



**Snake River Soil and Water Conservation District  
Annual Resource Conservation Plan  
March 11, 2014**

# Snake River Soil and Water Conservation District

The Snake River Soil and Water Conservation District follows the Snake River through Twin Falls County from the eastern county line to Filer. The cropland is primarily surface irrigated and is part of the Twin Falls Canal Company tract. Irrigation-induced soil erosion is a primary resource concern for the District. A few large dairies have moved into the District, but the majority of cooperators are crop farmers. A growing resource concern is the number of small acreages and subdivisions that are encroaching into agricultural land. To reach these non-traditional cooperators, the District puts an emphasis on the annual poster contest and celebrating National Soil and Water Stewardship week.

## Our top accomplishments in FY 2014

1. Cooperate with the Twin Falls SWCD on the Multi-Species Cover Crop Demonstration project. The main demonstration site is located near Kimberly.
2. Finalized the Twin Falls Coulee Wetland Project north of Kimberly. This project removed approximately 1,000 cubic yards of sediment in the first year of use.
3. Held a wetlands/water quality for 5th and 6th grade students at Hansen and Murtaugh Elementary Schools at the Filer Fishing Ponds.
3. Co-sponsored a booth at the Twin Falls County Fair in September 2013. This was part of the Ag Pavillion.
4. Enrolled cooperators in the Twin Falls Nitrate Priority Area Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative in conjunction with the Balanced Rock and Twin Falls conservation districts.
5. Upgraded conservation district website utilizing our capacity building grant from the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission.

## Our top priorities for FY 2015

1. Work with small landowners to reduce the potential for surface and ground water contamination.
2. Educate cooperators about soil health practices and the Multi-Species Cover Crop Demonstration.
3. Work with subdivisions that have not yet been developed on strategies to control weeds and both wind and water induced erosion.
4. Help cooperators adopt more intensive nutrient and irrigation water management practices through the Twin Falls Nitrate Priority Area Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative.
5. Participate in the Ag Pavillion when it is at the Twin Falls County Fair again in 2014. This is a chance to reach out to small acreage and other rural homeowners about the role of conservation districts.

## If the Snake River SWCD received additional funding, supervisors would:

1. Help Twin Falls Canal Co. install and manage pumpback systems throughout the tract.
2. Help purchase more conservation easements.
3. Provide cost-share to help convert the LS/LQ area to gravity pressurized irrigation systems.
4. Enhance wildlife habitat at constructed wetlands.
5. Provide assistance to small scale wind power development.
6. Reduce administration costs to put more dollars on the ground for conservation efforts.

**Snake River Soil and Water Conservation District**  
**Serving southern Twin Falls County and Legislative District 24 and 25**  
**For more information contact Matt Nail, chairman, at 733-5380 ext. 3**

**Mission**

To assist land owners and operators to intensively manage irrigated crop and pasture land.

**Trends Impacting Conservation**

The District has aggressively sought federal 319 grant dollars to develop constructed wetlands on critical irrigation return drains, and plans to continue that work while also developing water-related projects with the City of Twin Falls. Supervisors believe it is important to continue to work with agricultural land owners and operators, while expanding outreach efforts to urban and small rural landowners.

The Snake River SWCD includes the fast-growing cities of Twin Falls as well as Kimberly and Filer. Urban issues are becoming increasingly important for the District—not just within the rural-urban interface but also within city limits. The Snake River SWCD is working with the Balanced Rock and Twin Falls conservation districts to form an urban initiative to address these urban issues throughout Twin Falls County, but particularly issues facing the City of Twin Falls.

**Projects Planned, Coordinated or Managed**

- Twin Falls Nitrate Priority Area CCPI.

**Funding Sources for District Operations and Projects**

- Anticipated funds — \$8,000 from Twin Falls County and \$18,000 from the State of Idaho.
- Anticipated funds — \$800 Capacity Building Grant from ISWC

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**Priority #1 — Soil Health**

**Goal:** Encourage wider adoption of conservation practices that increase soil health and reduce erosion (both wind and water) potential.

**Objective:**

Promote practices that improve soil health to allow soils to be more productive and resilient.

**Action:**

- Encourage use of conservation tillage practices.
- Identify applicable loan and grant programs.
- Educate landowners about irrigation scheduling and irrigation water management.
- Educate cooperators about the requirements of the Conservation Stewardship Program.
- Educate cooperators about using enhances nutrient and irrigation management practices to minimize nutrient leaching (especially nitrates) into drinking water sources.
- Administer the proposed Twin Falls Nitrate Priority Area CCPI.

**Target Date:**

Annually  
Annually  
Annually  
Annually  
Annually  
Annually

**Leader:**

S. Schuyler  
M. Nail  
S. Schuyler  
S. Schuyler  
S. Haye  
S. Haye

**Objective:**

Encourage wider adoption of soil health practices that will also reduce wind erosion potential.

**Action:**

- Encourage use of management practices such as cover crops, conservation tillage and wind-breaks.
- Work with the Twin Falls SWCD to administer the Multi-Species Cover Crop Demonstration Project.
- Help host a field day at the main demonstration farm of the Multi-Species Cover Crop Demonstration Project.
  - Educate landowners about the state's crop residue management program and alternatives to field burning.

**Target Date:**

Annually  
July to June  
Fall 2014  
Summer/fall

**Leader:**

S. Schuyler  
C. Snyder  
C. Snyder  
C. Snyder  
S. Schuyler

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**Priority #2 — Water Quality**

**Objective:** Meet rules & regulations of section 319 of the Water Quality Act, the 1986 Safe Drinking Water Act and Amendments to the 1972 Clean Water Act, Anti-Degradation Section.

**Goal:**

Help cooperators reach sediment target of 52 mg/L sediment load to the Snake River.

**Action:**

- Work with the City of Twin Falls to develop localized pressurized irrigation systems.
- Provide assistance for the Mid-Snake River TMDL
- Identify applicable loan and grant programs.
- Collect baseline water quality data for constructed wetlands.
- Encourage use of polyacrylamide and other BMPs on surface irrigated fields.
- Encourage conversion to sprinkler irrigation where feasible.
- Explore possibility and feasibility of drip irrigation.
- Continue to explore potential sites for constructed wetland sites.
- Administer the Twin Falls Nitrate Priority Area Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative.
- Work with TFCC to identify future locations for 319 wetland projects.
- Promote Conservation Stewardship Program.

**Target Date:**

- Annually
- Spring 2015
- Annually

**Leader:**

- B. Olmstead
- B. Olmstead
- S. Haye
- B. Olmstead
- S. Haye
- B. Olmstead
- M. Nail
- B. Olmstead
- S. Haye
- C. Snyder
- S. Schuyler

**Goal:**

Improve water quality in Rock Creek.

**Action:**

- Secure additional funding for water quality projects along Rock Creek.
- Target educational message to small acreage owners in the Rock Creek area.

**Target Date:**

- Annually
- Annually

**Leader:**

- S. Schuyler
- C. Snyder

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**Priority #3 — Groundwater Protection**

**Goal:** Reduce potential for contamination from agricultural land and small acreages to ground water.

**Objective:**

Reduce potential for nitrate contamination to drinking water sources.

**Action:**

- Develop an outreach project to help educate small acreage and other rural land owners about strategies they can use to help reverse the trend toward increasing nitrate levels in ground water.
- Work more closely with the Twin Falls Groundwater Committee.
- Administer the Twin Falls Nitrate Priority Area CCPI.

**Target Date:**

Annually  
  
Annually  
  
Annually

**Leader:**

C. Snyder  
  
C. Pentzer  
C. Snyder  
S. Haye

**Objective:**

Implement pasture land renovation and management on small acreages surrounding Twin Falls.

**Action:**

- Establish riparian zones in vulnerable areas.
- Establish permanent pastures in shallow, steep areas.
- Include information about pasture management in district newsletter.

**Target Date:**

Annually  
  
Annually  
  
Annually

**Leader:**

S. Haye  
  
S. Haye  
  
C. Snyder

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**Priority #4 — Animal Waste Management**

**Objective:** Protect soil productivity as well as both surface and groundwater quality through proper use of animal waste resources.

**Goal:**

Help ensure nutrient management plans are followed.

**Action:**

- Educate dairies about crop rotation, soil tilth and crop nutrient needs.
- Educate non-dairies about requirements of accepting dairy waste and following nutrient management plan.
- Work with producers to optimize nutrient and irrigation water management to minimize nutrient leaching.
- Explore feasibility of touring new digester system located within the district.
- Educate dairies and crop producers about new state and county regulations concerning animal waste storage, hauling and application.
- Administer Twin Falls Nitrate Priority Area CCPI.

**Target Date:**

- Annually
- Annually
- Annually
- Fall 2014
- Annually
- Annually

**Leader:**

- M. Nail
- M. Nail  
C. Snyder
- S. Haye
- C. Snyder
- D. Norris
- S. Haye

**Goal:**

Locate animal feeding operations in proper sites.

**Action:**

- Provide information to the Twin Falls County Planning and Zoning Administration regarding siting issues.
- Provide technical assistance to other CAFO owners who are subject to new state rules.
- Provide soil surveys and other technical assistance for new or expanding lagoon facilities.

**Target Date:**

- Annually
- Annually
- Annually

**Leader:**

- M. Nail
- S. Schuyler
- S. Schuyler

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**Priority #5 — Urban**

**Goal:** Promote wise use of land resources during period of high growth in Twin Falls County.

**Objective:**

Minimize effects of urban sprawl into prime farmland.

**Action:**

- Educate small acreage owners about best management practices for protecting soil and water resources.
- Look into impacts of urban sprawl to Eastern Snake River Aquifer.
- Educate new-to-the-country landowners about modern agricultural practices.
- Educate landowners and land planners about water quality and quantity issues that arise when ag land is converted to subdivisions.
- Recruit small acreage and urban/suburban landowners to join SWCD Board.
- Approach cities within district about interest in joining the district.
- Work with City of Twin Falls on localized pressurized irrigation systems.
- Promote conservation easements.
- Work with developers and bankers to clean up subdivisions that has not yet been developed to control weeds and reduce soil erosion caused by both wind and water.

**Target Date:**

- Annually

**Leader:**

- C. Snyder
- D. Ramseyer
- R. Champlin
- B. Olmstead
- M. Nail
- R. Champlin
- B. Olmstead
- D. Ramseyer
- G. Gier

**Goal:**

Educate urban dwellers about soil and water conservation.

**Action:**

- Sponsor poster and speech contests through the Murtaugh, Kimberly, Hansen and Twin Falls school districts.
- Maintain and upgrade district website.
- Provide scholarship to students who volunteer for the District or attend NRC.
- Develop an outreach project to help educate small acreage and other rural land owners about strategies they can use to help reverse the trend toward increasing nitrate levels in ground water.

**Target Date:**

- Fall & Spring
- Annually
- Annually
- Annually

**Leader:**

- C. Snyder
- C. Snyder
- M. Nail
- C. Snyder

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**Priority #6 — Fish and Wildlife**

**Goal:** Enhance fishing, hunting and wildlife watching opportunities in the District.

**Objective:**

Improve wildlife habitat.

**Action:**

- Encourage participation in Habitat Improvement Programs.
- Encourage landowners to plant trees or food plots on pivot corners.
- Work with Twin Falls County Pest Abatement District to establish bluegill populations in water quality ponds to help control mosquito larvae.
- Establish more big game habitat.
- Provide assistance to the Idaho Department of Fish & Game on water quality ponds to provide additional upland bird and waterfowl habitat.

**Target Date:**

Annually

Annually

Annually

Annually

Annually

**Leader:**

S. Schuyler

S. Schuyler

B. Olmstead

M. Nail

B. Olmstead

**Objective:**

Improve fish habitat.

**Action:**

- Encourage adoption of management practices that reduce sediment and other pollutant loading to streams and rivers within the District.
- Work with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game to continue stocking the fishing ponds at LS/LQ for urban fishing access.
- Work with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game to develop fishing ponds at other wetlands for urban fishing access.

**Target Date:**

Annually

Annually

Annually

**Leader:**

S. Schuyler

B. Olmstead

B. Olmstead

# Snake River Soil and Water Conservation District Nitrate Priority Areas





