

**Blaine Soil & Water Conservation District**

**ANNUAL PLAN**

**FIVE-YEAR RESOURCE CONSERVATION**

**BUSINESS PLAN**

**ANTI-DEGRADATION PLAN**

**JULY 1, 2025 – JUNE 30, 2029**

## Forward

The Blaine 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 aid 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 provides 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.

It is the goal of the Blaine Soil Conservation District elected officials to set high standards for conservation of natural resources within the district. The district developed an action plan for meeting these needs. The Blaine SWCD acknowledges that among their role's as an elected board is the need to provide a service to the community, to assist in the economic stability of the area, to enhance the traditional way of life that is important to those we serve and to encourage the wise use of natural resources. The district further acknowledges the very important role our conservation partners play in the success of the Blaine SWCD.

This 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 Blaine Soil and Water Conservation District.

This document identifies the resource needs in the Conservation District and presents a resource conservation action plan for meeting these needs.

## **Certificate of Adoption**

The Board of elected supervisors of the Blaine Soil & Water Conservation District this 24th day of March 2025 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.

### **Chairman**

Robert Simpson  
Nicholas Purdy,  
Dan Ratliff,  
Kathy Noble,  
Kelsey Barg,

Chairman  
Vice Chair  
Sec/Treasure  
Supervisor  
Administrative Assistant

### **Supporting Idaho Conservation Partners**

Natural Resource Conservation Service – Jesse Fulmer  
Administrator Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission – Delwyne Trefz  
Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts – Travis Jones  
Wood River RC & D – Terry Ruby

(Note: the official signature page is housed in the Blaine SCD with the official plan)



# Five-Year Resource Conservation Plan Business Plan (2025 to 2029) Blaine Soil & Water Conservation District



For More Information Contact: Kelsey Barg (208)481-0409, [blainescd@gmail.com](mailto:blainescd@gmail.com)

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## Organization of the Blaine Soil & Water Conservation District

The Blaine SWCD was formed as a political subdivision of the State of Idaho, with its authorities, powers and structure contained in Soil Conservation District Law, Title 22, Chapter 27, Idaho Code

- Organized to provide voluntary land and water conservation technical and financial assistance to landowners and users within the Blaine SWCD boundary.

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## Function of the Blaine Soil & Water Conservation District

To make available technical, financial, and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land manager with conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources.

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## Who We Serve & Why

- We serve the people and natural resources in the Blaine County area, to conserve the natural resources for the beneficial and sustainable use by all.

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## Mission of the Blaine Soil & Water Conservation District

- To Coordinate and deliver technical, financial, and educational assistance for responsible natural resource management.

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## Vision of the Blaine Soil & Water Conservation District

- *To establish and support efforts of effective natural resource conservation in Blaine County.*

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## Values of the Blaine 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

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## Natural Resource Priorities and Goals

It is the goal of the Blaine Soil and Water Conservation District, as elected officials, to set high standards of conservation of natural resources by developing a comprehensive action plan for meeting these needs. The top priorities for the Blaine SWCD include:

### 1. Information and Education

Goal: To provide information and education to improve conservation practices in the district.

Objective: Have everyone in the district understand their ability to improve quality of life through best conservation practices.

- Blaine SWCD will continue working with the Blaine County Schools and other entities to bring Agriculture Education into the schools.
- Consistently working with our conservation partners in providing programs, information and teaching workshops for urban and rural conservation issues.
- Continue to provide current snowpack levels, water levels and snow water equivalent levels to partners and the public during the winter months.

- Annually conduct youth environmental education programs and increase participation and public involvement in the IASCD speech contest, poster contest, Envirothon Competition, Blaine SWCD scholarship programs, Blaine Bug Crew, University of Idaho Natural Resource Camp and others.
- Annually sponsor a fair booth.

## 2. Water Resources and Quality

Goal: To improve ground and surface water quality in Blaine County by conservation planning, funding, and promoting implementation of best management practices.

Objective: To increase awareness of water conservation and improve water quality.

- Make available technical and financial aid for improved irrigation water management to at least 5 producers from July 2025 to June 2029 through various conservation programs.
- To provide yearly information to District irrigators on current Idaho water issues.
- Annually support water users, irrigation districts, and conservation partners in improvement of water quality and water resources.

## 3. Irrigated Cropland

Goal: To provide programs and educational information to landowners that will help them develop best use of lands within the county.

Objective: To promote best management practices for crop land within Blaine County.

- Provide soil and plant testing services to landowners at a low cost.
- Make available technical and financial assistance for improved cropland management through various conservation programs.
- Purchased rangeland drill and leased it out to several area farmers and drilled 1000 acres.

## 4. Rangeland and Pasture/Hayland

Goal: To provide programs and educational information to landowners that will help them develop best use of land within the county.

Objective: To promote best management practices for range, pasture and hayland within the district.

- Annually promote biological control of noxious weeds through various conservation partners.
- Seek NRCS conservation funding and technical assistance for private landowners to develop best grazing management practices.
- Provide data on drought tolerant, native, and riparian plants available to landowners.
- Work with conservation partners on the sage grouse initiative and other conservation issues.

## 5. District Operations

Goal: Maintain district operations at optimum level of efficiency.

Objective: The Blaine SWCD will provide leadership and business management of the highest quality.

- Make available 5Y-Plans Annual Reports Budget as needed for federal and state agency assistance.
- Provide information to landowners on current environmental issues and available conservation funding.
- Provide the opportunity for supervisors to complete Supervisor Training.
- Complete effective and efficient operations including accounting, personnel management, training and development, annual planning and reporting, district web site and administrative procedures.
- Provide a yearly low-cost tree sale.
- Provide Workshops to local farmers and growers on soil health and water conservation management programs.

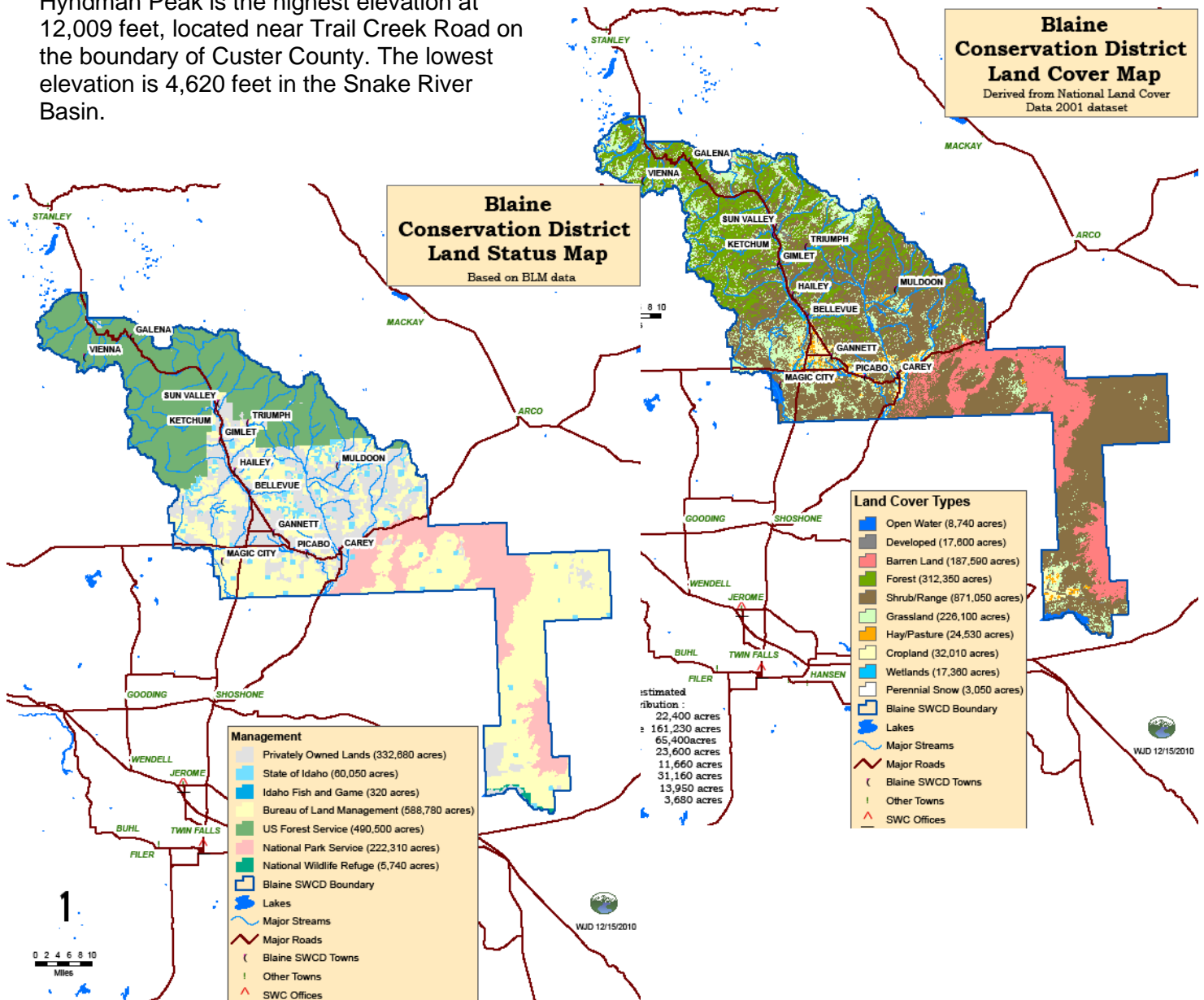
## Physical Characteristics and Critical Geographic Areas (attached map)

Blaine SWCD district correlates with the boundaries of Blaine County. Blaine County is a unique area that ranges from lava rock beds to dessert landscapes, to fertile farms and ranches, to forested mountains. It includes 2,661 square miles on the North side of the Snake River Basin, stretching into the Sawtooth Mountains.

The Northern part of the county is covered with streams and beautiful forested mountains. The Wood River flows through the county from its headwaters in the Sawtooth Mountains southward through the county's population centers around Sun Valley, Ketchum, Hailey (county seat), and Bellevue into the Snake River Basin.

A long arm of the county extends to the southeast through the Snake River Basin and all the way to the Snake River. This area is covered with ancient lava flows and is uninhabited. Much of it is included in the Craters of the Moon National Monument. The agricultural town of Carey lies at the base of the mountains on the northern edge of this arm.

Hyndman Peak is the highest elevation at 12,009 feet, located near Trail Creek Road on the boundary of Custer County. The lowest elevation is 4,620 feet in the Snake River Basin.

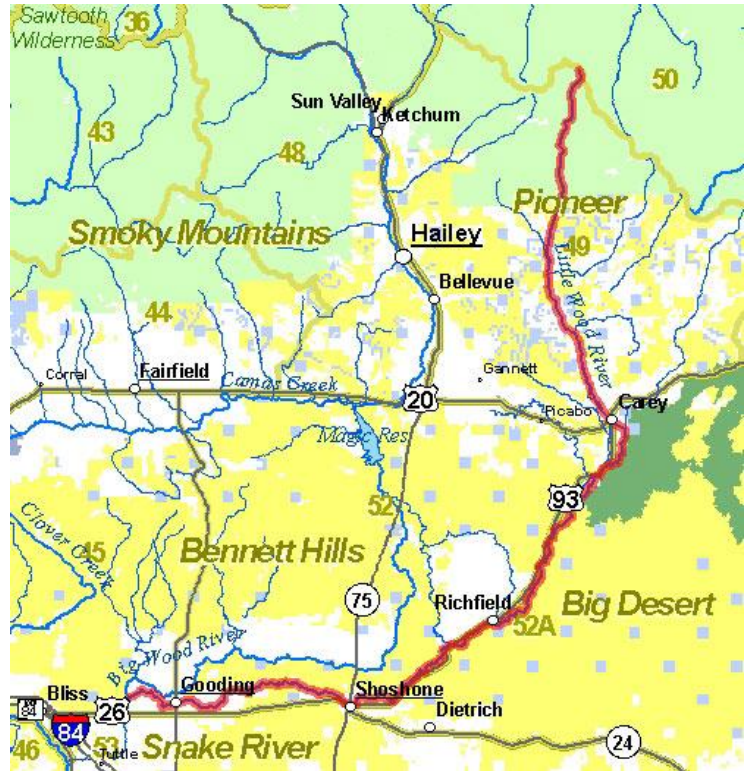




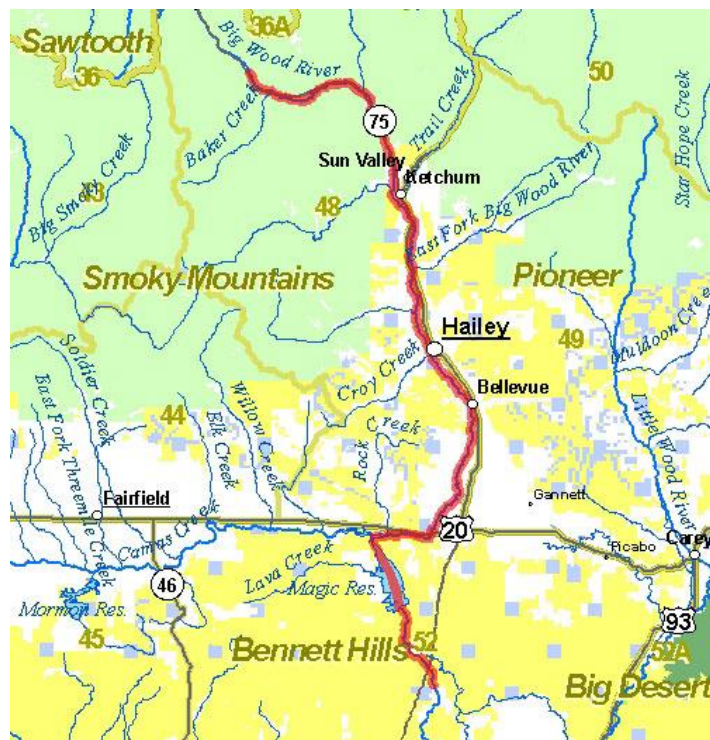


## Critical Geographic Areas for Natural Resource Conservation in Blaine County

The Big Wood River and tributaries  
(Image from fishandgame.idaho.gov)

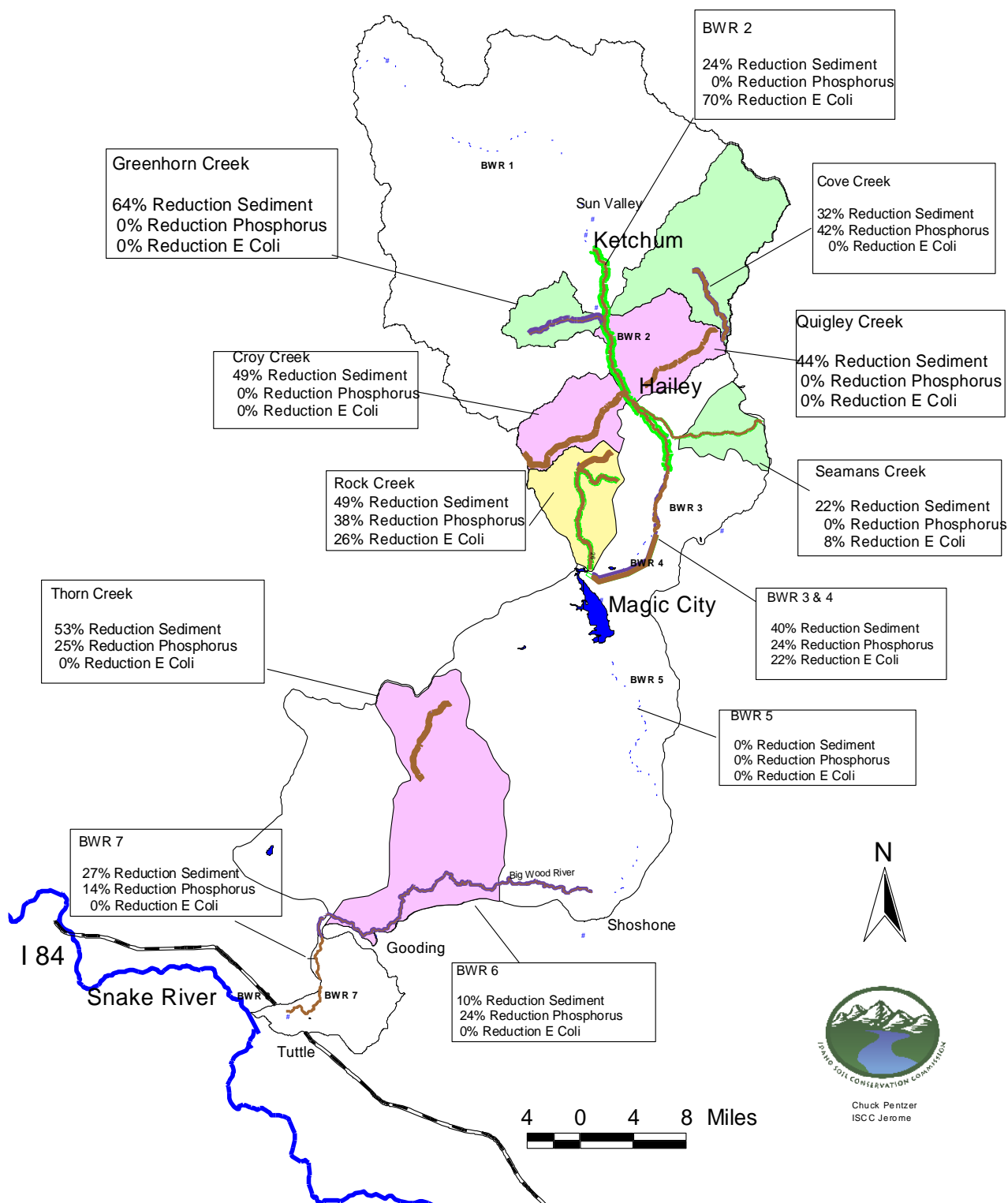


The Little Wood River and tributaries  
(Image from fishandgame.idaho.gov)

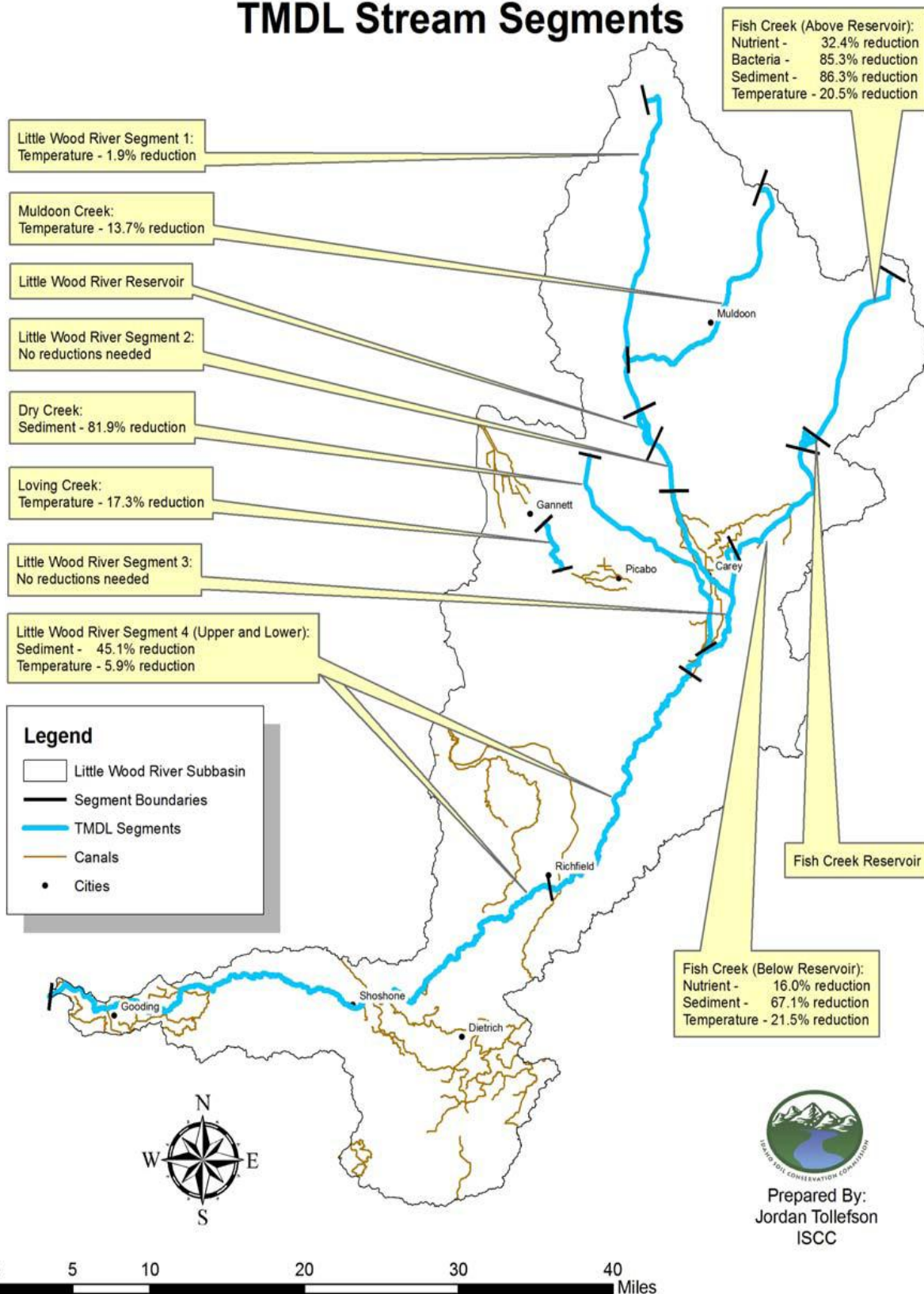




## Estimates for Big Wood River

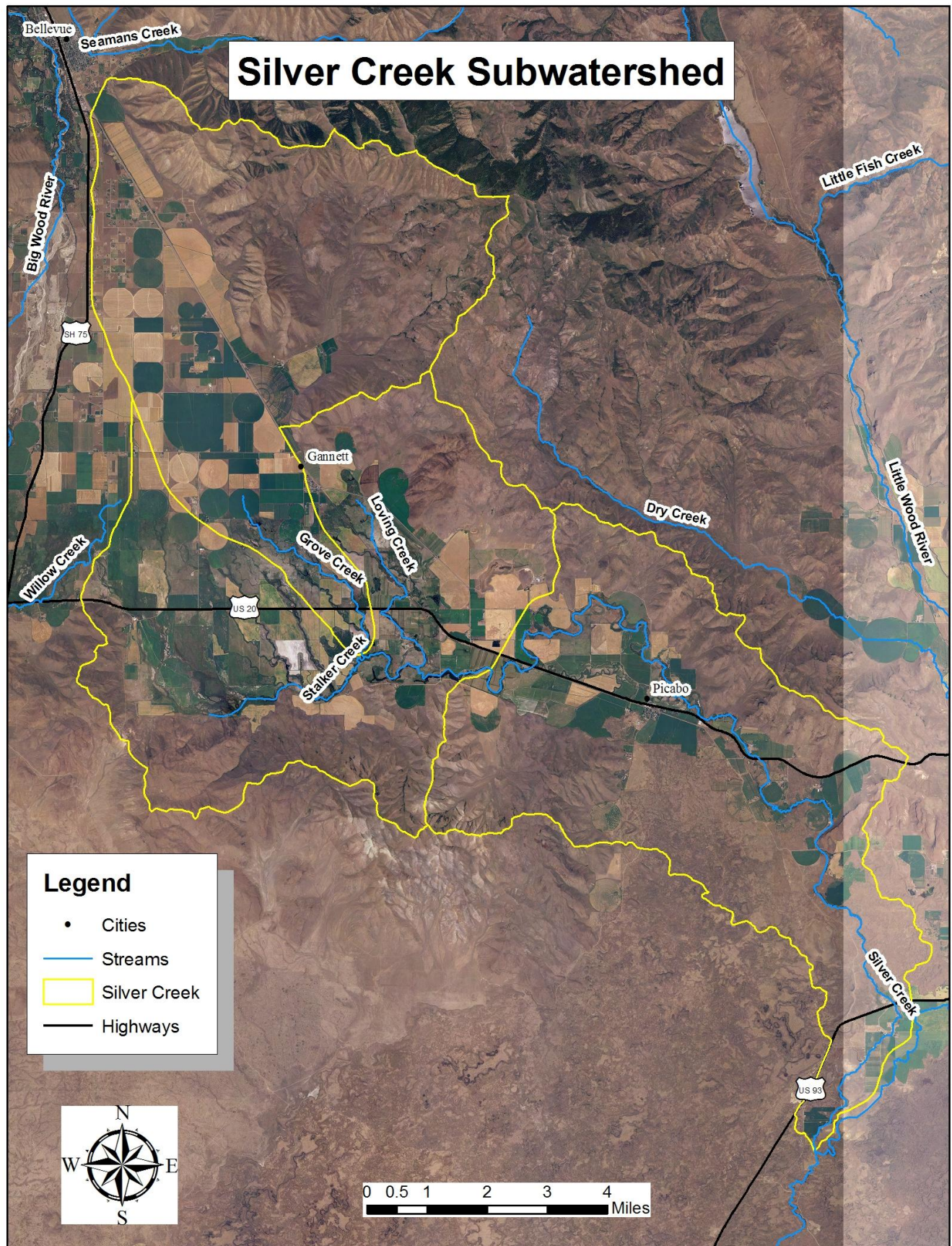
BWR Ag Implementation Plan  
TMDL Percent Reductions Map

# Little Wood River Subbasin TMDL Stream Segments





## Silver Creek







## Blaine County Economic Overview

|                                   |           |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Civilian Labor Force (Dec 2022)   | 13,422    |
| Unemployment Rate (Dec 2022)      | 2.1%      |
| Population (2021)                 | 24,766    |
| Median Household Income (2021)    | \$71,749  |
| Per Capita Personal Income (2020) | \$117,681 |
| Poverty Rate (2021)               | 9.9%      |



## How has the population changed in Blaine County?

The population of **Blaine County, Idaho** in **2021** was **24,766**, **16.3% up** from the **21,296** who lived there in **2010**. For comparison, the US population grew **7.3%** and Idaho's population grew **21%** during that period.

Idaho Department of Labor

[labor.idaho.gov](https://labor.idaho.gov)


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### Age

† Margin of error is at least 10 percent of the total value. Take care with this statistic.

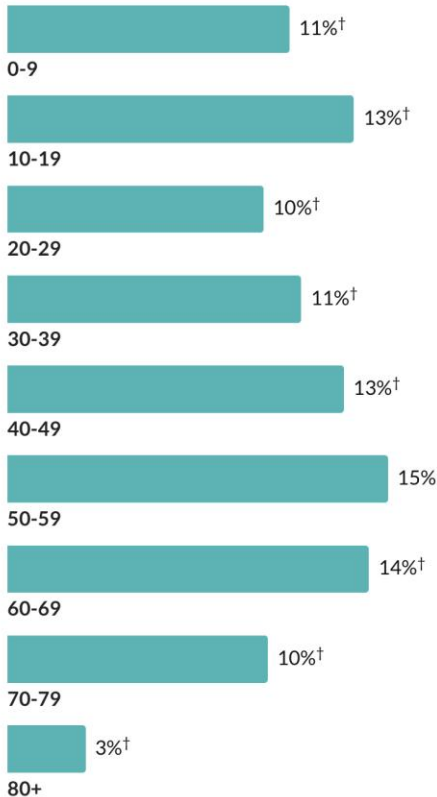
# 43.8

Median age

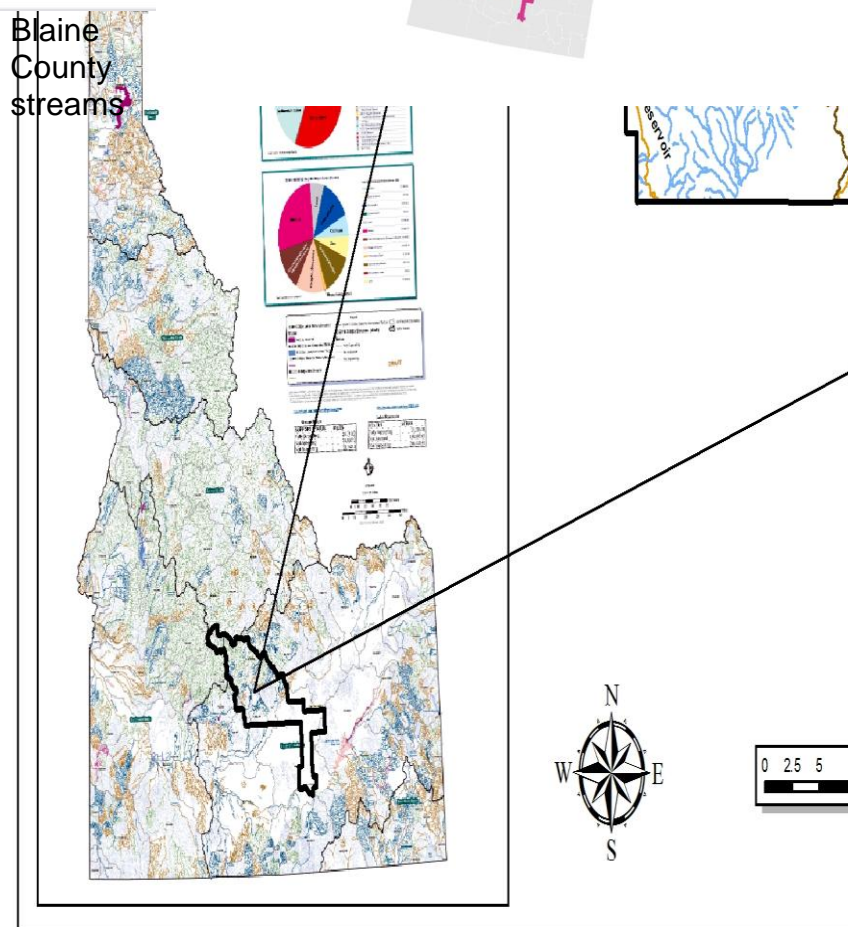
about 20 percent higher than the figure in Idaho:  
36.8

about 10 percent higher than the figure in United  
States: 38.4

### Population by age range



Blaine  
County  
streams



See <https://lmi.idaho.gov/Portals/0/2022/WorkforceTrends/BlaineProfile.pdf?v=012023>

## Trends Impacting Conservation in the Blaine Soil & Water Conservation District

- A forthcoming reduction in state funding which further reduces the district's efforts to be as effective in conservation.
- Endangered Species Acts requirements and enforcement
- Urban development and absentee landowners
- Poorly planned growth in agricultural areas
- Increasing small acreage farms, five acres or less
- Recreational use and its impact on agricultural management.
- Focus on water quality and quantity issues.

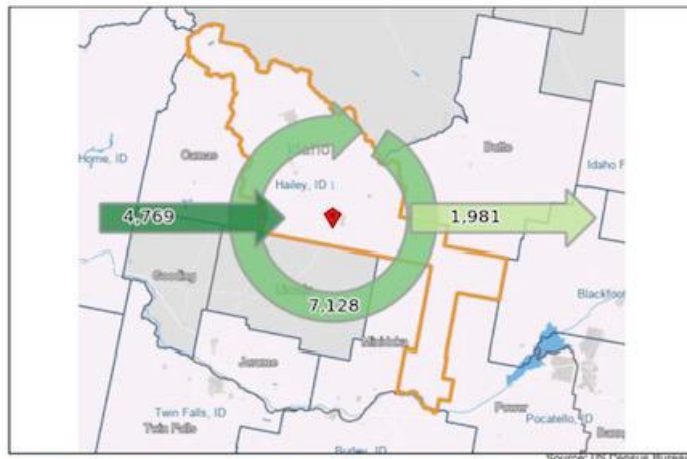
## Strategies to Address Trends

- Develop legislative outreach program to address funding shortfalls from State funds.
- Secure funding to address agricultural mandates and landowner private property rights.
  - Conduct more public education in partnership with existing organizations and cooperators who focus on protection of water and soil resources.
  - Determine opportunities to coordinate outreach activities with traditional and non-traditional partners.
  - Raise awareness of conservation values with state legislature and elected officials – help decision makers be better informed
  - Strengthen locally led conservation efforts by partnering with existing agencies and organizations.
  - Become more informed on current issues impacting working lands, Farm Bill programs, Information from agencies instead of relying on the NRCS District Conservationist
  - Determine how to become involved with County Planning and Zoning issues impacting natural resources.
  - Map noxious and invasive weeds to target more effectively weed control efforts
  - Establish a data base to track resource conditions
  - Solicit input to improve the Annual

Blaine County Labor Force And Economic Profile, January 2023

### 8. Labor Force Commuting Patterns, 2019

It is estimated that 7,128 workers lived and worked in Blaine County in 2019. Another 4,769 workers were employed in Blaine County but lived outside, while 1,981 workers commuted to other counties for work.



### 9. Top 10 Cities Where People Who Work in Blaine County Live, 2019

| City of Residence | Count of All Jobs | Percentage of Total Jobs |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Hailey            | 2,896             | 24.3%                    |
| Bellevue          | 931               | 7.8%                     |
| Ketchum           | 478               | 4.0%                     |
| Twin Falls        | 398               | 3.3%                     |
| Boise City        | 340               | 2.9%                     |
| Carey             | 252               | 2.1%                     |
| Sun Valley        | 249               | 2.1%                     |
| Shoshone          | 145               | 1.2%                     |
| Meridian          | 135               | 1.1%                     |
| Jerome            | 132               | 1.1%                     |

Note: "All Jobs" includes private and public sector jobs. It also includes a count of workers with multiple jobs. Source: US Census Bureau- Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD)

## Plan/Five-Year Resource Conservation Business Plan

- Take a proactive approach to funding water delivery systems on irrigated cropland

- Sponsor project proposals with other districts
- Continue an active information and education program for landowners to address urban development.
- Work with public land users to educate and encourage cooperation among private recreational entities and public land users/permittees and landowners private property rights.

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### Staffing Needs

- Part-time Conservation District Administrative Assistant.
  - Conservation District Technician via NRCS
- 

### Economic Condition and Outlook

The current economic condition of Blaine SCD is positive. Our budget is where it should be, and we are able to complete the programs and projects that have been decided upon. However, the economic outlook is not great as our match percentage looks as if it will be dropping. The state of Idaho has a serious deficit. Monies received from Blaine County look to remain the same as they have been in the past. Blaine SCD is always looking for new projects that will generate funding for the district and its programs.

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### Key Decision Makers

- Citizens in Conservation District
  - Blaine County Commissioners and Planning and Zoning Board Members
  - Elected City Officials and Planning and Zoning Board Members
  - State legislators representing Conservation District: Ned Burns and Steve Miller
  - U.S. Senators, Representatives and Staffers
  - Conservation District Supervisors
  - Key contacts for cities
  - Blaine County School District #61
  - Blaine County Weed Management
- 

### District Water Quality and Quantity

- District projects related to water resources, quality and quantity include continued efforts to provide irrigation improvements, riparian protection, and management.
  - The district will continue to work with area irrigation districts in decisions, goals, and planning.
- 

### Priority Actions – 6 Months

- *Summary of the priority actions needed to start the 5-year plan of the Blaine Soil & Water Conservation District.*

| Action  | Begin Date | End Date |
|---|------------|----------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seek public comments on Annual Plan/Five-Year Resource Conservation Business Plan</li> </ul>   | 1/1/25     | 3/1/26   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Board of Supervisor review of Annual Plan/Five-Year Resource Conservation Business Plan priorities, actions, and public comment</li> </ul> | 1/1/25     | 3/21/26  |



|   |          |          |
|---|----------|----------|
| ▪ Complete written update of Annual Plan/Five-Year Resource Conservation Plan | 12/1/24  | 3/21/25  |
| ▪ Identify budget and staff needs   | 7/1/24   | 3/21/25  |
| ▪ Develop, adopt, and submit annual budget                                    | Annually | Annually |
| ▪ Adopt and submit Annual Plan/Five-Year Resource Conservation Business Plan  | Annually | Annually |
|   |          |          |



## FY2024 (7/1/2025 – 6/30/2026 Annual Plan of Work Blaine Soil & Water Conservation District

### Conservation District Priority Number 1: Information and Education

**Goal(s): To provide information and education to improve conservation practices in the district.**

**Objective: Help each individual in the district to understand their ability to improve quality of life through best conservation practices.**

| <b>Actions</b>   | <b>Target Date</b> | <b>Individual(s) Responsible</b>           |
|--|--------------------|--|
| Work with the Blaine County Commission, School Board and other entities to bring back FFA & Agriculture to the Blaine County School System.  | Ongoing            | Supervisors, Kelsey Barg, Admin. Assistant |
| Work cooperatively with the RC&D, NRCS, Wood River Land Trust, Trout Unlimited, Blaine Bug Crew, municipalities and others to provide urban water use, weed control, native and drought tolerant plant species and other workshops | Ongoing            | Kelsey Barg Adm. Assistant                 |
| Present snow surveys, snow water equivalent levels, water forecasts, and current water levels to irrigation districts, soil conservation districts, WAG and RC&D's on a monthly basis where applicable                             | Ongoing            | Aaron Andrews, Bob Simpson, Supervisor     |
| Increase youth and public involvement and awareness through Annual Envirothon, field trips, speech contest, Natural Resource Camp, poster contest and annual scholarship program   | Ongoing            | Supervisors, Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant   |
| Provide a newsletter with current and pertinent information regarding conservation practices, water outlook, and other local programs  | Ongoing            | Kelsey Barg Adm. Assistant                 |
| Provide information to the public about grants available, including NRCS, Blaine County LAB and private funders.   | Ongoing            | Supervisors, Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant   |
| In partnership with U of I Extension to support the Trout Friendly Lawn Program in their efforts in establishing and maintaining a community garden in Hailey, ID teaching soil and water conservation principles                  | Ongoing            | Supervisors Kelsey Barg, Adm. Asst.        |
|  |                    |  |

## FY2024 (7/1/2025 – 6/30/2026) Annual Plan of Work



### Conservation District Priority Number 2: Water Resources and Quality

**Goal(s):** To promote programs that maximize and educate about water conservation and quality in the

**Objective:** To increase awareness of water conservation and improve water quality in the district.

| Actions   | Target Date | Individual(s) Responsible                  |
|---|-------------|--|
| Support the proposed Little Wood River & Fish Creek Pressurized Pipeline projects and irrigation delivery systems.  | ongoing     | Supervisors, Kelsey Barg Adm. Assistant    |
| Provide Urban water user workshops to promote awareness and best management practices   | ongoing     | Kelsey Barg Adm. Assistant                 |
| Support proactively the Fish Creek Reservoir Restoration  | ongoing     | Supervisors, Kelsey Barg, Admin. Assistant |
| Support the Wood River Land Trust and Trout Unlimited in the Water Conservation Fair and other water projects and issues  | ongoing     | Supervisors, Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant   |
| 1. Provide information to the public 2. Partner with local agencies and organizations in applying for available grants dealing with water conservation programs available from Blaine County LAB, NRCS and other grant agencies | ongoing     | Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant, Supervisors   |
| Provide and support local farmers for WQPA funding from SWC's   | Ongoing     | Supervisors<br>Kelsey Barg Adm. Assistant  |

## FY2024(7/1/2025 – 6/30/2026) Annual Plan of Work Blaine Soil & Water Conservation District



### Conservation District Priority Number 3: Irrigated Cropland

**Goal(s):** To provide programs and educational information to landowners that will help them develop the best use of land within the county.

**Objective:** To promote best management practices for crop land within the district.

| Actions   | Target Date | Individual(s) Responsible                  |
|---|-------------|--|
| Provide soil testing and analysis services to urban and agricultural users to meet the needs of organic and nutrient management practices | ongoing     | Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant                |
| Provide snow surveys and water outlook reports in partnership with the NRCS to landowners   | ongoing     | Aaron Andrews, and Bob Simpson, Supervisor |
| Provide plant and feed testing and analysis services to landowners, targeting Nitrate levels in soils and feed                            | ongoing     | Supervisors, Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant   |
| Assist and provide farmers with grant applications to meet best management practices  | ongoing     | Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant                |

## FY2024 (7/1/2025 – 6/30/2026) Annual Plan of Work Blaine Soil & Water Conservation District



### Conservation District Priority Number 4: Rangeland and Pasture/Hayland

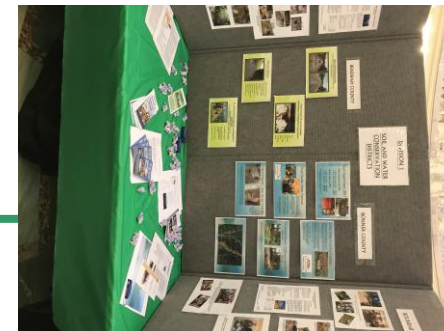
**Goal(s):** To provide programs and educational information to landowners that will help them develop the best use of land within the county.

**Objective:** To promote best management practices for range, pasture and hayland within the district

| Actions   | Target Date | Individual(s) Responsible                |
|---|-------------|--|
| Work with the NRCS in providing information and assisting in applying for grant funded programs to develop range and pastureland and increase best management practices, such as EQIP Sage Grouse and AWEPP funding | ongoing     | Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant              |
| Provide soil and forage testing services to increase better nutrient management practices   | ongoing     | Supervisors, Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant |
| Provide data on drought tolerant, native and riparian plants available to landowners  | ongoing     | Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant              |
| Investigate opportunities and requirements to provide equipment supporting best management practices on Blaine County land.   | ongoing     | Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant              |
| Support the Blaine Bug Crew with their program and encourage county wide participation  | ongoing     | Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant              |



## FY2024 (7/1/2025 – 6/30/2026) Annual Plan of Work Blaine Soil & Water Conservation District



### Conservation District Priority Number 5: District Operations

**Goal(s): Maintain District operations at optimum level of efficiency**

**Objective: The BSWCD will provide leadership and business management of the highest quality**

| <b>Actions</b>  | <b>Target Date</b> | <b>Individual(s) Responsible</b>        |
|---|--------------------|---|
| Maintain administrative procedures, compete annual work plan, conduct elections   | Ongoing            | Kelsey Barg Adm. Assistant              |
| Hold 12 monthly conservation district meetings, support RC&D meetings, pay dues   | ongoing            | Kelsey Barg Adm. Assistant              |
| Maintain comprehensive financial management system, using Quick Books conduct annual review, and submit all financial reports and budget to BSWCD Board | Ongoing            | Kelsey Barg Adm. Assistant              |
| Find, secure, and administer funds for the conservation district's goals and actions  | Ongoing            | Kelsey Barg Adm. Assistant              |
| Provide and maintain a website and newsletter providing current information, programs, and practices  | ongoing            | Kelsey Barg Adm. Assistant              |
| Work with the Wood River RC&D, NRCS and Blaine County LAB to develop grant opportunities  | Ongoing            | Kelsey Barg Adm. Assistant              |
| Provide funds to record SnoTel surveys in Blaine County area  | Ongoing            | Supervisors, Kelsey Barg Adm. Assistant |
| Provide a low-cost tree sale.   | ongoing            | Kelsey Barg, Adm. Assistant             |
| Provide a No till Drill for Blaine County farmers   | Ongoing            | Supervisors, Kelsey Barg Adm. Assistant |