

FY 2017-2020 Strategic Plan

Conservation the Idaho Way: sowing seeds of stewardship



Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission

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SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Conservation the Idaho Way: Sowing the Seeds of Stewardship

“A good river is nature's life work in song.”

Mark Helprin



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CONSERVATION THE IDAHO WAY

Idaho is endowed with a magnificent blend of diverse natural landscapes — rivers, lakes, mountains, forests and desert canyons -- combined with rich and fertile agricultural lands well suited for growing a wide variety of crops and raising livestock. People who work in Idaho agriculture have deep roots in the land. They know that caring for the land will reap benefits for future generations.

"Conservation the Idaho Way" reflects the conviction that the very best way to care for and enhance the soil, water, air, plants and wildlife is through voluntary, locally led efforts. We use the state's natural resources to benefit Idahoans while maintaining and improving natural resources for future generations.

MISSION

We facilitate coordinated non-regulatory, voluntary, and locally-led conservation by federal, state, and local governments including Idaho's conservation districts and other partners to conserve, sustain, improve, and enhance soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources. (IC 27:22)

SLOGAN

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VISION

Conservation in Idaho reflects locally-led natural resource conservation leadership and priorities, is voluntary and incentive-based, non-regulatory, and demonstrates scientifically sound stewardship. The Conservation Commission and local conservation districts are the primary entities to lead coordinated conservation efforts with partners to provide landowners and land-users with assistance and solutions for natural resource concerns and issues.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Address legislative intent and statute
- Benefit the environment and Idaho's agricultural-based economy
- Benefit conservation districts' locally led, voluntary, non-regulatory priorities and projects
- Benefit the Commission's ability to serve and meet statutory authorities
- Promote fiscal responsibility
- Strengthen existing and build new conservation partnerships
- Incorporate valid scientific data and practices
- Benefit conservation work on natural resource priority issue area
- Promote innovative conservation measures

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CORE FUNCTIONS

The Conservation Commission focuses on three core functions:

1. Providing support to Idaho's 50 locally-led, volunteer conservation districts.
2. Providing incentive-based and general conservation programs and services.
3. Supporting services and programs in a fiscally prudent, inclusive, and transparent manner.

KEY EXTERNAL FACTORS

There are key external factors that could affect the agency's ability to meet the goals and objectives contained in this Strategic Plan. They include:

- Changing demographics and land use designations.
- State and federal regulatory pressure and mandates that could shift priorities and resources away from current activities.
- Changing economics and pressures of agricultural and natural resources dependent industries which could result in significant increases or decreases in conservation program participation.
- Changing economics of state and federal budgets, which could result in additional agency cuts or fewer conservation dollars available to be spent in the state.

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CORE FUNCTIONS & KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

| GOALS | OBJECTIVES | KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES | BENCHMARKS |
|---|---|---|--|
| 1. Support Districts' voluntary conservation efforts | Provide districts w/technical and capacity building assistance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct annual survey to identify satisfaction with services & programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of districts satisfied with services & programs |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist in updating 5-Year Plans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # district 5-Year Plans updated |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct annual technical & comprehensive assistance request process, assign field staff, including reasonable/flexible discretionary time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantify and track assistance provided <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of technical assistance hours requested/awarded # served with projects # new projects # ongoing projects # landowners served |
| 2. Provide Conservation Programs & Services | Incentive-Based Programs | Resource Conservation & Rangeland Development Program (RCRDP) Make low interest conservation loans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantify and track: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of loan inquiries # of new loans Total \$ loaned in prior FY # customers satisfied |
| | | Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Provide technical leadership and oversight to reduce ground water use, improve water quantity and quality, enhance wildlife habitat, and decrease the risk of agriculture-related chemical and sediment runoff in Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantify & track: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # contracts # of acres # contracts certified (achieving program goals) # certified acres water conserved |

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| GOALS | OBJECTIVES | KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES | BENCHMARKS |
|--|--|--|--|
| | General Conservation Programs & Services | Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Planning Program – subject to DEQ priorities, write plans/ designated lead for voluntary ag/grazing projects on listed/impaired waterways | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quantify & track: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ # of new plans assigned by DEQ ▪ # plans completed ▪ # in progress ▪ # pending |
| | | Ground Water Quality/Nitrate Priority Areas - Facilitate cooperative ground water protection, promote and support implementation of water quality projects to maintain and enhance ground water quality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quantify & track: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ # acres treated ▪ Nitrates reduced (#s) ▪ Phosphorus reduced (#s) ▪ Sediments reduced (tons) |
| 3. Build Support for Voluntary Conservation | Conduct outreach and communication educate/inform public, decision makers, partners, and other stakeholders | Maintain Facebook & Twitter content about voluntary conservation activities of Commission and districts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quantify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ # of Facebook friends ▪ # of Twitter followers |
| | | Publish monthly newsletter about voluntary conservation activities of Commission and districts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quantify # of subscriptions |
| | | Co-produce video on Envirothon with Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 7-9 minute video about the Idaho Envirothon competition for use in legislative and other presentations in FY 2017 • Present to 5 germane legislative committees |

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C.L. "Butch" Otter, Governor

Board

H. Norman Wright, Chairman

Gerald Trebesch, Vice Chair

Leon Slichter, Secretary

Dave Radford, Member

Glen Gier, Member

Administrator

Teri Murrison

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