

WEST CASSIA SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

FIVE-YEAR RESOURCE CONSERVATION BUSINESS PLAN

JULY 1, 2023 – JUNE 30, 2028

and

FY24 ANNUAL WORK PLAN

(Revised March 2023)



1361 East 16th Street - Burley, ID 83318

208-572-3375

ewcswcd@gmail.com

website: www.minicassiaswcd.com

Executive Summary

The West Cassia Soil and Water Conservation District is one of 50 Conservation Districts in Idaho. Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Districts are political subdivisions of state government but are not state agencies. Conservation Districts are charged with carrying out a program for the conservation, use and development of soil, water, and other natural resources.

Conservation Districts 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. They are catalysts for coordinating and implementing conservation programs, channeling expertise from all levels of government into action at the local level. Programs are non-regulatory; science-based technical assistance, incentive-based financial programs and informational and educational programs at the local level.

Both by legislation and by agreement, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Idaho Soil and water Conservation Commission provide technical assistance to landowners and land users through Conservation Districts. Each Conservation District in Idaho has a signed Mutual Agreement with the Secretary of Agriculture and the Governor of Idaho that establishes a framework for cooperation.

This Annual Plan/Five-Year Resource Conservation Business Plan was developed not only to guide the Conservation District, but also to encourage cooperation among landowners, government agencies, private organizations, and elected officials. Through knowledge and cooperation, all concerned can ensure a sustainable natural resource base for present and future generations in the West Cassia Soil and Water Conservation District.

Table of Contents

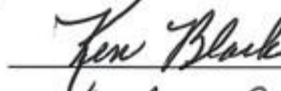
Cover Page	1
Executive Summary	2
Certificate of Adoption	4
5 Year Resource Conservation Business Plan	5
Organization and Function of West Cassia SWCD	
Mission & Value	
Maps	
Land Ownership	
Physical Characteristics	
Economic Conditions and Outlook	
Flooding	
Stream Segments of Concern	
Trends & Strategies	
Priority Actions	9
Annual Work Plan FY2023	10
Priority Area #1 WATER RESOURCES/EROSION CONTROL	11
Priority Area #2 PASTURE & HAY	12
Priority Area #3 INFORMATION/EDUCATION and PUBLIC OUTREACH.....	13
Priority Area #4 DISTRICT OPERATIONS	15
Priority Area #5 WATER RESOURCES/INVASIVE SPECIES	16
Certification	17


Certificate of Adoption

The Board of elected supervisors of the West Cassia Soil and Water Conservation District this 20th day of March, 2023, does hereby approve the following document known as the Resource Conservation Business Plan. This Plan will be in effect for a five-year period ending June 30, 2028 during which time it will be updated annually and/or amended, as necessary.

As evidence of our adoption and final approval, we do hereby affix our signatures to this document.

 Richard Kunau, Chairman

 Ken Black, Vice Chairman

 Kathy Poulton, Secretary/Treasurer

 Brent Stoker, Member

 Jordan Searle, Member

Supporting Idaho Conservation Partners:

_____ Natural Resources Conservation Service
_____ Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission
_____ Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts



Five-Year Resource Conservation Plan Business Plan (2023 to 2028) West Cassia Soil & Water Conservation District

For More Information Contact: Richard Kunau, Chairman

Organization and function of the West Cassia Soil & Water Conservation District

A political subdivision of the State of Idaho – authorities, powers and structure contained in Soil Conservation District Law, Title 22, Chapter 27, Idaho Code.

- Officially organized on September 22, 1958 to provide voluntary land and water conservation technical and financial assistance to landowners and users within the West Cassia SWCD boundary.
- To make available technical, financial and educational resources; to meet the needs of the local land manager with conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources.



*Idaho State Land & Soil
Evaluation Event*

Who We Serve

- We serve the people in the West Cassia SWCD by educating and assisting them in the conservation of natural resources for beneficial and sustainable use by all.

Mission of the West Cassia Soil & Water Conservation District

- To set high standards for conservation of natural resources.
- To educate both youth and adults in conservation practices and needs.
- To encourage cooperation among landowners, government agencies, private organizations, and elected officials to accomplish conservation goals.
- To carry out a well-balanced resource conservation program centered around reduced soil erosion, water management improvements, animal waste management improvements, and utilization of BMPs.

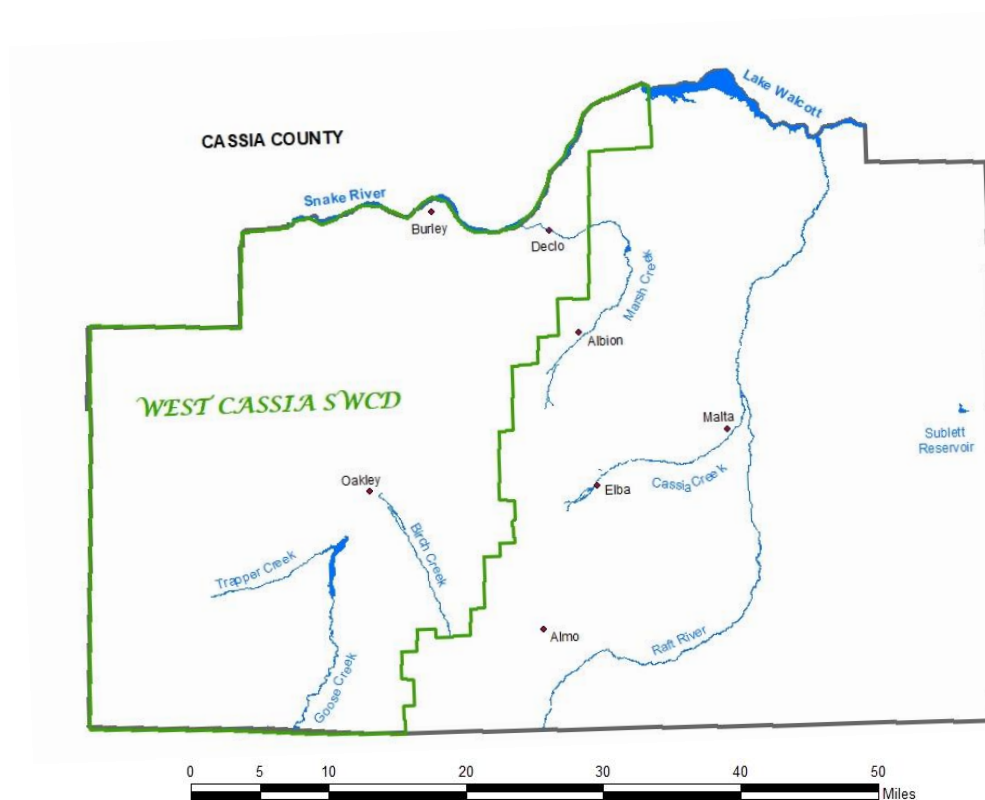
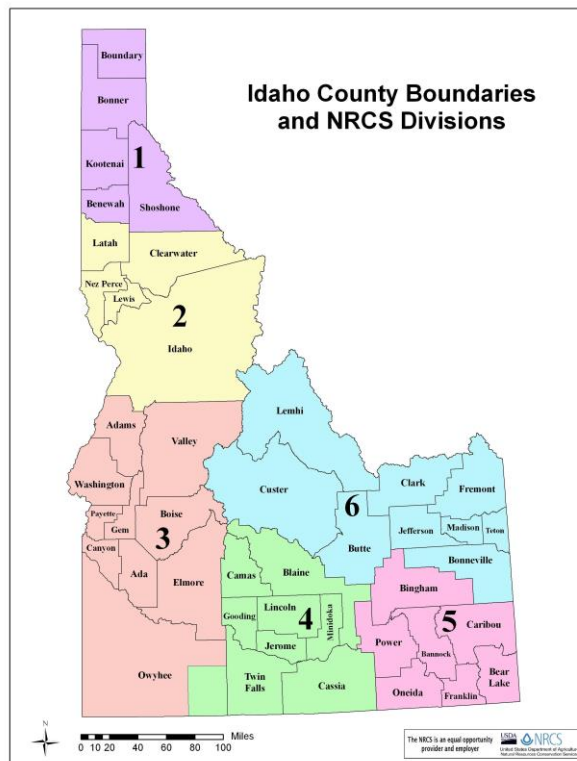
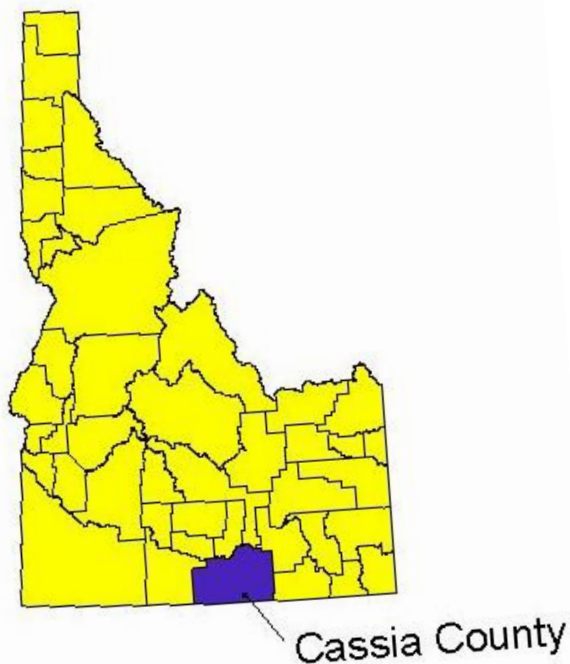
Value of the West Cassia Soil & Water Conservation District

- Sustainable use of natural resources
- Support for agriculture activity that uses sustainable, economically feasible practices
- Value and respect for the Idaho Conservation Partnership
- Conservation education for adults and youth.

Natural Resource Priorities Areas:

- Animal Waste Management
- District Operations
- Information and Education / Public Outreach
- Irrigated Cropland
- Pasture/Hay land
- Soil Health
- Water Quality-ground water and surface water
- Water Resources & Erosion Control (*Meets Anti-degradation Plan for Agriculture criteria*)

West Cassia Soil & Water Conservation District
is located in southcentral Idaho in Division IV,
in the Eastern part of Cassia County.



Land Ownership within West Cassia SWCD:

▪ Water	5,713 acres	0.8%
▪ State Land	19,650 acres	2.8%
▪ BLM	130,420 acres	19.3%
▪ National Forest	227,430 acres	33.6%
▪ Private Land	294,423 acres	43.5%

Physical Characteristics:

West Cassia SWCD is located in the south central part of Idaho and encompasses the entire western part of Cassia County, some 676,636 acres. Elevations range from 4,156 feet above sea level in Burley to about 10,000 feet in the higher mountain areas. The valley floor and lands along the Snake River Plain and Goose Creek drainage are generally flat to very gently sloping to the mountainous area ranging from sloping to very steep. For more information on the physical characteristics of the district, please refer to the published Soil Survey of Cassia County, Idaho, Western Part.

Economic Conditions and Outlook:

Population within the district is concentrated in Burley. Urban areas include Burley, Declo, and Oakley. Most goods and services are obtainable in Burley. Burley and Rupert are the centers for the Cassia-Minidoka area.

The main economic base of the West Cassia SWCD is agriculture. Crops grown include wheat, barley, alfalfa, corn (sweet and field), sugar beets, potatoes, dry beans and peas and other specialty seed crops. Much of the harvested agricultural products are sold and processed locally. McCains in Burley processes potatoes, and sugar beets are processed in Paul, Idaho by Amalgamated Sugar Company. The county is diversifying beyond agriculture. Marketing Cassia and Minidoka counties together through a community partnership has attracted new businesses. The area offers an abundance of natural resources and recreational opportunities with Burley located on the banks of the scenic Snake River.

Flooding:

Flooding occurs frequently above the Oakley Reservoir as a result of high spring flows. Some flooding occurs each year. Major flooding occurs once every five to 10 years. Drainage is only a problem on a year having high water yields and affects levels along Goose Creek, where lands remain in their native conditions as pastureland, hayland, and rangeland for livestock grazing. Flash flooding from summer storms can occur if and when the Oakley Reservoir fills to overflowing. This occurs rarely, 2 times since the reservoir was constructed in 1911.

A system was developed and installed that would handle the excess run-off waters from the Cottonwood Creek and the Oakley Reservoir. The Oakley Fan Aquifer Recharge Site is a series of infiltration trenches that absorb excess water into the aquifer. Also included in the project are gravity-fed abandoned deep wells. These injection systems provide disposal options for heavy spring run-off waters.

Flooding can also occur in the winter when rain falls on frozen, snow-covered ground as in the serious flooding of February 2017.

Stream Segments of Concern: (followed by pollutants addressed)

Goose Creek Area

- Goose Creek – temperature, sediment
- Trapper Creek – nutrients, sediment
- Birch Creek – nutrients, bacteria
- Cold Creek – temperature
- Beaverdam Creek – nutrients, temperature, bacteria, sediment, dissolved oxygen
- Little Cottonwood Creek – bacteria
- Left Hand Fork Beaverdam Creek – nutrients, sediment, bacteria

Lake Walcott Watershed

- Snake River – sediment, oil & grease, total phosphorus
- Milner Reservoir – sediment, oil & grease, total phosphorus

Lake Walcott

- Marsh Creek - bacteria, temperature

Trends Impacting Conservation in the West Cassia Soil & Water Conservation District

- Water and wind erosion concerns
- Outdated irrigation techniques
- Increased CAFOs with waste management needs
- Limited availability of State funds for conservation
- Focus on water quality compared to other conservation and environmental issues.
- Invasive species entering Idaho on watercraft.

Strategies to Address Trends

- Continued education through workshops, tours, press releases, and publications.
- Reducing water and wind erosion through
 - Conversion to sprinkler systems,
 - Crop residue,
 - Conservation tillage
 - Soil Health – Cover Crops
 - Cross slope farming practices
 - Windbreak education and seedling tree sale
 - Continued education.
- Improve animal waste management practices and composting efforts including odor and pest controls and nitrate and phosphate levels.
- Encourage use of BMPs, especially target Burley/Marsh Creek Groundwater Improvement Project area.
- Raising awareness of conservation values with state legislature and elected officials – help decision makers be better informed.
- Becoming a working partner with County and City Conservation activities.
- Supervisors become more informed on current issues impacting working lands, Farm Bill programs, and information from cooperating agencies.
- Be involved with County Planning and Zoning issues impacting natural resources.
- Work with weed supervisor to increase education on noxious and invasive weeds.
- Work together with East Cassia and Minidoka Districts.
- Active on Mid-Snake RC&D Council.
- Advertise Board Meetings where district goals are discussed to improve public awareness.
- Training for Conservation District Supervisors and staff.
- Look for new and innovative ways for funding, ie: grants, projects, etc.
- Manage the Invasive Species Inspection Station.
- Maintain a “living” website with district activities and information.
- Arrange and participate in the Local Work Group.

Staffing Needs

- Part-time Conservation District Administrative Assistant
 - Part Time Information & Education Specialist.
 - Cotterel Invasive Species Watercraft Inspection Station Manager
 - Other employees as needed for implementing district projects.
-

Annual Budget Needs

- Annual budget completed to carry out the plan of the West Cassia Conservation District based on the included needs and information.
-

Key Decision Makers

- Citizens in West Cassia Soil & Water Conservation District
 - Cassia County Commissioners
 - Cassia County Planning and Zoning Board Members
 - Elected City Officials including City Mayors and City Council Members and/or Planning and Zoning Board Members for Burley, Albion, Declo, Malta, and Oakley cities.
 - State legislators representing District 27
Kelly A. Anthon, Douglas Pickett, and Clay Handy.
 - Idaho's U.S. Senators, Representatives and Staffers
 - West Cassia Conservation District Supervisors
 - Burley City Administrator
 - Cassia County Planning & Zoning Administrator
 - Chamber of Commerce
-

Priority Actions

Action	Begin Date	End Date
▪ Seek public comments on Five-Year Resource Conservation Business Plan and Annual Work Plan	December	February
▪ Board of Supervisor review of Five-Year Resource Conservation Business Plan and the Annual work Plan. Review priorities, actions, and public comment	January	March
▪ Complete written update of Five-Year Resource Conservation Plan and Annual Work Plan		March
▪ Adopt and submit Five-Year Resource Conservation Business Plan and Annual Work Plan	January	March
▪ Identify budget and staff needs	On-going	
▪ Develop Budget (on-going), review (December and May), and adopt annual budget (June)	On-going	June

Annual Work Plan

FY2024 (7/1/23 – 6/30/24)

West Cassia Soil and Water Conservation District

[Grab your reader's attention with a great quote from the document or use this space to emphasize a key point. To place this text box anywhere on the page, just drag it.]



West Cassia Soil & Water Conservation District

Richard Kunau	Chairman
Ken Black	Vice-Chairman
Kathy Poulton	Treasurer
Brent Stoker	Member
Jordan Searle	Member
Rachelle Osterhout	Administrative Assistant
Doreen McMurray	Information & Education Specialist

Phone: 208-572-3375
Email: ewcswcd@gmail.com

FY2024 (7/1/2023 – 6/30/2024) Annual Plan of Work West Cassia Soil & Water Conservation District

Priority Area Number 1: WATER RESOURCES / EROSION CONTROL

Objective: To improve conservation practices throughout West Cassia SWCD

Goals:

- ♦ To encourage good conservation practices which reduce water and wind erosion, conversion to sprinkler systems, promoting the benefits of crop residue, and conservation tillage.
- ♦ To promote animal waste management practices including odor and pest controls, and nitrate and phosphate levels. Support Animal Waste Composting efforts through conservation plans. Encourage use of BMP's.
- ♦ To educate landowners on the importance of soil health and how to improve soil health through use of cover crops and reduced tillage.
- ♦ To have available for rent a direct seed drill where landowners will be able to test plots on their land to see the benefits of this practice.
- ♦ To research possible purchase and rental of “All-In-One-Pass” tillage equipment.
- ♦ To educate farmers around the county on available conservation programs.



Direct Seed Drill planting directly into stubble from previous harvest.

Action(s):

Actions for FY24	Dates	Person Responsible
1. Satisfy TMDL goals and work to reduce nitrate levels in groundwater. Continue to work with landowners on restoration work through programs such as EQIP, WQPA, 319 grants, Conservation Improvement grants and other programs. Support the Mini-Cassia Ground Water Improvement committees by attending meetings and offering solutions to address the problem of elevated nitrate levels in ground water within the Marsh Creek NPA. Support the Division IV Soil Health Project by participating in annual soil testing on selected fields.	On-going, Soil sampling fall 2024 spring 2025	Entire Board, Carolyn Firth (ISWCC)
2. Encourage good conservation practices which reduce water erosion and wind erosion through education including emphasis on converting to sprinkler systems, cover crops, and water resource information. (Through tours, newsletters, and press releases.)	Yearly	Direct Seed Committee Members, I&E Specialist
3. Promote the benefits of crop residue, conservation tillage, and cross slope farming practices through education. Inform landowners of irrigation practices available to them. Support new technology with tours, newsletter, or press releases. Promote and encourage landowners to participate in the Direct Seed and Cover Crop Project.	On-going, Year-round	Entire Board, I&E Specialist
4. Request NRCS assistance to help with design, layout, and approval of plans.	On-going	Chairman, NRCS staff
5. Keep current on animal waste management practices and pest controls and nitrate and phosphate levels. Support Animal Waste Composting efforts and concerns. (Including odor and through conservation plans).	On-going	All Board Members

6. Promote no till/low till practices and the use of cover crops.	Year round	Direct Seed Committee, I&E Specialist, Admin Assistant
7. Research possibility of obtaining a new piece of "All-In-One-Pass" tillage equipment for rent and developing educational training for tool use.	Year round	Direct Seed Committee, I&E Specialist, Admin Assistant
8. Develop plan for an Annual Forum for soil health education and/or equipment training and possible tour.	Year round	Direct Seed Committee, I&E Specialist, Admin Assistant

FY2024 (7/1/2023 – 6/30/2024) Annual Plan of Work West Cassia Soil and Water Conservation District

Priority Area Number 2: PASTURE & HAY

Objective: To improve irrigation and pasture management which will aid in reduction of erosion and improved yields.

Goal(s):

- ♦ To educate landowners concerning rotation techniques which will help to improve yields.
- ♦ To educate landowners about conservation practices which improve soil health.
- ♦ Encourage the use of windbreaks to control erosion through the annual seedling tree sale.
- ♦ Write and publish newsletters providing information regarding noxious weeds, stressing current weed control practices.

Actions(s):

Actions for FY24	Dates	Person Responsible
1. Educate the landowners concerning rotation techniques to improve yields through tours, newsletters, and presentations at board meetings.	Year Round	Entire Board, I&E Specialist
2. Educate the landowners on improving soil health through workshops and newsletters.	Year Round	Entire Board, I&E Specialist
3. Educate landowners concerning BMP's for watering and irrigating which reduces erosion and provides optimum moisture for crops.	Annually	Direct Seed Committee Members, I&E Specialist
4. Encourage use of windbreaks to control erosion by providing information through the newsletters, social media, and tree sale.	Spring	Entire Board, District Employees
5. Manage the annual tree sale providing seedling trees for windbreaks and other conservation purposes.	Annually	District Employees
6. Cooperate with County Weed Supervisor to Provide information through newsletter and other district education materials regarding noxious weeds, stressing weed control practices and prevention of spread of weeds.	Annually	I&E Specialist

FY2024 (7/1/2023 – 6/30/2024) Annual Plan of Work West Cassia Soil and Water Conservation District

Priority Area Number 3: Information / Education and Public Outreach

Objective: To Promote Environmental Awareness and Provide Information to cooperators, the general public, and to youth about agricultural information, soil health, and educational activities and opportunities.

Goal(s):

- ♦ Sponsor and host events that will educate, encourage participation in, and highlight conservation programs and efforts.
- ♦ Conduct conservation activities for students.
- ♦ Provide information on conservation activities through publications, press, and social media.
- ♦ Participate in the Mid-Snake RC&D Council.

Actions(s):

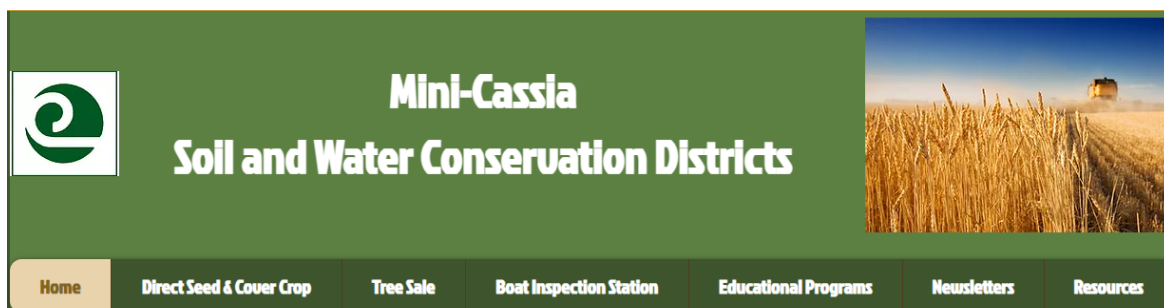
Actions for FY24	Dates	Person Responsible
1. Prepare, publish, and distribute three newsletters each year to approximately 1,200 local landowners through both mail and electronic sources. Solicit and collect advertising money to assist with printing/postage costs (with Minidoka Admin). District Activities and conservation issues will be included.	3 times per year	I&E Specialist, Admin Assistant
2. Publicize tours, activities, workshops, forums, tree sale, and special events through district newsletters, local radio, newspapers, website, and social media pages.	As needed	I&E Specialist
3. Have 2 board members serve on the Direct Seed & Cover Crop Project Committee. Evaluate drill rentals and project activities.	2-3 meetings per year	2 Board Members, I&E Specialist, Admin Assistant
4. Co-sponsor, along with East Cassia, the Idaho State Land & Soil Evaluation Event. (To include contest arrangements, volunteers, site selection, awards, banquet, pay bills, and raise funds to support the contest). Participate in state committee meeting in Spring.	Contest held in October 2024	I&E Specialist, Admin Assistant
5. Provide information to school age students within the district on the Natural Resources Workshop Camp, Know Your Government, 5th & 6th grade Poster Contest, High School Speech Contest, Envirothon, and annual Scholarship Awards. Have information and applications available on district website.	Year round	District Employees
6. Seek out worthy recipients for Conservation and Education Awards. Conduct an Annual Awards Banquet to honor Cooperator of the Year and present other conservation awards.	Spring/Summer	All Board Members, I&E Specialist
8. Scholarships for students planning to attend college.	Spring	Board Members I&E Specialist

9. Hold Poster contest for 5 th and 6 th graders in local elementary schools throughout Cassia County.	Fall	I&E Specialist
10. Hold Speech Contest for students in grades 9-12 focusing on the Stewardship theme.	Fall	I&E Specialist
11. Set up a display at the Cassia County Fair spotlighting district activities.	August	I&E Specialist
12. Actively participate on the Mid-Snake RC&D Council which holds quarterly council meetings.	Quarterly	Board Members, Employees
13. District Employee to serve in Council Leadership position on Mid-Snake RC&D Council.	Year Round	Doreen McMurray



Above: Soil Health Workshop

Below: Our Webpage www.minicassiaswcd.com



FY2024 (7/1/2023– 6/30/2024)

Annual Plan of Work

West Cassia Soil and Water Conservation District

Priority Area Number 4: DISTRICT OPERATIONS

Objective: To manage the ongoing business and activities of the District.

Goal(s):

♦ To manage and run the affairs of the district including the management of supervisors, employees, finances, monthly board meetings, and to evaluate and make new goals.

Actions for FY24	Dates	Person Responsible
1. Revise the Annual Plan and update the 5-year plan.	January-February	All Board Members, Admin Assistant, I&E Specialist
2. Conduct and attend monthly board meetings to be held the second Tuesday of each month. The meetings are open to the public and the media. Guests are invited when appropriate along with county officials and agency and state personnel.	2 nd Tuesday of each month	All Board Members, Admin Assistant, and other employees as requested
3. Discuss the USDA Memorandum of Agreement with the NRCS District Conservationist (Team Lead)	Annually	All Board Members
4. Have representation to the Summer Picnic, Awards Banquet, Division IV Meetings (Mar. & Oct.), the IASCD Conference (Nov.), and the Legislative session in January.	Throughout the year as scheduled	All Board Members, District Employees
5. Attend quarterly WAG (Walcott Watershed Advisory Group) meeting and yearly LWG (Local Work Group) meeting.	Quarterly	Board Members as assigned
6. Manage Supervisor elections in the even numbered years. Will organize an outreach program to recruit and educate new supervisors.	Yearly, elections in Oct.	Admin Assistant
7. Develop a budget, prepare monthly financial statements, and have an audit annually or as needed. Provide payroll and financial information to the accountant to meet tax obligations.	Budget set July, reviewed monthly	Entire Board, Admin Assistant
8. Discuss potential or existing legislation that impacts the district. Draft appropriate legislation for presentation at the IASCD annual conference.	On-going	All Board Members Admin Assistant
9. Meet with County Commissioners to review District Activities and present the proposed budget as a basis for requesting county funding.	February	All Board Members, Employees as requested
10. Review, revise if necessary, and approve the agreement with the Administrative Assistant, I & E Specialist, and other employees.	January	All Board Members, all employees
11. Participate in the Division IV Soil Sampling Project. (Soil Your Undies)	On-going	ISWCC, employees as assigned.
12. Participate in the Post-Harvest Deep Soil Sampling Project.	Spring and Fall	All Board, ISWCC

FY2024 (7/1/2023– 6/30/2024) Annual Plan of Work West Cassia Soil & Water Conservation District

Priority Area Number 5: WATER RESOURCES/INVASIVE SPECIES

Objective: Protecting Idaho Waters

Goals:

- ♦ Manage Cotterell Invasive Species Watercraft Inspection Station on I-84.
- ♦ Inspect all watercrafts to ensure they are clean, drained, dry, and free of invasive mussels, snails, clams, and weeds.
- ♦ To educate landowners on the importance of keeping Idaho Waters Clean of Invasive Species.

Action(s):

Actions for FY24	Dates	Person Responsible
1. Manage Cotterell Watercraft Inspection Station.	February through November	Entire Board, Admin Assistant, Watercraft Station Manager
2. Educate the public on the invasive species problem and the importance of keeping Idaho Waters Clean through press release and/or newsletters.	Yearly	I&E Specialist
3. Manage all employees during boat station season to ensure the station is in continual operation, including hiring and firing of employees and scheduling work shifts. Turn in all time sheet records and bills to Admin Assistant.	February November	Board Members as needed, Watercraft Station Manager
4. Complete all required reports for Idaho Department of Agriculture. Manage the agreement, finances, payroll, reports, and records.	As needed	Admin Assistant
5. Keep watercraft station up to date with needed equipment and supplies.	As needed	Watercraft Station Manager
6. Cooperate with County Weed Supervisor to provide information and training to the Watercraft inspectors regarding noxious weeds, stressing weed control practices, and prevention of the spread of weeds.	Annually	Watercraft Station Inspectors

