



*A sediment pond will be built on this site.*

## PARMA PROJECT PROGRESSING

### *Basin Construction Begins*

*RCPP project addresses excessive sediment and nutrients in irrigation water, reduces water usage/ improves water delivery, improves soil health, provides wildlife habitat for migratory birds, puts a communication plan into place to promote environmental awareness, increases the number of conservation practices implemented, and provides transparency for funding expenditures.*

Farmers' Cooperative Ditch Company (FCDC) of Parma received \$500,000 matching project funds from the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)'s Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) for a water quality project impacting approximately 4,000 acres in the Parma area. RCPP promotes coordination and collaboration between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and land-owners.

The project came about because producers using water from the Farmers' Cooperative Ditch Co. (FCDC) are experiencing large amounts of sediment in their systems. As the irrigation season progresses, producers end up pumping sediment-laden water, which causes damage to pumps, clogs micro-irrigation systems and deposits sediment in concrete ditches used for surface irrigation.

FCDC and NRCS have developed a

five-year timeline for the project. One of the keystone conservation practices for the overall project is an 8.8-acre sediment basin that officially begins construction on April 6. The basin will remove as much sediment as possible to assist downstream water users. A water quality monitoring plan will accompany the basin to help measure its efficiency and allow for improvement in subsequent basins of the same type.

## MEET DEREK MYNEAR, NEW SAGEBRUSH LANDSCAPE RESTORATION SPECIALIST

The Conservation Commission has hired Derek Mynear of Emmett to serve as a Sagebrush Landscape Restoration Specialist. He'll work on landscape-scale improvements across the state - restoring lost hydrology to wet meadow, mesic, and wetland areas - that benefit sage-steppe obligates and associated species.

"I'm super excited to join the team," says Derek, who will work closely with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Governor's Office of Species Conservation (OSC), the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and members of Idaho's Sage Grouse Action Team, working to preclude the bird's listing as an endangered species. "I've been working in my field for 25 years, and hope to continue working for another 25 doing what I love."

Derek graduated from Oregon State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife Science focusing on Conservation Ecology and Ecosystem Management, was a Project Biologist for Ducks Unlimited for 6 years, and notes his passion is conservation of our natural resources.

"We're pleased to have attracted such a well-qualified individual," says Commission Administrator Teri Murrison. "Derek has a very solid background. His desire to teach others about all nature has to offer, his experience in doing on the ground conservation, in pursuing project funding, and achieving good results for natural resources and people are all critical to success."

Among his new responsibilities are working with Commission field staff,

local and state NRCS staff, conservation districts, collaborative work groups, and other partners to:

- Provide outreach and technical conservation assistance to farmers and ranchers.
- Offer science-based training, identify technology transfer and training development needs, increase communication and build partnerships, and increase overall technical assistance capacity.
- Identify wet meadow, mesic and wetland landscape-scale challenges, develop strategic solutions, and assist partners with project planning.
- Help create and produce written and other outreach materials, including videos for potential and implemented projects.
- Establish and strengthen working relationships with state, federal and local groups to ensure projects meet all state, federal and local requirements.

Derek and his wife live in Emmett. Two of their four kids remain in the nest, says Derek, and "we enjoy spending time together as a family in the great outdoors".

A 2.5-year grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) funds Derek's new position. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the US Forest Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the US Bureau of Land Management provided funding to NFWF for this project. The Commission and the Governor's Office of Species Conservation are providing matching funds. □



*Derek's hit the ground running. If you are a landowner in sagebrush country, he wants to meet you!*

### LOW INTEREST CONSERVATION LOANS

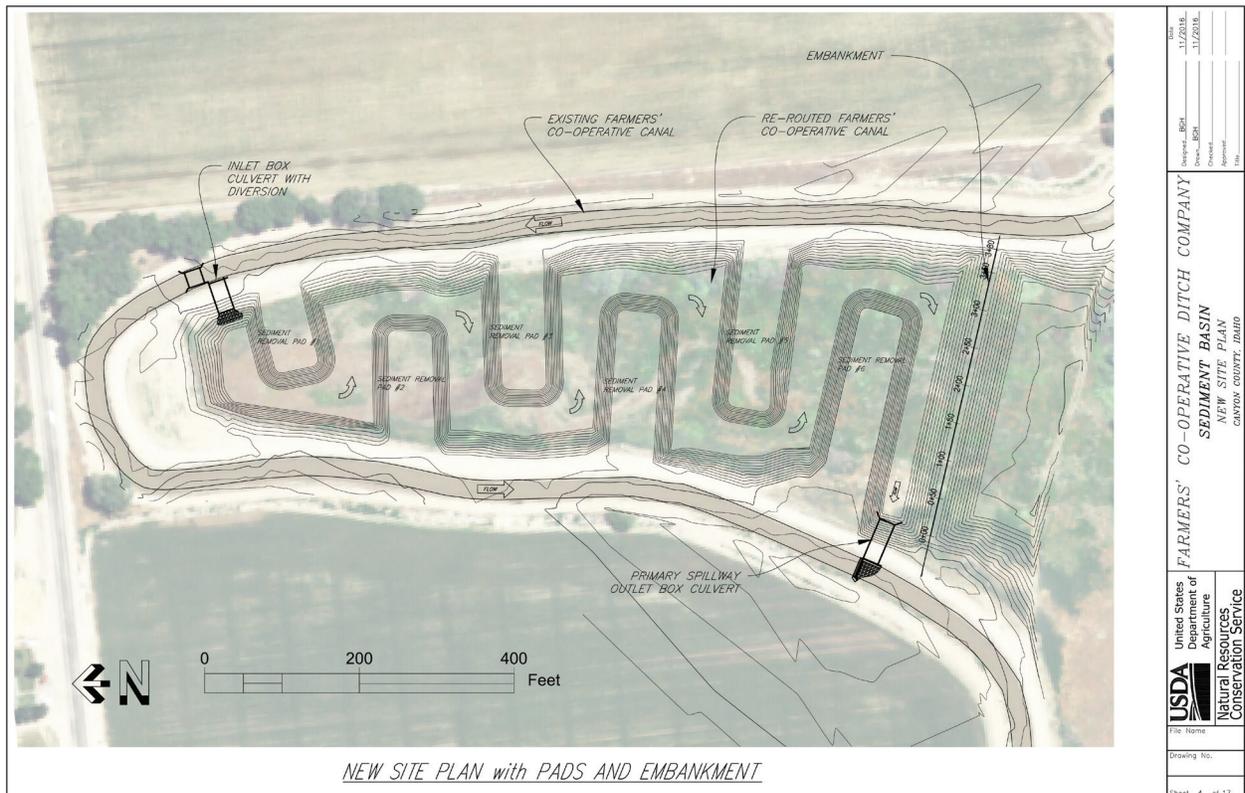
Sprinkler Irrigation  
No-Till Drills  
Livestock Feeding Operations  
Fences  
Solar Stock Water  
Pump Systems

INTEREST RATES AS LOW  
AS 2.5%

TERMS 7 TO 15 YEARS



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*New sediment basin design.*

**PARMA PROJECT** *cont. from Page 1*

This portion of the project will take advantage of a long, oxbow-like feature of the canal to divert water into the new basin located near a sharp bend. Irrigation water will flow through the basin for approximately 2,000 feet to allow sediment to settle out. The water will then be directed back into the canal on the other end.

The basin will also have a series of “pads” to facilitate the removal of sediment from the basin. These sediment removal pads will all be 60 feet wide on the top but vary in length. They will be constructed in a staggered fashion and spaced closely so an excavator will be able to access anywhere in the basin to remove deposited sediment and stack it so it can dry out and be transported.

Jerry Raynor, acting NRCS State Conservationist for Idaho, said, “This

multi-prong approach to water quality allows the Farmers’ Cooperative Ditch Company to implement and promote voluntary conservation within the 4,000-acre project area. We are happy to be able to support the long term water quality, quantity and soil health goals of the company in Canyon County and the Lower Boise River watershed.”

Tom Johnston, FCDC board member said, “The board is very committed to improve the Lower Boise River water quality. This project will help our shareholders improve water quality, quantity and reduce production costs.”

With the sediment basin in place, the project will start to implement other conservation practices by FCDC shareholders in the project area. These participants may apply for contracts with

NRCS which provide cost sharing and technical assistance through the Farm Bill programs it administers. Examples of some of the conservation practices that would apply to this project include Irrigation Water Management Plans, pivot and wheel line sprinkler systems, and flow meters.

Partner participation in the project is critical to its success. In addition to staff support, the FCDC has secured the lease for the land the sediment basin will sit on, as well as having shareholder participation in implementing other conservation practices on privately-held lands. The Canyon Soil Conservation District is providing staff time and logistical support. The Canyon County Commissioners, City of Parma, Southwest Idaho Resources Conservation and Development Council, Black Canyon Irrigation District,

# NRCS IDAHO ANNOUNCES APPLICATION PERIOD FOR STATE CONSERVATION INNOVATION GRANTS PROGRAM

Contact: Denise Adkins, Resource Conservationist, 208.685.6991

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is offering state grants for innovative ideas for conservation strategies and technologies. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Idaho plans to invest \$150,000 in the Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) program, funding innovative conservation projects in three focus areas: grazing lands, soil health and management to benefit threatened and endangered species or species of greatest conservation need. Grant proposals are due May 11, 2018.

"Conservation Innovation Grants play a critical role in developing and implementing new methods to help our customers conserve natural resources, strengthen their local communities, and improve their bottom lines," said Jerry Raynor, Acting State Conservationist in Boise. "Today's announcement supports our efforts to help producers build economically-strong and resilient farms and ranches by providing producers tools to utilize across their working farmlands."

The NRCS uses CIG to work with partners to accelerate transfer and adoption of promising technologies and approaches that address some of the nation's most pressing natural resource concerns. This year, NRCS is focusing funding in these areas:

**Grazing Lands:** Helping livestock producers make grazing management decisions and improving access to conservation planning tools used for developing grazing management plans.

**Soil Health:** Supporting both cropping and grazing systems, in a variety of climatic zones, that incorporate soil health man-

agement systems for addressing specific resource concerns like nutrients and availability. Evaluating multiple soil health assessment methods to assist in the development of new soil health indicators and thresholds.

## **Management to Benefit Threatened and Endangered Species (T&E) or Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN):**

Helping producers to adopt science-sound management actions that benefit targeted T&E species or SGCN or using the development of new technology to implement adaptive management decisions based on monitoring and natural resource goals and objectives.

"Every sector of American agriculture has its unique conservation challenges," Raynor said. "CIG enables USDA to help support new, innovative tools and techniques which have helped U.S. agriculture become the powerhouse we see today, leading the world in both production efficiency and conservation delivery."

Potential applicants should review the announcement of program funding available at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), which includes application materials and submission procedures. CIG is authorized and funded under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Projects can last up to three years. The maximum award amount for any project in Idaho this year is \$75,000.

## **Funding Conservation Innovation for More Than a Decade**

Since 2004, NRCS has invested nearly \$286.7 million (nationwide) in more than 700 projects focused on providing farmers and ranchers new techniques, data and decision-making tools for improving natural resources conservation on their land. □



These cattle are in enclosures as part of a state Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) studying the grazing of cover crops in South Dakota. Photo courtesy of USDA NRCS.

## **PARMA PROJECT, cont. from Page 3**

and the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission have all provided letters of support.

"It's wonderful to see the wide range of government and private organization support for this project," said Morgan Bennetts, Assistant State Conservationist for NRCS Idaho. "What is learned here can then be replicated elsewhere by these partners and new ones. NRCS helps get the ball rolling, but the partners are the ones who create interest and buy in by being leaders in their respective fields." □

Mindi Rambo, Public Affairs Specialist, NRCS

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