



# Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District

85 East Baseline Road Rupert Idaho 83350

## 2023 Performance Report

**General Information:** The Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District was organized on July 1 1955, spending the first five years helping farmer's level land, build irrigation structures and develop proper crop rotation. The District's efforts have evolved over the years, from equipment leases to producer, to education of the area school children and soil health workshops for the area growers.

**Mission:** Deliver natural resource technology and education, to promote wise use of natural resources and to promote management practices to ensure a sustainable natural resource base for present and future generations of producers/growers in Minidoka County.

**Location:** Minidoka County is in central southern Idaho, with the Snake River forming the Southern boundary, Power County to the East, Blaine County at the Northern end, with Lincoln and Jerome Counties to the West. Minidoka County has 267,567 acres in production agriculture, the average size farm is 432 acres. The county has a unique topography and elevation. Its Southern portion, which runs along the Snake River, was originally part of the riverbed. Its Northern and Eastern boundaries consist of lava flows with large and small areas of arable land. Although the surface structure is varied, there is only 180 feet difference in elevation from the lowest point at the Southwest corner, 4180 feet and its highest point in the Northeast corner, 4360.

**Water:** Water stored in reservoirs created by dams on the Snake River provide the mean of irrigation for the diversified farming on the original Minidoka Project. Water was first delivered to the Minidoka Project in 1907 with the completions of the Minidoka Dam. The old project consists of 72,221 acres. Deep wells provide the water for the 'new' Governmental Homestead Project consisting of 89,00 acres. Additional acres have been developed by private enterprise since the first Veteran Homestead drawing in 1953. Today there are approximately 160,000 acres of rich sagebrush land under irrigation by pumping. Irrigated farmland covers the Southern part of the county, while lave beds cover the Northern portion. Minidoka is the largest sugar beet producer in Idaho and in the 2017 census it showed that farmers and ranchers brought in \$354 million in far-gate receipts during that year.

**Legislative District 27** with Senator Kelly Anthon and Representatives Clay Handy and Doug Pickett

### Recap of the year 2023:

Our busy year started out with a Workshop in early January – the weather was extremely foggy, we had 182 attendees the theme was Managing Water for Tomorrows Agriculture. We had guest speakers, a vendor fair and lunch. We moved right into our annual tree sale – moving 2350 trees of a variety of species, from evergreens to shrubs. In March we hosted the Division IV meeting then the Tri-District summer banquet and awards dinner.

There were 2 WQPA grants administered this year with partners who installed moisture monitors, and a conversion of a very old wheel line to a pivot.

The Direct seed no-till drill is in its 9<sup>th</sup> year of operation, with a total of 12,378.7 acres on the drill. This year there was 1035.5 acres planted of oats, wheat, alfalfa, sorghum, barley, cover crops, and crep (grasses) the least was 8.1 acres while the largest was 259.7 acres for a rental.

Spring weather was cold and wet, growers were hurrying to get their crops in this year, in the mist of all those things we had a shift in board members. Currently it is: Chairman Dusty Wilkins, Vice Chairman Reid Bowen, Treasurer Lance Lovell,

Supervisors Luke Stevenson, and Jeff Schow. Great to have these busy and amazing young men as the Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation Districts Supervisors.

One of the organizations that the District supports is FFA our chapter had a great accomplishment, with 10 receiving their State FFA degree and 2 receiving American, we are excited to have a strong FFA in our county.

The Minidoka County Fair theme this year was 'Stirrup some Fun' so as a play on the words the booth was decorated with cooking items along with lists and pictures of foods grown in Idaho so we can all enjoy 'stirring up' some fun.



Other projects we support is the Poster and Speech contests, the theme this year was 'One Water' our 1<sup>st</sup> place speech contestant was able to travel to Boise and participate in the State Contest where she placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in State. We were proud.

Minidoka and East Cassia and West Cassia Districts sponsor the State Land Judging and Education contest each year, and the weather is usually very cold and this year wet. There were 19 teams from throughout the state, the winning teams were Preston, Troy and Kuna.

Admin Sharon Hardy, presenting the program at Idaho History Days for 4<sup>th</sup> grade explaining that were an apple the earth how much is farmable and what our farmers do for us.



Stewardship of the year award to Sara, and Derrick Maier presented by Chairman Dusty Wilkins.

Workshop attendees were very interested in the various reports and speakers.



Minidoka SWCD is looking at new projects with some good options coming to the fore front- looking towards a great new year.