

Division 4
Minidoka SWCD
Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission
Technical Assistance Request for FY 2015

Project #1: Direct Seed and Cover Crop Practices in the Mini-Cassia Area

Technical Assistance Time Requested: 40 Hours (without travel) for conservation planning and writing seeding plans

Project Description:

This project seeks to expose landowners to the use of direct seed farming and the use of cover crops to grow crops without disturbing the soil, increase the amount of water and organic matter (nutrients) in the soil, decrease erosion, and control weeds. Direct seeding is an accepted practice in other areas of the state of Idaho such as Northern Idaho, but it is a new concept to farmers in Minidoka and Cassia County and other agricultural areas of Southern Idaho.

Together with East and West Cassia Soil and Water Conservations Districts, Minidoka will be applying for a Conservation Innovation Grant to purchase two direct seed (no till) drills, which will be available for farmers to rent for test plots, and money to establish a cover crop seed bank where farmers can purchase cover crop seeds for their farms. With the drill available to rent at a reasonable rate, farmers will be able to test direct seed and cover crop practices without the risk of equipment overhead costs and unknown crop production results.

By purchasing direct seed drills and establishing an on-demand cover crop fund for farmers within the two counties, it gives the districts a unique opportunity to set up multiple unique demonstration sites on farms to show how cover crops will work with diverse and unique crop rotations. It also allows the districts to accelerate the adoption of direct seeding and cover crop practices and help with the technical and cultural change to less invasive tillage practices, thereby increasing soil health and sustainability throughout the area.

Project #2: Mini-Cassia Nitrate Priority Areas CCPI Project

(Include Local support, Plans for publicizing, Permitting, and maintaining the project.)

Technical Assistance Time Requested: 40 Hours (without travel) for implementation of contracts

Project Description:

The project addresses two priorities: water resources and irrigated cropland. Funding for this project was awarded in May 2011. Three producers within the Minidoka SWCD currently have CCPI-EQIP contracts with NRCS. Documentation of support consists of three contracts with landowners, plus commitments by the SWC and NRCS (in the original grant application) to provide financial and technical resources. NRCS and SWC personnel have been providing technical assistance in the form of conservation planning, nutrient management planning, and irrigation water management planning.

The Minidoka SWCD has provided outreach for the project in the form of newsletters, workshops, and county fair displays. An overall reduction in nitrogen and phosphorus of 25 per cent is expected as a result of this project. This will benefit ground water by reducing nitrates (the Minidoka Nitrate Priority Area is currently ranked 12th in the state) and reducing phosphorus runoff into the Lake Walcott sub basin, thus helping to attain the established TMDL targets for the watershed. Water savings are also expected as a result of high intensity irrigation water management. This will be particularly helpful for producers within the Magic Valley Ground Water District who rely on well water for irrigation. Recent water calls by senior water right holders pose a potential curtailment hazard to ground water pumpers whose farms are located within portions of the Minidoka SWCD.

One of the goals of this project is to demonstrate to farmers the economic and environmental benefits of implementing high intensity nutrient management, precision ag, and irrigation water management. By working closely with project participants, the Minidoka SWCD can increase outreach efforts to publicize the benefits of these BMPs, and hopefully encourage other farmers to adopt these BMPs on their own. This grant was awarded with the understanding that the SWC would provide technical assistance, in partnership with NRCS.

**IDAHO SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE
CERTIFICATION**

DISTRICT: **Minidoka SWCD**

Project or Activity Name:

FOR FISCAL YEAR: **2015**

Hours of Assistance Requested:

Due: **March 31, 2014**

CERTIFICATION

By concurrence of a majority of the supervisors of the district board and the above name conservation district certifies that attached Request for Assistance is true and accurate, and further submits said Report for the above named District and fiscal year.

A copy of this Request for Assistance and supporting documents shall be kept at the District office and is available for public inspection.



Board Supervisor Chairperson Signature

John Firth

Printed Name

March 31, 2014
Date

(208) 436-4777 ext. #3

District or Board Chairperson Telephone

mswcd@pmt.org

District Email Address

FOR SWC USE ONLY:

DATE OF CONFIRMATION:
