



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

IDAHO SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION PUBLIC MEETING & TELECONFERENCE

Date and Time:

Wednesday, January 18, 2012

From 8 am to 3 pm MDT

Location:

Soil & Water Conservation Commission

650 West State St, Rm 145, Boise Idaho

AMENDED APPROVED MINUTES

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dick Bronson

Dave Radford

Norman Wright

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE:

Roger Stutzman

Jerry Trebesch

ADVISORS PRESENT:

Karma Bragg, President, IDEA

Bret Rumbeck, Executive Director, IASCD

COMMISSION STAFF PRESENT:

Teri Murrison

Kristin Magruder

Terry Hoebelheinrich

Erin Seaman

Delwyne Trefz

PARTNERS AND GUESTS PRESENT:

Harriet Hensley, Deputy Attorney General

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ITEM #1: WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dick Bronson, Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission (SWC) member at 8:09 a.m. Roll call: Dick Bronson, and Norman Wright present. Roger Stutzman and Jerry Trebesch participated via teleconference. A quorum was present.

ITEM #2: REVIEW AGENDA

Chairman Bronson reviewed the agenda. No items were added.

ITEM #2a: PARTNER REPORTS

Bret Rumbeck, Executive Director, Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts (IASCD), presented the partner report on behalf of the association. IASCD has a new office location in Boise effective December 2011. Mr. Rumbeck provided a report on legislative activities including letters to legislators and the budget committee. The Board of Directors is having a meeting later this week with a focus on reviewing the by-laws. David Ascuena, Division III Director, resigned this winter. His successor declined the position so it is currently open. Discussion ensued about feedback received from districts on the annual conference.

Vice Chairman Dave Radford joined the meeting at 8:16 a.m.

Karma Bragg, President, Idaho District Employees Association (IDEA), presented the partner report. She announced two new directors, Robbie Taylor and Pegi Long. Their board updated the annual report for 2012. They continue to work with district staff on the QuickBooks Online issue as there was information received that costs were increasing and it would be cost-prohibitive to districts. IDEA leadership is looking at options and working with NRCS to see what options are available if districts opt to use the desktop version. The Performance Report training was well received by staff and the reports look excellent this year. IDEA is planning an annual and five-year plan workshop to share resources and ideas for upcoming deadline in March.

The IASCD 2012 Conference will be hosted by Division VI this year. November 26, the Monday after Thanksgiving, is the scheduled start to the conference. A planning committee is formed and making arrangements for hotel and agenda items. IASCD is celebrating 70 years and will be part of the overall theme. Planning directors are meeting in March to coincide with an IASCD board meeting. Discussion ensued on legislative displays planned for this Session on January 26th.

Discussion followed about district employee health benefits. There are only a few employees across the state with health benefits and some receive a stipend for premiums. Commissioner Wright advised that a cooperative of Idaho cities have formed an ICRMP-like insurance plan for their employees and suggested that district employees may be able to participate.

Jeff Burwell, State Conservationist, NRCS, was delayed by the weather. His report was delayed until later in the agenda.

49 Chairman Bronson invited all partners and guests to attend the upcoming legislative committee
50 presentations.

51

52 **ITEM #3: MINUTES**

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54 Commissioners reviewed the October 12, 2011 teleconference minutes. Commissioner Wright noted
55 the need to amend line 108 from “farms” to “farmed”.

56

57 **Vice Chair Radford moved to approve the October 12, 2011 minutes as amended. Commissioner
58 Wright seconded. No further discussion. Motion carried.**

59

60 Commissioners reviewed the November 9, 2011 teleconference minutes. No amendments were made.

61

62 **Vice Chair Radford moved to approve the November 9, 2011 minutes as presented. Commissioner
63 Wright seconded. No further discussion. Motion carried.**

64

65 Teri Murrison, Commission Administrator, reviewed the November 15th minutes from the listening
66 session held at the 2011 IASCD Annual Conference. A copy of the attendance list was distributed to
67 participants at the meeting.

68

69 Discussed the FY 2013 budget discussion from the session:

- 70 - Protocol for addressing budget items with legislators
- 71 - District compensation for work on RCRDP loan program
- 72 - Transparency
- 73 - Processing loans with faster turnaround

74

75 Strategic Plan discussion from listening session:

- 76 - Process for update scheduled to begin in February with a target date of April or May to present
77 to Commission for review and approval
- 78 - Plan priorities
- 79 - New hires Mason Lefevre and Erin Seaman
- 80 - Request for a method to request technical assistance; incorporated into activities of DSSS
- 81 - Introduced Delwyne Trefz as new District Support and Services Specialist

82

83 Line 232 of minutes to be changed from “Kyle Hawley” to “Kyle Wilson.”

84

85 Comments and feedback included:

- 86 - District capacity building. Delwyne is working on this process and plan.
- 87 - Need plan to address land coming out of CRP in near future.
- 88 - Flood prevention and control activities report from Harriet Hensley, Deputy Attorney General,
89 provided a summary of her research on how districts fit into the statutory history. Vice Chair
90 Radford requested that Harriet find out how many Watershed Improvement Districts are in the
91 state. WIDs have taxing authority where conservation districts do not. There could be some
92 opportunities for districts to work with flood control districts to work on projects. Harriet will
93 also find out which WIDs currently have taxing authority. Conservation districts cannot act as a
94 flood prevention district.

95

96 Line 251 of minutes to be changed from “CRP” to “CREP.”

- 97
98 - Outreach strategy has been developed by Commission for CREP program and will be headed by
99 Chuck Pentzer, Program Specialist.
100 - Assistance to districts to develop more comprehensive five-year plans. This is being addressed
101 by Delwyne in work with districts.
102 - Assist districts with local planning process. Included in Delwyne's work plan.
103

104 **Vice Chair Radford moved to approve November 16, 2011 minutes as amended. Commissioner Wright**
105 **seconded. Commissioner Wright requested the Commission implement a method for districts to**
106 **submit questions prior to listening session in future years. No further discussion. Motion carried.**
107

108 Discussion continued about the Commission's listening session and the value on continuing the practice
109 in future years. Ms. Murrison asked for feedback from partners. Ms. Bragg advised that the session was
110 very helpful and positive. Discussed options for taking questions in advance of the public meeting
111 including division meetings or having districts submit written questions. Commissioners deferred to Ms.
112 Murrison and Mr. Rumbleck to discuss options for moving forward and establishing protocol.
113

114 Jeff Burwell, NRCS State Conservationist, provided the partner report. Good news includes weather
115 (recent precipitation). Bad news has to do with federal budget cuts though NRCS fared relatively well
116 compared to other USDA agencies. FSA is closing offices in Orofino, Marsing, Weiser and Gooding.
117 NRCS is taking over those office leases and hopes to be able to continue to offer services there to
118 producers. Closing soils office in Meridian and previously closed RC&D offices.
119

120 Idaho NRCS took a \$2 million hit in the budget from last fiscal year. The budget for financial assistance is
121 significantly higher than technical assistance. \$62.5 million total agency budget, \$44 million of which is
122 for financial assistance. Looking at organizational structure to run more efficiently and effectively,
123 including centralization of administrative services. There is likely to be consolidation.
124

125 NRCS is focusing on three priorities: 1) get conservation on the ground by continuing to work with the
126 conservation partnership, and maintaining commitment to the Commission and districts; 2) maintaining
127 organizational structure including technical assistance delivery, maintaining a skilled workforce; and 3)
128 create climate where private land conservation thrives and is successful. Need to be able to show
129 measurable results.
130

131 There is \$12 million for general Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funding. There will be
132 a streamlined process for applications which should save staff time.
133

134 Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) funding increased to \$4 million primarily to address sage grouse, but it
135 is a long process of approximately 12-18 months. NRCS is hoping to keep processing time down to 12
136 months and hoping for additional funding.
137

138 There is a new water quality initiative to use EQIP to target 303(d) listed streams. He will be meeting
139 with all partners to identify highest priorities including DEQ, ISDA, and the Commission.
140

141 Chairman Bronson requested that the Commission be notified of upcoming meetings with FSA related to
142 the office closings.
143

144 Harriet Hensley discussed flood control districts and the potential for district partnerships with
145 Watershed Improvement Districts (WIDs) as a source of additional resources. She will research existing
146 WIDs, including their taxing authority, and provide that information at a future meeting.

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148 **ITEM #4: ADMINISTRATORS REPORT**

149

150 Ms. Murrison provided the report on agency activities over the last two months. She has curtailed travel
151 over the winter months in anticipation of weather and increased legislative and administrative activities.

152

153 Governor's FY 2013 Budget Recommendations

154 Ms. Murrison reviewed the Detail Report of the Governor's budget recommendation for the
155 Commission. Total base: \$2,465,000. There are slight adjustments in program maintenance for
156 increased benefit costs for an adjusted amount \$2,469,200. Adjustments for recommended agency line
157 item requests for RCRDP loan program, NRCS TA match grant, and TA cost recovery. Items not
158 recommended include the request for increased NRCS office space and district allocations. Total budget
159 recommendation is \$2,650,100.

160

161 The Commission's budget hearing is scheduled for February 1, 2012 at 8:55 am.

162

163 Discussion on budget analysis to cover the NRCS office space. Staff is working on plan. One option is to
164 discontinue ICRMP payment on behalf of districts totaling \$42,000 annually.

165

166 Discussion on anticipated expenses for RCRDP loan program, technical assistance cost recovery, and the
167 NRCS grant.

168

169 Office Update

170 There has been a need for additional office space for quite some time but with the expansion of the loan
171 program there was a sense of urgency to make it happen sooner rather than later. Expansion has been
172 paid from the loan program and not out of general funds.

173

174 Staff updated the marketing material for the loan program and was used for the outreach conducted by
175 Terry Hoebelheinrich and Brian Reed.

176

177 Next step with loan program is to update the policies and streamline procedures to ready for an
178 increase in volume. Staff plans to conduct a work session with Commissioners Wright and Trebesch to
179 evaluate options and refine recommendations.

180

181 The Department of Administration has a statewide video conferencing system that the Commission
182 plans to utilize for loan processing, public meetings, work groups, and to enable field staff to participate
183 in district board meetings rather than spending so much time on the road.

184

185 The Idaho Statesman recent ran an article on Rural Idaho which prompted IASCD to comment in a Letter
186 to the Editor. Ms. Murrison drafted a response letter from the Commission for review. Commissioner
187 Wright requested adding contact information. There was a recommendation to contact Mr. Barker
188 directly as a follow up prior to sending letter to provide additional context and history of districts in rural
189 Idaho.

190

239
240 Additional talking points include: addressing conservation trends and regulatory pressure to lay the
241 groundwork for discussing coordination and helping partners; discussing major agency changes over the
242 past year including new Commission members, new administrator, new strategic plan, and staffing
243 changes; and continued focus on non-regulatory, voluntary conservation, doing more with less, proving
244 our worth, and strategic plan implementation.

245
246 Commissioner Trebesch rejoined the meeting at approximately 10:25 am.

247
248 Vice Chair Radford stressed the importance of the RCRDP loan program and would like that to be a
249 highlight of the presentations.

250
251 Ms. Murrison will be highlighting programs and services including OnePlan and the potential for
252 statewide conservation reporting. Discussion followed about a statewide conservation certification
253 program.

254
255 **ITEM #5: FY 2012 FINANCIAL REPORT**

256
257 Ms. Murrison provided a report of the December 2011 financials. The RCRDP financial will be addressed
258 under a separate agenda item. The state is 50% through the fiscal year. Fund balances as follows:

- 259
- 260 • Personnel Costs: \$577,460 (\$391,139 expended – 40.38%)
 - 261 ○ Trending low due to consistent vacancies
 - 262 • Operating Expenses: \$44,186 (\$133,599 expended – 75.06%)
 - 263 ○ One time or large expenditures include travel expenses, fuel, SWCAP, ICRMP,
264 administrator moving expenses, all-staff training, coordination training and related
265 expenses
 - 266 ○ Some of these expenses were not anticipated when the budget blueprint was approved
267 last year
 - 268 ○ Despite high percentage of funds expended, the Commission is on track to cover
269 expenses for rest of the fiscal year and can roll down personnel fund or utilize interest
270 from SRF loan fund
 - 271 • Trustee & Benefits: \$9,421 (\$1,093,780 expended – 99.15%)
 - 272 • SRF/DEQ fund: \$25,914
- 273

274 **Vice Chair Radford moved to accept the December 2011 financial report. Commissioner Wright**
275 **seconded. Further discussion on Commission policy for reimbursing districts that opt into liability**
276 **insurance other than ICRMP. Staff to research and report at next meeting. Motion carried.**

277
278 Discussion over Governor's recommendation for \$45 million in tax cuts or savings.

279
280 **ITEM #7: COMMISSION MEMO ON DRAFT IDAHO WATER PLAN**

281
282 Ms. Murrison provided an overview of the process around the proposed water plan from Idaho
283 Department of Water Resources (IDWR) and the memo drafted for Commission review. Ms. Hensley
284 and Delwyne Trefz, District Support Services Specialist, provided context for this plan.

285

286 Ms. Hensley was assigned to IDWR on the state Water Plan and suggested that the Commission provide
287 comments. This is the first major revision since the 1996 plan. The subcommittee will be meeting in a
288 few weeks to discuss the comments submitted and will be making a recommendation to the full
289 committee.

290
291 Ms. Murrison commented about the importance of being involved in these processes with other
292 agencies.

293
294 Mr. Trefz presented an overview of comments made on the Water Plan. He made it a point to highlight
295 the statutory authorities of the Commission and districts in the overall plan. There was a focus to offer
296 assistance where appropriate and to highlight coordination where possible to have effective delivery of
297 services.

298
299 Discussion over state water uses and policies. It was suggested that the two agencies meet to discuss
300 opportunities to assist each other, trends, and policy issues. Further discussion about water uses.

301
302 Ms. Hensley will report back to the commission on the best format to provide comments to the IDWR
303 subcommittee.

304

305 **ITEM #8: STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

306
307 Ms. Murrison presented an update on the status of the strategic plan implementation. She provided an
308 overview of how staff is breaking down the objectives within their work plans and when deliverables are
309 due. Review of the OWP worksheet which contains all components of the strategic plan divided by team
310 leads Delwyne Trefz, Chuck Pentzer, Bill Lillibridge, and Kristin Magruder. The next spreadsheet breaks
311 down the allocation of hours by staff member for an 18 month period. Each manager will be
312 responsible for their own budgets rather than someone in the Boise office.

313
314 Discussion about the Plan being a living document and using the information to justify decisions for
315 staffing, workload analysis, and budget requests. There was tremendous value noted in seeing the
316 reality of what the entire agency is responsible for.

317
318 Mr. Trefz provided an overview of the planning process and updated the Commission on his activities
319 surrounding the Technical Assistance Work Group. The focus of the work group will be on transparent
320 planning during this process, which includes developing a ranking tool for allocating technical assistance.
321 Target completion date is March 30, 2012. Discussion followed.

322
323 Following the adoption of the ranking tool, Mr. Trefz will be conducting the district needs assessment
324 and is approaching the process to see the big picture and help districts find resources that they may not
325 know about. Beyond that, coordination is a component in his work plan and he will be looking for
326 opportunities to assist districts to implement coordination in a reasonable and thoughtful manner.
327 Discussion followed.

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329 **ITEM #9: OTHER BUSINESS**

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331 There were no other business items for discussion.

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334 **RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND RANGELAND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

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ITEM #10a: FY 2012 RCRDP FINANCIAL REPORT

Ms. Magruder provided the RCRDP Financial Report. She noted a date error in the third section that should read "Cash as of 12-31-2011" rather than 11-30-2011.

Balances as of December 31, 2011:

- Principal payments: \$928,194.66
- Loan interest: \$154,091.16
- Default/late interest: \$2,612.45
- Interest Income: \$13,874.55
- Personnel costs: \$20,030.99 (23.96% expended)
- Operating expenses: \$34,499.04 (33.96% expended)
- Loan disbursements: \$218,534.34

After adjustments for 3% contingency, funds approved but not yet disbursed, and loans pending review and approval, there is \$3,146,459.15 available to loan.

Vice Chair Radford moved to approve the December 2011 RCRDP Financial Report as presented. Commissioner Wright seconded. No further discussion. Motion carried.

ITEM #10b: RCRDP STATUS REPORT

There were no other business items for discussion.

ITEM #11: PENDING LOAN BUSINESS

Vice Chair Radford moved to enter into executive session pursuant to Idaho Code § 67-2345(d) for the purpose of considering pending RCRDP loan business only. Commissioner Stutzman seconded. No discussion. Roll call vote was taken with all voting in the affirmative. Motion carried.

The Commission moved into executive session at 12:30 pm after a ten-minute break. Teri Murrison, Terry Hoebelheinrich, Kristin Magruder, Harriet Hensley, Erin Seaman, and Delwyne Trefz were invited to stay.

Executive session ended at 2:09 pm.

Commissioners discussed the disposition of pending RCRDP loan business.

Loan No. 661

- Amount: \$17,575
- Term: 15 years
- Rate: 4%

Conservation Benefit: Water efficiency increased from 50% to 100% annually; soil savings of 3 tons per year.

381 **Vice Chair Radford moved to approve Loan A-661 pursuant to the loan officer recommendation**
382 **including as the application meets criteria for conservation benefit and meets the loan criteria as**
383 **established in IDAPA 60.05.01 and loan policy. Commissioner Wright seconded. No further**
384 **discussion. Motion carried.**

385
386 Loan No. 660

387 Amount: \$33,715
388 Term: 4 years
389 Rate: 2%

390 Conservation Benefit: Water efficiency increased from 36% to 72% annually; soil savings of 150 tons per
391 year (6.53 tons/acre). Directly addresses TMDL 303(d) listed segment and ground water quality
392 protection area. Pollutants addressed: sediment.

393
394 **Commissioner Trebesch moved to approve Loan A-660 pursuant to the loan officer recommendation**
395 **and to give borrower term options of 4 years at 2% or 7 years at 3% as the application meets criteria**
396 **for conservation benefit and meets the loan criteria as established in IDAPA 60.05.01 and loan policy.**
397 **Commissioner Stutzman seconded. No further discussion. Motion carried.**

398
399 Loan No. 658

400 Amount: \$182,275
401 Term: 4 years
402 Rate: 2%

403 Conservation Benefit: Water efficiency increased from 25% to 85% annually; soil savings of 1 ton per
404 year. Indirect impact to 303(d) listed segment.

405
406 **Commissioner Wright moved to approve Loan A-658 pursuant to the loan officer recommendation**
407 **including UCC filing and request review of loan documents by the Attorney General's office as the**
408 **application meets criteria for conservation benefit and meets the loan criteria as established in IDAPA**
409 **60.05.01 and loan policy. Commissioner Trebesch seconded. No further discussion. Motion carried.**

410
411 **At 2:18 pm, Chairman Bronson adjourned the meeting.**

412
413 Respectfully submitted,

414
415 Roger Stutzman
416 Commissioner and Secretary,
417 Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission