Interstate 15 for ISDA.
*Cottonwood Creek Off Stream Project
*Soil Health 319 No-Till/Range Drill Project

Future projects:

*Curlew Watershed Project Phase 2

Staffing Needs

- Conservation District Manager
- Full-time Conservation District Administrative Assistant
- Conservation District Technician

Annual Budget Needs

- The Oneida Soil and Water Conservation District needs an annual budget of $125,000.00 to carry out basic programs. Full time District Manager; administrative assistant and information and education specialist. Additional funding is needed for technical assistance.

FY 2023 (7/1/22 – 6/30/23) Annual Plan

Oneida Soil and Water Conservation District

For Information Contact: **Chairman: Loyd Briggs**
Telephone Number: (208)766-4748 ext. 101
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Counties Served: Oneida

Mission of the Oneida Soil and Water Conservation District: To develop county solutions to sustain, conserve and improve our natural resources and promote sound management practices that protect the environment and are economically feasible and productive.

Trends Impacting Conservation in the Oneida Soil and Water Conservation District: Land use is surprisingly dynamic, with increased annual shifts in and out of different uses and continual changes in ownership. Examining net change in land use reveals general trends, but masks the real extent of land use change over time. In agriculture there are frequent shifts in the use of land among cropland, pastureland, rangeland and forest land. Each land change use affects erosion potential, contiguity of habitat, or hydrologic features of the landscape. Cropland, pastureland, rangeland comprise the majority of our land resources and the condition of the land directly or indirectly influences the environment. Meeting the objectives for natural resources and environmental quality depend on how these lands are used and conserved.

Projects Planned, Coordinated or Managed: Assist with applications and implementation of Resource Conservation loans funded through the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission. Successfully operate and manage, Idaho Department of Agriculture invasive species check stations. The District is continually seeking funding through 319 and other grants sources, such as SFY22 State General Fund Agricultural BMPs Program, and the Office of Species Conservation.

Funding Sources for District Operations and Projects Coordinated: Continual efforts are expounded to obtain funding sources to support priority conservation projects. Various agencies coordinate with the District to obtain technical assistance for projects. Partnerships with the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Idaho Department of Fish & Game, US Forest Service, Cooperative Extension Service, Bureau of Reclamation, Idaho State Department of Agriculture, Malad City, Oneida County and many other state and federal agencies to coordinate conservation efforts.

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Oneida Soil and Water Conservation District

Priority 1: Soil Quality/Erosion

Objective: Promote and implement Erosion projects.

Goal(s): Use various conservation programs to help owners and operators meet the objectives of the Oneida Soil and Water Conservation District for Soil Quality in Oneida County.

Actions	Target Date	Individual(s) Responsible
Participate with various agencies and seek funding pertaining to soil quality in Oneida County.	Through F.Y. 2023	Oneida SWCD Board of Supervisors and staff, George Hitz, Idaho SWCC, Conservation Basics
Evaluate opportunities for 319 funding, promote EQIP, and seek other funding to implement practices to improve soil quality within Oneida County.	Through F.Y. 2023	Oneida SWCD Board of Supervisors and staff, George Hitz, Idaho SWCC, Conservation Basics
Promote No-Till, cover crops, and soil health projects to help land- owners and operators improve soil quality.	Through F.Y. 2023	Oneida SWCD Board of Supervisors and staff, George Hitz, Idaho SWCC, Conservation Basics

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Oneida Soil and Water Conservation District

Priority 2: Water Quantity/Quality

Objective: Assist landowners and Operators with water quantity/quality issues with practices that conserve and improve water usage.

Actions	Target Date	Individual(s) Responsible
Participate with various agencies and seek funding opportunities that improve and protect Oneida County reservoirs and streams.	Through F.Y. 2023	Oneida SWCD Board of Supervisors and staff, George Hitz, Idaho SWCC, Conservation Basics
Evaluate opportunities for 319 projects and continue to promote EQIP, encourage projects that will help reduce water usage.	Through F.Y. 2023	Oneida SWCD Board of Supervisors and staff, George Hitz, Idaho SWCC, Conservation Basics
Identify new projects in cooperation with ISWCC and DEQ to improve water quantity/quality within Oneida County.	Through F.Y. 2023	Oneida SWCD Board of Supervisors and staff, George Hitz, Idaho SWCC, Conservation Basics

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Oneida Soil and Water Conservation District

Priority 3: Plant Condition

Objective: Improve plant condition within Oneida County

Goal(s): Promote programs and activities and seek funding for BMP implementation that would improve plant conditions on rangeland with in Oneida County.

Actions	**Target Date**	**Individual(s) Responsible**
Promote Environmental Quality Incentive Program	Through F.Y. 2023	Oneida SWCD Board of Supervisors and staff, George Hitz, Idaho SWCC, Conservation Basics
Seek opportunities for funding BMP implementation	Through F.Y. 2023	Oneida SWCD Board of Supervisors and staff George Hitz, Idaho SWCC, Conservation Basics
Encourage land owners and land managers to create and implement grazing management plans	Through F.Y. 2023	Oneida SWCD Board of Supervisors and staff, George Hitz, Idaho SWCC, Conservation Basics

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Oneida Soil and Water Conservation District

Priority 4: Education

Objective: Improve natural resources outreach and education within Oneida County

Goal(s): Educate the public about the SWCD, partners, and natural resource conservation within Oneida County.

Actions	**Target Date**	**Individual(s) Responsible**
Provide opportunities for public outreach and education programs, poster contest, and speech contest, Envirothon, Women in Agriculture Luncheon, and the County fair.	Through F.Y. 2023	Oneida SWCD Board of Supervisors and staff, George Hitz, Idaho SWCC, Conservation Basics
Provide daily precipitation and temperature data to the National Weather Service, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.	Through F.Y. 2023	Oneida SWCD Board of Supervisors and staff
Present a yearly display at the State Capital during legislative display day, and at events and activities in Oneida County.	Through F.Y. 2023	Oneida SWCD Board of Supervisors and staff

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Oneida Soil and Water Conservation District

Priority 5: Invasive Species

Objective: Provide opportunities to control invasive species within Oneida County

Goal(s): Reduce current invasive species populations and work towards preventing new infestations within Oneida County.

Actions	**Target Date**	**Individual(s) Responsible**
Operate and manage a Watercraft Inspection station though Idaho State Department of Agriculture in order to protect Idaho's natural resources and educate the public. Seek opportunities for educating the public about invasive species.	Through F.Y. 2023	Oneida SWCD Board of Supervisors and staff
Promote Environmental Quality Incentive Program, RCRDP Loan Program, and other programs to support invasive species management.	Through F.Y. 2023	Oneida SWCD Board of Supervisors and staff, George Hitz, Idaho SWCC, Conservation Basics
Seek opportunities for funding for BMP implementation to prevent invasive species in Oneida County.	Through F.Y. 2023	Oneida SWCD Board of Supervisors and staff, George Hitz, Idaho SWCC, Conservation Basics
Seek opportunities to work in conjunction with the Oneida County weed department supervisor, federal and state agencies, and other groups to control invasive species.	Through F.Y. 2023	Oneida SWCD Board of Supervisors and staff, George Hitz, Idaho SWCC, Conservation Basics

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Oneida Soil and Water Conservation District

Priority 6: Fish & Wildlife

Objective: Improve habitat for Sage Grouse, Sharp-tail Grouse, and Bonneville Cutthroat Trout within Oneida County

Goal(s): Promote programs and activities and seek funding for BMP implementation that would improve habitat for species of concern within Oneida County.

Actions	**Target Date**	**Individual(s) Responsible**
Promote Environmental Quality Incentive Program, RCRDP Loan Program, and other programs to support fish & wildlife.	Through F.Y. 2023	Oneida SWCD Board of Supervisors and staff, George Hitz, Idaho SWCC, Conservation Basics
Seek opportunities for funding BMP implementation.	Through F.Y. 2023	Oneida SWCD Board of Supervisors and staff, George Hitz, Idaho SWCC, Conservation Basics
Seek opportunities to work with existing partners and explore new partnerships to meet goals.	Through F.Y. 2023	Oneida SWCD Board of Supervisors and staff, George Hitz, Idaho SWCC, Conservation Basics