

Presentation for  
Interim Legislative Committee  
July 27, 2009

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## Idaho Soil Conservation Commission

### CURRENT MEMBERS:

Chair – Dwight Horsch (Aberdeen, Idaho)  
Vice-Chair – J. Morgan Evans (Downey, Idaho)  
Secretary – Dick Rush \* (Boise, Idaho)  
Member – Joe Davidson (Jerome, Idaho)  
Member – Bill Flory (Culdesac, Idaho)

### ADMINISTRATOR:

Sara Schmidt (Boise, Idaho)

\* Position expired on July 1, 2009



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## **Our Mission**

Provide leadership and assistance for natural resource conservation programs in coordination with other local, state and federal agencies.

Provide support to 51 Idaho conservation districts. Via these local districts, technical assistance, financial incentive programs, and educational programs are provided to private landowners and land users.



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## **Our Values**

- Strengthen conservation districts and locally led natural resource conservation
- Provide the highest level of professional, reliable and ethical assistance to partners and clients in a manner deserving of the public trust
- Provide science-based technical assistance and incentive-based financial assistance
- Support local and statewide natural resource education programs
- Protect all personal and private information entrusted to the Commission
- Ensure transparency and accountability



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## Our Core Functions and Goals

- Responsibilities to Local Conservation Districts
  - Provide districts with policy, program, capacity development, and other assistance
- Technical Assistance
  - Maintain and enhance capabilities to serve Idaho's conservation districts, private landowners, and public land managers to address local issues and meet mandates
- State Mandates
  - Examples include Idaho OnePlan, Carbon Sequestration, TMDLs, Clearwater Focus Program, CREP, Groundwater Quality, Ag Pollution Abatement, and more
- Develop Statewide Leadership Awareness Role
  - Develop outreach programs to enhance the awareness of the conservation partnership leadership roles for non-regulatory, incentive-based resource coordination
- Commission Operations
  - Improve efficiencies and accountability with operating procedures, statewide staffing plan, budget requests, training plan, and communications program



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## Key ISCC Programs

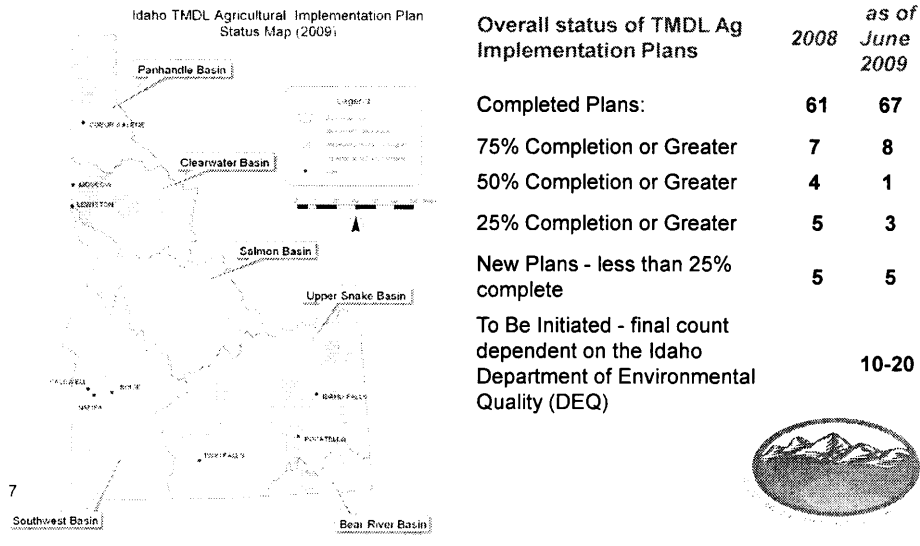
- Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Planning and Implementation
- Water Quality Program for Agriculture (WQPA)
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
- Resource Conservation and Rangeland Development Program (RCRDP)
- Carbon Sequestration
- Clearwater Focus Program
- Upper Salmon Basin Watershed Program



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## TMDL Agricultural Implementation Plans

Accelerate the development of agricultural and grazing components of TMDL plans and assist with implementation as directed by state law since 1995.



## Water Quality Program for Agriculture

- WQPA was created in 2000 to conserve and enhance the quality and value of the water resources of the State of Idaho
- This program provides cost-sharing to install conservation practices known as “best management practices” or BMPs
- Since its beginning in 2000, WQPA, through local conservation districts, has assisted over 1000 owners and operators of agricultural land in treating:
  - 206,296 critical acres*
  - 80 miles riparian area*
  - 100 livestock confinement facilities*
- The state’s contribution through WQPA has been over \$12.5 million. State funding has been leveraged with private and federal sources for a total of over \$39 million in BMP treatments

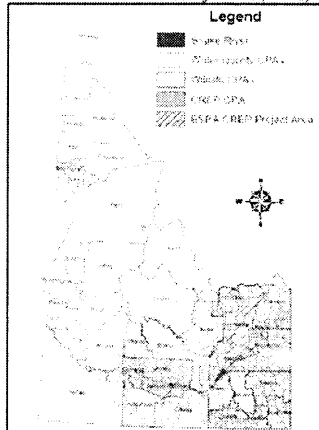
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## Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Facilitates and oversees the provision of technical assistance, program implementation, coordination, promotional activities, and monitoring and evaluation of installed BMPs.

Idaho Conservation Priority Areas (CPAs)



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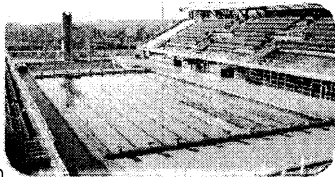
### Idaho CREP Status as of July 20, 2009

- 18,338 acres enrolled in nine Idaho counties
- 15,038 acres seeded in permanent cover or vegetation
- 11,200 acres enhanced for wildlife habitat
- 36,676 acre-feet of water saved annually
  - *Approximately equal to the storage behind Milner Dam*



## Resource Conservation and Rangeland Development Program (RCRDP)

- Provides short and long term, low interest loans to farmers and ranchers for resource management projects and improvements. In May 2009, the Commission directed staff to initiate an update to RCRDP rules
- Only one loan default in over 630 loans since 1987
- Thirteen loans approved in FY2009 for almost \$925,000 of improvements on 1460 acres that resulted in:
  - Soil saved (pounds): 10,624,000  
*Enough soil to fill 443 end dump trucks*
  - Water saved (gallons): 788,133,393  
*Enough water for 1194 Olympic-sized swimming pools*



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## Carbon Sequestration

Program initiated by the 2002 Legislature, with efforts currently underway to develop viable carbon markets for Idaho's private agricultural and forest landowners.



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## Carbon Sequestration Focus Areas

*as determined by 19-member Advisory Committee, chaired by SCC*

- **Information Outreach**  
*Presentations, workshops, and "how-to" information available*
- **Carbon Trading Pilot Projects**  
*Pilot projects for precision agriculture on the Palouse, rangeland/grassland in southeastern Idaho, forestry in North Idaho, and with the Nez Perce Tribe*
- **Research**  
*Quantify soil organic matter and carbon values*
- **Geologic Sequestration**  
*Exploring potential and characterization of Idaho*
- **Carbon Sequestration Registry**  
*Developing template to track carbon sequestered, and all private and exchange trades*



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# Clearwater Focus Program



Coordinates the development and management of fish habitat restoration in the Clearwater River Sub-basin

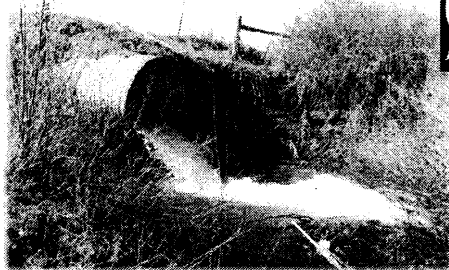


Based on local districts' input, the Commission has a flexible approach in the Clearwater and Upper Salmon projects



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Before – Fish Barrier



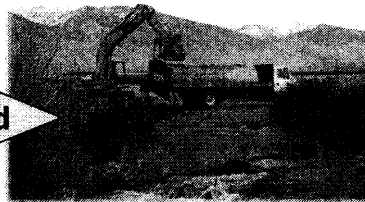
## Upper Salmon Basin Watershed Program



Creek Returns to Historic Channel

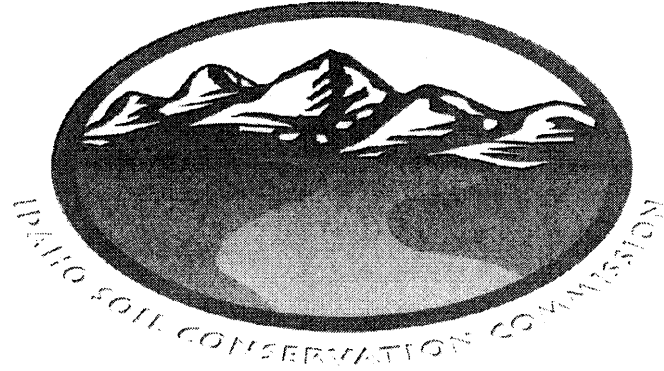
## Sulphur Creek Barrier Removal

Fish Barrier Removed



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Thank you. Any questions?



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