

Part I – Agency Profile

Agency Overview

The Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission (ISWCC) was created in 1939 under Idaho Code § 22-2716, et. seq.) to form local conservation districts to work on reducing soil erosion generated by agricultural land management practices. ISWCC is now also the lead agency for a number of voluntary conservation programs that address water quality and other natural resource issues. ISWCC has no regulatory authority.

The ISWCC was led in FY 2016 by five Commissioners appointed by the Governor: Chairman H. Norman Wright, Vice Chairman Gerald Trebesch, Secretary Leon Slichter, and members Dave Radford and Glen Gier. The administrator was Teri Murrison. In FY 2016, the agency had 17.75 administrative and technical staff located in Boise and in offices around the State.

Core Functions/Idaho Code

1. **District Support and Services:** provides technical, financial, and other assistance to Idaho's 50 local conservation districts.
2. **Comprehensive Conservation Services:** provides/promotes non-regulatory incentive and science-based programs to support voluntary conservation activities enhancing the environmental quality and economic productivity of the state.
3. **Administration:** ensures continuity of operations and establishes protocols to support Commissioners and staff.
4. **Outreach:** engages local, state, and federal partners, non-governmental organizations, and resource and agricultural production groups to coordinate, collaborate, and cooperate on voluntary conservation efforts.

Revenue and Expenditures: ¹

Revenue	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
General Fund	\$2,306,400	\$2,364,100*	\$2,531,000	\$2,590,700
Receipts	6,700	5,600	6,800	29,600
RCRDP Loan Program	1,793,900	1,447,600	1,033,700	960,800
SRF Loan Program	147,270	31,900	84,300	99,300
Federal Grant Funds	<u>80,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	\$4,334,270*	\$3,849,200*	\$3,655,800	\$3,680,400
Expenditure	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Personnel Costs	\$1,137,421	\$1,151,400	\$1,149,700	\$1,239,400
Operating Expenditures	421,341	286,200	346,400	257,500
Capital Outlay	10,526	0	71,400	80,100
Trustee/Benefit Payments	1,103,198	1,169,200	1,203,200	1,253,200
RCRDP Loan Disbursements	232,623	794,100	352,400	415,200
DEQ Loan	<u>116,322</u>	<u>44,300</u>	<u>71,700</u>	<u>86,700</u>
Total	\$3,021,431*	\$3,445,200	\$3,194,800	\$3,332,100

¹ “*” indicates where numbers were updated in FY 2016 to correct prior year errors.

Profile of Cases Managed and/or Key Services Provided

Cases Managed and/or Key Services Provided	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Conservation systems implemented on all cropland (acres)	133,625	186,076	97,432	133,586
Conservation implemented on other land uses (acres)	107,090	78,925	83,255	6,348
Grazing/pasture management systems implemented (acres)	539,007	531,613	486,449	506,625
Riparian acres implemented with protection, restoration, enhancement or creation (acres)	487	289	1,201	3,399
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) – Private agricultural land removed from tillage-induced erosion through financial incentive for a contractual time period.	349,617	589,484	583,135	568,839

Numbers above include conservation statistics from federal and local partners: NRCS and districts. The reason “other land uses” declined so significantly was unknown, although it may have dropped due to a policy, funding, or programmatic change. While an analysis by partners has not been conducted, it is likely that overall acres in conservation systems on all cropland and grazing/pasture management systems in FY 2015 were down due to the fact that the amount of land treated by NRCS in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) went down. There were also several large projects still in the middle of construction in other programs - those acres affected data are reported in FY 2016.

Performance Highlights

- District Support and Services** In FY 2016 districts received Trustee and Benefit funding that included the usual base funding (\$8,500), local matching funds (capped at \$50,000 per district), \$2,000 in operating funds per district, and capacity building awards that ranged from \$800 to \$2,300 per district. District satisfaction with Commission services continues to strengthen.
- Comprehensive Conservation Programs and Services** New loan volume in the RCRDP fund increased from 7 loans made for \$392,517 in FY 2015, to 12 loans made totaling \$875,049 in FY 2016. This is an increase of 223% from FY2015. The number of loan inquiries increased to 63, yet the number of loan applications decreased to 15. Approval rates increased from 70% to 80% of applications received. The average loan increased to \$72,921. Commercial lender rates are still low, making the additional paperwork required for a public funds loan less attractive. The impact of much lower commodity prices may also be a factor in fewer loan applications received.
- Outreach** The Commission published monthly issues of our newsletter *Conservation the Idaho Way* in FY 2016 to a distribution list of 591 subscribers (list was updated in FY 2016). Stories covered included: district efforts to benefit water quality on the Snake River, Snake and Pole Creeks, and key tributaries of Lake Cascade, fires in Southern and Northern Idaho, brush thinning and fire restoration efforts around the state, reduction of nitrate levels in ground water, online conservation resources for landowners, no-till, direct-seed, and cover crops, this year’s youth Envirothon competition, and more. Newsletter articles have been reprinted by newspapers and other agencies, including the Farm Bureau. *Conservation the Idaho Way* received an award from the Idaho Press Club in 2016.

Part II – Performance Measures

Performance Measure	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2016 Benchmarks
DISTRICT SUPPORT & SERVICES					
# of District Surveys on Commission Satisfaction	40 of 50	36 of 50	35 of 50	34 of 50	50 of 50
- Strongly agree	18%	22%	28.6%	29%	34%
- Somewhat agree	45%	50%	45.7%	62%	47%
- Neutral	30%	11%	8.6%	3%	7%
- Somewhat Disagree	8%	11%	14.3%	3%	10%
- Disagree	0%	6%	2.9%	3%	2%
N/A	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
District five-year plans updated	50	50	50	50	50
Technical Assistance Provided to districts:					
- # of districts w/projects	31	38	40	38	39
- # of new projects	24	57	81	34	50
- # of ongoing projects	41	103	106	101	100
- # of landowners served	246	386	229	241	300
COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION PROGRAMS					
CREP Program Deliverables					
- Total Contracts	159	156	155	155	175
- Total Acres	17,236	16,792	16,729	16,526	21,000
- Certified Contracts	0	28	7 (82 total acres)	6 (88 total acres)	15
- Certified Acres	0	2,537	300 (8,880 total acres)	647 (9,527 total acres)	1,500
Ground Water Quality/Nitrate Priority Areas					
- Acres Treated	35,685	27,918	39,863	42,594	37,700
- Nitrates Reduced (lbs.)	114,797	141,779	138,247	145,370	132,100
- Phosphorus Reduced (lbs.)	24,473	32,084	27,745	29,575	26,500
- Sediment Reduced (tons)	137,414	54,618	143,670	150,170	142,600
RCRDP Loan Program					
- # of new loans	4	12	7	12	12
- Total \$ conservation projects	\$128,100	\$841,624	\$392,517	\$875,049	\$850,000
-Inquiries received ²	-	-	48	63	50
-Applications submitted	-	-	20	15	25
Pending @ end of FY	-	-	5	0	2
-Applications denied or withdrawn	-	-	6	3	5
TMDL Ag Implementation Plans (subject to DEQ priorities)	5 Completed 19 In Progress 31 Pending	6 Completed 15 in Progress 19 Pending	8 completed 16 in progress 18 pending	7 completed 17 in progress 18 pending	6 Completed 12 In Progress 19 Pending

² New performance measures were established in FY 2015 to track overall program activity in addition to funded loans.

OUTREACH	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2016 BENCHMARKS
Communications					
Website					
Total Visitors	383,964	N/A	71,822	70,255	71,000
Average Page Views*	-	-	-	26	N/A
Average Hits Per Day	-	-	-	31,936	N/A
Total Hits	-	-	-	1,018,241	N/A
Facebook					
Number of Posts**	49	220	153	230	275
Post Reach	-	-	-	48,046	N/A
New Page Likes	-	-	-	170	N/A
Twitter					
Number of Tweets	29	89	36	40	150
Twitter Impressions	-	--	--	11,144	N/A
Profile Views	-	-	-	762	N/A
New followers	-	-	-	111	N/A
Newsletter					
Subscriptions	N/A	505	725	591***	750

*Average page views is per visitor.

**From FY 2013 on, # of posts are reported. In FY 2016 analytics for different metrics were captured to provide a better picture of readership and growth.

***Reduction in distribution list due to a clean up and consolidation of subscription list.

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