



# Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission

650 W. State St., Room 145 • Boise Idaho 83720

Telephone: 208-332-1790 • Fax: 208-332-1799

www.swc.idaho.gov

ITEM #3a

## IDAHO SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION PUBLIC MEETING & TELECONFERENCE

**Date and Time:**

Tuesday August 7 , 2012

From 8 am to 5 pm MDT

**Location:**

Soil & Water Conservation Commission

650 W State St, Rm 145, Boise Idaho

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### DRAFT MINUTES

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**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Dick Bronson

Dave Radford

Jerry Trebesch

Norman Wright

**COMMISSION STAFF PRESENT:**

Teri Murrison

Jan Webster

Delwyne Trefz

Terry Hoebelheinrich

Cheryl Wilson

**PARTNERS AND GUESTS PRESENT:**

Harriet Hensley, Attorney General's Office

Brett Rumbeck, IASCD

Clint Evans, NRCS

Karma Bragg, IDEA

Terry Halbert, North Side SWCD

Wayne Newbill, One Plan Coordinator

Helen Harrington, IDWR

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3 **ITEM #1: WELCOME AND ROLL CALL**

4 The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bronson at 8:03 a.m. Roll call: Commissioners Dick  
5 Bronson, Jerry Trebesch, Norman Wright, and Dave Radford were present. A quorum being reached,  
6 the meeting began.

7

8 **ITEM #2: REVIEW AGENDA**

9 No items were added

10

11 **ITEM #3: PARTNER REPORTS**

12 Reports were received from Karma Bragg, President, Idaho District Employees Association (IDEA), Bret  
13 Rumbeck, Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts (IASCD) and Clint Evans, NRCS. Discussion  
14 followed.

15

16 Action: No action taken; for information only.

17

18 **ITEM #4: PRESENTATION ON DRAFT STATE WATER PLAN UPDATE**

19 Action: No action taken, for information only.



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20 **ITEM #5: ONE PLAN UPDATE**

21

22 Action: No action taken; for information only

23

24 **ITEM #6: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AWARD PROCESS RECOMMENDATION**

25

26 Action: No action taken; for information only

27

28 **ITEM #7: ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

29 Pursuant to Idaho Code § 22-2718(3), the following officers were elected for FY13:

30

31 Commissioner Radford moved to nominate Dick Bronson as Chairman and Commissioner Stutzman as  
32 Secretary. Commissioner Wright offered an amended motion to include the nomination of  
33 Commissioner Radford for Vice Chairman. Chairman Bronson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

34

35 **ITEM #8: APPOINTMENT OF ADMINISTRATOR FOR FY 2013**

36

37 Action: Vice Chair David Radford moved to reappoint Teri Murrison as administrator of the  
38 Conservation Commission for FY 2013. Commissioner Norman Wright seconded. Motion carried  
39 unanimously.

40

41 **ITEM #9: Approval of June 5, 2012 Draft Minutes**

42

43 Action: Vice Chair Radford moved to approve June 5, 2012 minutes and Commissioner Trebesch  
44 seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

45

46 **ITEM #10: PROPOSED FY 2013 COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE**

47

48 Action: Vice Chair David Radford moved to approve FY 2013 Commission meeting schedule revised.  
49 Directed Administrator to distribute new schedule with regular meetings scheduled on second Thursday  
50 of each month when possible. Commissioner Wright seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

51

52 **ITEM #11: FY 2012 FINANCIAL REPORT**

53

a) May 2012 Budget Summary

54

b) June 2012 year End Budget Summary

55

56 Action: Commissioner Trebesch moved to approve Items A & B. Commissioner Wright seconded.  
57 Motion carried unanimously.

58

59

60

61



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62 **ITEM #12: ADMINISTRATORS REPORT**

63

64 Action: Vice Chair Radford moved to approve revised totals for unmet District needs in FY 2013.  
65 Commissioner Trebesch seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

66

67 **ITEM #13: RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND RANGELAND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM UPDATE**

68

69 Action: No action taken; for information only

70

71 **ITEM #14: FY 2013 INTEREST RATES FOR RCRDP LOAN PROGRAM**

72

73 Action: Vice Chair Radford moved to approve FY 2013 Interest rates as recommended by Loan  
74 Committee. Commissioner Wright seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

75

Interest Rates FY 13	
TERM	PERCENT
1-7	2.5%
8-11	3. %
12-15	3.5%

76

77 **ITEM #15 OTHER BUSINESS**

78

79 **ITEM #16: Adjourn**

80 At 2:09 pm, Chairman Bronson adjourned the meeting. The Conservation Commission is tentatively  
81 scheduled to reconvene September 24<sup>th</sup> at 8:00am.

82

83 Respectfully submitted,

84

85 Roger Stutzman

86 Commissioner and Secretary,

87 Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission

88



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ITEM #3b

## IDAHO SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION PUBLIC MEETING & TELECONFERENCE

**Date and Time:**

Tuesday September 6 , 2012

From 8 am to 10 am MDT

**Location:**

Soil & Water Conservation Commission

650 W State St, Rm 145, Boise Idaho

### DRAFT MINUTES

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**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Dick Bronson

Roger Stutzman

Jerry Trebesch

Norman Wright

**COMMISSION STAFF PRESENT:**

Teri Murrison

Jan Webster

Cheryl Wilson

Janet Failing

**PARTNERS AND GUESTS PRESENT:**

Ann Vonde, Attorney General's Office

Brett Rumbeck, IASCD

1

2

3 **ITEM #1: WELCOME AND ROLL CALL**

4 The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bronson at 7:59 a.m. Roll call: Commissioners Dick  
5 Bronson, Jerry Trebesch, Norman Wright, and Roger Stutzman were present. A quorum being reached,  
6 the meeting began.

7

8 **ITEM #2: REVIEW AGENDA**

9 Action: No items were added

10

11 **ITEM #3: FY 2014 BUDGET REQUEST**

12 Action: Commissioner Wright moved to list the items, using bullet points rather than priority numbers,  
13 in the following order:

14

- 15 • Office Space Relocation
- 16 • NRCS Request
- 17 • 2:1 Match
- 18 • Ongoing Spending Authority
- 19 • TMDL Person

20

21 Chairman Trebesch seconded the motion.

22



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23 Mr. Rumbeck stated there he believes there will be backlash if the 2:1 Match is not first on the list. He  
24 believes it will cause undue and unnecessary problems and recommends putting it first.

25

26 Chairman Bronson said that the match has been a priority of the association. He asked Jan Webster to  
27 take a roll call vote on the motion.

28

29 A Roll Call vote was requested on the motion. Motion passed, 3 AYE, 1 NAY. Voting in favor:  
30 Commissioners Trebesch, Stutzman and Wright. Voting in opposition: Chairman Bronson.

31

#### 32 **ITEM #4: FY 2012 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT REPORT**

33 Action: For information only.

34

#### 35 **ITEM #5: APPOINTMENT OF DISTRICT ALLOCATION WORK GROUP**

36 Action: Chairman Bronson will re-appoint all FY2012 members who are willing to be re-appointed and  
37 appoint replacements as needed.

38

#### 39 **ITEM #6 OTHER BUSINESS**

40 Action: The next Conservation Commission meeting is scheduled for Monday, Sept. 24, 2012 at 1:00  
41 pm. The meeting will be held In the Capital building.

42

#### 43 **ITEM #7: Adjourn**

44 There being no further business to appear before the Commission, Chairman Bronson moved to adjourn  
45 the meeting. Commissioner Trebesch seconded the motion. At 9:14 am, the meeting was adjourned.

46

47 Respectfully submitted,

48

49 Roger Stutzman

50 Commissioner and Secretary,

51 Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission

52



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## ITEM # 4

**TO: CHAIRMAN BRONSON AND COMMISSIONERS RADFORD, STUTZMAN, WRIGHT, AND TREBESCH**  
**FROM: TERI MURRISON, ADMINISTRATOR**  
**DATE: SEPTEMBER 6, 2012**  
**RE: SWC FINANCIAL REPORT**

At your last meeting, staff noted an error in the financial report for FY 2012 which showed the General Fund Index Operating Fund with a \$183 deficit as of June 30, 2012.

The Department of Administration has reviewed the accounting and has issued an amended FY 2012 Year End SWC Report Summary as of June 30, 2012 which shows the General Fund Index Operating Fund with a positive balance of \$32.00. It is necessary for your Board to approve the amended Report.

The SWC Report Summary for July 31 and August 31, 2012 are undergoing revisions due to some improperly coded expenses. Both will be presented for approval at your next meeting on October 11th.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Approve Amended FY 2012 Year End SWC Report Summary, June 30, 2012

### Attachments:

- Amended FY 2012 Year End SWC Report Summary as of June 30, 2012; and

### SWC REPORT SUMMARY AS OF June 30, 2012

GENERAL FUND	PERSONNEL			OPERATING			CAPITAL OUTLAY			TRUSTEE & BENEFITS		
FY12	EXPENSE thru End of Current Month			EXPENSE Thru End of Current Month			EXPENSE Thru End of Current Month			EXPENSE Thru End of Current Month		
	BUDGET		BALANCE	BUDGET		BALANCE	BUDGET		BALANCE	BUDGET		BALANCE
INDEX												
7101					(215)	215						
7111 MANAGEMENT BOARD	1,692	2,820	(1,127)	3,957	6,837	(2,880)	0	0	0	0	0	0
7201 ADMIN & FIELD STAFF	802,600	811,051	(8,451)	177,181	181,972	(4,791)	69,006	52,860	16,146	0	0	0
7202 TEMPS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7310 DISTRICT ALLOCATIONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,053,200	1,053,200	(0)
7320 WQPA WATER QUALITY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50,000	50,000	(0)
7350 CREP	89,309	79,730	9,579	18,987	11,499	7,488	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL GENERAL FUND 0001	893,601	893,600	1	200,125	200,093	32	69,006	52,860	16,146	1,103,200	1,103,200	(0)
			100.00%			99.98%						100.00%
7315 SWC TECH ASSISTANCE	0	0	0	20,000	0	20,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL FUND 0348	0	0	0	20,000	0	20,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
7325 SWC PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	0	0	0	37,385	0	37,385	2,615	0	2,615	0	0	0
TOTAL FUND 0450	0	0	0	37,385	0	37,385	2,615	0	2,615	0	0	0
DEDICATED FUND	PERSONNEL			OPERATING			CAPITAL OUTLAY			CASH		
FY12	EXPENSE thru End of Current Month			EXPENSE Thru End of Current Month			EXPENSE Thru End of Current Month			BEG CASH AT	PLUS TOTAL	LESS TOTAL
	BUDGET		BALANCE	BUDGET		BALANCE	BUDGET		BALANCE	7/1/11	REC TO DATE	EXP TO DATE
7351 RCRDP LOAN ADMINISTRATION	59,800	59,706	94	125,400	102,695	22,705	0	0	0	2,984,699	1,621,209	162,401
TOTAL RCRDP ADMIN 0522-01	59,800	59,706	94	125,400	102,695	22,705	0	0	0	2,984,699	1,621,209	162,401
			99.84%			81.89%						
7361 REVOLVING LOAN - DEQ	0	0	0	30,000	9,795	20,205	0	0	0	13,208	12,815	9,795
TOTAL DEQ LOAN 0529-16	0	0	0	30,000	9,795	20,205	0	0	0	13,208	12,815	9,795
						32.65%						

**ITEM #4a**

CASH			
BEG CASH AT 7/1/11	PLUS TOTAL REC TO DATE	LESS TOTAL EXP TO DATE	CASH BALANCE End of Current
0	0	(215)	215
5,649	0	9,656	(4,007)
1,048,787		1,045,882	2,905
0	0	0	0
1,053,200	0	1,053,200	(0)
50,000	0	50,000	0
108,296	0	91,229	17,067
2,265,932	0	2,249,753	16,179
			99.29%
0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0
1,450	2,864	0	4,314
1,450	2,864	0	4,314

BEFORE
CASH
BALANCE
End of
Current
<u>4,443,506</u>
4,443,506
<u>16,228</u>
16,228



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## ITEM #5

**TO: CHAIRMAN BRONSON AND COMMISSIONERS RADFORD, STUTZMAN, WRIGHT, AND TREBESCH**  
**FROM: TERI MURRISON, ADMINISTRATOR**  
**DATE: SEPTEMBER 18, 2012**  
**RE: ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

### Activities

Staff has been largely occupied with administrative duties since your last meeting:

- The FY 2014 Budget Request was submitted on the extended deadline date (September 17), as was the FY 2012 Performance Measurements Report (see attached);
- A detailed memo on the requested additional FTP for the TMDL program was sent to districts and the IASCD President Kit Tillotson last week;
- A OnePlan Executive Committee meeting was held on September 18 to discuss the prospect of customizing some segments of the program for the State of Montana Extension;

### Revised Annual Meeting Schedule

After Commission consideration of a proposed meeting schedule in August, members requested revisions. As promised, attached is a Revised Regular Meeting Schedule for FY 2012.

### Fall Division Meetings

The annual Fall Division meetings will be held in October. Staff requests that the Chairman assign commissioners to represent the Commission at each meeting. The dates and locations are as follows:

Division	Date	Location
Division 1	October 26, 9:00 am	Centennial Distributing 701 W Buckles Rd, Hayden ID
Division 2	October 25, pm	Craigmont City Hall 109 E Main St, Craigmont ID
Division 3	October 9, 1:30-6:30 pm	USDA Service Center, 1805 Hwy 16, Emmett ID
Division 4	November 1, 2:30 pm	Burley Best Western Inn (I-80 Exit 208) Burley ID
Division 5	October 17, pm TBA	TBA
Division 6	October 18, 9:30 am	Rexburg Senior Citizens Center, 40 South Second, Rexburg ID



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## **State Water Plan Comment Letter**

The comment period for the updated State Water Plan closes Friday, September 21. Attached is a copy of the letter which was submitted from the Conservation Commission. You will remember that comments were initially considered in January and then again in August. Commissioners, our partners, and the public were encouraged to contact staff with concerns about the draft so that they could be incorporated into the Conservation Commission's comment letter.

Staff received no comments on the draft and our meeting schedule did not provide an opportunity for another discussion at a meeting prior to the deadline. Attached is a copy of the letter which was considered in August and finalized by staff for submission prior to the deadline.

## **Performance Measurements Report**

To be distributed via email under separate cover is a copy of the Performance Measurements Report for your information and discussion. Staff will make a verbal presentation of its contents and requests that your Board approve the report as submitted.

**ACTION:**           Accept Performance Measurements Report

### **Attachments:**

- Revised Regular Meeting Schedule for FY 2012
- Comment Letter on State Water Plan Update
- FY 2012 Performance Measurements Report (under separate cover)



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## ITEM #5

### REVISED FY 2013 REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE

Date	Location
Monday, September 24, 1:00 pm	Boise ( <i>preceding Southwest Pacific Regional Conservation District meeting 9/24-27</i> )
Thursday, October 11, 8:00 am	Boise
Thursday, Nov. 15, 4:15 pm	Idaho Falls, ( <i>Listening Session at annual IASCD Conference</i> )
Thursday, December 13, 8:00 am	Boise
TBA*	Boise
TBA*	Boise ( <i>typically held in conjunction with Ag Summit</i> )
TBA*	Boise*
Thursday, April 11, 8:00 am	Boise
Thursday, May 9, 1:00 pm	Buhl
Thursday, June 13, 8:00 am	Boise

*\*Germane committees and JFAC presentations drive Commission meeting schedule this month.*

## PART I – AGENCY PROFILE

### AGENCY OVERVIEW

The Idaho Soil Conservation Commission (SWCC) was originally created in 1939 by Idaho's soil conservation district law (Idaho Code § 22-2716, et. seq.). Idaho's water quality law designated SWCC as a lead agency on conservation programs like the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), Total Maximum Daily Load Program (TMDL) for agriculture and grazing components only), voluntary planning, and implementation of projects related to grazing and agricultural activities (Idaho Code § 39-3602). SWCC has no regulatory authority. In addition to these responsibilities, SWCC also supports voluntary conservation activities of local soil and water conservation districts and operates incentive programs to promote voluntary conservation including the Resource Conservation and Rangeland Development Program (RCRDP), which makes low interest loans to agricultural borrowers for conservation purposes (Idaho Code § 22-2730).

The SWCC is led by five commissioners appointed by the Governor: Chairman Richard Bronson, Vice Chairman Dave Radford, Secretary Roger Stutzman, and members Gerald Trebesch and H. Norman Wright, and an administrator, Teri Murrison, who reports to them. The administrator oversees 16 administrative staff and technical experts located in offices around the State (most field staff are co-located with local conservation districts within U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) field offices).

The SWCC was administratively housed at the Department of Lands until 1997, when the Legislature transferred it to the Idaho State Department of Agriculture. In 2010, the Legislature recognized the importance of the independent, non-regulatory role and services that SWCC provides as a vehicle to reduce the need for environmental regulations. In FY 2011, the Legislature renamed the Commission the Soil & Water Conservation Commission, and granted SWCC autonomy by authorizing it to enter into contracts for the proper administration of its statutory authorities. The SWCC contracts with the Department of Administration for fiscal, human resources, and information technology support.

Over the last several years, the size and capacity of SWCC has been significantly reduced: at the beginning of fiscal year (FY) 2009, the SWCC had 33 full-time and contract staff responsible for technical and administrative program delivery. By the end of FY 2010, the SWCC had 15 full-time staff and two vacancies, and in FY 2012, SWC had 16 FTPs. This reduction of personnel has significantly impacted service delivery.

### 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 Commission and local conservation districts are the primary entities to lead coordinated conservation efforts to provide landowners and land-users with assistance and solutions for natural resource concerns and issues.

### MISSION

To 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.

## VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY

The Commission is dedicated to guiding principles for each goal and related activity.

- Satisfy 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
- Promote fiscal responsibility
- Strengthen existing and build new conservation partnerships
- Incorporate valid scientific data and practices

## CORE FUNCTIONS

### DISTRICT SUPPORT AND SERVICES

The Commission provides leadership and technical and other assistance to Idaho's 50 local conservation districts as established in Title 22 Chapter 27, Idaho Code. Traditionally, the Commission has provided technical assistance to the districts in addition to disbursing annual legislative appropriations and ensuring state reporting requirements (Title 22 Chapter 27, Idaho Code; Title 39 Chapter 36, Idaho Code).

### COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION SERVICES

The Commission is required to provide and promote non-regulatory, science-based incentive programs to develop and accelerate development of voluntary conservation activities around the state. The SWCC also provides policy and program mechanisms to enhance the environmental quality and economic productivity of the state including programs that improve water quality and quantity within the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer, leading TMDL plan development related to agricultural and grazing components, assisting with planning and implementation efforts in Nitrate Priority Areas, and promoting computer-based conservation planning and reporting tools (Title 22 Chapter 27, Idaho Code; Title 39 Chapter 36, Idaho Code). A flagship program is the Resource Conservation and Rangeland Development Program, which provides low-interest loans to eligible applicants to implement resource management projects (Title 22 Chapter 27, Idaho Code).

### ADMINISTRATION

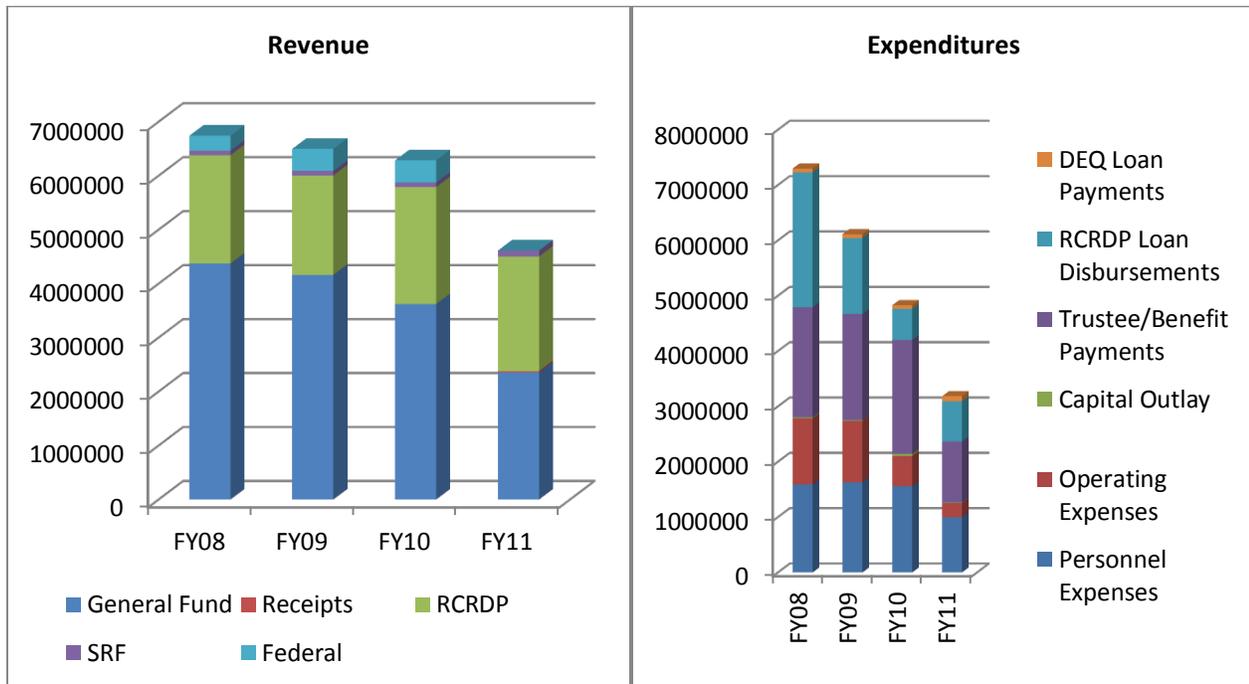
The Commission carries out and adopts measures as are necessary and proper to ensure continuity of operations and establish protocols to assist Commissioners and staff in the performance of duties. This includes the annual strategic planning process and performance reporting, along with a yearly budget that supports the annual activities of the Commission. Idaho Code authorizes the Commission to engage in rulemaking as necessary to carry out the purposes of Title 22 Chapter 27 (Title 67 Chapter 19, Idaho Code).

The Commission actively engages local, state, and federal partners, non-governmental organizations, and resource and agricultural production groups to coordinate, collaborate, and cooperate in Idaho's non-regulatory conservation efforts. Developing intergovernmental and other relationships to maximize scarce resources and harmonize non-regulatory conservation delivery with regulatory efforts is critical to meeting statewide conservation goals (Title 22 Chapter 27, Idaho Code).

GENERAL FUND REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES

Revenue	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
General Fund	4,163,800	3,621,679	2,357,740	2,265,932
Receipts	0	2,000	23,013	0
RCRDP Loan Program	1,843,881	2,169,543	2,125,270	1,621,209
SRF Loan Program	81,270	81,270	107,270	12,815
Federal Grant Funds	408,400	410,730	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,497,351</b>	<b>\$6,285,222</b>	<b>\$4,413,293</b>	<b>\$3,889,505</b>
Expenditures	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Personnel Costs	1,626,700	1,559,579	1,000,810	953,306
Operating Expenditures	1,115,900	545,622	254,052	302,787
Capital Outlay	6,500	38,278	6,340	18,761*
Trustee/Benefits (includes District Allocations & WQPA)	1,920,300	2,057,918	1,105,190	1,103,200
RCRDP Loan Disbursements	1,374,411	562,165	724,664	524,244
DEQ Loan	68,693	67,049	94,693	44,972
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,112,504</b>	<b>\$4,830,611</b>	<b>\$3,185,749</b>	<b>\$2,947,270</b>

\*capital funds for vehicle replacement encumbered in FY 2012



KEITH: These are the numbers to use in updating above tables

GF Revenue FY 2012 2,265,932

Receipts FY 2012	0
RCRDP Revenue FY 2012	\$1,621,209
SRF Revenue FY 2012	\$12,815
Federal Revenue FY 2012	0

#### Expenditures

DEQ Loan Payments	\$9,795
RCRDP Loan Disbursements	524,244
Trustee/Benefit Payments	1,103,200.28
Capital Outlay	18,761 (encumbered)
Operating Expenses	302,787
Personnel Expenses	953,306

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TRUSTEE & BENEFIT PAYMENTS chart below needs updating for FY 2012: District Allocations \$1,103,200 & \$SWCC expenditures \$1,146,553,

## DISTRICT ALLOCATIONS – BREAKDOWN BY DISTRICT

District	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Ada	\$53,664.61	\$95,187.11	\$52,196.04	\$58,500.00
Adams	10,199.85	12,876.47	12,364.67	14,280.52
Balanced Rock	14,381.96	19,977.15	16,122.53	19,901.29
Bear Lake	24,684.39	34,285.82	17,676.17	23,872.13
Benewah	10,817.66	13,806.54	12,869.60	15,035.77
Blaine	18,540.31	29,724.93	21,705.91	8,500.00
Bonner	20,322.46	29,903.79	15,054.41	18,303.66
Boundary	15,570.06	21,855.17	17,239.21	20,845.34
Bruneau River	8,916.70	11,284.55	10,830.46	12,711.94
Butte	11,992.75	15,309.91	14,811.65	21,305.75
Camas	10,223.61	12,912.25	12,384.09	14,890.53
Canyon	14,381.96	19,172.29	15,782.67	19,392.95
Caribou	16,164.11	23,757.91	19,379.10	23,023.93
Central Bingham	9,035.51	11,123.66	11,413.07	12,857.18
Clark	11,411.71	19,172.29	15,782.67	19,392.95
Clearwater	14,381.96	20,960.87	16,753.70	23,169.16
Custer	9,448.36	12,458.27	12,578.30	14,454.81
East Cassia	8,441.46	10,229.37	10,927.56	12,130.98
East Side	12,599.81	16,489.41	14,326.14	17,214.35
Elmore	12,599.81	17,383.71	14,811.65	18,231.04
District	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Franklin	28,526.29	48,257.92	29,031.51	25,381.89
Gem	19,621.29	23,643.75	13,355.12	15,761.97
Gooding	10,223.61	13,006.16	12,384.09	15,035.77
Idaho	12,599.81	18,278.00	15,297.16	18,666.75
Jefferson	11,411.71	14,700.83	13,355.12	22,297.73
Kootenai-Shoshone	13,883.11	21,408.02	16,996.45	8,500.00
Latah	30,421.31	43,318.17	28,891.48	39,000.25
Lemhi	11,649.48	14,700.83	13,355.12	15,761.97
Lewis	14,976.01	20,960.87	16,753.70	20,845.34
Madison	12,599.81	16,489.41	14,326.14	15,761.97
Minidoka	9,629.56	12,017.95	12,857.18	12,857.18
Mud Lake	10,817.66	13,806.54	12,869.60	8,500.00
Nez Perce	32,504.05	53,633.30	41,344.86	58,500.00
North Bingham	8,085.03	9,692.79	10,636.25	11,695.27
North Side	11,411.71	18,757.91	27,920.46	58,500.00
Oneida	19,134.36	25,208.27	23,987.82	25,202.52
Owyhee	8,441.46	11,123.66	10,927.56	12,130.98
Payette	15,273.04	20,066.58	14,811.65	13,583.38
Portneuf	25,694.16	35,627.26	24,567.52	32,402.03
Power	12,671.10	25,015.59	14,568.89	17,577.46
Snake River	13,787.91	18,904.00	16,996.45	21,208.44
South Bingham	7,847.41	9,335.08	10,442.05	11,404.78
Squaw Creek	12,145.36	16,131.70	13,913.45	16,197.68

<b>Teton</b>	11,649.33	15,720.32	14,070.76	16,832.38
<b>Twin Falls</b>	13,787.91	18,904.00	15,637.02	19,175.09
<b>Valley</b>	32,797.51	50,114.79	28,934.21	46,870.77
<b>Weiser River</b>	16,164.11	23,643.75	18,210.23	23,023.93
<b>West Cassia</b>	8,441.46	10,229.37	10,927.56	12,130.98
<b>West Side</b>	11,114.69	14,253.68	13,112.36	15,398.86
<b>Wood River</b>	9,035.51	12,134.95	12,384.09	15,035.77
<b>Yellowstone</b>	15,924.11	20,357.88	16,151.66	19,944.86
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$780,048.92</b>	<b>\$1,117,314.80</b>	<b>\$872,583.00</b>	<b>\$1,053,200.28</b>

### PROFILE OF KEY SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE IDAHO CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP

Foundational to the partnership is the concept that locally led conservation districts identify and inventory resource needs and make contact with landowners while the Federal Natural Resources Conservation Service and the State Conservation Commission typically provide financial and technical assistance to assist districts in achieving their goals. The Conservation Partnership has been called a “three-legged stool”, each equally necessary to sustaining ongoing voluntary conservation efforts in Idaho.

Over the past five years, working together the Idaho Conservation Partnership has provided the following key services benefitting both private land and natural resources in Idaho. The premise of the partnership, going back many years in the conservation movement, was that the locally led districts would identify the resource needs and make contact with landowners. Then the federal and state agencies would provide both financial and technical assistance to accomplish the district’s mission. The Idaho Conservation Partnership has provided key services to benefit private land and natural resources in Idaho, which is evidenced in the table above.

Key Services Provided by the Conservation Partnership	FEDERAL FY2009	FEDERAL FY2010	STATE FY2011*	STATE FY2012
Conservation systems implemented on all cropland (acres)	210,000	186,527	178,080	133,967
Conservation systems implemented on other land uses (acres)	410,000	291,162	15,687	18,855
Grazing/pasture management systems implemented (acres)	205,000	257,358	269,295	379,157
Riparian acres implemented with protection, restoration, enhancement or creation (acres)	58	72	705	1347
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) – Private agricultural land removed from tillage-induced erosion through financial incentive for a contractual time period. *	757,348	711,540		518,341**

\* Prior to state FY 2010, conservation data had been reported by federal fiscal year. Starting with state FY 2010, the SWCC will provide conservation data based upon the state fiscal year. Due to the transition, the fourth quarter data for federal FY 2009 has been included as part of the state FY 2010 data.

\*\* CRP acres are down significantly in FY 2012 due to a large number of contracts that expired and fewer new contracts were enrolled.

## FY 2012 SWCC PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

### DISTRICT SUPPORT SERVICES HIGHLIGHTS

As noted above, SWCC distributed state funding to districts in FY 2012 (\$8,500 per district in baseline funding and an additional allocation was made to each, recognizing the amount of matching funding each district was able to secure - up to a \$50,000 per district cap) as prescribed by statute. In addition, SWCC utilized unique, field-based experience to provide technical and engineering assistance to Idaho's conservation districts and private landowners to address local resource issues, and assist the State of Idaho in meeting statewide and national mandates. On the ground, the SWCC field staff worked to identify problems, determine the landowners' objectives, inventory resources, formulate alternatives, and assist with implementation activities. Many times, SWCC technical assistance and assessment is leveraged with other state and federal funding opportunities for implementation.

In recognition of SWCC's reduced staffing level and districts' reliance on SWCC for technical assistance, FY 2012's Strategic Plan called for the formation of a transparent and inclusive Technical Advisory Work Group (TAWG) to develop an allocation process to ensure the maximum efficacy of SWCC efforts. The TAWG met 10 times in FY 2012 to develop a recommendation for the allocation process including ranking criteria to be used in spring of FY 2013. The TAWG recommendation will be considered by the Commissioners in FY 2013.

In FY 2012, SWCC made transparency and cooperation with local districts a priority, and the responses to the District Survey indicate overall efforts were successful in both increasing satisfaction and reducing the number of districts dissatisfied with SWCC's services. Those satisfied or somewhat satisfied with overall SWCC services and support increased from 79% in FY 2011 to 81% in FY 2012. Those ranking their satisfaction as "neutral" went from 10% to 15%, and districts that were somewhat dissatisfied or dissatisfied in FY 2011 decreased from 10% to 4% in FY 2012.

### ANTIDEGRADATION PLANS (FIVE YEAR PLANS)

All 50 districts successfully completed the requirement to update their individual five-year plans this year. Districts considered their plans during regular public meetings and incorporated public feedback before submitting them to SWCC. SWCC technical field staff typically assists the local districts with requests to inventory and assess the resource concerns required in the plan.

## COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND RANGELAND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (RCRDP)

This program provides long-term, low-interest loans to farmers and ranchers for conservation improvements. Loans were available in FY 2012 for up to \$200,000 with interest rates of 2% to 4%, and terms up to 15 years. Projects addressed environmental issues, including but not limited to: soil and water resource conservation; efficient and beneficial use of water resources; riparian area improvement; fish and wildlife habitat restoration and preservation; and the increased agricultural productivity of croplands, pasture and hay land, rangeland, and woodland.

RCRDP Loan Program Statistics	FY2012 Totals	Program Totals
Loans Approved	12	589
Total Loan Commitments	\$664,193	\$30,786,088
Current Active RCRDP Loans	152	
Total RCRDP Principal Balance at FY 2012 Year End	\$5,702,103	

Loans approved during FY 2012 involve projects that reduced soil erosion and consumptive water use including:

- Improving irrigation efficiency by converting acres of flood irrigation to pipeline, pump, and sprinkler systems;
- Purchase of no-till or direct-seed drills to replace traditional tillage equipment;
- Installation of pumping facilities to livestock watering troughs, improving riparian areas and reducing nonpoint source pollution in waterways; and
- Reconstructing animal feeding operations that reduced nutrient, waste, and sediment runoff into streams.

After operating several years on reduced budgets and decreased loan staff hours, loan activity slowed in the RCRDP Program. To increase volume, the loan officer and loan assistant positions (which had been reduced to part time) were restored to full time positions at the end of FY 2012. This combined with extensive outreach and marketing is expected to increase the volume of applications and loan approvals for the implementation of conservation activities in FY 2013.

#### CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is designed to address water shortages within the Eastern Snake River Plain. The Program area extends from King Hill to Ashton and is approximately 250 miles long and 70 miles wide. (*See Appendix A, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Map FY 2012.*) Idaho's CREP goal is to retire up to 100,000 acres of groundwater-irrigated land. This reduction is forecasted to provide a water savings of approximately 200,000 acre-feet annually. Challenges to meeting that FY 2012 goal included:

- The economy - FY 2012's high value of commodities compared to Program annual compensation rates.
- Producers' sense of security that there is no need for water conservation due to ample groundwater available.
- Risk of loss of income due to making 15 year commitment to the Program in light of the potential for ongoing high commodity values
- Producer ineligibility due to USDA limits on average adjusted gross income (AGI).

The CREP area includes 26 local soil conservation districts, 20 Farm Service Agency county committees, and seven groundwater districts. Commission staff works closely with Farm Service Agency (FSA), Idaho Department of Water Resources, and Idaho Department of Fish & Game, Pheasants Forever, and Idaho Groundwater Users.

The Commission is the technical lead for CREP. Staff checks all enrolled fields at least once per year; however many fields are actually checked multiple times. Enrolled acres are seeded to cover of native grasses and

legumes and work towards the goal of “establishment” - permanent establishment of this vegetative cover (heavily dependent on weather patterns and other vegetative growth). In FY 2012, 11 completed contracts (327 acres) were certified established. To date, a total of 6,025 acres on 48 contracts have been certified established.

Based on acreage enrolled in FY 2012, CREP produces an estimated water savings of 34,419 acre feet per year, equivalent to average annual water consumption of 308,000 people or the amount of water used by 143 pivots covering 120 acres each for 15 years. The estimated annual power savings is 67,977,920 kilowatt hours. In addition, an estimated 137,677 tons of soil were saved due to decreased wind and water erosion. Fifty three contracts have wildlife enhancement plantings on 9,243 acres.

The summary of CREP acres enrolled by Soil Conservation District boundary as of June 30, 2012:

SCD/SWCD	Acres	# of Contracts
Blaine	80	2
Central Bingham	4,498	40
East Cassia	1,502	2
Jefferson	1,694	17
Madison	9	1
Minidoka	3,740	51
North Side	791	3
South Bingham	2,679	16
Twin Falls	43	1
West Cassia	721	3
West Side	327	6
Wood River	1,026	8
Total	17,210	157

#### IDAHO GROUNDWATER QUALITY PLAN

The SWCC encourages and facilitates voluntary implementation and outreach activities to benefit groundwater. Implementation efforts in FY 2012 were focused on Idaho’s Nitrate Priority Areas (NPAs) as designated in 2008 by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality.

In addition to SWCC’s working on the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs), several soil conservation districts and SWCC conducted public outreach in various locations throughout the state in the form of grower workshops, county fair displays, and school activities. The SWCC worked with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and six soil conservation districts located within the Twin Falls, Cassia, and Minidoka NPAs to secure funding for nutrient management (including precision agriculture) and irrigation water management through the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative. Implementation of this program began in March 2012, so performance measures will be reported next year. The total amount of acres currently enrolled in this program is 2728, with up to 2000 additional acres expected to be enrolled during the next sign-up period. (See Appendix B for a map of Groundwater and Nitrate Priority Areas within the state.)

## IDAHO ONEPLAN

Idaho OnePlan provides data and software to help growers develop a single conservation farm plan that can be pre-endorsed by the various agencies, streamlining and simplifying the regulatory process that farmers face. Idaho One Plan is a multi-agency project to combine government regulations and current best management practices for agriculture into a single plan, integrating federal, state, and local regulations for: nutrient, pest and waste management, water quality and wetlands, air quality, financial assistance, endangered species, and petroleum storage tanks. SWCC is responsible to “encourage and promote” OnePlan and convenes an annual Executive Committee meeting of agencies involved.

SWCC submitted an unfunded grant application to the NRCS National CIG grant program to significantly enhance OnePlan and include an online inventory of voluntary conservation efforts (across multiple state and federal agencies), and worked with Montana Extension to determine the possibility of customizing OnePlan components for their use. Also in FY 2012, Google maps were integrated for the Pesticide Application Recordkeeping (PAR) application. Ongoing operational funding for OnePlan remains uncertain, although participating landowners (and agencies) are said to find it useful (due to OnePlan’s protection of landowner-related statistics, quantitative data on usage can’t be reported).

## TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOADS (TMDL) PROGRAM

The Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) requires that states restore and maintain the integrity of the nation’s waters. Pursuant to section 303 of the CWA, states are to adopt water quality standards necessary to protect fish, shellfish, and wildlife while providing for recreation in and on the waters whenever possible. Section 303(d) of the CWA establishes the requirements for states to identify and prioritize water bodies that do not meet beneficial uses. For impaired waters identified on this list, states must establish a total maximum daily load (TMDL) for the pollutants, the maximum level of pollutants that can exist in a water body and still meet water quality standards. (*See Appendix C – Idaho TMDL Agricultural Implementation Plan Map FY 2012.*)

After much negotiation, in 2002 a settlement agreement was reached between the EPA, the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and several environmental groups that filed a Complaint alleging that EPA failed to undertake nondiscretionary duties imposed by section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act (“CWA”), 33 U.S.C. § 1313(d). They claimed that the EPA failed to comply with CWA § 303(d), which relates to the establishment of Total Maximum Daily Loads (“TMDLs”) for water quality limited segments identified pursuant to the CWA, for the State of Idaho. As a result of the settlement agreement, the DEQ was required to address 303(d) listed waterbodies pursuant to the schedule outlined in the agreement.

The SWCC is the designated agency responsible for implementation plans relative to grazing and agricultural activities. It generates Agricultural TMDL Implementation Plans for 303(d) listed water bodies as an ongoing process in cooperation with the DEQ. SWCC also contributes updated data for 5-year reviews of Subbasin Assessments (SBA) and TMDLs. Technical field staff provides assistance to local conservation districts on implementation projects and activities, and facilitates an interagency coordination and planning committee.

It takes approximately a year and a half to complete a TMDL implementation plan from start to finish. This includes the time it takes to review and provide comments on DEQ’s draft SBA-TMDLs, to conduct field inventories and stream assessments, to write the implementation plan, and to present and modify the plan with input from local soil conservation districts.

### WATER QUALITY PROGRAM FOR AGRICULTURE (WQPA)

The WQPA was created to protect and enhance the quality and value of Idaho's waters by controlling and abating water pollution from agricultural nonpoint sources. This program, unfortunately inactivated in FY 2012 due to lack of funding, provided cost-share assistance to conservation districts implementing water quality projects with local cooperators. WQPA was a valuable financing mechanism for implementation projects under the TMDL Program. The SWCC selected projects for funding, evaluated program effectiveness in reducing agricultural nonpoint source pollution, provided technical assistance, and supported conservation districts in further planning and implementation. (See *Appendix D – Water Quality Program for Agriculture Map*).

Over the past 12 years, WQPA implementation projects have generated impressive results: the conservation partnership (state, local, and federal partners) has treated over 638,457 acres or 997 square miles in the state. The financial partnership and matching effort has been huge, as well: landowners have contributed \$9,537,388, the state has matched \$8,726,408, and the federal government has contributed \$5,774,183. The total of combined funding dedicated to WQPA projects over the last 12 years is over \$25,000,000!

In FY 2012, SWCC distributed the last of available funds to 5 conservation districts located in 5 different WQPA priority areas. Local efforts included completing 4 contracts for conservation planning activities and the implementation of best management practices (BMPs) to improve agricultural operations and resource conditions. The SWCC expended \$132,105, landowners contributed \$62,738, and the federal government contributed \$105,848, for a total of \$300,591 in conservation dollars implemented on WQPA efforts in FY 2012.

The result of the WQPA investment in FY 2012 was the treatment of 29,672 critical acres including:

- 48,367 feet of fencing
- 11,741 acres of cropland with a nutrient management plan
- 9,784 acres of residue management
- 39 watering facilities

### ADMINISTRATION HIGHLIGHTS

#### STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE (FY 2013-2016)

SWCC initiated an inclusive, transparent process to update the Strategic Plan in March 2012. District representatives and other partners participated in an ad hoc advisory committee that reviewed staff recommended updates and proposed additional updates for consideration. Most changes were minor, however, FY 2012-2015's Goal #3, Administration, was eliminated from the Strategic Plan and Goal #3, Communication and Outreach Services, was added. Objectives and Performance Measurements were added for Partner Participation (to engage districts and other partners in public meetings, planning processes), External and Internal Outreach (to inform and educate the public, partners, and others (Legislature, Executive Branch, staff, etc.) on SWCC activities, Intergovernmental Relations (to facilitate non-regulatory, voluntary, and locally-led conservation activities by and between the SWCC and local, state, and federal agencies), and Collaboration with stakeholders (IASCD, IDEA, etc.) to achieve SWCC's mission.

One of the external factors affecting results in the SWCC Strategic Plan is "required budget cuts". Since the FY 2010 strategic plan was adopted, the SWCC has experienced approximately 50% decrease in available state general funds and permanent full time staff has been reduced correspondingly. As a result, during FY 2011 SWCC worked through a collaborative process with districts and other conservation partners to identify and make the best use of available staff and resources. While there was considerable negotiation over the content of that

Strategic Plan, FY 2012's update was negotiated over the course of two meetings with partners. Subsequently, SWCC received no negative comments about the proposed update and it was adopted unanimously in June 2012.

## PART II – PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS

New Performance Measures were established with the adoption of the FY 2012-2015 Strategic Plan and updated in the FY 2013-2016 Strategic Plan.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	Benchmarks 2013
<b>District Support &amp; Services</b>					
Number of Surveys Received	N/A	51 of 51	49 of 50	47 of 50	50 of 50
Survey Results					
- Satisfied		22%	22%	32%	36%
- Somewhat Satisfied		37%	57%	44%	49%
- Neutral		20%	10%	14%	10%
- Somewhat Dissatisfied		20%	8%	4 %	5%
- Dissatisfied		2%	2%	0%	0%
Assist with five-year plans	N/A	51	50	50	50
Technical Assistance <sup>1</sup> :	N/A				
- # of districts w/projects		37	31	35	35
- # of new projects		59	42	47	47
- # of ongoing projects		62	50	45	45
- # of landowners served		942	812	271	271
<b>Comprehensive Conservation Programs</b>					
CREP					
- Total Contracts	159	158	161	157	175
- Total Acres	18,189	17,422	17,457	17,210	18,500
- Certified Contracts	7	23	10	48	9
- Certified Acres	685	4,239	725	4,000	1,000
Groundwater/Nitrate Priority Areas	N/A				
- Acres Treated		39,855 <sup>2</sup>	49,320	40,606	49,300
- Nitrates Reduced (lbs)		115,910	254,105	151,020	255,100
- Phosphorus Reduced (lbs)		20,167	24,200	28,677	25,000
- Sediment Reduced (tons)		121,865	128,367	144,482	128,300
RCRDP Loan Program					
- # of new loans	13	12	17	12	21
- Total \$ conservation projects	\$924,701	\$790,864	\$1,116,908	\$664,193	\$1,300,000

<sup>1</sup> The Commission began conducting a district assessment and ranking along with a workload analysis of Commission staff in FY 2012. These numbers will adjust in next year's report.

<sup>2</sup> FY 2010 NPA measures were inaccurate and corrected in FY 2011 PMR.

TMDL Ag Implementation Plans (subject to DEQ priorities)	N/A	10 Completed 15 in Progress 35 Pending	4 Completed 16 In Progress 38 Pending	3 completed 23 in progress 30 pending	Complete 7 13 In Progress Initiate <sup>3</sup> 5 Pending
WQPA - Ongoing Priority Areas - Completed Priority Areas - Acres Treated	N/A	19 3 18,337	13 5 6,400	13 13 29,672	N/A
<b>Administration</b>					
Communications <sup>4</sup> - Website (Total Visitor Hits) - Facebook (Total impressions) - Twitter (# of tweets)	N/A	N/A	N/A	321,588 8,387 N/A*	320,000 10,000 75

\*not activated due to staffing constraints

## PART III: ADDITIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### GOAL #1: DISTRICT SUPPORT SERVICES

#### OBJECTIVE # 1.1: PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO DISTRICTS

- SWCC technical staff assisted local conservation districts with 47 new and 45 ongoing projects. The value of these projects totaled \$6,615,102. Conducted hearing to consider unmet needs of 26 participating districts based on district budgets, budget requests, programs and work plans. Prioritized Unmet Needs for funding were valued by the districts at \$3,437,335. Priority 1 funding needs totaled \$804,825, Priority 2 funding needs totaled \$2,183,610, and Priority 3 needs totaled \$448,900. Staffed process (Technical Advisory Work Group, or TAWG) to rank and prioritize district applications for technical assistance. Conducted 10 meetings over 4 months.

#### OBJECTIVE # 1.2: DISTRICT ALLOCATIONS

- Convened workgroup in October 2011 to review Financial & Match Reports and make recommendation to Commission. Base allocations to districts distributed in July 2011. Match allocations distributed to districts in October 2011.

#### OBJECTIVE # 1.3: DISTRICT CAPACITY BUILDING

- Delivered District Supervisor Handbook draft to IASCD for finalization and distribution in late October 2011. Awarded capacity building funding to 40 districts for outreach activities and to four Northern Idaho districts to attend grant training and train other districts at IASCD convention or other regional venues. Participated in IDEA report training in Division 5 and staff participated in a district administrator training at the IASCD annual convention in November. Provided training in November 2011 IASCD annual conference on intergovernmental coordination. Prepared draft coordination resolutions for

<sup>3</sup> Pending plans and addendums are subject to DEQ priorities and may affect projected numbers for FY 2013.

<sup>4</sup> New benchmark for FY 2012.

district and SWCC use (January 2012). Put on hold to work with sister agencies to establish clear understanding and agreement on roles and statutory authority.

## GOAL #2: COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION SERVICES

### OBJECTIVE # 2.1: INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

#### 2.1.1 RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND RANGELAND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (RCRDP).

- Established Loan Committee and held 3 meetings in spring 2012 to review and propose changes to loan policies and processes to ensure continued accountability and recommend improvements. Application forms redesigned and flyers designed for interim marketing purposes (pending development of marketing plan). On Committee recommendation, Commission granted staff authority to approve loans up to \$50,000. Began outreach to SWCC staff and districts in November 2011 (Northern Idaho), also targeted active geographic regions with flyers and presentations by SWC technical staff at monthly district meetings. Committee appointed in spring 2012 to develop recommendation to Commission for SWCC District Incentive compensation for funded referrals.

#### 2.1.2 STATE REVOLVING FUND

- Administered one existing loan. Assessed and reported to Commission that potential to increase administered loans is limited.

#### 2.1.3 WATER QUALITY PROGRAM FOR AGRICULTURE (WQPA)

- Finalized program obligations, processed remaining pre-approved projects in 13 priority areas (submitted by Burley, several Northern Idaho, Valley, and Idaho districts) resulting in \$ 132,388 spent in FY 2012 (\$83,388 encumbered from FY 2011 and \$50,000 pre-approved for FY 2012) with remaining funds by June 30, 2012. Reported to Commission in spring 2012 that future program funding opportunities are not evident.

#### 2.1.4 CONSERVATION IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

- Evaluated feasibility of continuing program. Reported to Commissioners that future funding has not been identified and will likely not be available in the foreseeable future due to the economy and budget constraints.

#### 2.1.5 WORKING LANDSCAPES CONSERVATION PROGRAM

- No work in FY 2012.

### OBJECTIVE # 2.2: CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

#### 2.2.1 CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (CREP)

- Initial investigation of feasibility of enhancing Idaho OnePlan for interagency data sharing and reporting was conducted (and an unsuccessful grant application submitted in January 2012 to NRCS).

#### 2.2.2 TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOADS (TMDL)

- Initiated TMDL deliverables schedule update for delivery in August 2012 to incorporate into annual Overall Work Plan (OWP), field staff conducted annual meetings with six DEQ regional offices to coordinate TMDL activities, completed 3 TMDL Ag Plans (total 85 to date), 23 plans or addendums were

in progress, provided field assistance, data analysis, technical writing for two 5-year reviews, initiated work on 8 plans or addendums upon EPA approval, worked on 47 new and 45 ongoing projects

#### 2.2.3 IDAHO GROUNDWATER QUALITY PLAN

- SWCC was directly involved in treating 40,606 acres with best management practices (BMPs) including nutrient management, irrigation water management, sprinkler and drip irrigation systems, sediment ponds, and direct seed that will directly benefit ground water quality and surface water quality. The WQPA and DEQ's §319 non-point source grant program helped fund implementation. The estimated total reductions to pollutants were:
  - 151,020 pounds of nitrates eliminated
  - 28,677 pounds of phosphorus eliminated
  - 144,482 tons of sediment erosion reduced

The SWCC worked with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and six soil conservation districts within the Twin Falls, Cassia, and Minidoka Nutrient Priority Areas to secure funding for nutrient management (including precision agriculture) and irrigation water management through the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative. Implementation began in March 2012, so performance measures will be reported next year. The total amount of acres currently enrolled is 2728, with up to 2000 additional acres expected to be enrolled the next sign-up period.

#### 2.2.4 IDAHO AGRICULTURAL POLLUTION ABATEMENT PLAN

- Met with DEQ staff regarding potential updates to Best Management Practices (BMP) for Ag Abatement Plan and reconvening BMP Technical Review Committee.

#### 2.2.5 IDAHO ONEPLAN

- Conducted annual Executive Committee meeting with stakeholders in May 2012. Met with private individuals interested in enhancing water quality reporting capabilities in late 2011 on possibility of submitting grant proposal. Developed conceptual proposal in January 2012 to enhance Idaho OnePlan online conservation planner (not funded by NRCS). Worked with representative of Montana Extension to prepare a scope of work and proposal to customize OnePlan components for use in Montana. Scheduled presentation to Commission on potential for enhancements, ongoing funding, and operation for July 2012.

#### 2.2.6 CARBON SEQUESTRATION

- No activity in FY 2012. No funding sources identified.

#### 2.2.7 WATERSHED IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

- Received no requests to oversee creation and discontinuance of watershed improvement districts as provided for in statute. Conducted research to determine applicability of utilizing watershed improvement districts as funding mechanisms for district projects and programs, reported outcome (districts can contact one of approximately nine watershed improvement districts that have taxing authority to partner on projects).

## GOAL #3: ADMINISTRATION

### OBJECTIVE # 3.1: STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Leadership team met in July 2011 (and ongoing in FY 2012), developed principles to guide planning efforts, goals, and objectives. Worked with partners to draft and adopt FY 2012-2015 Strategic Plan. Conducted multi-stakeholder meeting to review revisions to draft. Adopted FY 2012-2015 Strategic Plan on August 30, 2011. Distributed annual district and partner survey in April 2012. Adopted FY 2012 Performance Measurements Report August 30, 2012. Convened advisory team of partners to advise on Strategic Plan update in April 2012. Received recommendation on updated FY 2013-2016 Strategic Plan, adopted by SWCC on June 5, 2012. Reported to germane committees in February 2012 (House and Senate Agricultural Affairs Committees, House and Senate Environment and Resource Committees). SWCC was not required to submit an updated Information Technology Plan in FY 2012.

### OBJECTIVE # 3.2: ANNUAL BUDGET & OVERALL WORK PLAN

- Prepared and submitted annual budget request on September 1, 2011. Leadership Team prepared multiple iterations of SWCC staff workload analyses between October 2011 and June 2012 in preparation for new technical assistance allocation process. Leadership team developed new time coding system to track expenditures and personnel time spent on district assistance, programs and projects, communication, and administration. Leadership team developed draft OWP for FY 2013 that contains project management work flow requirements, objectives, and budget details associated with programs and activities.

### Objective # 3.3: Statutes, Rules, and Policies

#### 3.3.1 RULEMAKING

- Loan Committee convened to evaluate program policies and procedures and will determine in FY 2013 the need for further rulemaking. Presented pending rule for allocation of funds to conservation districts before germane committees in January 2012. Rule adopted and codified in January 2012.

#### 3.3.2 COMMISSION PROTOCOLS

- Templates created and informal guidelines established in August 2012 for Commission agenda preparation and distribution no later than one week prior to Commission meetings. Policy established for agenda distribution.

### OBJECTIVE # 3.4: EXTERNAL RELATIONS

#### 3.4.1 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Held 12 public SWCC meetings in FY 2012, provided timely online access to agendas and where feasible, supporting documentation for Commission meetings. Utilized live audio streaming for approximately 6 Commission meetings, investigated and purchased video conferencing equipment to conduct video conference meetings to increase district and public participation in FY 2013.

#### 3.3.2 COMMUNICATIONS.

- Development of Communication Plan scheduled for FY 2013.

### 3.3.3 INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

- Considered adoption of draft Commission coordination resolution and policies in February 2012. Tabled to work with other state agencies to determine statutory authority overlap and roles first. Provided training on intergovernmental coordination to districts and Commission staff at IASCD annual conference in November 2011. Participated in natural resource groups and processes including Idaho Environmental Forum (attended 3 meetings – BLM, USFS, and Senator Crapo briefing – in spring 2012), NRCS meetings including Quarterly Partnership (April 2012), NRCS Blowing Dust management meeting (May 2012), Office of Species Conservation Sage Grouse Task Force meeting (April 2012) to focus attention on the roles, policies, and plans of the Commission and districts to attract partners and resources.

### 3.4.4 COLLABORATION

- Collaborated with non-governmental organizations including the Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts (IASCD) (2 Board meetings), the Idaho District Employees Association (IDEA) (2 Board meetings), and others to advance on the ground conservation in Idaho. Worked with IDEA to co-sponsor report training at IASCD annual Conference and at regional training in Pocatello (spring 2012). Met with representatives of Idaho Farm Bureau regarding Strategic Plan, presented RCRDP program information to industry groups (November 2011). Attended multiple district tours, events, and visited projects with districts and field staff (Madison, Franklin, Bear Lake, Latah, Portneuf, Blaine, Benewah, Custer, West and East Cassia, Butte, etc.) and Administrator attended district meetings (Madison, Bear Lake, Latah, Blaine, Benewah, Bruneau, Northside, Balanced Rock, Twin Falls, Gooding, Ada, Canyon, Owyhee, Bonner, Boundary, etc.), all staff attended annual IASCD Conference in November 2011, selected staff attended all six Division meetings around the state in October 2011 and April 2012, staff regularly assigned to attend all district meetings.

## OBJECTIVE # 3.5: COMMISSION ADMINISTRATION

### 3.5.1 COMMISSIONERS

- Staffed 12 regular and special Commission meetings to provide assistance to Commissioners in carrying out their responsibilities. Implemented videoconferencing system with SWCC staff, Commissioners, and interested stakeholders in June 2012.

### 3.5.2 STAFFING AND RETENTION

- Conducted workload analysis in March – June 2012. Prepared staffing plan to maintain statewide presence by strategically locating personnel and resources March – June 2012. Conducted annual all-staff meeting for training and development in July 2011. Technical field staff attended an average of 4 trainings each throughout the year. Administrative staff attended an average of two trainings each. Evaluated compa-ratio survey of existing positions with other state agencies in April 2012. Determined adjustments may be appropriate for up to six staff members, but funding is not available to implement.

### 3.5.3 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- Loan Committee convened to recommend development of new policies, forms, and online application process in April 2012 and continues to meet (held 3 meetings in FY 2012). Recommend for FY 2012-2015 in consultation with the Office of the Chief Information Officer. Initial meetings held in winter 2012 to determine feasibility of updating and enhancing Idaho OnePlan in accordance with the Commission's Information Technology Plan. Update and enhancements are on hold pending identification of funding.

Staff began update of Tracker (software in use since 1998 to keep track of SWCC voluntary conservation activities) in fall of 2011. Data will be incorporated into OnePlan when funding is secured. Video conferencing system was purchased in June 2012 to enable better communication with staff and partners and to limit travel time for field staff to attend meetings (district and SWCC).

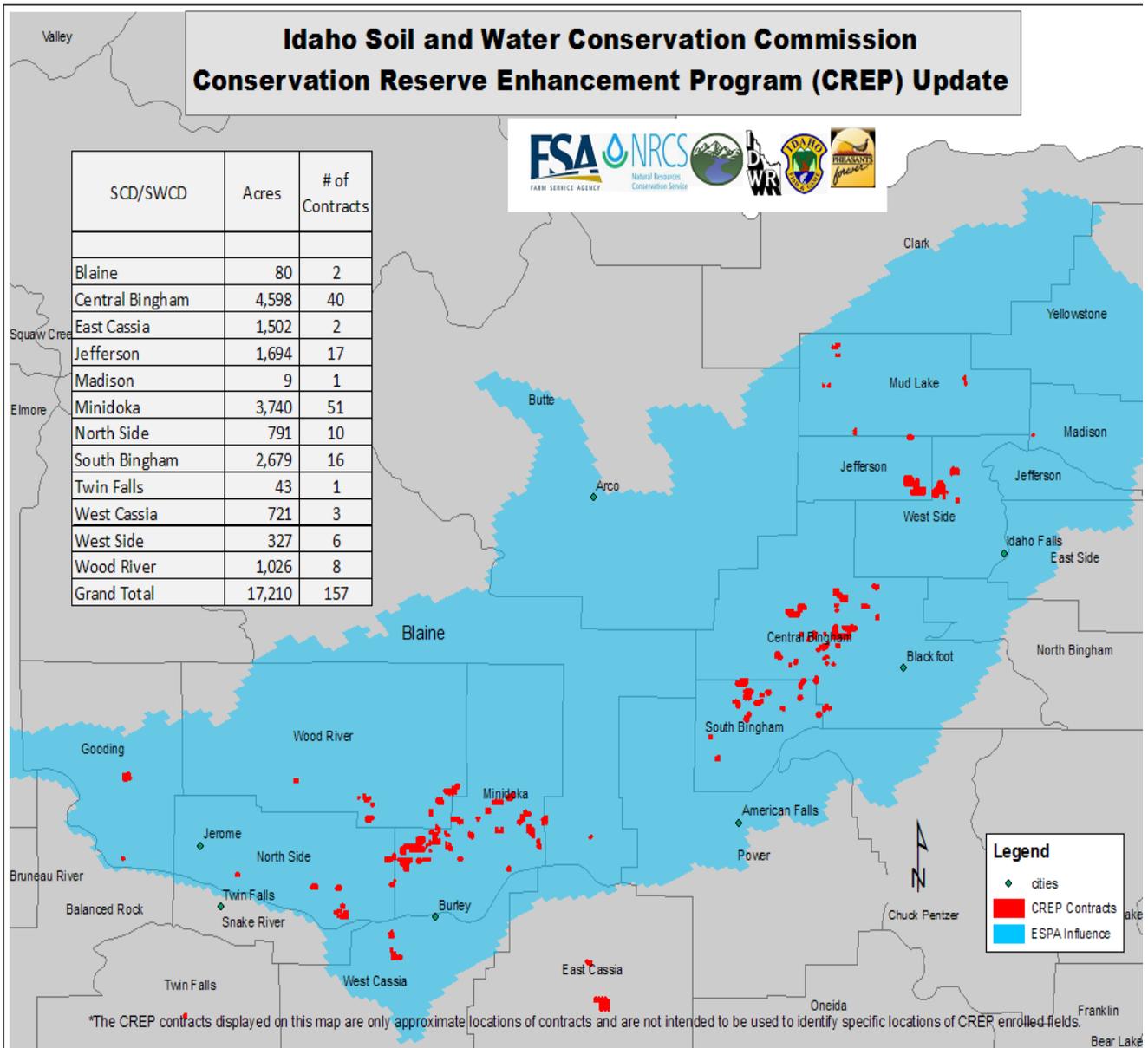
#### 3.5.4 FLEET MANAGEMENT

- Draft vehicle usage policies were circulated to staff for comment in June 2012.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Teri Murrison, Administrator  
Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission  
650 West State Street, Room 145  
Boise, ID 83720-0083  
Phone: (208) 332-1790  
Fax: (208) 332-1799  
E-mail: [Teri.Murrison@swc.idaho.gov](mailto:Teri.Murrison@swc.idaho.gov)

# APPENDIX A – CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM MAP FY 2012



# APPENDIX B – GROUNDWATER/NITRATE PRIORITY AREA MAP FY 2012

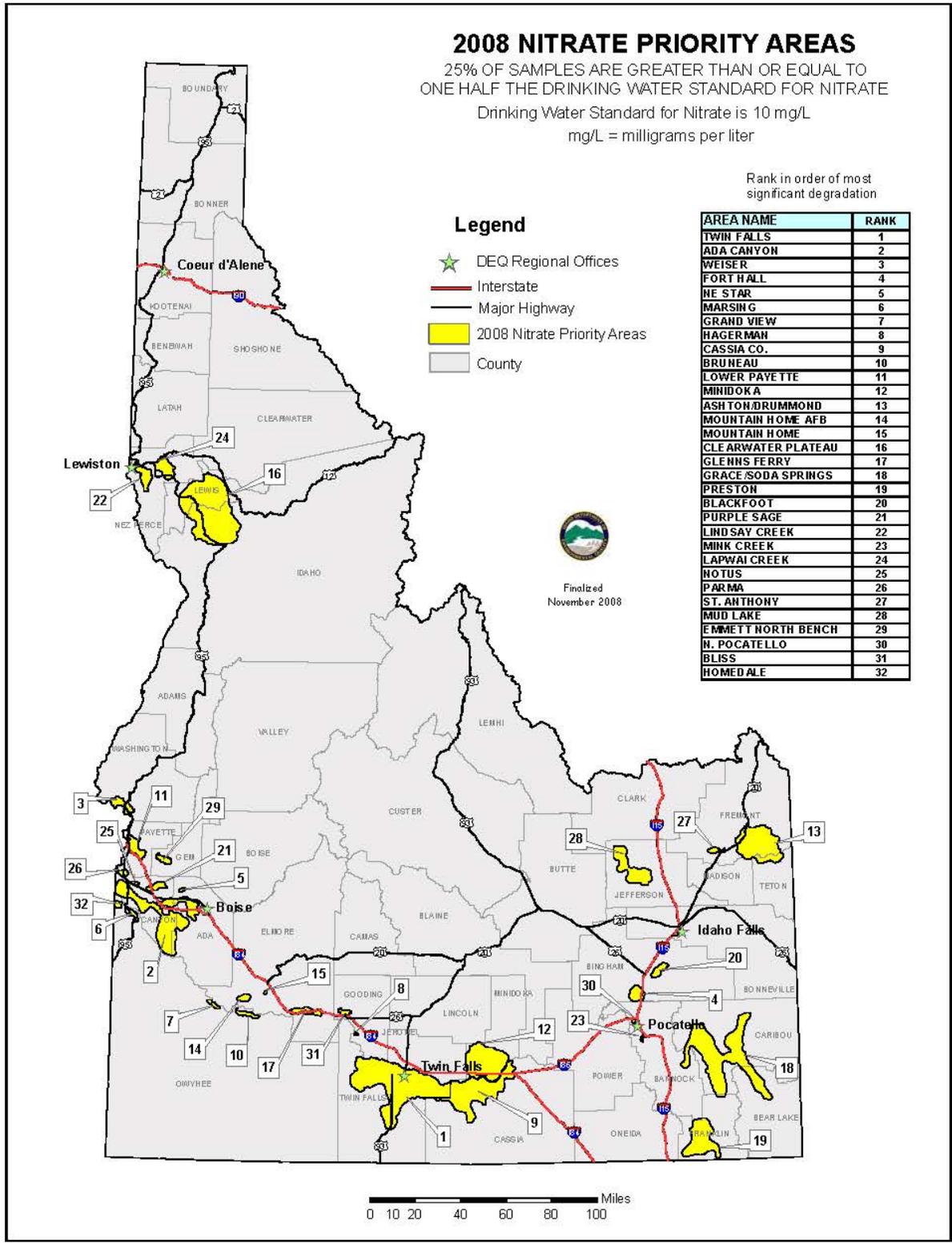
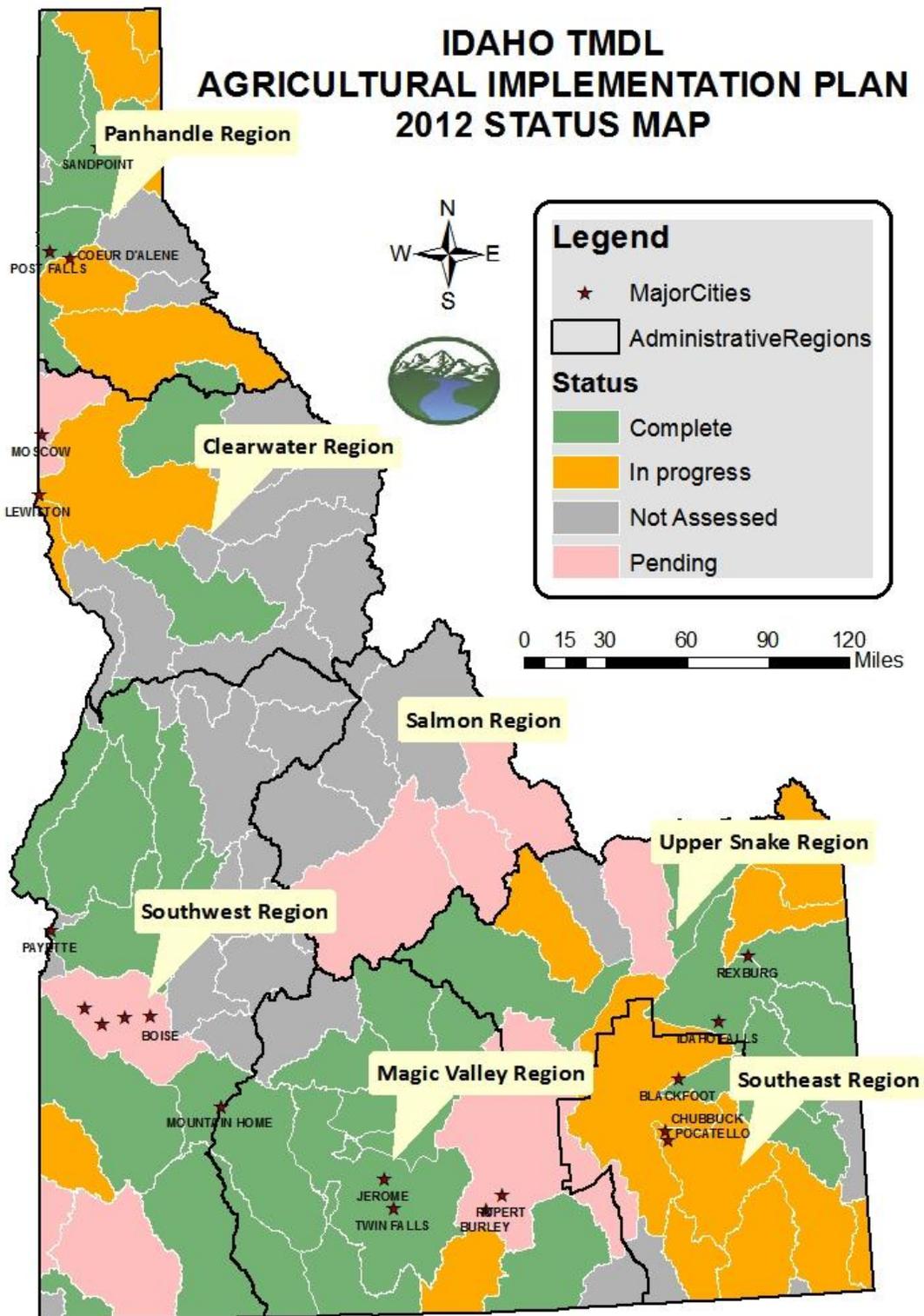
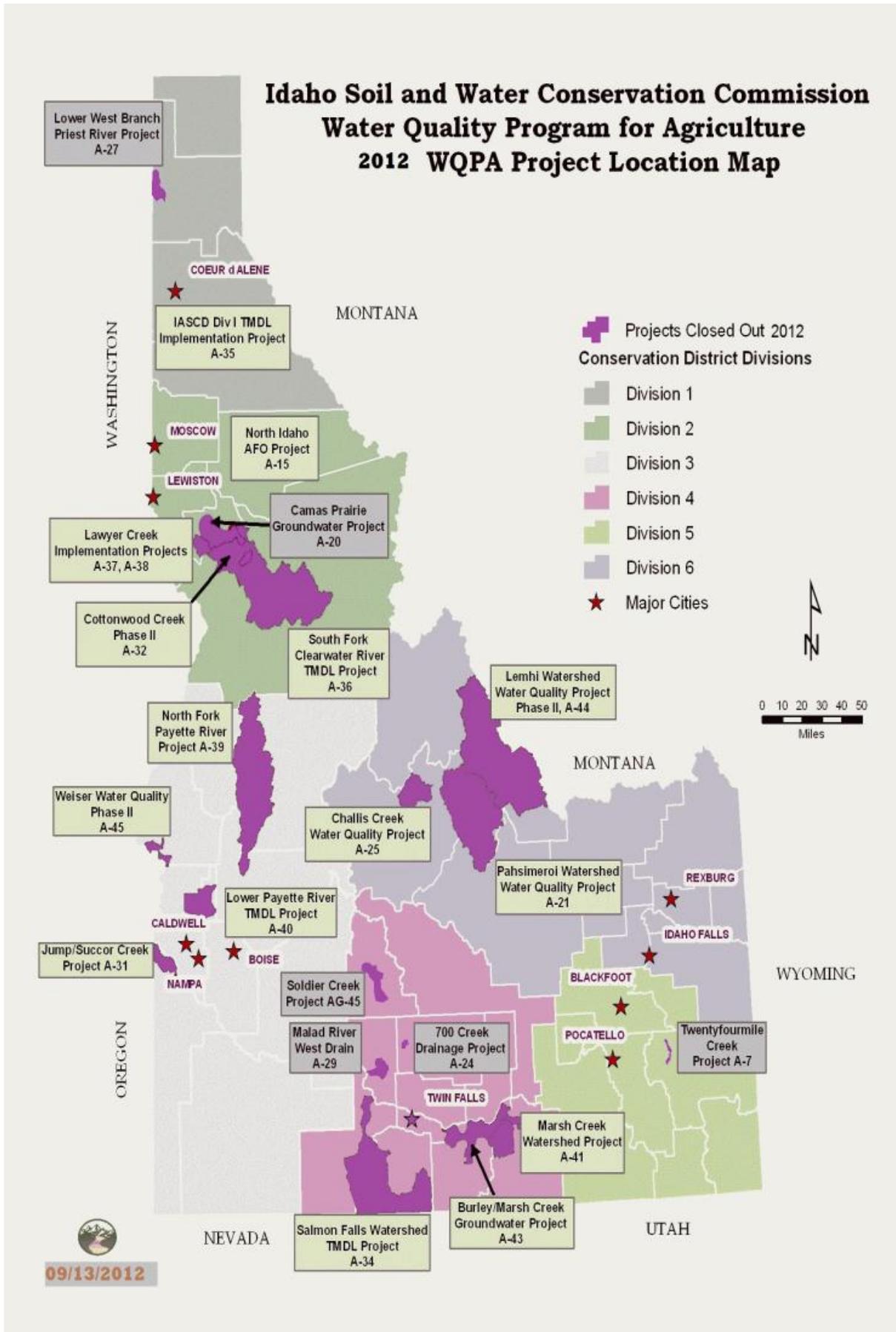


Figure 2. 2008 Nitrate Priority Areas statewide with the ranked list.



APPENDIX D – WATER QUALITY PROGRAM FOR AGRICULTURE MAP FY 2012





# Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission

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## MEMO

**TO:** IDWR Water Plan Subcommittee  
**FROM:** Teri Murrison, Administrator  
**DATE:** January 9, 2012  
**RE:** Comments re Conservation element of Draft Water Plan

The Commission appreciates the opportunity to provide input to the Subcommittee in its important work to update the Idaho Water Plan. To provide context for our specific comments below, it will be helpful to refer to Idaho Code § 22-27.

Within that Section, the Legislature states it's in the best interest of the state of Idaho:

*“(3)(c) That soil conservation districts, as governmental subdivisions, and the state soil and water conservation commission, as a state agency, 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; ... and*

*(e) That soil conservation districts and the state soil and water conservation commission lead nonregulatory efforts to conserve, sustain, improve and enhance Idaho's private and state lands and to provide assistance to private landowners and land users to plan, develop and implement conservation plans addressing soil, water, air, plant and animal resources...”*

The Commission and Idaho's 50 locally led conservation districts are nonregulatory and work closely with regulatory agencies to coordinate voluntary conservation of multiple resources, including water. Upon review, it appears that portions of the Draft should be made consistent with Idaho Code § 22-27.

We have highlighted some of the sections of the Draft where the roles of the Commission and local conservation districts should be referenced. We encourage the Subcommittee and IDWR to consider revising the Draft's policies and implementation strategies as specified and as is otherwise necessary to attain consistency with statute.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to weigh in. Please let me know if we can help further.

The following are specific comments:

### **POLICY 2A – WATER USE EFFICIENCY**

1. Insert the following statement after the third sentence of the Discussion section:

*“The Soil and Water Conservation Commission and local conservation districts have been granted the power to lead non-regulatory water conservation works by developing comprehensive plans and carrying on works of improvement for the conservation, development, utilization, and disposal of water within the district (Idaho Code §§ 22-2718 and 22-2722).”*

2. The sixth sentence of the Discussion section states “As water efficiencies increase, conserved water may be available to supply existing uses, new demands, or improve instream flows” which appears to contradict Idaho Code § 42-223. Given that Idaho Code provides that no water right shall be lost or forfeited for nonuse resulting from water conservation practices, how can conserved water be available for new demands?



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## **POLICY 2B – FEDERALLY LISTED SPECIES AND STATE SPECIES OF GREATEST CONSERVATION NEED**

1. Revise first sentence on page 11 to state “It is in the interest of the public for the Idaho Water Resource Board to coordinate its planning with the development of local and regional conservation strategies...”
2. Include the following with the bullet list of Implementation Strategies:

“Coordinate with the Office of Species Conservation, with the Soil and Water Conservation Commission, and local conservation districts—the state and local government entities which have been granted primary responsibility for providing assistance to private landowners and land users in the conservation of Idaho’s natural resources (Idaho Code § 22-2716)—to develop and implement integrated water, soil, habitat, and species conservation plans.”

## **POLICY 2D – STATE PROTECTED RIVER SYSTEM**

1. Revise first sentence of second paragraph to read:

“Although rivers can be protected under the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, it is the policy of the Idaho Water Resource Board to protect streams and rivers through the Comprehensive State Water Planning process...”

This wording will provide IDWR with better negotiating leverage with the federal agencies via the coordination process.

2. Under Implementation Strategies:

“Coordinate with state and federal agencies, local conservation districts, and stakeholders to identify potential minimum stream flow needs.”

## **POLICY 2E – RIPARIAN HABITAT AND WETLANDS**

1. Insert the following statements after the last sentence of the second paragraph of the Discussion section:

“The Soil and Water Conservation Commission is the designated agency for the planning and implementation of treatments to protect and improve water quality in watersheds impacted by agricultural and grazing activities (Idaho Code § 39-3601 et. seq.). The Soil and Water Conservation Commission and local conservation districts are the State entities with authority to develop and implement comprehensive, non-regulatory, locally-led conservation strategies to maintain, improve, and enhance Idaho’s riparian habitats and wetlands (Idaho Code § 22-2716).”

## **2F – STREAM CHANNEL REHABILITATION**

1. Add the following statement to the Discussion section:

“The Soil and Water Conservation Commission and local conservation districts are the primary entities for planning and implementing voluntary, non-regulatory practices to remediate past stream channel damage and to prevent further damage caused by agricultural or grazing activities (Idaho Code § 22-2716).”



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2. Add the following bullet to Implementation Strategies:

- Coordinate planning (including inventory and analyses), prioritization, and implementation activities with soil conservation districts and the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission.

## **2H – FLOOD HAZARD AREAS**

1. Insert the following statement after the fifth sentence of the Discussion section:

“Watershed Improvement Districts have authority to develop comprehensive plans, levy assessments and construct, operate, and maintain structures for the prevention of flood damage and the conservation, development, utilization and disposal of water in the watersheds of this state (Idaho Code § 42-3701, et. seq.). The Soil and Water Conservation Commission is the designated agency to oversee creation of Watershed Improvement Districts throughout the state (Idaho Code § 42-3705).”

## **2I- FLOOD DAMAGE REDUCTION LEVEE REGULATION**

1. Add the following statement to the list of Implementation Strategies (see Code sections below):

“Coordinate with the Soil and Water Conservation Commission and local conservation districts during development of a state levee safety program in order to provide that local economic, social and environmental concerns are addressed during safety program development.”

Idaho Code § 22-2722 grants Soil Conservation Districts the power to:

- Carry out preventive and control measures and works of improvement for flood prevention on any lands within the district upon obtaining the consent of the owner of such lands, and on lands owned or controlled by the state or any of its agencies, with the cooperation of the agency administering and having jurisdiction thereof (§ 22-2722(3));
- Construct, improve, operate and maintain such structures as may be necessary or convenient for the performance of any of the operations authorized in this chapter (§ 22-2722(7));
- Develop comprehensive plans for flood protection (§ 22-2722(8)), and to;
- Take over, by purchase, lease, or otherwise, and to administer any flood prevention located within its boundaries, to manage any flood prevention project within its boundaries, and to act as agent for this state or any of its agencies in connection with the acquisition, construction, operation, or administration of any flood prevention project within its boundaries (§ 22-2722(9)).

Idaho Code § 22-2718 confers upon the Soil and Water Conservation Commission the responsibility to:

- Offer appropriate assistance to the supervisors of conservation districts in the carrying out of any of their powers (§ 22-2718(4)(a)), and to;
- Secure the cooperation and assistance of the United States and any of its agencies, and of the agencies of this state, in the work of such districts (§ 22-2718(4)(d)).

Idaho Code § 22-2716(3) declares that it is in the best interest of the state of Idaho to establish policies for cooperative working relationships between local soil conservation districts, the state Soil and Water Conservation Commission, local, state and federal agencies and public and private groups to plan, develop and implement conservation goals and initiatives.



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## **6A – HABITAT CONSERVATION PLANS**

1. Add the following to the list of Implementation Strategies:

“Coordinate with the Soil and Water Conservation Commission and local conservation districts during the development and implementation of habitat conservation projects and plans.”

## **PAGE 45 – PACIFIC COAST SALMON RESTORATION FUND**

1. Add the following to the list of Implementation Strategies:

“Coordinate with local conservation districts during the development and implementation of projects to improve instream flows, increase the quantity and quality of fish habitat, and contribute to the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the state and its citizens.”



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September 18, 2012

Chairman Peter Van Der Meulen  
Idaho Water Resource Board  
ATTN: SWP  
PO Box 83720  
Boise, ID 83720-0098

Re: Comments on State Water Plan Update

Dear Chairman Van Der Meulen:

The Conservation Commission appreciates the opportunity to provide input to the Subcommittee. To provide context for our comments below it will be helpful to the Committee to refer to Idaho Code § 22-27. Within that Section, the Legislature stated that it's in the best interest of the state of Idaho:

*"(3)(c) That soil conservation districts, as governmental subdivisions, and the state soil and water conservation commission, as a state agency, 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; ... and*

*(e) That soil conservation districts and the state soil and water conservation commission lead non-regulatory efforts to conserve, sustain, improve and enhance Idaho's private and state lands and to provide assistance to private landowners and land users to plan, develop and implement conservation plans addressing soil, water, air, plant and animal resources..."*

It appears that portions of the draft are inconsistent with Idaho Code § 22-27. We encourage the subcommittee and IDWR to examine and revise the Draft Water Plan policies and implementation strategies accordingly.

The following are further comments and suggestions

## **POLICY 2A – WATER USE EFFICIENCY**

**Suggestions:** Insert the following statement after the third sentence of the Discussion section:

*"The Soil and Water Conservation Commission and local conservation districts have been granted the power to lead non-regulatory water conservation works by developing comprehensive plans and carrying on works of improvement for the conservation, development, utilization, and disposal of water within the district (Idaho Code §§ 22-2718 and 22-2722)."*

Additionally, the Legislature provides funds for low interest loans for equipment and projects which have conservation benefits via the Resource Conservation and Rangeland Development Program (RCRDP) administered by the Conservation Commission. We suggest including the RCRDP as an implementation strategy and including the number of loans funded as a milestone.

**Comment:** The fifth sentence of the Discussion section states "As water efficiencies increase, conserved water may be available to supply existing uses, new demands, or improve instream flows" which appears to contradict Idaho Code § 42-223. Given that Idaho Code provides that no water right shall be lost or forfeited for nonuse resulting from water conservation practices, how can conserved water be available for new demands?



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## **POLICY 2B – FEDERALLY LISTED SPECIES AND STATE SPECIES OF GREATEST CONSERVATION NEED**

**Suggestions:** Revise last sentence of the Discussion to state “It is in the interest of the public for the Idaho Water Resource Board to coordinate its planning with the development of local and regional conservation strategies...”

Include the following with the bullet list of Implementation Strategies:

“Coordinate with the Office of Species Conservation and with the Soil and Water Conservation Commission and local conservation districts—the state entities which have been granted primary responsibility for providing assistance to private landowners and land users in the conservation of Idaho’s natural resources (Idaho Code § 22-2716)—to develop and implement integrated water, soil, habitat, and species conservation plans.”

## **POLICY 2D – STATE PROTECTED RIVER SYSTEM**

**Discussion:** Revise first sentence of second paragraph to read: “Although rivers can be protected under the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, it is the policy of the Idaho Water Resource Board to protect streams and rivers through the Comprehensive State Water Planning process...” This wording will provide IDWR with better negotiating leverage with the federal agencies via the coordination process.

**Under Implementation Strategies:** “Coordinate with state and federal agencies, local governments, and stakeholders to identify potential minimum stream flow needs.”

## **POLICY 2E – RIPARIAN HABITAT AND WETLANDS**

**Suggestion:** Insert the following statements after the last sentence of the second paragraph of the Discussion section:

“The Soil and Water Conservation Commission is the designated agency for the planning and implementation of treatments to protect and improve water quality in watersheds impacted by agricultural and grazing activities (Idaho Code § 39-3601 et. seq.). The Soil and Water Conservation Commission and local conservation districts are the State entities with authority to develop and implement comprehensive, non-regulatory, locally-led conservation strategies to maintain, improve, and enhance Idaho’s riparian habitats and wetlands (Idaho Code § 22-2716).”

## **2F – STREAM CHANNEL REHABILITATION**

**Suggestions:** Add the following statement to the Discussion section:

“The Soil and Water Conservation Commission and local conservation districts are the primary entities for planning and implementing voluntary, non-regulatory practices to remediate past stream channel damage and to prevent further damage caused by agricultural or grazing activities (Idaho Code § 22-2716).”

Add the following bullet to Implementation Strategies:

- Coordinate planning (including inventory and analyses), prioritization, and implementation activities with local soil conservation districts and the Soil and Water Conservation Commission.



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## 2H – FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

**Comment:** Insert the following statement after the fifth sentence of the Discussion section:

“Watershed Improvement Districts have authority to develop comprehensive plans, levy assessments and construct, operate, and maintain structures for the prevention of flood damage and the conservation, development, utilization and disposal of water in the watersheds of this state (Idaho Code § 42-3701, et. seq.). The Soil and Water Conservation Commission is the designated agency to oversee creation of Watershed Improvement Districts throughout the state (Idaho Code § 42-3705).”

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**Comment:** Idaho Code § 22-2722 grants Soil Conservation Districts the power to:

- Carry out preventive and control measures and works of improvement for flood prevention on any lands within the district upon obtaining the consent of the owner of such lands, and on lands owned or controlled by the state or any of its agencies, with the cooperation of the agency administering and having jurisdiction thereof (§ 22-2722(3));
- Construct, improve, operate and maintain such structures as may be necessary or convenient for the performance of any of the operations authorized in this chapter (§ 22-2722(7));
- Develop comprehensive plans for flood protection (§ 22-2722(8)), and to;
- Takeover, by purchase, lease, or otherwise, and to administer any flood prevention located within its boundaries, to manage any flood prevention project within its boundaries, and to act as agent for this state or any of its agencies in connection with the acquisition, construction, operation, or administration of any flood prevention project within its boundaries (§ 22-2722(9)).

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- Secure the cooperation and assistance of the United States and any of its agencies, and of the agencies of this state, in the work of such districts (§ 22-2718(4)(d)).

Idaho Code § 22-2716(3) declares that it is in the best interest of the state of Idaho to establish policies for cooperative working relationships between local soil conservation districts, the state Soil and Water Conservation Commission, local, state and federal agencies and public and private groups to plan, develop and implement conservation goals and initiatives.

**Suggestion:** Add the following statement to the list of Implementation Strategies:

“Coordinate with the Soil and Water Conservation Commission and local conservation districts during development of a state levee safety program in order to provide that local economic, social and environmental concerns are addressed during safety program development.”



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## 6A – HABITAT CONSERVATION PLANS

**Suggestion:** Add the following statement to the list of Implementation Strategies:

“Coordinate with the Soil and Water Conservation Commission and local conservation districts during the development and implementation of habitat conservation projects and plans.”

Thanks for the opportunity to provide input on the update to the State Water Plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T. Murrison'.

TERI A. MURRISON  
Administrator

Cc: Harriet Hensley, Deputy Attorney General

**SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION'S TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AWARD  
PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission staff (SWC) concurs with the majority of the process defined in the recently approved Technical Assistance Work Group (TAWG) Recommendations. The TAWG recommendations are the base of SWC's recommendations. Proposed additions to or deviations from the TAWG Recommendations were highlighted utilizing "Track Changes".

We wish to express our appreciation to conservation partners who realized that the Commission's resources are insufficient to provide technical assistance to every district and helped us come up with a process and criteria to rank and prioritize requests for assistance. SWC agrees with the TAWG that the award of technical assistance to districts is a process that WILL undergo changes over time. As the technical assistance work group (TAWG) submits the following recommendations to the commission it wants to stress that the processes and tools it is recommending are a work in progress. As the commission moves towards adoption and implementation of this process the need to revise or modify specific aspects of the process will most certainly become apparent. Thus, as important as any of the rest of these recommendations is the recommendation that both the overall strategy and the ranking tool be reviewed periodically and modified whenever doing so will improve the process.

Specific to the ongoing review and revision of this process, the TAWG recommends that, following the completion of the first cycle of this process during the Spring of 2013, the process be subjected to a thorough review by the current TAWG members in order to identify what is working well, and what needs revision. Alternatively, a new review committee comprised of one member per division or regional area, selected by the districts of each region, may be appointed to conduct the Spring, 2013 review of the process. Thereafter, the process should be reviewed on an annually, and more frequently whenever the occurrence of procedural problems warrants.

**BACKGROUND**

In March of 2012 the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWC) convened the TAWG and tasked it with developing recommendations related to how district requests for technical assistance are evaluated, prioritized, and serviced by SWC.

Specifically, the TAWG was established to develop and recommend:

- An overall strategy to guide the equitable allocation of TA over time.
- A ranking tool which SWC can use to objectively prioritize annual district TA needs requests from across the state.

The TAWG is comprised of the following nine voting members. Each member was appointed by SWC Commission Chair Richard Bronson to represent the stakeholder group indicated.

Bret Rumbeck, IASCD Executive Director, representing.....IASCD

Rick Rodgers, IASCD Division IV Director, representing..... IASCD  
 Karma Bragg, IDEA Chair, representing..... IDEA  
 Billie Brown, Benewah SWCD District Chair, representing..... Panhandle Region Districts  
 Kyle Wilson, Nez Perce SWCD Supervisor, representing..... Clearwater Region Districts  
 Julie Burkhardt, Adams SWCD Supervisor, representing..... South West Region Districts  
 Terry Halbert, North Side SWCD District Manager, representing..... South Central Districts  
 Terry Lebrecht, South Bingham SCD Supervisor, representing..... South East Districts  
 Matt Woodard, East Side SWCD District Chair, representing..... North East Region Districts

Non-voting members of the TAWG include:

Richard Bronson, SWC Commission Chair  
 Roger Stutzman, SWC Commissioner  
 Teri Murrison, SWC Administrator  
 Chuck Pentzer, SWC Field Staff Supervisor  
 Delwyne Trefz, SWC District Support Services Specialist

Successful implementation of these recommendations will depend upon local conservation districts and the commission both investing significant time and thought into mid- to long-range planning. As district supervisors complete their annual work plans and update their 5-year plans they will need to consider upcoming assistance needs. The commission will also need to carefully review its strategic plan as well as its annual agency and staff work plans in order to efficiently address district needs.

TAWG members believe it is important that this process to be both transparent and objective. The TAWG recommends that opportunity be provided for all districts to review and comment on these recommendations.

**THE OVERALL STRATEGY**

The recommended process by which districts request assistance is designed to document the district’s plans, objectives, and commitment to the particular project or activity for which they are requesting assistance. Individually, these requests and the process the Commission uses to evaluate them promote transparency and accountability; collectively, the requests demonstrate how districts across the state are addressing local resource concerns, and how much additional natural resources conservation work could be accomplished were commission resources not limiting.

The TAWG’s recommended overall strategy for a process to guide the allocation of available commission assistance involves the following four steps:

- Conservation district develops a request for assistance.
- District submits a request for assistance to the commission.
- Evaluation team ranks requests based on a weighted criteria ranking tool.
- Commission allocates assistance based on the evaluation committee ranking and available resources.

| Each of the above steps is expanded upon below.

### **Development of a request for assistance**

A reference manual to assist districts to develop activity or project specific requests is attached to this report as Appendix A. Refer to Appendix A for details of the procedures the TAWG recommends districts follow to develop a request for assistance.

Note that before developing a request for assistance, a district will first need to determine which category of assistance they need. All assistance can be categorized as either specialized technical assistance or comprehensive district assistance, defined as follows.

**Specialized technical assistance** is defined as: That assistance used to support districts in the wise use and enhancement of natural resources which can only be provided by someone possessing a specialized, science-based skill set and an ability to integrate local knowledge of the site-specific interactions between environmental, economic, cultural and social concerns into the assistance provided.

Examples of Specialized Technical Assistance may include but are not limited to:

- Conservation planning
- Engineering services
- Project implementation and construction inspections
- BMP effectiveness monitoring
- Watershed planning and riparian assessments
- Development of a district needs assessment

**Comprehensive district assistance** is defined as: That assistance which supports the independent and collective strengthening of conservation districts by providing services which: a) expand resources or otherwise enhance district capacity to assist private landowners and land users in the conservation, sustainment, improvement and enhancement of Idaho's natural resources, or; b) support routine district activities or projects.

Examples of comprehensive assistance may include but are not limited to:

- District information and outreach activities
- Administration of district-sponsored cost-share programs
- Grant writing assistance
- Development of 5-year and annual work plans

### **Submission of a request for assistance**

Requests for assistance may be submitted at any time. However, to facilitate annual Commission budget and work plan development, the evaluation of requests and the allocation of assistance will be conducted one time per year. Requests must be formally approved and certified by the local conservation district board of supervisors and submitted to the commission no later than March 31<sup>st</sup> in order to be considered during the annual evaluation.

Identifying needs and requesting assistance well in advance of when it is needed helps districts and the commission efficiently budget, schedule and utilize available resources.

The TAWG recognizes that urgent or emergency conservation opportunities and concerns do arise and recommends a mechanism for expediting the handling of urgent requests (see recommendation under **Evaluation of a request for assistance**, below).

### **Evaluation of a request for assistance**

~~The TAWG recommends that a standing committee made up of 5 members be convened to evaluate district requests for assistance. It is recommended that the evaluation committee include: a current TAWG member; a person with experience allocating conservation resources across the state, e.g., someone with NRCS or SWC experience managing statewide staff and resources; 1-2 conservation district supervisors, selected to represent a broad range of districts, and; 1-2 commission staff.~~

Staff recommends that an evaluation committee be convened in each of the state's geographic regions to review and prioritize requests for assistance submitted by districts located within the region. It is recommended that each of the conservation districts located in the region be represented on the evaluation committee.

The evaluation committee will meet annually in April to review requests. An annual review completed in early Spring is necessary in order for the commission to plan for the allocation of its resources during the upcoming field season and fiscal year. The committee will evaluate requests based on the criteria in the appropriate list, i.e., either the specialized technical assistance or the comprehensive district assistance criteria, depending on which type of assistance is being requested. ~~The committee will prepare and provide to the commission a prioritized list of the requests, showing the total number of ranking points awarded to each request, by April 30<sup>th</sup>. No later than April 30<sup>th</sup> each year, each regional evaluation committee will prepare and provide to the Administrator their recommendation regarding the requests they reviewed. The committee's recommendation will include a prioritized list showing the relative ranking of each request.~~

~~In order to expedite urgent or emergency requests for assistance, it is recommended that such requests be reviewed by a team comprised of Commission staff including the administrator, the field staff person who works in the district requesting urgent assistance, the field staff supervisors, and the district support services specialist, or alternates designated by them. This team will have discretionary authority to grant or deny assistance based upon their evaluation of the request and the availability of commission resources appropriate to addressing the need. The TAWG recommends that urgent or emergency requests for assistance be evaluated by the commission team and a decision made regarding the allocation of assistance to service the request within 3 business days of the commission having received the request. Please note that assistance which careful planning would have anticipated will not be considered by the commission to qualify as an urgent need.~~

### **Allocation of Assistance**

It is recommended that the commission allocate assistance to districts based on the recommendations of the evaluation committee and the availability of commission resources. The commission's assessment of available commission resources should include an inventory of available staff hours, consideration of logistical factors, and the existence of current and on-going commitments. To the extent possible assistance granted to service a request will be provided by the commission field staff person located in the requesting district's geographic region. However, the commission may assign staff from outside of the region if necessary to meet a specific district need.

The commission will announce no later than May 31<sup>st</sup> its decision regarding whether or not assistance is being allocated to each request.

### **THE RANKING TOOL**

The TAWG recommends that lists of weighted criteria be used to evaluate requests for assistance. The TAWG has developed two separate sets of criteria, one for evaluating requests for specialized technical assistance and the other for evaluating requests for comprehensive district assistance. Requests from districts around the state will be evaluated and ranked based upon the appropriate list of criteria. Each request will be awarded a number of ranking points per criterion depending upon how effectively the project or activity for which the district is requesting assistance with addresses each criterion. Requests will be ranked according to how many total points each project is awarded. The commission will use the results of the ranking of statewide requests as a tool to assist them with prioritizing projects and activities towards which they will allocate available assistance resources.

Following are the lists of weighted criteria which the TAWG recommends the evaluation committee use to evaluate requests for each category of assistance. Staff recommend a range of weights—which equate to ranking points—be available for each of the criteria. The number of points awarded for each criterion will be dependent upon the factors described in parenthesis.

#### **Criteria for Evaluating Requests for Specialized Technical Assistance:**

- 1) Does the proposed activity address a natural resources conservation priority identified in the conservation district's 5-year or annual work plan?  
Weight: 0-12 (Dependent upon the number of priorities addressed, e.g., award 4 points for each district priority addressed, to a maximum of 12 points.)
- 2) Has the district provided documentation of support for the proposed activity, including: a) letters in support of the proposed activity from landowners and producers within the project area, and; b) letters in support of the proposed activity from entities which will be contributing resources towards project implementation?  
Weight: 0-12 (Dependent upon the number of letters of support, e.g., award 2 points per support letter, to a maximum of 12 points.)
- 3) Have the necessary steps been taken to ensure that the district will be able to utilize the assistance being requested within the time-frame indicated in the request for assistance?

Weight: 0-11 (Dependent upon evidence that the district has considered and made plans to procure necessary permits, contractor services, etc.)

- 4) Has the conservation district identified adequate resources to ensure that the objectives of the proposed project will be achieved?

Weight: 0-11 (Dependent upon evidence of sufficient partner resources to complete the project. Projects with secure adequate resources in place will receive more points than projects without.)

- 5) Has the district requesting assistance received activity- or project-specific comprehensive or specialized technical assistance from SWC within the last three years?

Weight: 0-11

Note: a “No” response is awarded 11 ranking points; a “Yes” response is awarded 0 ranking points.

- 6) If the answer to question 5 is “yes”, were the objectives of the activity or project which SWC provided assistance for achieved in a timely fashion?

Weight: ±0-10 (10 points awarded for a “yes” response. 0 – 9 points awarded for “no” responses, dependent upon the degree to which previous failures were due to factors under the districts control.)

- 7) Is the requested assistance necessary in order to address an urgent or emergency need?

Weight: 0-10 (Maximum points awarded to emergency needs, i.e., projects which address natural resources disasters. Examples of emergency needs would be projects to rehabilitate resources impacted by wildfire, flood, or similar disasters.)

- 8) Will the proposed project deliver quantifiable natural resources benefits?

Weight: 0-8 (The greater the projects potential positive effect on natural resources quality, the more points will be awarded).

- 9) Does the proposed project address the need for on-going operations and maintenance of the planned practices in order to ensure that conservation benefits are sustainable over time?

Weight: 0-7 (The more comprehensive the operations and maintenance plan developed by the district is, the greater the number of points will be awarded.)

- 10) Is the assistance required for use as either in-kind or hard match in order to enable the district to qualify for a specific grant or cost-share program opportunity?

Weight: ±0-5 (Award maximum points if Commission assistance is absolutely necessary in order for the district to qualify for essential third-party project funding.)

- 11) Will the requested specialized technical assistance help the district to develop a plan for a potential future project?

Weight: 0-5 (Award maximum points for projects which will generate technical data essential to conservation and implementation plan development.)

12) Does the proposed project include plans to publicize project outcomes?

Weight: 0-5 (Award maximum points to requests which include a well-defined public relations component.)

13) Have entities other than the conservation district indicated a willingness to commit resources towards implementation of the proposed project?

Weight: 0-5 (Award maximum points to requests with greatest level of resource commitment from third-parties such as local, state, federal and non-governmental agencies, landowners, and others.)

14) Does the district have technical staff or other resources which will be committed to the project?

Weight: 0-2 (Award maximum points to requests from districts which are able to commit the greatest level of district resources to the project. District resources may include the time and expertise of district board supervisors, staff, and local volunteers, as well as equipment.)

### Criteria for Evaluating Requests for Comprehensive District Assistance:

- 1) Does the proposed activity address a priority identified within the district's 5-year or annual work plan?  
Weight: 0-18 (Dependent upon the number of priorities addressed, e.g., award 4 points for each district priority addressed, to a maximum of 12 points.)
- 2) Has the district provided documentation of support for the proposed activity, including:  
a) letters in support of the proposed activity from landowners and producers within the project area, and; b) letters in support of the proposed activity from entities which will be contributing resources towards achieving activity objectives?  
Weight: 0-18 (Dependent upon the number of letters of support, e.g., award 2 points per support letter, to a maximum of 18 points.)
- 3) Have the necessary steps been taken to ensure that the district will be able to utilize the assistance being requested within the time-frame indicated in the request for assistance?  
Weight: 0-15 (Dependent upon evidence that the district has considered and made plans to procure necessary permits, contractor services, etc.)
- 4) Will the requested assistance be used to enhance district capacity by developing tools, strategies and successes which the district will be able to use to independently implement future projects?  
Weight: 0-12 (Award maximum points to requests which will result in the greatest positive impact to district capacity.)
- 5) Is the assistance required for use as either in-kind or hard match in order to enable the district to qualify for a specific grant or cost-share program opportunity?  
Weight: ~~0~~-12 (Award maximum points if Commission assistance is absolutely necessary in order for the district to qualify for essential third-party project funding.)
- 6) Has the district provided evidence of having researched the availability of district, division, IASCD, IDEA or other resources which may be available to meet their need?  
Weight: 0-9 (Award maximum points to requests which document that the district need cannot be met by alternative resources.)
- 7) Has the district requesting assistance received activity- or project-specific comprehensive or specialized technical assistance from SWC within the last three years?  
Weight: 0-5  
Note: a "No" response is awarded 5 ranking points; a "Yes" response is awarded 0 ranking points.)

- 8) If the answer to question 7 is "yes", were the objectives of the activity or project which SWC provided assistance for achieved in a timely fashion?

Weight: ~~10~~-4 (4 points awarded for a "yes" response. 0 – 3 points awarded for "no" responses, dependent upon the degree to which previous failures were due to factors under the districts control.)

### Notes on the Weights Assigned to Each Criteria

The TAWG concluded that fair and equitable allocation of limited commission resources depends upon the process used to prioritize requests being as objective as possible. You can see that the criteria in the above two lists are, for the most part, very objective. This was purposeful on the part of the TAWG as they strove to develop a tool which minimized the chance that bias would affect the request's ranking scores.

### Criteria with a Range of Weights

~~The following explanation of criteria numbers 5 and 6 on the specialized technical assistance list, and numbers 7 and 8 on the comprehensive district assistance list may be helpful.~~

~~The first of each of these pair of criteria—"Has the district requesting assistance received activity or project specific comprehensive or specialized technical assistance from SWC within the last three years?"—is intended to help make sure commission assistance is allocated fairly over time. If the district has received no specialized technical or comprehensive assistance from the commission over the course of the last 3 years, the request being evaluated is awarded the ranking points indicated. If the district has received such assistance during the last 3 years, the current request is awarded no points for that criterion. Knowing the commission's resources are not adequate to assist every needy district every year, the ranking tool awards extra points to districts who haven't received assistance recently in order to move those districts up the priority list relative to districts which have recently benefitted from commission assistance.~~

~~The criterion evaluators are next asked to consider is: "If the district has received assistance during the last 3 years, were the objectives of the activity or project which the commission provided assistance for achieved in a timely fashion?", and the number of ranking points awarded will vary depending upon how the district requesting assistance addresses this criterion. Basically, the TAWG's thinking is that this criterion provides opportunity for districts which "lost" ranking points on the basis of having received assistance recently to "make up" some, but not all, of the lost points by demonstrating that they make effective and efficient use of commission assistance when they do receive it. The bottom line is that, all else being equal, districts which haven't received assistance recently will rank higher than those who have. And, when requests from two districts which have both received assistance recently are evaluated, all else being equal, the district whose previous project wasn't completed in a timely fashion due to the field season being cut short by an unusually long, wet winter should rank higher than the district whose previous project wasn't efficiently run due to district supervisors being unable to agree on an implementation strategy.~~

~~Each list includes one additional criterion for which a range of ranking points may be awarded.~~

~~Criteria number 10 on the specialized technical assistance criteria list and number 5 on the comprehensive assistance list relate to how critical the requested assistance is to enabling the district to qualify for a grant or cost share program. The TAWG feels that requests for assistance which it is absolutely essential that the commission provide in order for the district to qualify for third party support of a district project should be awarded more ranking points than requests for assistance without which project implementation would still be possible.~~

**Final Note**

As stated in the Introduction, the TAWG and the Conservation Commission recognize that the processes introduced in this report will continue to evolve over time. We expect and encourage periodic reviews which will no doubt lead to these processes becoming increasingly effective as time goes on.

# Appendix A:

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING AND SUBMITTING A REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

# INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING AND SUBMITTING A REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

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## **Purpose**

The purpose of this section of the manual is to assist districts with developing, certifying, and submitting a Request for Assistance.

## **Authority**

These instructions are issued to be consistent with chapter 27, title 22 Idaho Code (“Soil Conservation Districts”) and with procedures adopted by the Soil & Water Conservation Commission.

The statute referenced above is available on the internet at:

<http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/idstat/Title22/T22CH27.htm>

## **Timing and Due Date**

Requests for assistance may be submitted at any time. However, to facilitate annual Commission budget and work plan development, the evaluation of requests and the allocation of assistance will be conducted one time per year. Requests must be submitted to the Commission no later than **March 31** in order to be considered during the annual evaluation.

The commission recognizes that urgent or emergency conservation opportunities and concerns do arise. The commission is committed to remaining nimble enough to respond to these situations and so has instituted a mechanism for expediting the development and handling of urgent requests.

## **Certification**

Once the request is finalized, complete the Certification attached as Appendix A and present the completed request to the district Board of Supervisors Chairperson for review and signature. Attach the Certification to the Request for Assistance and submit to the Commission by the due date.

## Completing the Request for Assistance

### **Introduction**

This section of the manual is designed to assist districts with the development of requests for assistance which will effectively document the district's plans, objectives, and commitment to the particular project or activity for which they are requesting assistance. Use of the standardized format presented here will enable the Commission to efficiently and objectively evaluate requests from districts across the state. Individually, the requests and the process the Commission uses to evaluate them are intended to promote transparency and accountability; collectively, the requests demonstrate how districts across the state are addressing local resource concerns, and how much additional work could be accomplished were resources not limiting.

It is expected that assistance will be requested for projects and activities intended to address local natural resources priorities identified in a district 5-year or annual work plan. It will be helpful to develop a district needs assessment, wherein you identify and quantify local characteristics, natural resource conditions, and available resources and strategies for improving conditions, as an aid to anticipating upcoming needs. Assistance which the Commission may be able to provide can then be requested well in advance of when it is needed. Requests for assistance can be submitted at any time during the year but in order to be considered for the upcoming field season requests need to be received by the Commission no later than March 31<sup>st</sup>.

The commission recognizes that there will be times when an urgent or emergency conservation opportunity or concern presents itself. In these instances the local district is encouraged to immediately submit an urgent request for assistance. Urgent requests will be evaluated by the Commission and a decision made regarding the allocation of assistance to service the request within 3 business days of the Commission having received the request. Please note that assistance which careful planning would have anticipated will not be considered by the Commission to qualify as an urgent need.

### **Categories of Assistance**

The assistance districts require can be categorized as either "specialized technical" or "comprehensive district" assistance. A district request for assistance will be specific to either one or the other of these two categories. The categories are defined as:

**Specialized Technical Assistance** is that technical assistance used to support districts in the wise use and enhancement of natural resources which can only be provided by someone possessing a specialized, science-based skill set and an ability to integrate local knowledge of the site-specific interactions between environmental, economic, cultural and social concerns into the assistance provided.

Examples of Specialized Technical Assistance may include but are not limited to:

- Conservation planning
- Engineering services
- Project implementation and construction inspections
- BMP effectiveness monitoring
- Watershed planning and riparian assessments
- Development of a district needs assessment

**Comprehensive District Assistance** is that assistance which supports the independent and collective strengthening of conservation districts by providing services which: a) expand resources or otherwise enhance district capacity to assist private landowners and land users in the conservation, sustainment, improvement and enhancement of Idaho's natural resources, or; b) support routine district activities or projects.

Examples of comprehensive assistance may include but are not limited to:

- District information and outreach activities
- Administration of district-sponsored cost-share programs
- Grant writing assistance
- Development of 5-year and annual work plans

### **Development of a Request for Assistance**

1. Schedule adequate time on district board meeting agendas to complete each of the following steps. Keep mindful that, as with other district business, preparing a request for assistance needs to be harmonized with local district priorities and objectives. District supervisors need to actively participate in the development of a request and must formally approve and certify requests before they are submitted to the Commission.
2. Determine which category of assistance you need. Refer to the definitions presented above to determine whether you are requesting "Specialized Technical" or "Comprehensive District" Assistance. If you are unsure which category of assistance your need falls under, contact the Commission for clarification.
3. Refer to the list of criteria which the project ranking committee will use to evaluate your request. Note that requests are evaluated based upon category-specific criteria. If you are requesting specialized technical assistance, refer to the list of criteria for evaluating requests for specialized technical assistance, and if you are requesting comprehensive district assistance, then refer to the list of criteria for evaluating comprehensive district requests for assistance. The two lists of criteria follow these instructions.
4. Develop your request by responding writing a narrative response to each of individual criterion on the relevant list. ~~Because the listed criteria are all presented as questions this part of the process can be compared to completing an essay exam in school.~~ The evaluating committee will award ranking points for each criterion based on the content of your response, not on grammar, spelling, or prose style!

Write as little or as much as necessary to provide an evaluator who may be unfamiliar with your district enough information to get a clear picture of how the assistance you are requesting relates to each criterion. Take care to address each criterion on the list as no ranking points will be awarded for criteria lacking a response.

Additional information which you would like evaluators to be aware of may be included in the form of an introduction. Make sure such information pertains to the request, and present it as succinctly as possible.

Should an urgent-natural resources opportunity or emergency arise which you would like to request the commission help you with you may initiate a commission evaluation of your need by telephoning a commission staff member or by emailing or faxing a written description of the situation to the commission office, depending upon the urgency of the need.

5. Estimate: a) the number of hours of Commission staff time which will be required to service your request, and; b) the calendar dates during which the assistance will be needed. Enter these estimates in the space provided at the top of the Request for Assistance Certification.

It is important that you provide a realistic approximation of how much assistance you expect to need. If you need help estimating the hours of assistance your project will require, contact the commission field staff person who works with your district or the commission district support services staff.

6. Submit the request to your district Board of Supervisors for formal approval and certification. The request must be formally approved by the district board and the District Needs Request Certification (attached) must be signed by the Chair. Attach the signed and dated Certification to your request and submit to the Commission.

Requests may be submitted to the Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission electronically, by fax, or by regular mail. If you submit your request electronically make certain that you also provide a signed copy of the Certification, which you may fax, scan, or mail to the Commission.

- Email electronic versions to: [info@swc.idaho.gov](mailto:info@swc.idaho.gov)
- Mail hard copies to: Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission, 650 West State Street, Room 145, Boise, Idaho 83702.
- Fax documents to: (208)332-1799
- Telephone: Boise Commission Office staff @ 208-332-1790  
Commission District Support Services staff @ 208-989-0707

#### **Timing and Due Date**

Standard requests for assistance are due on or before **March 31** of each year. Standard requests include requests for assistance needed during the upcoming fiscal year (July 1<sup>st</sup> – June 30<sup>th</sup>).

Urgent requests for assistance may be submitted at any time.

### Criteria for Evaluating Requests for Specialized Technical Assistance:

- 1) Does the proposed activity address a natural resources conservation priority identified in the conservation district's 5-year or annual work plan? Weight: 0-12 (Dependent upon the number of priorities addressed, e.g., award 4 points for each district priority addressed, to a maximum of 12 points.)
- 2) Has the district provided documentation of support for the proposed activity, including: a) letters in support of the proposed activity from landowners and producers within the project area, and; b) letters in support of the proposed activity from entities which will be contributing resources towards project implementation? Weight: 0-12 (Dependent upon the number of letters of support, e.g., award 2 points per support letter, to a maximum of 12 points.)
- 3) Have the necessary steps been taken to ensure that the district will be able to utilize the assistance being requested within the time-frame indicated in the request for assistance? Weight: 0-11 (Dependent upon evidence that the district has considered and made plans to procure necessary permits, contractor services, etc.)
- 4) Has the conservation district identified adequate resources to ensure that the objectives of the proposed project will be achieved? Weight: 0-11 (Dependent upon evidence of sufficient partner resources to complete the project. Projects with secure adequate resources in place will receive more points than projects without.)
- 5) Has the district requesting assistance received activity- or project-specific comprehensive or specialized technical assistance from SWC within the last three years?  
Weight: 0-11 Note: a) A "No" response is awarded 11 ranking points; a "Yes" response is awarded 0 ranking points.
- 6) If the answer to question 5 is "yes", were the objectives of the activity or project which SWC provided assistance for achieved in a timely fashion? Weight: 10-10 (10 points awarded for a "yes" response. 0 – 9 points awarded for "no" responses, dependent upon the degree to which previous failures were due to factors under the districts control.)
- 7) Is the requested assistance necessary in order to address an urgent or emergency need?  
Weight: 0-10 (Maximum points awarded to emergency needs, i.e., projects which address natural resources disasters. Examples of emergency needs would be projects to rehabilitate resources impacted by wildfire, flood, or similar disasters.)
- 8) Will the proposed project deliver quantifiable natural resources benefits? Weight: 0-8 (The greater the projects potential positive effect on natural resources quality, the more points will be awarded).

- 9) Does the proposed project address the need for on-going operations and maintenance of the planned practices in order to ensure that conservation benefits are sustainable over time? Weight: 0-7 (The more comprehensive the operations and maintenance plan developed by the district is, the greater the number of points will be awarded.)
- 10) Is the assistance required for use as either in-kind or hard match in order to enable the district to qualify for a specific grant or cost-share program opportunity? Weight: 0-5 (Award maximum points if Commission assistance is absolutely necessary in order for the district to qualify for essential third-party project funding.)
- 11) Will the requested specialized technical assistance help the district to develop a plan for a potential future project? Weight: 0-5 (Award maximum points for projects which will generate technical data essential to conservation and implementation plan development.)
- 12) Does the proposed project include plans to publicize project outcomes? Weight: 0-5 (Award maximum points to requests which include a well-defined public relations component.)
- 13) Have entities other than the conservation district indicated a willingness to commit resources towards implementation of the proposed project? Weight: 0-5 (Award maximum points to requests with greatest level of resource commitment from third-parties such as local, state, federal and non-governmental agencies, landowners, and others.)
- 14) Does the district have technical staff or other resources which will be committed to the project? Weight: 0-2 (Award maximum points to requests from districts which are able to commit the greatest level of district resources to the project. District resources may include the time and expertise of district board supervisors, staff, and local volunteers, as well as equipment.)

### Criteria for Evaluating Requests for Comprehensive District Assistance:

- 1) Does the proposed activity address a priority identified within the district's 5-year or annual work plan? Weight: 0-18 (Dependent upon the number of priorities addressed, e.g., award 4 points for each district priority addressed, to a maximum of 12 points.)
- 2) Has the district provided documentation of support for the proposed activity, including: a) letters in support of the proposed activity from landowners and producers within the project area, and; b) letters in support of the proposed activity from entities which will be contributing resources towards achieving activity objectives? Weight: 0-18 (Dependent upon the number of letters of support, e.g., award 2 points per support letter, to a maximum of 18 points.)
- 3) Have the necessary steps been taken to ensure that the district will be able to utilize the assistance being requested within the time-frame indicated in the request for assistance? Weight: 0-15 (Dependent upon evidence that the district has considered and made plans to procure necessary permits, contractor services, etc.)
- 4) Will the requested assistance be used to enhance district capacity by developing tools, strategies and successes which the district will be able to use to independently implement future projects? Weight: 0-12 (Award maximum points to requests which will result in the greatest positive impact to district capacity.)
- 5) Is the assistance required for use as either in-kind or hard match in order to enable the district to qualify for a specific grant or cost-share program opportunity? Weight: 0-12 (Award maximum points if Commission assistance is absolutely necessary in order for the district to qualify for essential third-party project funding.)
- 6) Has the district provided evidence of having researched the availability of district, division, IASCD, IDEA or other resources which may be available to meet their need? Weight: 0-9 (Award maximum points to requests which document that the district need cannot be met by alternative resources.)
- 7) Has the district requesting assistance received activity- or project-specific comprehensive or specialized technical assistance from SWC within the last three years? Weight: 0-5 Note: a "No" response is awarded 5 ranking points; a "Yes" response is awarded 0 ranking points.)
- 8) If the answer to question 7 is "yes", were the objectives of the activity or project which SWC provided assistance for achieved in a timely fashion? Weight: 0-4 (4 points awarded for a "yes" response. 0 – 3 points awarded for "no" responses, dependent upon the degree to which previous failures were due to factors under the districts control.)

**REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE  
CERTIFICATION**

**IDAHO SOIL & WATER  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**CONSERVATION DISTRICT:**

**PROJECT OR ACTIVITY NAME:**

**FOR FISCAL YEAR:**

**HOURS OF ASSISTANCE REQUESTED:**

**DATES ASSISTANCE IS NEEDED:**

**REQUEST DUE DATE : MARCH 31, 2013**

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Conservation District Board of Supervisors Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
District or Board Chairperson  
Telephone

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Email Address

**FOR SWC USE ONLY:**

**DATE OF CONFIRMATION:**

## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WORK GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

As the technical assistance work group (TAWG) submits the following recommendations to the commission it wants to stress that the processes and tools it is recommending are a work in progress. As the commission moves towards adoption and implementation of this process the need to revise or modify specifics aspects of the process will most certainly become apparent. Thus, as important as any of the rest of these recommendations is the recommendation that both the overall strategy and the ranking tool be reviewed periodically and modified whenever doing so will improve the process.

Specific to the ongoing review and revision of this process, the TAWG recommends that, following the completion of the first cycle of this process during the Spring of 2013, the process be subjected to a thorough review by the current TAWG members in order to identify what is working well, and what needs revision. Thereafter, the process should be reviewed on an annually, and more frequently whenever the occurrence of procedural problems warrants.

### **BACKGROUND**

In March of 2012 the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWC) convened the TAWG and tasked it with developing recommendations related to how district requests for technical assistance are evaluated, prioritized, and serviced by SWC.

Specifically, the TAWG was established to develop and recommend:

- An overall strategy to guide the equitable allocation of TA over time.
- A ranking tool which SWC can use to objectively prioritize annual district TA needs requests from across the state.

The TAWG is comprised of the following nine voting members. Each member was appointed by SWC Commission Chair Richard Bronson to represent the stakeholder group indicated.

Bret Rumbeck, IASCD Executive Director, representing.....IASCD  
Rick Rodgers, IASCD Division IV Director, representing.....IASCD  
Karma Bragg, IDEA Chair, representing.....IDEA  
Billie Brown, Benewah SWCD District Chair, representing.....Panhandle Region Districts  
Kyle Wilson, Nez Perce SWCD Supervisor, representing.....Clearwater Region Districts  
Julie Burkhardt, Adams SWCD Supervisor, representing.....South West Region Districts  
Terry Halbert, North Side SWCD District Manager, representing.....South Central Districts  
Terry Lebrecht, South Bingham SCD Supervisor, representing.....South East Districts  
Matt Woodard, East Side SWCD District Chair, representing.....North East Region Districts

Non-voting members of the TAWG include:

Richard Bronson, SWC Commission Chair  
Roger Stutzman, SWC Commissioner  
Teri Murrison, SWC Administrator

Chuck Pentzer, SWC Field Staff Supervisor  
Delwyne Trefz, SWC District Support Services Specialist

Successful implementation of these recommendations will depend upon local conservation districts and the commission both investing significant time and thought into mid- to long-range planning. As district supervisors complete their annual work plans and update their 5-year plans they will need to consider upcoming assistance needs. The commission will also need to carefully review its strategic plan as well as its annual agency and staff work plans in order to efficiently address district needs.

TAWG members believe it is important that this process to be both transparent and objective. The TAWG recommends that opportunity be provided for all districts to review and comment on these recommendations.

### **THE OVERALL STRATEGY**

The recommended process by which districts request assistance is designed to document the district's plans, objectives, and commitment to the particular project or activity for which they are requesting assistance. Individually, these requests and the process the Commission uses to evaluate them promote transparency and accountability; collectively, the requests demonstrate how districts across the state are addressing local resource concerns, and how much additional natural resources conservation work could be accomplished were commission resources not limiting.

The TAWG's recommended overall strategy for a process to guide the allocation of available commission assistance involves the following four steps:

- Conservation district develops a request for assistance.
- District submits a request for assistance to the commission.
- Evaluation team ranks requests based on a weighted criteria ranking tool.
- Commission allocates assistance based on the evaluation committee ranking and available resources.

Each of the above steps is expanded upon below.

#### **Development of a request for assistance**

A reference manual to assist districts to develop activity or project specific requests is attached to this report as Appendix A. Refer to Appendix A for details of the procedures the TAWG recommends districts follow to develop a request for assistance.

Note that before developing a request for assistance, a district will first need to determine which category of assistance they need. All assistance can be categorized as either specialized technical assistance or comprehensive district assistance, defined as follows.

**Specialized technical assistance** is defined as: That assistance used to support districts in the wise use and enhancement of natural resources which can only be provided by someone possessing a specialized, science-based skill set and an ability to integrate local knowledge of

the site-specific interactions between environmental, economic, cultural and social concerns into the assistance provided.

Examples of Specialized Technical Assistance may include but are not limited to:

- Conservation planning
- Engineering services
- Project implementation and construction inspections
- BMP effectiveness monitoring
- Watershed planning and riparian assessments
- Development of a district needs assessment

**Comprehensive district assistance** is defined as: That assistance which supports the independent and collective strengthening of conservation districts by providing services which: a) expand resources or otherwise enhance district capacity to assist private landowners and land users in the conservation, sustainment, improvement and enhancement of Idaho's natural resources, or; b) support routine district activities or projects.

Examples of comprehensive assistance may include but are not limited to:

- District information and outreach activities
- Administration of district-sponsored cost-share programs
- Grant writing assistance
- Development of 5-year and annual work plans

### **Submission of a request for assistance**

Requests for assistance may be submitted at any time. However, to facilitate annual Commission budget and work plan development, the evaluation of requests and the allocation of assistance will be conducted one time per year. Requests must be formally approved and certified by the local conservation district board of supervisors and submitted to the commission no later than March 31<sup>st</sup> in order to be considered during the annual evaluation. Identifying needs and requesting assistance well in advance of when it is needed helps districts and the commission efficiently budget, schedule and utilize available resources.

The TAWG recognizes that urgent or emergency conservation opportunities and concerns do arise and recommends a mechanism for expediting the handling of urgent requests (see recommendation under **Evaluation of a request for assistance**, below).

### **Evaluation of a request for assistance**

The TAWG recommends that a standing committee made up of 5 members be convened to evaluate district requests for assistance. It is recommended that the evaluation committee include: a current TAWG member; a person with experience allocating conservation resources across the state, e.g., someone with NRCS or SWC experience managing statewide staff and resources; 1-2 conservation district supervisors, selected to represent a broad range of districts, and; 1-2 commission staff.

The evaluation committee will meet annually in April to review requests. An annual review completed in early Spring is necessary in order for the commission to plan for the allocation of its resources during the upcoming field season and fiscal year. The committee will evaluate requests based on the criteria in the appropriate list, i.e., either the specialized technical assistance or the comprehensive district assistance criteria, depending on which type of assistance is being requested.

In order to expedite urgent or emergency requests for assistance, it is recommended that such requests be reviewed by a team comprised of Commission staff including the administrator, field staff supervisors, and the district support services specialist or alternates designated by them. This team will have discretionary authority to grant or deny assistance based upon their evaluation of the request and the availability of commission resources appropriate to addressing the need. The TAWG recommends that urgent or emergency requests for assistance be evaluated by the commission team and a decision made regarding the allocation of assistance to service the request within 3 business days of the commission having received the request. Please note that assistance which careful planning would have anticipated will not be considered by the commission to qualify as an urgent need.

The committee will prepare and provide to the commission a prioritized list of the requests, showing the total number of ranking points awarded to each request, by April 30<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Allocation of Assistance**

It is recommended that the commission allocate assistance to districts based on the recommendations of the evaluation committee and the availability of commission resources. The commission's assessment of available commission resources should include an inventory of available staff hours, consideration of logistical factors, and the existence of current and on-going commitments.

The commission will announce no later than May 31<sup>st</sup> its decision regarding whether or not assistance is being allocated to each request.

#### **THE RANKING TOOL**

The TAWG recommends that lists of weighted criteria be used to evaluate requests for assistance. The TAWG has developed two separate sets of criteria, one for evaluating requests for specialized technical assistance and the other for evaluating requests for comprehensive district assistance. Requests from districts around the state will be evaluated and ranked based upon the appropriate list of criteria. Each request will be awarded a number of ranking points per criterion depending upon how effectively the project or activity for which the district is requesting assistance with addresses each criterion. Requests will be ranked according to how many total points each project is awarded. The commission will use the results of the ranking of statewide requests as a tool to assist them with prioritizing projects and activities towards which they will allocate available assistance resources.

Following are the lists of weighted criteria which the TAWG recommends the evaluation committee use to evaluate requests for each category of assistance.

**Criteria for Evaluating Requests for Specialized Technical Assistance:**

- 1) Does the proposed activity address a natural resources conservation priority identified in the conservation district's 5-year or annual work plan?  
Weight: 12
- 2) Has the district provided documentation of support for the proposed activity, including:  
a) letters in support of the proposed activity from landowners and producers within the project area, and; b) letters in support of the proposed activity from entities which will be contributing resources towards project implementation?  
Weight: 12
- 3) Have the necessary steps been taken to ensure that the district will be able to utilize the assistance being requested within the time-frame indicated in the request for assistance?  
Weight: 11
- 4) Has the conservation district identified adequate resources to ensure that the objectives of the proposed project will be achieved?  
Weight: 11
- 5) Has the district requesting assistance received activity- or project-specific comprehensive or specialized technical assistance from SWC within the last three years?  
Weight: 11  
Note: a "No" response is awarded 11 ranking points; a "Yes" response is awarded 0 ranking points.
- 6) If the answer to question 5 is "yes", were the objectives of the activity or project which SWC provided assistance for achieved in a timely fashion?  
Weight: 1-10
- 7) Is the requested assistance necessary in order to address an urgent or emergency need?  
Weight: 10
- 8) Will the proposed project deliver quantifiable natural resources benefits?  
Weight: 8
- 9) Does the proposed project address the need for on-going operations and maintenance of the planned practices in order to ensure that conservation benefits are sustainable over time?  
Weight: 7
- 10) Is the assistance required for use as either in-kind or hard match in order to enable the district to qualify for a specific grant or cost-share program opportunity?  
Weight: 1-5
- 11) Will the requested specialized technical assistance help the district to develop a plan for a potential future project? Weight: 5

12) Does the proposed project include plans to publicize project outcomes?

Weight: 5

13) Have entities other than the conservation district indicated a willingness to commit resources towards implementation of the proposed project?

Weight: 5

14) Does the district have technical staff or other resources which will be committed to the project?

Weight: 2

**Criteria for Evaluating Requests for Comprehensive District Assistance:**

1) Does the proposed activity address a priority identified within the district's 5-year or annual work plan?

Weight: 18

2) Has the district provided documentation of support for the proposed activity, including: a) letters in support of the proposed activity from landowners and producers within the project area, and; b) letters in support of the proposed activity from entities which will be contributing resources towards achieving activity objectives?

Weight: 18

3) Have the necessary steps been taken to ensure that the district will be able to utilize the assistance being requested within the time-frame indicated in the request for assistance?

Weight: 15

4) Will the requested assistance be used to enhance district capacity by developing tools, strategies and successes which the district will be able to use to independently implement future projects?

Weight: 12

5) Is the assistance required for use as either in-kind or hard match in order to enable the district to qualify for a specific grant or cost-share program opportunity?

Weight: 1-12

6) Has the district provided evidence of having researched the availability of district, division, IASCD, IDEA or other resources which may be available to meet their need?

Weight: 9

7) Has the district requesting assistance received activity- or project-specific comprehensive or specialized technical assistance from SWC within the last three years?

Weight: 5

Note: a "No" response is awarded 5 ranking points; a "Yes" response is awarded 0 ranking points.

- 8) If the answer to question 7 is "yes", were the objectives of the activity or project which SWC provided assistance for achieved in a timely fashion?

Weight: 1-4

### **Notes on the Weights Assigned to Each Criteria**

The TAWG concluded that fair and equitable allocation of limited commission resources depends upon the process used to prioritize requests being as objective as possible. You can see that the criteria in the above two lists are, for the most part, very objective. This was purposeful on the part of the TAWG as they strove to develop a tool which minimized the chance that bias would affect the request's ranking scores.

### **Criteria with a Range of Weights**

The following explanation of criteria numbers 5 and 6 on the specialized technical assistance list, and numbers 7 and 8 on the comprehensive district assistance list may be helpful.

The first of each of these pair of criteria—"Has the district requesting assistance received activity- or project-specific comprehensive or specialized technical assistance from SWC within the last three years?"—is intended to help make sure commission assistance is allocated fairly over time. If the district has received no specialized technical or comprehensive assistance from the commission over the course of the last 3 years, the request being evaluated is awarded the ranking points indicated. If the district has received such assistance during the last 3 years, the current request is awarded no points for that criterion. Knowing the commission's resources are not adequate to assist every needy district every year, the ranking tool awards extra points to districts who haven't received assistance recently in order to move those districts up the priority list relative to districts which have recently benefitted from commission assistance.

The criterion evaluators are next asked to consider is: "If the district has received assistance during the last 3 years, were the objectives of the activity or project which the commission provided assistance for achieved in a timely fashion?", and the number of ranking points awarded will vary depending upon how the district requesting assistance addresses this criterion. Basically, the TAWG's thinking is that this criterion provides opportunity for districts which "lost" ranking points on the basis of having received assistance recently to "make up" some, but not all, of the lost points by demonstrating that they make effective and efficient use of commission assistance when they do receive it. The bottom line is that, all else being equal, districts which haven't received assistance recently will rank higher than those who have. And, when requests from two districts which have both received assistance recently are evaluated, all else being equal, the district whose previous project wasn't completed in a timely fashion due to the field season being cut short by an unusually long, wet winter should rank higher than the district whose previous project wasn't efficiently run due to district supervisors being unable to agree on an implementation strategy.

Each list includes one additional criterion for which a range of ranking points may be awarded. Criteria number 10 on the specialized technical assistance criteria list and number 5 on the comprehensive assistance list relate to how critical the requested assistance is to enabling the

district to qualify for a grant or cost-share program. The TAWG feels that requests for assistance which it is absolutely essential that the commission provide in order for the district to qualify for third-party support of a district project should be awarded more ranking points than requests for assistance without which project implementation would still be possible.

**Final Note**

As stated in the Introduction, the TAWG recognizes that the processes introduced in this report will continue to evolve over time. We expect and encourage periodic reviews which will no doubt lead to these processes becoming increasingly effective as time goes on.

# Appendix A:

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING AND SUBMITTING A REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

# INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING AND SUBMITTING A REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

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## **Purpose**

The purpose of this section of the manual is to assist districts with developing, certifying, and submitting a Request for Assistance.

## **Authority**

These instructions are issued to be consistent with chapter 27, title 22 Idaho Code (“Soil Conservation Districts”) and with procedures adopted by the Soil & Water Conservation Commission.

The statute referenced above is available on the internet at:

<http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/idstat/Title22/T22CH27.htm>

## **Timing and Due Date**

Requests for assistance may be submitted at any time. However, to facilitate annual Commission budget and work plan development, the evaluation of requests and the allocation of assistance will be conducted one time per year. Requests must be submitted to the Commission no later than **March 31** in order to be considered during the annual evaluation.

The commission recognizes that urgent or emergency conservation opportunities and concerns do arise. The commission is committed to remaining nimble enough to respond to these situations and so has instituted a mechanism for expediting the development and handling of urgent requests.

## **Certification**

Once the request is finalized, complete the Certification attached as Appendix A and present the completed request to the district Board of Supervisors Chairperson for review and signature. Attach the Certification to the Request for Assistance and submit to the Commission by the due date.

## Completing the Request for Assistance

### **Introduction**

This section of the manual is designed to assist districts with the development of requests for assistance which will effectively document the district's plans, objectives, and commitment to the particular project or activity for which they are requesting assistance. Use of the standardized format presented here will enable the Commission to efficiently and objectively evaluate requests from districts across the state. Individually, the requests and the process the Commission uses to evaluate them are intended to promote transparency and accountability; collectively, the requests demonstrate how districts across the state are addressing local resource concerns, and how much additional work could be accomplished were resources not limiting.

It is expected that assistance will be requested for projects and activities intended to address local natural resources priorities identified in a district 5-year or annual work plan. It will be helpful to develop a district needs assessment, wherein you identify and quantify local characteristics, natural resource conditions, and available resources and strategies for improving conditions, as an aid to anticipating upcoming needs. Assistance which the Commission may be able to provide can then be requested well in advance of when it is needed. Requests for assistance can be submitted at any time during the year but in order to be considered for the upcoming field season requests need to be received by the Commission no later than March 31<sup>st</sup>.

The commission recognizes that there will be times when an urgent or emergency conservation opportunity or concern presents itself. In these instances the local district is encouraged to immediately submit an urgent request for assistance. Urgent requests will be evaluated by the Commission and a decision made regarding the allocation of assistance to service the request within 3 business days of the Commission having received the request. Please note that assistance which careful planning would have anticipated will not be considered by the Commission to qualify as an urgent need.

### **Categories of Assistance**

The assistance districts require can be categorized as either "specialized technical" or "comprehensive district" assistance. A district request for assistance will be specific to either one or the other of these two categories. The categories are defined as:

**Specialized Technical Assistance** is that technical assistance used to support districts in the wise use and enhancement of natural resources which can only be provided by someone possessing a specialized, science-based skill set and an ability to integrate local knowledge of the site-specific interactions between environmental, economic, cultural and social concerns into the assistance provided.

Examples of Specialized Technical Assistance may include but are not limited to:

- Conservation planning
- Engineering services
- Project implementation and construction inspections
- BMP effectiveness monitoring
- Watershed planning and riparian assessments
- Development of a district needs assessment

**Comprehensive District Assistance** is that assistance which supports the independent and collective strengthening of conservation districts by providing services which: a) expand resources or otherwise enhance district capacity to assist private landowners and land users in the conservation, sustainment, improvement and enhancement of Idaho's natural resources, or; b) support routine district activities or projects.

Examples of comprehensive assistance may include but are not limited to:

- District information and outreach activities
- Administration of district-sponsored cost-share programs
- Grant writing assistance
- Development of 5-year and annual work plans

### **Development of a Request for Assistance**

1. Schedule adequate time on district board meeting agendas to complete each of the following steps. Keep mindful that, as with other district business, preparing a request for assistance needs to be harmonized with local district priorities and objectives.
2. Determine which category of assistance you need. Refer to the definitions presented above to determine whether you are requesting "Specialized Technical" or "Comprehensive District" Assistance. If you are unsure which category of assistance your need falls under, contact the Commission for clarification.
3. Refer to the list of criteria which the project ranking committee will use to evaluate your request. Note that requests are evaluated based upon category-specific criteria. If you are requesting specialized technical assistance, refer to the list of criteria for evaluating requests for specialized technical assistance, and if you are requesting comprehensive district assistance, then refer to the list of criteria for evaluating comprehensive district requests for assistance. The two lists of criteria follow these instructions.
4. Develop your request by writing a narrative response to each of individual criterion on the relevant list. Because the listed criteria are all presented as questions this part of the process can be compared to completing an essay exam in school. The evaluating committee will award ranking points for each criterion based on the content of your response, not on grammar, spelling, or prose style!

Write as little or as much as necessary to provide an evaluator who may be unfamiliar with your district enough information to get a clear picture of how the assistance you are requesting relates to each criterion. Take care to address each criterion on the list as no ranking points will be awarded for criteria lacking a response.

Additional information which you would like evaluators to be aware of may be included in the form of an introduction. Make sure such information pertains to the request, and present it as succinctly as possible.

Should a natural resources opportunity or emergency arise which you would like to request the commission help you with you may initiate a commission evaluation of your need by

telephoning a commission staff member or by emailing or faxing a written description of the situation to the commission office, depending upon the urgency of the need.

5. Estimate: a) the number of hours of Commission staff time which will be required to service your request, and; b) the calendar dates during which the assistance will be needed. Enter these estimates in the space provided at the top of the Request for Assistance Certification.

It is important that you provide a realistic approximation of how much assistance you expect to need. If you need help estimating the hours of assistance your project will require, contact the commission field staff person who works with your district or the commission district support services staff.

6. Submit the request to your district Board of Supervisors for formal approval and certification. The request must be formally approved by the district board and the District Needs Request Certification (attached) must be signed by the Chair. Attach the signed and dated Certification to your request and submit to the Commission.

Requests may be submitted to the Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission electronically, by fax, or by regular mail. If you submit your request electronically make certain that you also provide a signed copy of the Certification, which you may fax, scan, or mail to the Commission.

- Email electronic versions to: [info@swc.idaho.gov](mailto:info@swc.idaho.gov)
- Mail hard copies to: Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission, 650 West State Street, Room 145, Boise, Idaho 83702.
- Fax documents to: (208)332-1799
- Telephone: Boise Commission Office staff @ 208-332-1790  
Commission District Support Services staff @ 208-989-0707

### **Timing and Due Date**

Standard requests for assistance are due on or before **March 31** of each year. Standard requests include requests for assistance needed during the upcoming fiscal year (July 1<sup>st</sup> – June 30<sup>th</sup>).

Urgent requests for assistance may be submitted at any time.

## **CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING REQUESTS FOR SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:**

- 1) Does the proposed activity address a natural resources conservation priority identified in the conservation district's 5-year or annual work plan?  
Weight: 12
- 2) Has the district provided documentation of support for the proposed activity, including:  
a) letters in support of the proposed activity from landowners and producers within the project area, and; b) letters in support of the proposed activity from entities which will be contributing resources towards project implementation?  
Weight: 12
- 3) Have the necessary steps been taken to ensure that the district will be able to utilize the assistance being requested within the time-frame indicated in the request for assistance?  
Weight: 11
- 4) Has the conservation district identified adequate resources to ensure that the objectives of the proposed project will be achieved?  
Weight: 11
- 5) Has the district requesting assistance received activity- or project-specific comprehensive or specialized technical assistance from SWC within the last three years?  
Weight: 11  
Note: a "No" response is awarded 11 ranking points; a "Yes" response is awarded 0 ranking points.
- 6) If the answer to question 5 is "yes", were the objectives of the activity or project which SWC provided assistance for achieved in a timely fashion?  
Weight: 1-10
- 7) Is the requested assistance necessary in order to address an urgent or emergency need?  
Weight: 10
- 8) Will the proposed project deliver quantifiable natural resources benefits?  
Weight: 8
- 9) Does the proposed project address the need for on-going operations and maintenance of the planned practices in order to ensure that conservation benefits are sustainable over time?  
Weight: 7
- 10) Is the assistance required for use as either in-kind or hard match in order to enable the district to qualify for a specific grant or cost-share program opportunity?  
Weight: 1-5

- 11) Will the requested specialized technical assistance help the district to develop a plan for a potential future project?  
Weight: 5
- 12) Does the proposed project include plans to publicize project outcomes?  
Weight: 5
- 13) Have entities other than the conservation district indicated a willingness to commit resources towards implementation of the proposed project?  
Weight: 5
- 14) Does the district have technical staff or other resources which will be committed to the project?  
Weight: 2

## **CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING REQUESTS FOR COMPREHENSIVE DISTRICT ASSISTANCE:**

- 1) Does the proposed activity address a priority identified within the district's 5-year or annual work plan?  
Weight: 18
- 2) Has the district provided documentation of support for the proposed activity, including:  
a) letters in support of the proposed activity from landowners and producers within the project area, and; b) letters in support of the proposed activity from entities which will be contributing resources towards achieving activity objectives?  
Weight: 18
- 3) Have the necessary steps been taken to ensure that the district will be able to utilize the assistance being requested within the time-frame indicated in the request for assistance?  
Weight: 15
- 4) Will the requested assistance be used to enhance district capacity by developing tools, strategies and successes which the district will be able to use to independently implement future projects?  
Weight: 12
- 5) Is the assistance required for use as either in-kind or hard match in order to enable the district to qualify for a specific grant or cost-share program opportunity?  
Weight: 1-12
- 6) Has the district provided evidence of having researched the availability of district, division, IASCD, IDEA or other resources which may be available to meet their need?  
Weight: 9
- 7) Has the district requesting assistance received activity- or project-specific comprehensive or specialized technical assistance from SWC within the last three years?  
Weight: 5  
Note: a "No" response is awarded 5 ranking points; a "Yes" response is awarded 0 ranking points.
- 8) If the answer to question 7 is "yes", were the objectives of the activity or project which SWC provided assistance for achieved in a timely fashion?  
Weight: 1-4

<p><b><u>REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE</u></b> <b><u>CERTIFICATION</u></b></p> <p><b>IDAHO SOIL &amp; WATER</b> <b>CONSERVATION COMMISSION</b></p>	<b>CONSERVATION DISTRICT:</b>
	<b>PROJECT OR ACTIVITY NAME:</b>
	<b>FOR FISCAL YEAR:</b>
	<b>HOURS OF ASSISTANCE REQUESTED:</b>
	<b>DATES ASSISTANCE IS NEEDED:</b>
	<b>REQUEST DUE DATE : MARCH 31, 2013</b>

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Conservation District Board of Supervisors Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
District or Board Chairperson  
Telephone

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Email Address

**FOR SWC USE ONLY:**

**DATE OF CONFIRMATION:**



# Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission

650 W. State St., Room 145 • Boise Idaho 83702

Telephone: 208-332:1790 • Fax: 208-332:1799

www.swc.idaho.gov

## ITEM #6

**TO: CHAIRMAN BRONSON AND COMMISSIONERS RADFORD, STUTZMAN, WRIGHT, AND TREBESCH**  
**FROM: DELWYNE TREFZ, DISTRICT SUPPORT SERVICES SPECIALIST**  
**DATE: SEPTEMBER 13, 2012**  
**RE: ADOPTION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AWARD PROCESS**

### **Introduction**

This report includes:

- a) A summary of the process used to develop procedures intended to assist us with allocating the commission's limited resources.
- b) The procedure recommended by the Technical Assistance Work Group (TAWG).
- c) A summary of responses from districts to the TAWG recommendation.
- d) The recommendation developed by commission staff which incorporates modifications to the TAWG recommendation made in response to district comments and concerns.

### **Background**

The efficient utilization of the commission's limited human resources requires a mechanism by which we can anticipate and plan for the assistance districts are going to request of us in the upcoming fiscal year. In March, 2012, Chairman Bronson appointed nine voting members to the TAWG and tasked them with developing a recommendation relative to how district requests for assistance are submitted, evaluated, prioritized, and serviced by the commission. The IASCD, IDEA, and conservation districts from each of the state's 6 geographic regions were represented on the TAWG and Commissioners and commission staff participated as non-voting members.

The TAWG met via teleconference ten times between March 15 and June 13, 2012. At the conclusion of the June 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, eight of the nine TAWG members recommended that the procedures they had developed be forwarded to the commission as a recommendation. While the TAWG is aware that any number of real-world conditions may result in it becoming apparent that the recommended procedures need to be modified, the group is confident that their recommendation is a good starting point. The TAWG recommendation is attached.

### **Comments Received**

Since distributing the TAWG recommendation in August, staff met with supervisors and/or staff of 34 districts from across the state, listening to their suggestions and addressing their concerns relative to the recommendation.

Suggestions and concerns expressed by districts include:

- The recommended process is too cumbersome and complicated
- "if it ain't broke, why fix it?"
- Two or more request cycles per year may fit district schedules better than one cycle per year.
- Who will be competing for a specific staff persons time, i.e., will districts currently served by a specific staff person now have to compete with districts statewide for that staff's assistance?



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- Districts located within a given division or geographic region should be the only districts qualified to submit requests for the assistance of the commission staff person who is assigned to that region. This means that requests for assistance should be evaluated on a regional rather than a statewide basis.
- Reducing staff flexibility will reduce efficiency and effectiveness.
- In order to keep the locally-led nature of our partnership front and center, it's best to enable local districts and SWC staff to function with a minimum amount of centralized control.
- The procedure needs to include a mechanism for handling joint requests for assistance submitted by two or more districts.
- When a district receives an inquiry into the RCRDP loan program, will commission staff be available to provide the technical assistance required to prepare a conservation plan and loan application? Bear in mind that it is impossible for districts to predict how many RCRDP applicants they may have over the course of a year.
- Is it wise to create a system which compels districts to compete with each other for commission assistance?
- Assuming that a process similar to the one recommended by the TAWG is adopted: Following evaluation of the requests for assistance, it may be wise to simply report the order in which the requests are ranked and not the actual number of ranking points each request earned.
- If the commission's belief that the current process for allocating district assistance needs to be changed is based upon the annual survey of districts, then the legitimacy of the survey should be examined.
- Some interpret the recommended process as an attempt to micromanage, rather than trust, districts and field staff.

Twelve districts and the IASCD Board of Directors also submitted written comments, which are attached.

## **Staff Recommendation**

Commission staff recommends certain modifications to the TAWG recommendation based on feedback received from districts. The technical assistance award process recommendation prepared by commission staff is attached.

Key modifications recommended by Commission staff are:

- The addition of language emphasizing that the recommended process is dynamic, must be reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis, and WILL undergo changes over time as it becomes apparent that changes will improve the effectiveness of the process.
- Recommending that requests for assistance be reviewed by a regional evaluation committee rather than by a centralized, statewide committee.
- Assigning a range of weights, or ranking points, for each criterion, and including language explaining the basis upon which the available points will be awarded.

**ACTION:** Adopt process for award of technical assistance to districts

Attachments:

- TAWG Recommendation



## Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission

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- Commission Staff Recommendation
- Comment Letters from Districts



# Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts

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August 23, 2012

Chairman Richard Bronson  
Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission  
650 W. State St. Room 145  
Boise, ID 83702

RECEIVED  
AUG 27 2012  
IDAHO SOIL & WATER  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Dear Chairman Bronson,

The IASCD Board would like to thank you for the Commission's endeavors and the herculean efforts Delwyne Trefz and Teri Murrison put forward working with the Technical Advisory Working Group (TAWG)\*to address the issue of providing technical assistance needs for Districts. The Association whole heartedly agrees that districts as a whole need to focus on effective and efficient program delivery.

Upon circulation of the TAWG proposal, we have received a lot of negative feedback. Although we appreciate the effort to develop an equitable and transparent strategy, we feel the need to bring to your attention the collective district concerns which are as follows:

- 1.) Complexity
  - a. The seventeen (17) page document as presented to districts is too cumbersome and complex. While we want to see the best conservation projects float to the top, we do not want to see a district not apply because they are discouraged by the process.
- 2.) Project Bias
  - a. The proposed TAWG program criteria are biased to progressive Districts. Looking at the 50 Soil Conservation Districts, one has to be cognizant that over 60% of the state's districts are funded (county & state) at a medium to lower level and employ part-time staff. Although we do not advocate carrying districts, the Commission should provide opportunity for growth in the process. The growth occurring through the planning and implementation of a project and it would stand to reason a "smaller project" might be the best place to start.
  - b. Item #2 on both the Strategic and Compressive list is unreasonable. Does an effective project warrant six (6) letters of support to be effective and in the best interest of conservation and the State of Idaho?

3.) Fiscal Responsibility

- a. The greatest concern in the proposed process is making it necessary to hire a new FTP to help cover the additional work it would involve to implement this process. The development involved by the TAWG to date has involved an estimated five months and conservatively 50 to 70 hours of SWC staff time. IASCD and districts have said repeatedly and clearly that the best use of SWC staff is in the field. More importantly, the economic and political climate will not (or should) weather an increase in state staffing. It does not make sense to engage another staff person to manage nine (9) staff positions. (Keep in mind this does not account for the time that will be needed by Commissioners and the committee selected to "prioritize" the requests for TA.) This process should assess and weigh district needs and priorities without a complex application, evaluation, and then implementation.

In conclusion, again IASCD whole heartedly supports the Commissions pursuit of efficient and effective distribution of technical assistance; however, there is strong sentiment the process as presented is not acceptable in its present form. The Commission has always been a strong partner and district advocate and IASCD is very encouraged at the dedication involved in the development of this process.

We appreciate and embrace an opportunity to help develop this into a process that will be workable to all parties involved.

Sincerely,



Kit Tillotson  
President



Billie Brown  
Vice President



Steve Becker  
Treasurer



Rick Rodgers  
Secretary



J. Lynn Bagley  
Director



Lynn McKee  
Director



Power Soil Conservation District  
2769 Fairgrounds Road  
Power, Idaho 83211  
Phone: (208) 226-5130  
Fax: (208) 226-3122

Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission  
Attn: Dick Bronson, Commission Chair  
132 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite 102  
Meridian, Idaho 83642

July 24, 2012

Dear Mr. Bronson,

The Power Soil Conservation District is writing in response to the Request for Assistance. We have taken the time to review and discuss the ranking worksheet for Commission staff members that serve Soil Conservation Districts. The Soil Conservation Commission is the districts ?? partner and in past their objective was to assist the districts in any way they can at any time, this appears to no longer be the case. The District's other partners are quick to offer assistance at any time!

## What do we do?

The Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission provides leadership and assistance for natural resource conservation programs throughout the state. The Commission provides support and services to local conservation districts, landowners and land users to conserve, sustain, improve and enhance Idaho's natural resources through non-regulatory and science-based technical assistance, financial incentive programs, and educational programs.

The Commission seeks to strengthen and expand conservation districts and locally-led natural resource conservation while maintaining the flexibility to anticipate new challenges. Through agreements with local, state and federal conservation partners, the Commission strives to provide the highest level of professional, reliable and ethical assistance in a manner deserving of the public trust.

We appreciate the time that the TWAG has spent in creating this document, but we have a few opposing points and concerns that we feel are relevant to our position in this matter. Our concerns are as follows:

- 1) It appears that this reporting process could end up being extremely time consuming.
- 2) The time involved ranking the requests, comparing with other districts and final approval for assistance would delay the project along with discouraging districts from applying for assistance.
- 3) Regarding question #5 in the Specialized Technical Assistance section and question #7 in the Comprehensive District Assistance section, it appears to limit District's ability to obtain Commission

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assistance. If District's have an on-going 3 to 5 year project, they could potentially only receive Commission help every 4<sup>th</sup> year.

- 4) By following the ranking process, yearly activities could be eliminated.
- 5) Coming up with exact dates is challenging, especially when you are dealing with projects that involve landowners. There is no way to know when a landowner will have BMP's installed and construction inspections needed.
- 6) If assistance isn't granted then objectives in our 5-Year Plans could not be implemented.
- 7) If Districts have received assistance in the past 3 years, and are not allocated for any Commission assistance, would it be possible to receive assistance if Commission staff is available?
- 8) After reviewing the questions, we feel that a lot of Districts will rank out about the same, so how would Commission staff's time be allocated in a situation such as that?
- 9) A portion of the 319 grant application asks for Technical Assistance match. In an already difficult environment to limit the use of Commission TA it might be even more discouraging for District's to seek 319 or any other alternative funding.

We appreciate your time in reviewing and considering our concerns.

Respectfully,

BEAR LAKE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
785 NO. 4<sup>TH</sup> STREET SUITE B  
MONTPELIER, IDAHO 8325



GARTH BOEHME, CHAIRMAN   KERRY ROMRELL   JEFF BARTSCHI   ROBERT WARD   JAMES HARDCASTLE

---

Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission  
Attn: Dick Bronson, Commission Chair  
132 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite 102  
Meridian, Idaho 83642

July 24, 2012

Dear Mr. Bronson,

The Bear Lake Soil & Water Conservation District is writing in response to the Request for Assistance. We have taken the time to review and discuss the ranking worksheet for Commission staff members that serve Conservation Districts.

We appreciate the time that the TWAG has spent in creating this document, but we have a few opposing points and concerns that we feel are relevant to our position in this matter. Our concerns are as follows:

- It appears that this reporting process could end up being extremely time consuming.
- Regarding question #5 in the Specialized Technical Assistance section and question #7 in the Comprehensive District Assistance section, it appears to limit District's ability to obtain Commission assistance. If District's have an on-going 3 to 5 year project, they could potentially only receive Commission help every 4<sup>th</sup> year.
- By following the ranking process, yearly activities could be eliminated.
- Coming up with exact dates is challenging, especially when you are dealing with projects that involve landowners. There is no way to know when a landowner will have BMP's installed and construction inspections needed.
- If assistance isn't granted then objectives in our 5-Year Plans could not be implemented.
- If Districts have received assistance in the past 3 years, and are not allocated for any Commission assistance, would it be possible to receive assistance if Commission staff is available?
- After reviewing the questions, we feel that a lot of Districts will rank out about the same, so how would Commission staff's time be allocated in a situation such as that?
- A portion of the 319 grant application asks for Technical Assistance match. In an already difficult environment to limit the use of Commission TA it might be even more discouraging for District's to seek 319 or any other alternative funding.

We appreciate your time in reviewing and considering our concerns.

Respectfully,



Caribou Soil Conservation District  
390 East Hooper Ave.  
Soda Springs, Idaho 83276  
Phone: (208) 547-4396  
Fax: (208)547-4801

Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission  
Attn: Dick Bronson, Commission Chair  
132 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite 102  
Meridian, Idaho 83642

July 24, 2012

Dear Mr. Bronson,

The Caribou Soil Conservation District is writing in response to the Request for Assistance. We have taken the time to review and discuss the ranking worksheet for Commission staff members that serve Soil Conservation Districts.

We appreciate the time that the TWAG has spent in creating this document, but we have a few opposing points and concerns that we feel are relevant to our position in this matter. Our concerns are as follows:

- 1) It appears that this reporting process could end up being extremely time consuming.
- 2) Regarding question #5 in the Specialized Technical Assistance section and question #7 in the Comprehensive District Assistance section, it appears to limit District's ability to obtain Commission assistance. If District's have an on-going 3 to 5 year project, they could potentially only receive Commission help every 4<sup>th</sup> year.
- 3) By following the ranking process, yearly activities could be eliminated.
- 4) Coming up with exact dates is challenging, especially when you are dealing with projects that involve landowners. There is no way to know when a landowner will have BMP's installed and construction inspections needed.
- 5) If assistance isn't granted then objectives in our 5-Year Plans could not be implemented.
- 6) If Districts have received assistance in the past 3 years, and are not allocated for any Commission assistance, would it be possible to receive assistance if Commission staff is available?
- 7) After reviewing the questions, we feel that a lot of Districts will rank out about the same, so how would Commission staff's time be allocated in a situation such as that?
- 8) A portion of the 319 grant application asks for Technical Assistance match. In an already difficult environment to limit the use of Commission TA it might be even more discouraging for District's to seek 319 or any other alternative funding.

We appreciate your time in reviewing and considering our concerns.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wilder L. Hatch".

Wilder L. Hatch, Chairman

*Helping People Help the Land*

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

CLARK SCD TAWG RESPONSE/COMMENTS

THE CLARK SCD COMMENTS REGARDING THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WORKING GROUP ARE AS FOLLOWS:

THE DISTRICT IS CONCERNED WITH THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TAWG IN REGARDS TO HOW DISTRICTS OBTAIN SUPPORT FROM THE SWC. FOR THE PAST 20 PLUS YEARS DISTRICTS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO UTILIZE THE COMMISSION WITHOUT A LOT OF "RED TAPE". THE DISTRICT IS CONCERNED THAT THEY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO UTILIZE THE COMMISSION SUPPORT STAFF AS THEY HAVE IN THE PAST WITHOUT HAVING TO COMPLETE AN APPLICATION WHEN IN MOST CASES THE ONLY ASSISTANCE THAT IS BEING REQUESTED IS INFORMATION THAT WILL ASSIST THE DISTRICT WITH CONSERVATION REVIEWS, STUDIES OR REPORTS.

THE DISTRICT IS FULLY AWARE OF THE EVER CHANGING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS THAT EXIST IN COUNTY, STATE AND FEDERAL BUDGETS. THE CLARK SCD APPRECIATES THE CHANCE TO RESPOND TO THE TAWG RECOMMENDATIONS.

**From:** [Bruce and Joyce Hanson](#)  
**To:** [Delwyne Trefz](#)  
**Cc:** "Clearwater SWCD"  
**Subject:** comments on Tech Asst requests  
**Date:** Friday, August 24, 2012 11:47:51 AM

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Delwyne,

These are comments discussed among the Clearwater SWCD concerning the recommendations of the Technical Assistance Work Group. It is a good idea to have some type of ranking criteria for new technical assistance requests, and we emphasize 'new' projects only. With that caveat, the recommendations of the work group look good.

We did not receive information on whether this would apply for current projects each District may have. If it did apply for current projects the ranking sheets would be redundant, some questions would not really apply, and the administration of paperwork for ongoing projects would be cumbersome each year.

Our District has 3 or 4 ongoing projects the SWC has committed TA for, and some Districts have 9 or more projects. We think current SWC commitments should have priority over new requests for staff. It would be more appropriate to have Districts with current projects fill out a separate and simplified form each year with three columns: 1) Name of project, phase, or grant; 2) Completion Date; 3) Estimated hours of TA needed from SWC in the next fiscal year.

If the Commission used the information for ongoing projects with SWC commitments of staff, plus the new ranking sheets for *new* projects, it would be much more comprehensive.

Bruce Hanson,  
Clearwater Soil and Water Conservation District  
Home phone: 208 476-3949



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East Side Soil Conservation District  
1120 Lincoln Rd. - Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

Idaho Soil and Water Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the new proposed Technical Assistance Work Group's (TAWG) process.

The East Side Soil and Water Conservation District (District) values the beneficial administrative and technical assistance that we have received from the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWC) staff. The assistance received has been beneficial in planning and implementing the District's long term project goals of assisting landowners and users with conservation measures.

The District encourages the ISWC to continue to provide technical assistance to Idaho's Conservation Districts. The District strongly supports the "locally-led" nature of the partnership. The strength of the Conservation Partnership in Idaho is open communication and cooperation.

Following are comments the District has with the proposed TAWG process:

- Due to the intricacy of application process it may be may be problematic for Districts with inexperienced and limited administrative assistance or paid staff. For example if a District has a new administrative assistant and inexperienced board of supervisors will the application process deter them from applying for assistance?
- How will SWC allocate the technical assistance throughout the State?
- Is it the intention of the Commission to keep technical assistance providers within certain geographical boundaries? It would be good to know how the TSP personnel will divided up.
- What are the SWC's expectations for reporting?
- The process is cumbersome and somewhat complicated.
- This seems to be a top down approach rather than coming from the bottom up.
- Has the option been explored to use IASCD staff like Chris Banks to assist districts within his region?
- Is the current method of providing assistance really broken?
- The weakest District is the weakest link in this process.

# IDAHO SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

## Board of Supervisors:

Chairman  
Leon Slichter

Vice Chairman  
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Secretary  
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Associate  
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Mike Duclos  
Pete Lane  
Ed Stuivenga

District  
Administrator  
Stefanie Bowman

Conservation Planner  
Barbara Seaman

**District  
Conservationist:**  
Richard Spencer

September 18, 2012

Delwyne Trefz  
District Support Services Specialist  
Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission  
650 W. State Street, Room 145  
Boise, Idaho 83720

Delwyne,

At the Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Districts (Idaho SWCD) monthly meeting in September, the Board of Supervisors discussed the TAWG recommendations and that we were asked to review. After reading through the recommendations and discussing it, we have some concerns and comments we would like to share.

The Idaho SWCD has had a very good working relationship with the ISWCC and with Eileen Rowan and would like it to continue. Everything has worked smoothly in having Eileen's technical assistance on past and current programs giving us her technical assistance as needed and as she has had time. If the TAWG recommendations are adopted, the Idaho SWCD feels that in requesting any of Eileen's time to assist us will be done on a best guess scenario, as we are not able to specifically figure how much of her time we will need on each of our six current programs. There is no way to specifically estimate ahead of time how many producers will sign up for projects and what the extent of each project is going to be. There have been occasions when a producer has stopped in for assistance that does not have a contract with the Idaho SWCD and we have had to contact Eileen for her technical support either by phone or e-mail. Eileen has been very good about scheduling her time to assist Idaho SWCD, Lewis SCD, Clearwater SWCD, and NezPerce SWCD for the past 10 years. Eileen has assisted 88 landowners successfully and efficiently in the past 4 years.

The Idaho SWCD also feels that if this plan is adopted, it would be a step backwards in the working relationship and efficient manner of the ISWCC.

If you have any questions or would like clarification on any of our concerns, please feel free to contact us at the numbers listed below.

Sincerely,

Leon Slichter, Chairman  
Idaho Soil & Water Conservation District

**From:** KSSWCD [mailto:ksswcd@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 22, 2012 9:22 AM  
**To:** Delwyne Trefz  
**Subject:** RE: TAWG Recommendation Discussion

Delwyne,

I guess my first question is: what is the problem you are trying to solve? I've been reading over the proposed TAWG questionnaire, I guess it kind of makes sense, but during the eleven years I've been here, I haven't seen a systematic failure of access to Commission resources and assistance. So, again, what's broken? I can't contribute to the conversation until I know what the question is.

I ran the questionnaire through a couple of real-life scenarios. I calculated the points it might accumulate, and at the end, all I could conclude was "so what?" Maybe I'm just oblivious or out of the loop. Is there something I'm missing here?

Bob

**LEWIS SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

*Jerry Reid, Chairman*

*Dick Pentzer, Vice Chairman*

*John Miller, Secretary/Treasurer*

*Eric Hasselstrom, Supervisor*

*Kyle Meacham, Supervisor*

DISRTICT ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

*Karol Holthaus*

September 14, 2012

Delwyne Trefz  
District Support Services Specialist  
Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission  
650 W. State Street, Room 145  
Boise, Idaho 83720

Dear Delwyne,

The Lewis Soil Conservation District (LSCD) would like the technical support for our district to continue having Eileen Rowan doing the technical work to get conservation on the ground. Eileen has been working with Lewis, Clearwater, Idaho and Nez Perce Districts for the past 10 years. Currently LSCD has four grants which Eileen does the technical work for. We commend her for the hard work she does. She has worked with 88 landowners in the past year between the four districts. The LSCD feels it would be a waste of time to fill out the paper work to request technical assistance, when she already knows what needs to get done and approximately how much time it will take to get projects completed. She has been doing her own scheduling for what needs done in each district she serves, to get projects completed in a timely manner. When producers contact us wanting to develop a plan for a potential future conservation project, we communicate with Eileen via email or phone to schedule a time for her to meet with the producer.

The LSCD feels if theTAWG recommendations are adopted the work of getting conservation on the ground would not go as efficiently as it has in the past. We feel, "Why ruin a good thing that is working well for us!"

If you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

The Lewis Soil Conservation District Board and Staff

**From:** [Halbert, Terry - NRCS, Jerome, ID](#)  
**To:** [Delwyne Trefz](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Commissioners Consideration of TAWG Recommendation  
**Date:** Thursday, August 23, 2012 9:47:54 AM

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Delwyne, I guess I was surprised and disappointed to see this! I thought Dick's comments at the last commission meeting were well spoken. While I did not support the final recommendation of the TWAG I do respect the process. The TWAG group met in good faith, and did their job. The Commission Staff was a part of the TWAG if they had comments or recommendations they should have made them then! Regardless of the staff intentions they will be seen as heavy handed.

Terry

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**From:** Delwyne Trefz [mailto:[Delwyne.Trefz@swc.idaho.gov](mailto:Delwyne.Trefz@swc.idaho.gov)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 21, 2012 10:32 AM  
**To:** Miller, Diane - NRCS-CD, Boise, ID; Adams SWCD; Balanced Rock SCD; Transtrum, Lisa - NRCS-CD, Montpelier, ID; Klaus, Sherry - NRCS, Plummer, ID; Blaine SWCD; OHare, Linda - NRCS, Sandpoint, ID; Riddle, Rene - Bonner Ferry, ID; Bruneau River SCD; Perkes, Frances - NRCS, Arco, ID; Camas SCD; Kent, Lori - NRCS, Caldwell, ID; Bassett, Pauline - NRCS, Soda Springs, ID; Central Bingham SWCD; Taylor, Robbie - NRCS, Rexburg, ID; Clearwater SWCD; Custer SWCD; East Cassia SWCD; Smith, Joyce - NRCS, Idaho Falls, ID; Miranda.Pedroza - NRCS, Mountain Home, ID; Franklin SWCD; Stelling, Sheryl - NRCS-CD, Emmett, ID; Gooding SCD; Bowman, Stefanie - NRCS-CD, Grangeville, ID; Crystal, Rebecca - NRCS, Rigby, ID; Kootenai-Shoshone SWCD; Latah SWCD; Lemhi SCD; Holthaus, Karol - NRCS-CD, Nezperce, ID; Minidoka SWCD; Nezperce SWCD; North Bingham SCD; Halbert, Terry - NRCS, Jerome, ID; Daniels, Linda - NRCS, Malad City, ID; Millard, Gina - NRCS, Marsing, ID; Gabiola, Johna - NRCS-CD, Payette, ID; Portneuf SWCD; Long, Pegi - NRCS, American Falls, ID; Snake River SWCD; South Bingham SCD; Ringel, Lori - NRCS, Driggs, ID; Coski, Kay - NRCS-CD, Cascade, ID; Lukehart, Vicki - NRCS-CD, Weiser, ID; Astle, Barbara - NRCS-CD, Shoshone, ID; Yellowstone SCD  
**Subject:** Commissioners Consideration of TAWG Recommendation

Hello All,

The Commissioners are scheduled to consider processes related to how district requests for assistance are handled during their September 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. This agenda item was scheduled for an earlier Commission meeting but has been rescheduled in order to give districts ample time to review and provide feedback on the Technical Assistance Work Group's (TAWG) recommendations.

In addition to the TAWG recommendations, the Commissioners will consider the modifications to that recommendation suggested by Commission staff. Modifications suggested by staff are shown in red ink in the attached document.

If you have questions, comments, or suggestions relative to either of these recommendations please get ahold of me. All the feedback I receive will be passed on to the Commissioners for their review and consideration prior to their September 24<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Thank-you,

Delwyne Trefz  
District Support Services Specialist  
Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission

## Jan Webster

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**To:** Ringel, Lori - NRCS, Driggs, ID  
**Subject:** RE: TAWG Recommendation

-----Original Message-----

From: Ringel, Lori - NRCS, Driggs, ID [mailto:Lori.Ringel@id.nacdnet.net]  
Sent: Monday, August 13, 2012 1:16 PM  
To: Delwyne Trefz  
Cc: Teri Murrison; Brian Reed; Matt Woodard (MWoodard@tu.org)  
Subject: RE: TAWG Recommendation

Delwyne -

The Teton SCD board reviewed the ranking sheet at their meeting held on August 8, 2012, and became a bit overwhelmed to say the least with the process to obtain assistance from the commission.

I won't give exact comments, but I have to tell you a synopsis of their comments were: the process needs to be 'short, concise, and simplified,' in order for the Commission to not become 'obsolete.' There also needs to be some avenue to ensure that if a district needs immediate assistance, they are not put off for a year to be 'ranked in March.'

Brian Reed was very patient with the board in the face of some criticism that was voiced at the meeting. He deserves a GOLD STAR!

I know this not what you wanted to hear, but this is the toned down version.

If you would prefer to talk about this give me a call.

Thanks -

Lori Ringel

**Jan Webster**

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**Subject:** FW: Thank-You!

-----Original Message-----

From: Lukehart, Vicki - NRCS-CD, Weiser, ID [mailto:Vicki.Lukehart@id.nacdn.net]

Sent: Tuesday, August 28, 2012 2:12 PM

To: Delwyne Trefz

Subject: RE: Thank-You!

Hi Delwyne,

Just wanted to take the time to give you some suggestions from our District as we discussed last week. As we talked I began to realize why I felt so disconnected from the Commission. In the past we used the Commission as our source for accounting such as QuickBooks, which helped us with our financial review or audit reports and our payroll and liabilities. We now have slowly migrated to a total independent state from the Commission. Which I am fine with. However, I don't really know the staff there or talk to anyone much anymore. I actually work with a lot of state and federal agencies but not closely with my own commission.

I also realized that I had thought on several occasions, on how nice it would be to have someone from the Commission that would know all of our projects and be involved in whatever capacity they could. Someone that understands on the ground projects and is on top of the latest "pots of funding" available to us for our particular projects. For instance we currently sought out funding to do a wetland along the Weiser River, which is a TMDL listed stream. I was sharing this project with a local landowner and he said that he would like to see at least 5-6 wetlands on the Weiser Flat, which would be a nice compliment to a very large project we did on the flat a few years back. If someone from the Commission knew all of our projects and ideas, they might be able to come up with some ideas or present the idea in its infant stage to IDEQ or whatever connection they had. Our District does have a lot of good connections, but, of all the agencies we work with, it is very rarely our own Commission.

A solution to this might be that we send all of board minutes to someone like Loretta who represents us and possibly you and between the two you could take a vested interest in all we do. You probably aware of quite a few projects and could see where another District did something similar and maybe send us their project reports or grant submissions. That way we would know where they went for the funding. Or you might know of an initiative that has come down the pike and because you now know our area you might realize that we may be a good fit and help us write a grant for it. Something like that.....hope this helps. Thank you very much.

Vicki Lukehart  
Weiser River SCD  
847 E. 9th St.  
Weiser, Idaho 83672  
208-549-4250





# Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission

650 W. State St., Room 145 • Boise Idaho 83702

Telephone: 208-332-1790 • Fax: 208-332-1799

www.swc.idaho.gov

## ITEM #7

**TO: CHAIRMAN BRONSON, COMMISSIONERS STUTZMAN, RADFORD, WRIGHT, AND TREBESCH**  
**FROM: TERRY HOEBELHEINRICH, LOAN OFFICER**  
**DATE: SEPTEMBER 14, 2012**  
**RE: RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND RANGELAND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM UPDATE**

### **New Loans**

Staff approved a \$40,000 loan in August. Terms include 2.5% interest and a 7 year term. The loan is to be secured with irrigation equipment. The project is located in southern Idaho and is a conversion from gated pipe to center pivot irrigation. The borrower and the loan are well within the Commission's credit standards.

There are no active loan applications for Commission consideration at this time, however there have been a couple of loan inquiries. Over the past two months, staff has been actively promoting the program and we anticipate this outreach will generate applications after the harvest winds down.

### **Program Activities**

The following marketing activities have been conducted since your last meeting:

- Staff promoted the loan program at the August Soil Health workshops in Idaho Falls, Pocatello and Jerome.
- The Commission participated in the Ag Pavilion at the Western Idaho State Fair and the Twin Falls County Fair.
- Staff met the Twin Falls Soil Conservation District at their August meeting and presented a loan program update.
- Staff provided an RCRDP update to NRCS District Conservationist's located in Mountain Home, American Falls, Soda Springs, and Preston.
- Staff provided an RCRDP update at the quarterly meeting of Division V Administrative Assistants located in Montpelier. Representatives from the Bear Lake, Caribou, Franklin, North Bingham, South Bingham, Oneida, Portneuf, South Bingham and IASCD attended.
- RCRDP articles were submitted for publication in the Custer and Canyon Soil Conservation District newsletters.
- Clearwater Soil Conservation District displayed RCRDP flyers at the District's booth at the Clearwater County Fair.

In addition to making district presentations, staff is scheduled to present the RCRDP program at the October Division meetings (6), the IASCD Annual Conference in November, and the Irrigation Equipment Associated Conference in January. Staff will also present at the Farm Finance Trade Show in November which is organized by the North Side Soil and Water Conservation District.



# Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission

650 W. State St., Room 145 • Boise Idaho 83702

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[www.swc.idaho.gov](http://www.swc.idaho.gov)

## **District Incentives**

Staff met with Harriet Hensley, Deputy Attorney General, to initiate legal review/research on potential RCRDP incentive payments to Districts. We anticipate convening committee consideration of possible incentives in October.

## **RCRDP Forms and NLS Software**

The RCRDP form which authorizes NRCS to provide information for the RCRDP program was updated to include additional information. The updated RCRDP balance sheet is available on the SWC website. Another NLS software update was installed.

## **RCRDP financial information**

See attached RCRDP financial report for July and August 2012.

## **Other**

Commissioner Radford will discuss feedback he has received regarding the RCRDP program.

**ACTION:** For information only

Attachments:

- NRCS Information Release Form
- RCRDP Balance Sheet
- RCRDP Financial Report July & August 2012

**Authorization to Release Information to the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission for the purpose of processing my Resource Conservation and Range Development Program loan application.**

The undersigned loan applicant hereby authorizes the USDA, Farm Service Agency, Natural Resource Conservation Service ("NRCS") to release all information requested, including information protected by 7 U.S.C. 8791(b)(2)(A), to the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission ("Commission") for the purpose of processing my Resource Conservation and Rangeland Development Program loan application. The undersigned loan applicant requests that copies of any requested documents be provided to the Commission, and that NRCS notify the Commission upon completion of my conservation project.

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Applicant Signature

---

Date

---

Applicant Name Printed

---

Co-Applicant Signature

---

Date

---

Co-Applicant Name Printed



<b>LONG TERM (FIXED)</b>		<b>REAL ESTATE MORTGAGES AND CONTRACTS</b>	
REAL ESTATE (Schedule G)		(Schedule G, amount due after one year)	
INTEREST IN PARTNERSHIPS AND CORPORATIONS		OTHER LONG TERM DEBT	
SECURITIES NOT PUBLICLY TREADED		ESTIMATED DEFERRED TAXES	
OTHER FIXED ASSETS		<b>TOTAL LONG TERM LIABILITIES</b>	
		<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	
<b>TOTAL FIXED ASSETS</b>		<b>NET WORTH</b>	
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET WORTH</b>	
Have you any assets or liabilities not listed on this financial statement or do you have any liabilities as a guarantor?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No   If yes, explain:			
Are you aware of any pending or existing lawsuits or legal action against you?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No   If yes, explain:			

REPRESENTATIONS AND WARRANTIES: The information contained in this statement is provided to induce you to extend or to continue the extension of credit to the undersigned or to others upon the guarantee of the undersigned. The undersigned acknowledge and understand that you are relying on the information provided herein in deciding to grant or continue credit or to accept a guarantee thereof. Each of the undersigned agrees to notify you immediately and in writing of any change in name, address, or employment and of any material adverse change (1) in any of the information contained in this statement or (2) in the financial condition of any of the undersigned or (3) in the ability of any of the undersigned to perform its (or their) obligations to you. In the absence of such notice or a new and full written statement, this should be considered as a continuing statement and substantially correct. If the undersigned fail to notify you as required above, or if any of the information herein should prove to be inaccurate or incomplete in any material respect, you may declare the indebtedness of the undersigned or the indebtedness guaranteed by the undersigned, as the case may be, immediately due and payable. You are authorized to make all inquiries you deem necessary to verify the accuracy of the information contained herein and to determine the credit-worthiness of the undersigned. The undersigned authorize any person or consumer reporting agency to give you any information it may have on the undersigned. Each of the undersigned authorizes you to answer questions about your credit experience with the undersigned. As long as any obligation or guarantee of the undersigned to you is outstanding, the undersigned shall supply annually an updated financial statement. This personal financial statement and any other financial or other information that the undersigned give you shall be your property:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_







<b>RCRDP - JULY 2012</b>		
	CURRENT	YEAR TO DATE
<b>BEGINNING CASH BALANCE</b>	\$ 4,443,506.48	\$ 4,443,506.48
Interest Received		
- 2515 Interest Income:	\$ 2,610.65	\$ 2,610.65
- 2523 Loan Interest:	\$ 5,642.37	\$ 5,642.37
- 2535 Default Interest: (late fees)	\$ 172.38	\$ 172.38
Principal payments received	\$ 85,867.54	\$ 85,867.54
Suspense items cleared		
Miscellaneous		
<b>TOTAL INCREASES</b>	<b>\$ 94,292.94</b>	<b>94,292.94</b>
<b>ADJUSTED CASH BALANCE</b>	<b>\$ 4,537,799.42</b>	<b>4,537,799.42</b>
Decrease of Funds		
1) Personnel costs	\$ (4,986.30)	\$ (4,986.30)
2) Operating Expense (less P-Card liability)	\$ (6,593.69)	\$ (6,593.69)
3) State Holdback	\$ -	\$ -
4) Loan Disbursements	\$ (4,351.00)	\$ (4,351.00)
5) Capital Outlay	\$ -	\$ -
<b>TOTAL DECREASES</b>	<b>(15,930.99)</b>	<b>(15,930.99)</b>
<b>ENDING CASH BALANCE as of July 31, 2012</b>	<b>\$ 4,521,868.43</b>	<b>\$ 4,521,868.43</b>
Cash as of 7/31/2012		\$ 4,521,868.43
3% Minimum Contingency Reserve		\$ (168,617.61)
Funds Approved - Not Disbursed		\$ 239,451.00
<b>FUNDS AVAILABLE TO LOAN</b>		<b>\$ 4,592,701.82</b>
Pending Approval		\$ -
Funds Available after 7/11/2012		\$ 4,592,701.82
<b>LOAN STATUS REPORT:</b>		
Outstanding Principal Loan Balance beginning 6/30/2012		\$ 5,702,103.43
Disbursements during July 2012		\$ 4,351.00
Principal payments made during July 2012		\$ (85,867.54)
Adjustments to STARS balance		\$ -
<b>ADJUSTED PRINCIPAL LOAN BALANCE as of 7/31/2012</b>		<b>\$ 5,620,586.89</b>
Active Loans at July 31, 2012	151	

<b>RCRDP - AUGUST 2012</b>		
	CURRENT	YEAR TO DATE
<b>BEGINNING CASH BALANCE</b>	\$ 4,521,868.43	\$ 4,443,506.48
Interest Received		
- 2515 Interest Income:	\$ 2,162.42	\$ 4,773.07
- 2523 Loan Interest:	\$ 2,125.14	\$ 7,767.51
- 2535 Default Interest: (late fees)	\$ -	\$ 172.38
Principal payments received	\$ 7,949.09	\$ 93,816.63
Suspense items cleared	\$ 0.01	\$ 0.01
Miscellaneous	\$ -	\$ -
<b>TOTAL INCREASES</b>	<b>\$ 12,236.66</b>	<b>106,529.60</b>
<b>ADJUSTED CASH BALANCE</b>	<b>\$ 4,534,105.09</b>	<b>4,550,036.08</b>
Decrease of Funds		
1) Personnel costs	\$ (2,282.90)	\$ (7,269.20)
2) Operating Expense (less P-Card liability)	\$ (29,868.53)	\$ (36,462.22)
3) State Holdback	\$ -	\$ -
4) Loan Disbursements (2)	\$ (132,960.00)	\$ (137,311.00)
5) Capital Outlay	\$ -	\$ -
<b>TOTAL DECREASES</b>	<b>(165,111.43)</b>	<b>(181,042.42)</b>
<b>ENDING CASH BALANCE as of August 31, 2012</b>	<b>\$ 4,368,993.66</b>	<b>\$ 4,368,993.66</b>
Cash as of 8/31/2012		\$ 4,368,993.66
3% Minimum Contingency Reserve		\$ (172,367.93)
Funds Approved - Not Disbursed		\$ 85,491.47
<b>FUNDS AVAILABLE TO LOAN</b>		<b>\$ 4,282,117.20</b>
Pending Approval		\$ -
Funds Available		\$ 4,282,117.20
<b>LOAN STATUS REPORT:</b>		
Outstanding Principal Loan Balance beginning 7/31/2012		\$ 5,620,586.89
Disbursements during August 2012		\$ 132,960.00
Principal payments made during August 2012		\$ (7,949.09)
Adjustments to STARS balance		\$ -
<b>ADJUSTED PRINCIPAL LOAN BALANCE as of 8/31/2012</b>		<b>\$ 5,745,597.80</b>
Active Loans at August 31, 2012	153	