

**Blaine Soil Conservation District**

**ANNUAL PLAN**

**FIVE-YEAR RESOURCE CONSERVATION**

**BUSINESS PLAN**

**ANTI-DEGRADATION PLAN**

**JULY 1, 2014 – JUNE 30, 2019**

## **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 20th day of March, 2013 do 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, 2018 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.

Aaron Andrews,  
Robert Simpson,  
John Saili  
Bryan Dilworth,  
Kathy Noble

Chairman  
Vice Chairman  
Secretary/Treasurer  
Member  
Member

## Supporting Idaho Conservation Partners

Natural Resource Conservation Service – Patti Hurley  
Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission – Chuck Pentzer  
Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts – Rick Rodgers  
Wood River RC & D – Polly Huggins  
(note: the official signature page is housed in the Blaine SCD with the official plan)



## Five-Year Resource Conservation Plan Business Plan (2014 to 2019) Blaine Soil Conservation District

For More Information Contact: Beverly Swainston, 481-1080, blainescd@gmail.com



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### 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.

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### 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.

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### Who We Serve & Why

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

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### Mission of the Blaine Soil & Water Conservation District

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

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### Vision of the Blaine Soil Conservation District

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

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### 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

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### 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.

- In 2014 Blaine SCD will be working with the Blaine County Schools and other entities to bring back FFA and Agriculture Education into the schools.
- Consistently work with our conservation partners in providing programs, information and workshops, teaching 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 2014 to June 2015 through various conservation programs.
- By April 20, 2014 provide information to District irrigators on current Idaho water issues.
- By June 2015 provide an urban water users workshop, to promote awareness and best management practices.
- 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.

- Annually 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.
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## 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.
- Conduct Conservation District elections on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday in November 2014.
- By May 2015 provide a low cost tree sale.

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### **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.

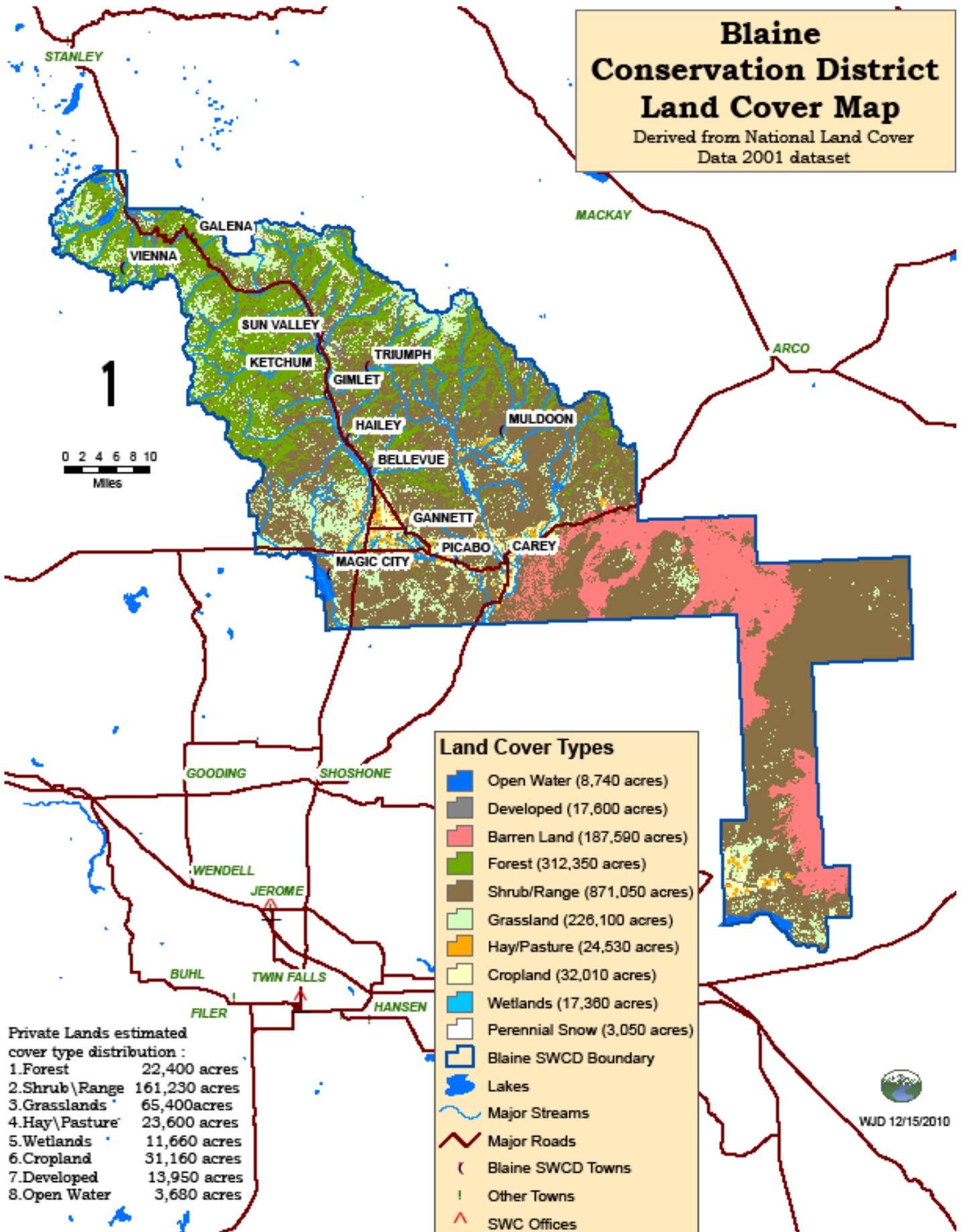
The Northern part of the county is covered with streams and beautiful forested mountains. The Wood River flows through the county from its headwaters in the Sawtooth Mountains southward through the county's population centers around Sun Valley, Ketchum, Hailey (county seat), and Bellevue into the Snake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

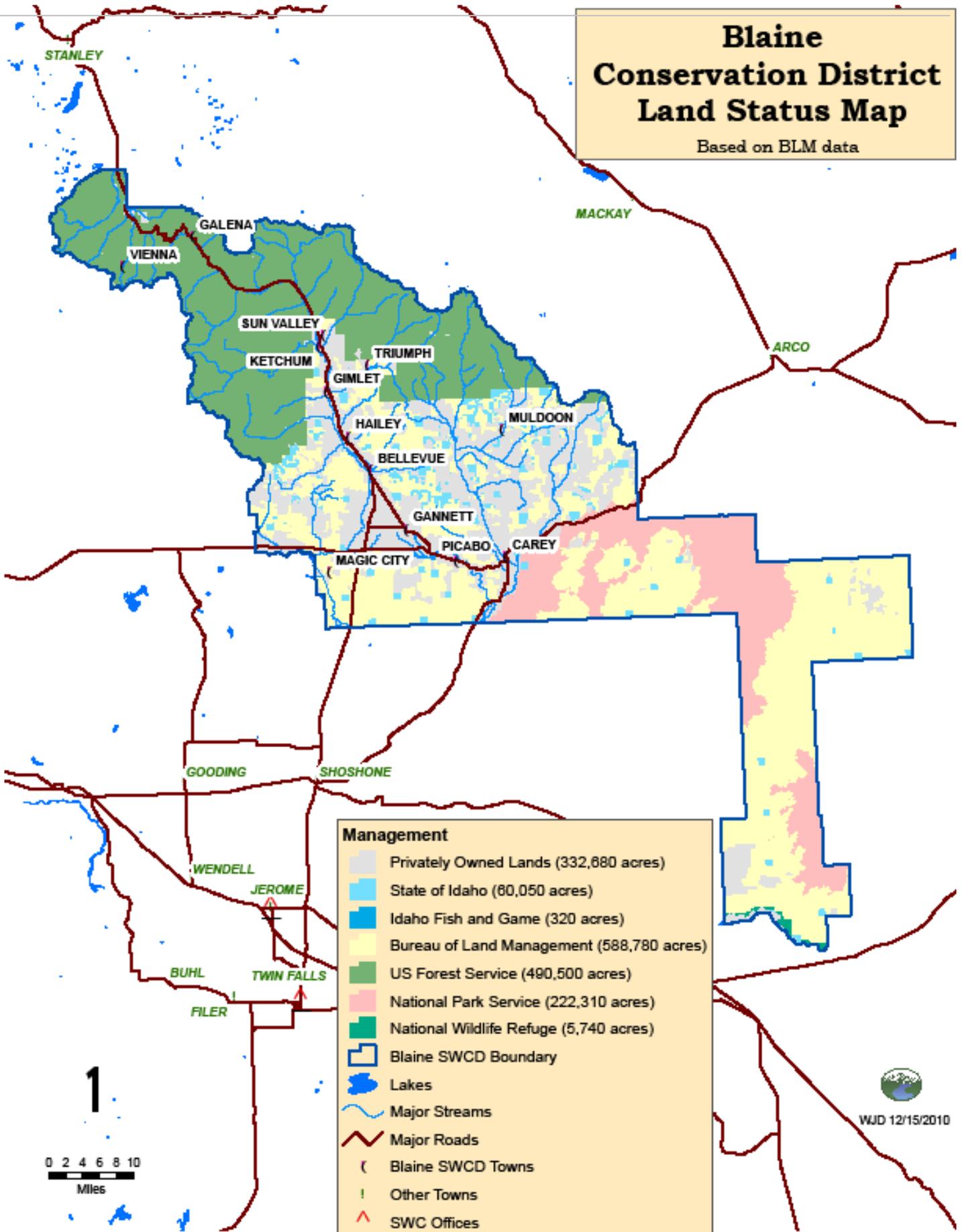
# Blaine Conservation District Land Cover Map

Derived from National Land Cover  
Data 2001 dataset



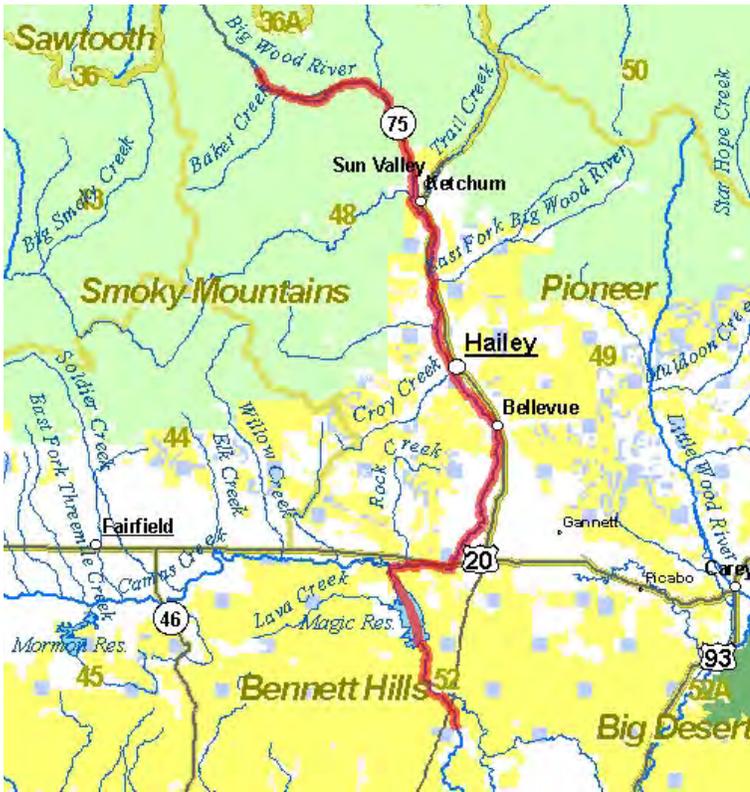
# Blaine Conservation District Land Status Map

Based on BLM data

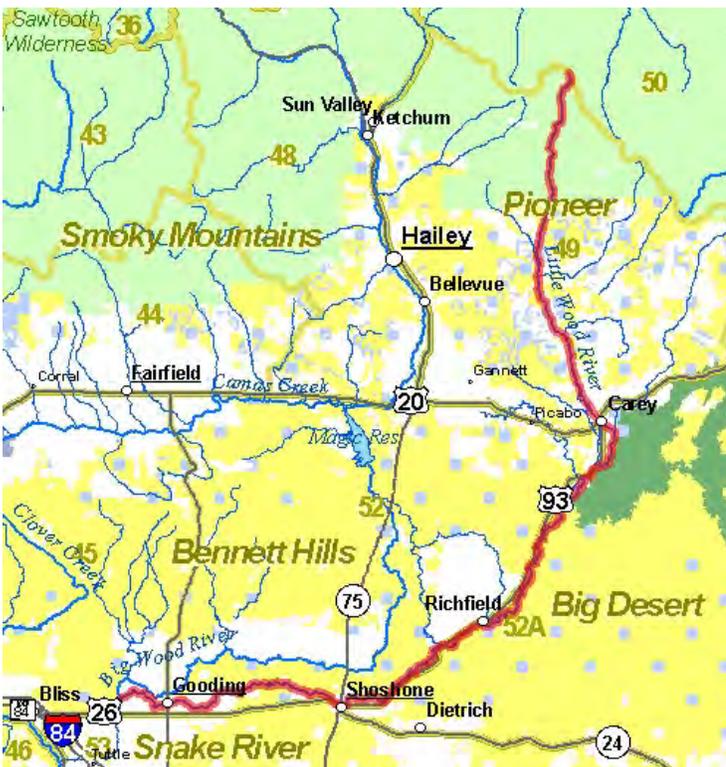


## Critical Geographic Areas for Natural Resource Conservation in Blaine County

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

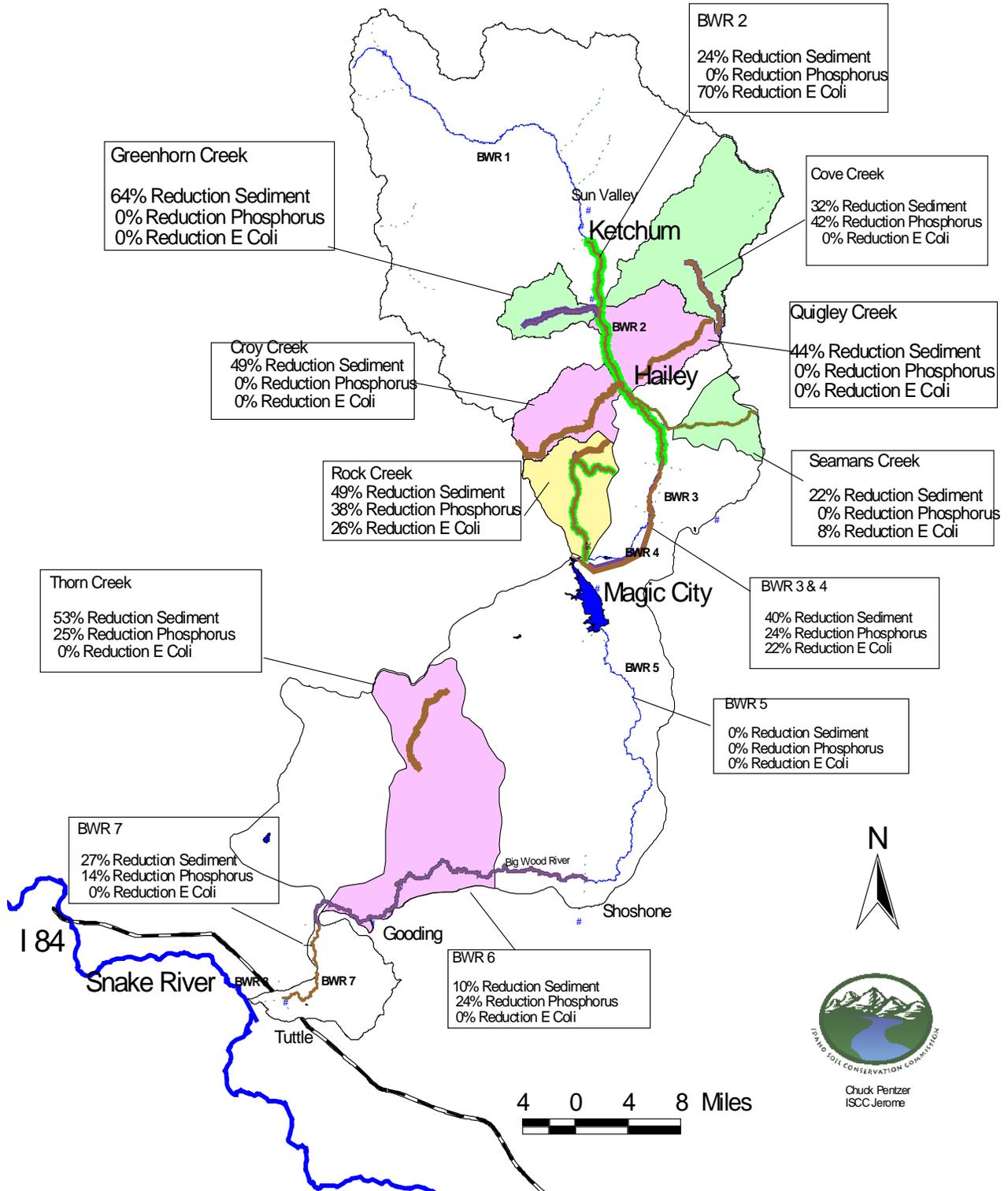


The Little Wood River and tributaries (image from fishandgame.idaho.gov)



# TMDL Implementation Plans and Reductions Estimates for Big Wood River

## BWR Ag Implementation Plan TMDL Percent Reductions Map



# Little Wood River Subbasin TMDL Stream Segments

Little Wood River Segment 1:  
Temperature - 1.9% reduction

Muldoon Creek:  
Temperature - 13.7% reduction

Little Wood River Reservoir

Little Wood River Segment 2:  
No reductions needed

Dry Creek:  
Sediment - 81.9% reduction

Loving Creek:  
Temperature - 17.3% reduction

Little Wood River Segment 3:  
No reductions needed

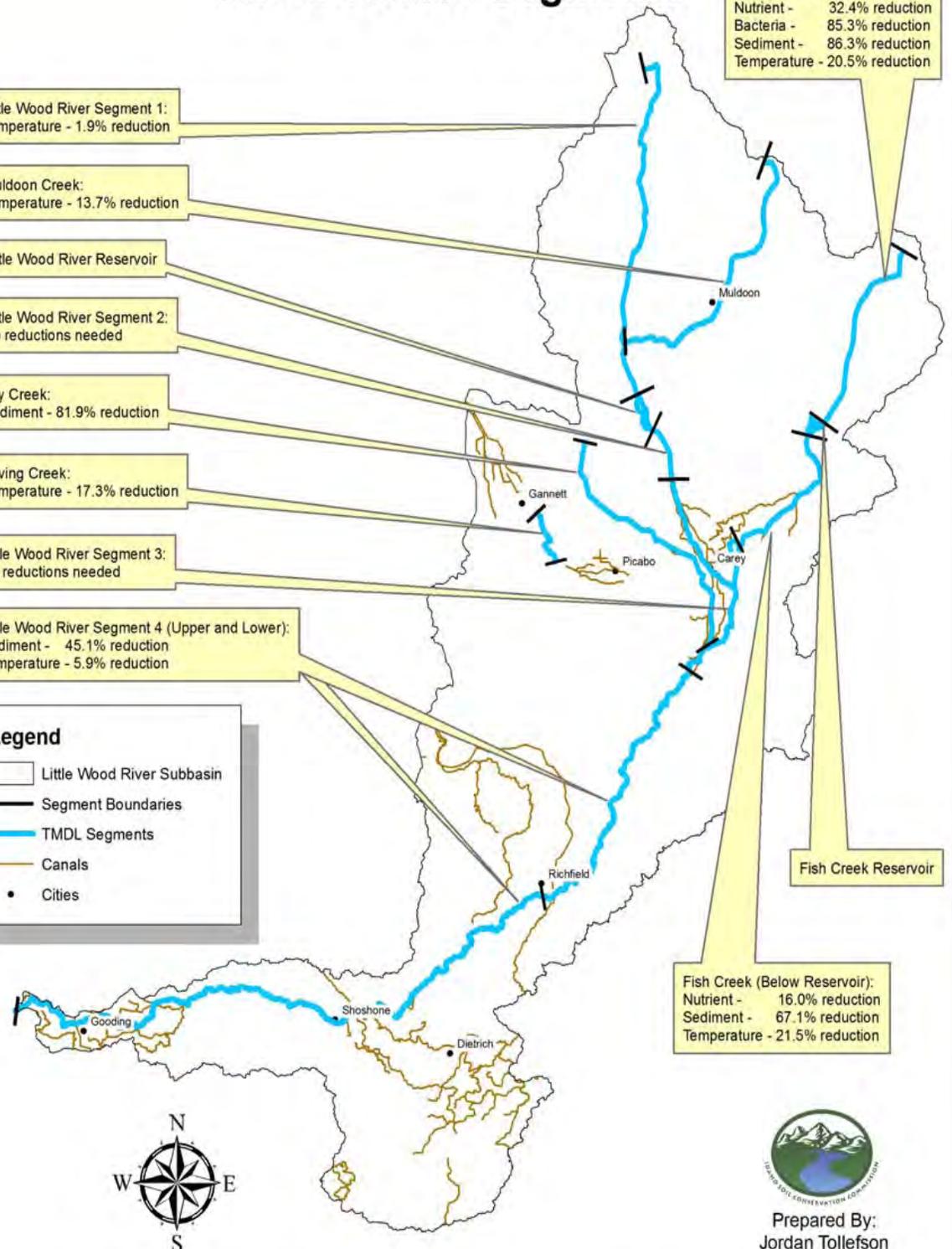
Little Wood River Segment 4 (Upper and Lower):  
Sediment - 45.1% reduction  
Temperature - 5.9% reduction

Fish Creek (Above Reservoir):  
Nutrient - 32.4% reduction  
Bacteria - 85.3% reduction  
Sediment - 86.3% reduction  
Temperature - 20.5% reduction

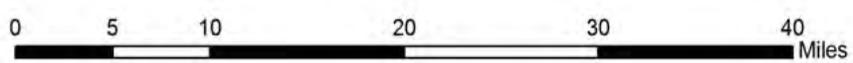
Fish Creek (Below Reservoir):  
Nutrient - 16.0% reduction  
Sediment - 67.1% reduction  
Temperature - 21.5% reduction

**Legend**

-  Little Wood River Subbasin
-  Segment Boundaries
-  TMDL Segments
-  Canals
-  Cities

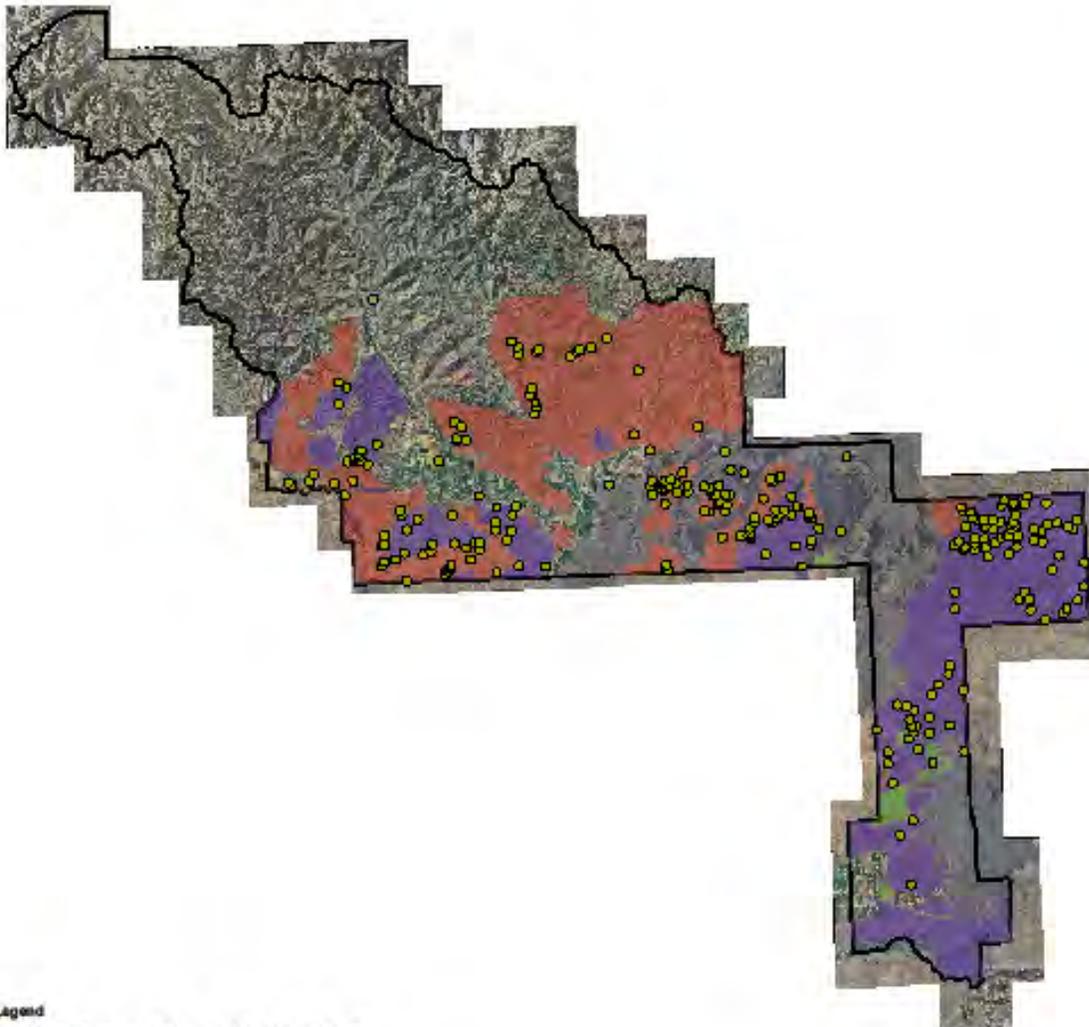


Prepared By:  
Jordan Tollefson  
ISCC



## Historic Sage Grouse Range

# Species of Concern Map Sage Grouse

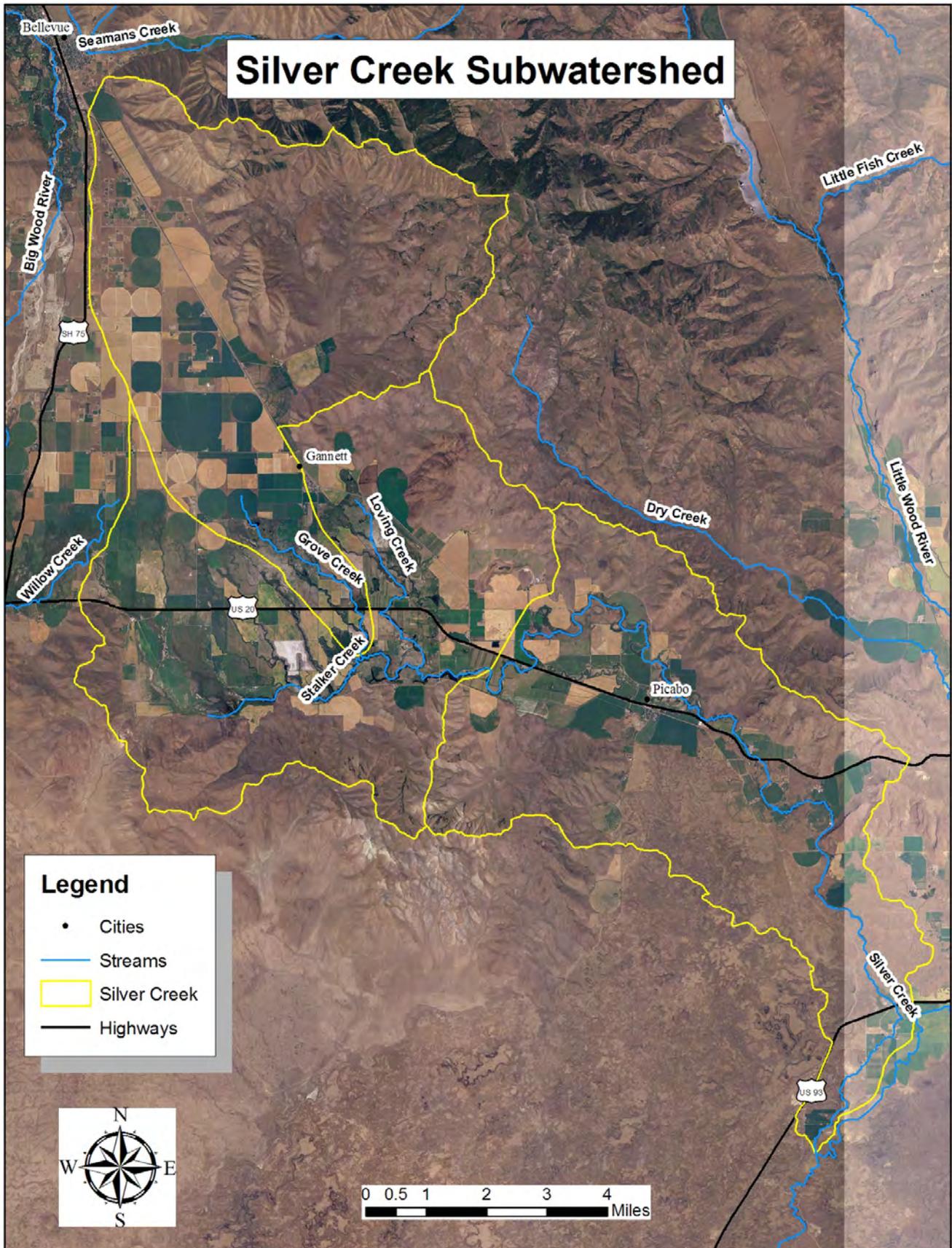


**Legend**

- ◆ SageGrouseLeks\_Feb2011\_Blaine
- SageGrouseHabitatDiv4\_Blaine**
  - Annual grassland with low restoration potential
  - Key Sage-grouse Habitat
  - Perennial grassland with high restoration potential



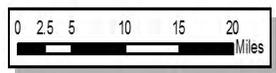
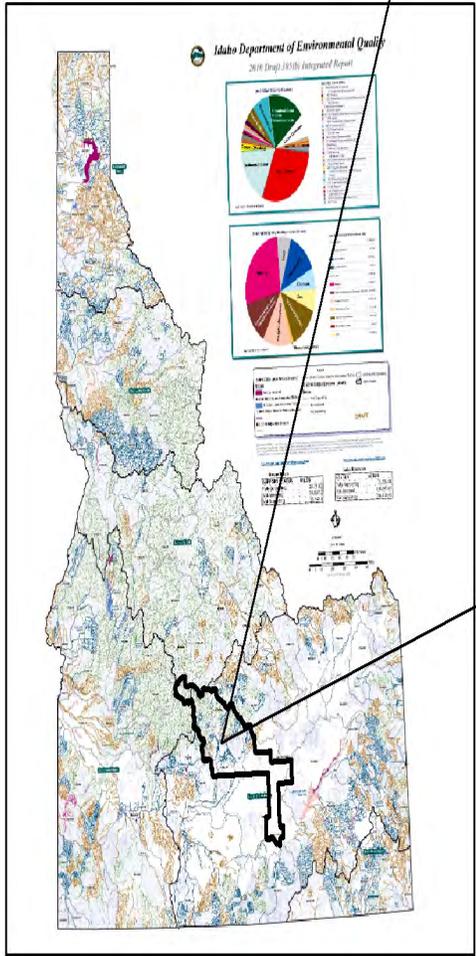
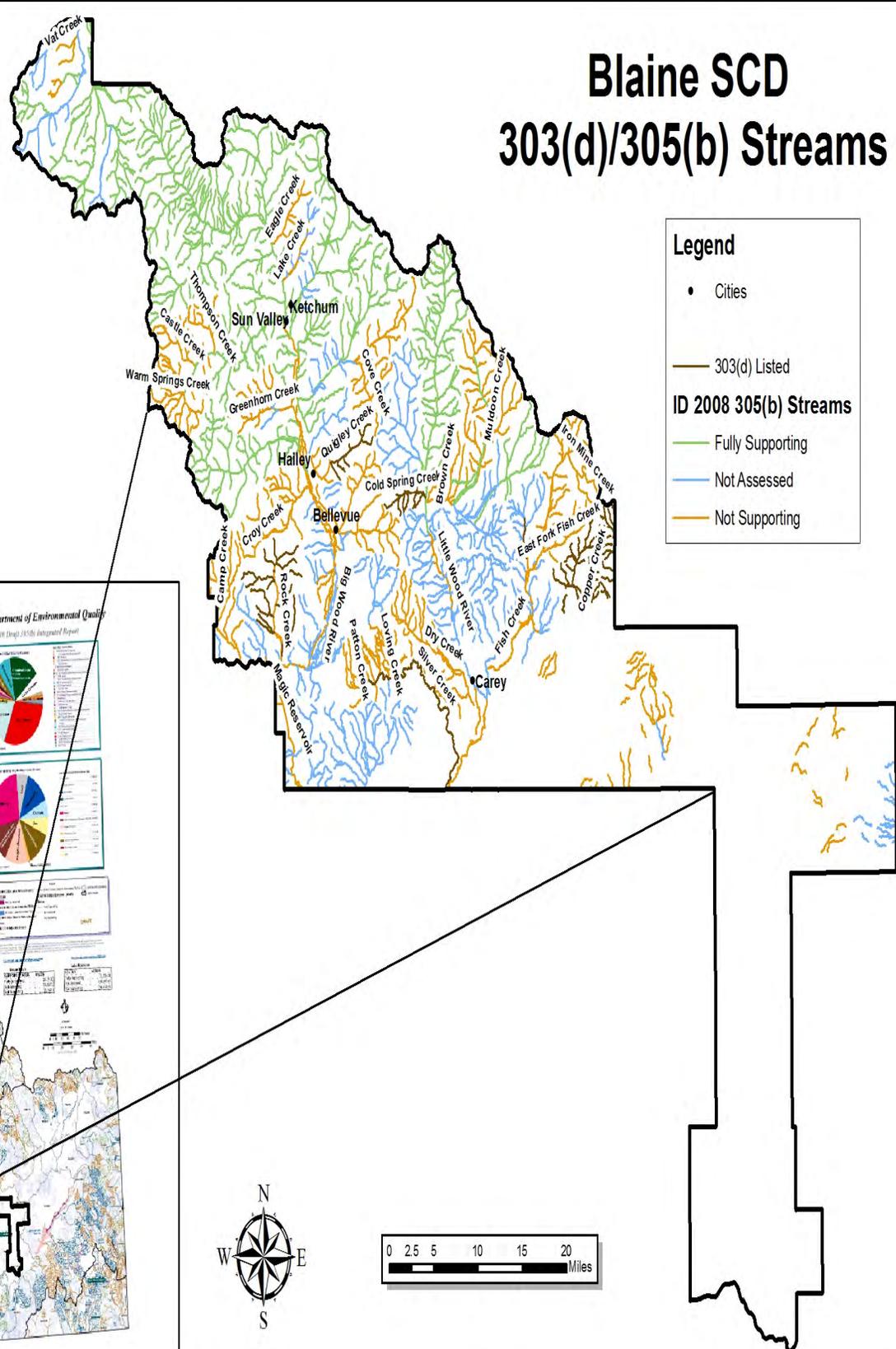
# Silver Creek



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

**Legend**

- Cities
- 303(d) Listed
- ID 2008 305(b) Streams**
  - Fully Supporting
  - Not Assessed
  - Not Supporting





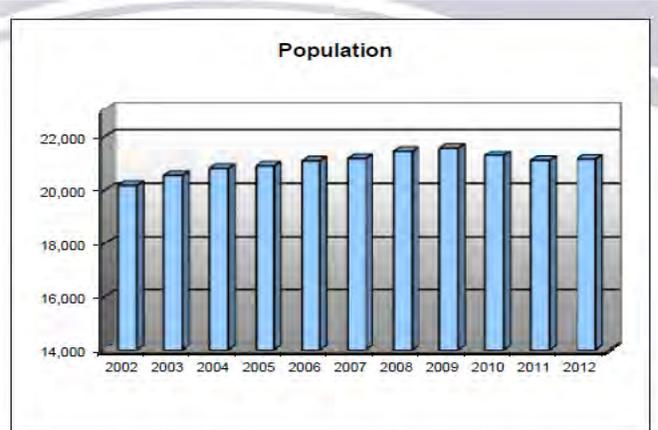
# Blaine County

November 2013

## Work Force Trends

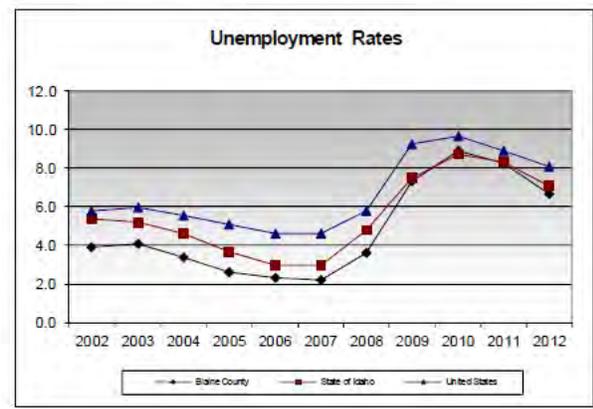
### Population

Blaine County's population rose 4.7 percent from 20,189 in 2002 to 21,146 in 2012, 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 city at 7,893. 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 saw 383,780 skier days during the 2012-2013 season, a 1.2 percent increase. Local leaders continue to try jump starting the economy. The recession was severe, dramatically cooling building activity in upscale subdivisions and condominium projects. Ketchum, the commercial hub, has five hotel projects seeking financing. New attractions in recent years include an all-season gondola, another golf course, an outdoor symphony pavilion and rodeo grounds, all enhancing tourism. Collaborative marketing is expected to bring more visitors to the area. Talks continue on ensuring regular commercial air service at Friedman Memorial Airport in Hailey.



### Labor Force & Employment

Blaine County's workforce has suffered from the construction and housing slump that hit many tourism and highgrowth 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 2.2 percent in 2007 before the recession pushed it up to 8.9 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 along with dropping home prices have temporarily lessened the impact. The high cost of living offsets wages that are typically higher than elsewhere in Idaho. Routine traffic congestion between



Labor Force	Oct 12	Oct 13
Civilian Labor Force	12,196	11,897
Total Employment	11,433	11,210
Unemployed	763	687
% of Labor Force Unemployed	6.3	5.8
State of Idaho % Unemployed	6.6	6.7
U.S. % Unemployed	7.9	7.3

increased public transportation ridership. A significant number of workers commuted to the county for higher -paying construction and landscape jobs before the recession. A new airport was planned and then put on hold by the Federal Aviation Administration. Sun Valley has been designated the first Nordic Olympic and Paralympic training site in the United States, the only one specific to Nordic skiing. This requires intensified visitor logistics, amenities and services.

Labor Force	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Civilian Labor Force	12,893	12,653	13,261	13,898	14,030	13,658	13,798	13,243	12,655	12,507	12,328
Unemployment	507	520	449	363	323	300	502	969	1,125	1,034	820
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.9	4.1	3.4	2.6	2.3	2.2	3.6	7.3	8.9	8.3	6.6
Employment	12,386	12,132	12,812	13,535	13,707	13,358	13,296	12,274	11,530	11,473	11,508

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## **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 it's impact on agricultural management.
- Focus on water quality compared to other conservation and environmental issues
- Increased paper work in getting the job done
- Trend to regulate agriculture and ranching

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## **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/permitees and landowners private property rights.

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## **Staffing Needs**

- Full-time Conservation District Administrative Assistant with benefits
- Conservation District Technician
- Full Time Technician via NRCS or if necessary the District would secure funding for a full time position.

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## **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 good. The district received one time monies from the state that were great. Those monies will not be given to the district this coming year, furthermore, the 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 looking into projects that will generate funding for the district and its programs.

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### 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: Steve Miller, Donna Pence, 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

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### 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.

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### 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	3/1/14	3/31/15
▪ Board of Supervisor review of Annual Plan/Five-Year Resource Conservation Business Plan priorities, actions, and public comment	3/1/14	6/30/14
▪ Complete written update of Annual Plan/Five-Year Resource Conservation Plan	2/1/14	3/29/14
▪ Identify budget and staff needs	3/1/14	3/31/14
▪ Develop, adopt and submit annual budget	6/1/14	
▪ Adopt and submit Annual Plan/Five-Year Resource Conservation Business Plan	6/1/14	



# FY2013 (7/1/2014 – 6/30/2015) 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.	6/15	Supervisors, Beverly Swainston, Admin. Assistant
Work cooperatively with the RC&D, NRCS, Wood River Land Trust, Blaine Bug Crew, municipalities and others to provide urban water use, weed control, native and drought tolerant plant species and landscaping workshops	6/15	Beverly Swainston 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	6/15	Aaron Andrews, Chair Bob Simpson, Vice Chair
Increase youth and public involvement and awareness through Annual Envirothon, field trips, speech contest, Natural Resource Camp, poster contest and annual scholarship program	6/15	Supervisors, Beverly Swainston, Adm. Assistant
Provide a newsletter with current and pertinent information regarding conservation practices and programs	6/15	Beverly Swainston Adm. Assistant
Provide information to the public about grants available, including NRCS, Blaine County LAB and private funders.	6/15	Supervisors, Beverly Swainston, Adm. Assistant
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	6/15	Supervisors, Beverly Swainston, Adm. Asst.

## FY2013 (7/1/2014 – 6/30/2015) Annual Plan of Work Blaine Soil Conservation District



Conservation District Priority Number 2: Water Resources and Quality

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

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	Aaron Andrews Chair , Bob Simpson, Chair, Beverly Swainston Adm. Assistant
Provide Urban water user workshops to promote awareness and best management practices	6/15	Beverly Swainston Adm. Assistant
Support proactively the Fish Creek Reservoir Restoration	ongoing	Supervisors, Beverly Swainston, Admin. Assistant
Support the Wood River Land Trust in the Water Conservation Fair and other water projects and issues	6/15	Supervisors, Beverly Swainston, 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	6/15	Beverly Swainston, Adm. Assistant, Supervisors

## FY2013 (7/1/2014 – 6/30/2015) 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	6/15	Beverly Swainston, Adm. Assistant
Provide snow surveys and water outlook reports in partnership with the NRCS to land owners	6/15	Aaron Andrews, Chair Bob Simpson, Vice Chair
Provide plant and feed testing and analysis services to land owners, targeting Nitrate levels in soils and feed	6/15	Supervisors, Beverly Swainston, Adm. Assistant
Assist and provide farmers with grant applications to meet best management practices	6/15	Beverly Swainston, Adm. Assistant



# FY2013 (7/1/2014 – 6/30/2015) 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 AWEF funding	6/15	Beverly Swainston, Adm. Assistant
Provide soil testing services to increase better nutrient management practices	6/15	Supervisors, Beverly Swainston, Adm. Assistant
Provide data on drought tolerant, native and riparian plants available to landowners	6/15	Beverly Swainston, Adm. Assistant
Investigate opportunities and requirements to provide equipment supporting best management practices on Blaine County land.	6/15	Beverly Swainston, Adm. Assistant
Support the Blaine Bug Crew with their insectory program and encourage county wide participation	6/15	Beverly Swainston, Adm. Assistant



## FY2013 (7/1/2014 – 6/30/2015) 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	6/15	Beverly Swainston Adm. Assistant
Hold 12 monthly conservation district meetings, support RC&D meetings, pay dues	6/15	Beverly Swainston Adm. Assistant
Maintain comprehensive financial management system, using Quick Books, Conduct annual review, and submit all financial reports and budget to SCC	6/15	Beverly Swainston Adm. Assistant
Identify, secure and administer funds for the conservation district's goals and actions	6/15	Beverly Swainston Adm. Assistant
Provide and maintain a website and newsletter providing current information, programs and practices	6/15	Beverly Swainston Adm. Assistant
Work with the Wood River RC&D, NRCS and Blaine County LAB to develop grant opportunities	6/15	Beverly Swainston Adm. Assistant
Provide a low cost tree sale.	5/15	Beverly Swainston, Adm. Assistant