



*IDAHO DISTRICT EMPLOYEE  
ASSOCIATION*

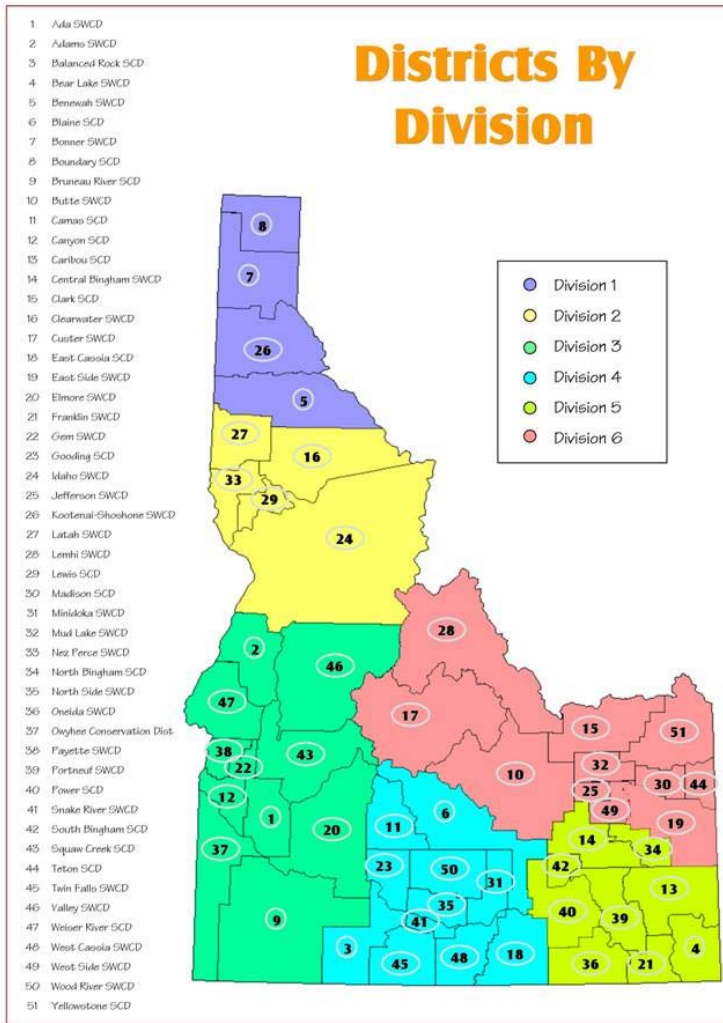
Presentation for  
Interim Legislative Committee  
September 23, 2009

# Mission Statement of the Idaho District Employee Association (IDEA)

*To enhance communication,  
promote professional improvement,  
and increase effectiveness of  
conservation districts  
and their employees;  
and to foster mutual partnership  
with conservation agencies, organizations and  
associations.*



There are  
Six  
Divisions  
within the  
State



# IDEA Directors

## Officers:

President – Karma Bragg, Custer SWCD

Vice President – Lyla Dettmer, Franklin SWCD

Secretary – Sherry Klaus, Benewah SWCD

Treasurer – Charlene Wimpy, Payette SWCD

Historian – Chris Simons, Twin Falls & Balanced Rock SCDs

## Directors by Divisions:

Division I Director – Sherry Klaus, Benewah SWCD

Division II Director – Karol Holthaus, Lewis SCD

Division III Director – Charlene Wimpy, Payette SWCD

Division IV Director – Chris Simons, Twin Falls & Balanced Rock SCDs

Division V Director – Lyla Dettmer, Franklin SWCD

Division VI Director - Karma Bragg, Custer SWCD

Division VI Director at Large – Lori Ringel, Teton SWCD



# Our Membership

- *50 of the 51 Districts are IDEA Members*
- *This represents approximately 67 employees*
- *Our employees serve over 280 SWCD/SCD Elected Officials serving as SWCD/SCD Supervisors*
  - *In addition approximately 85 Alternates/Advisors made up of Educators, County Commissioners, ISCC Commissioners serve in an advisory roll to districts.*
- *Supervisors and staff provide support and service to our Cooperators across the state*



# IDEA Priorities:

*Promote and encourage internal communication within the membership*

*Increase and encourage internal communication within the Partnership: divisions, state, regional and national organizations*

*Promote professional advocacy within the membership*

*Encourage the development of stable base funding for SCD/SWCD's technical assistance*



# Division I Districts

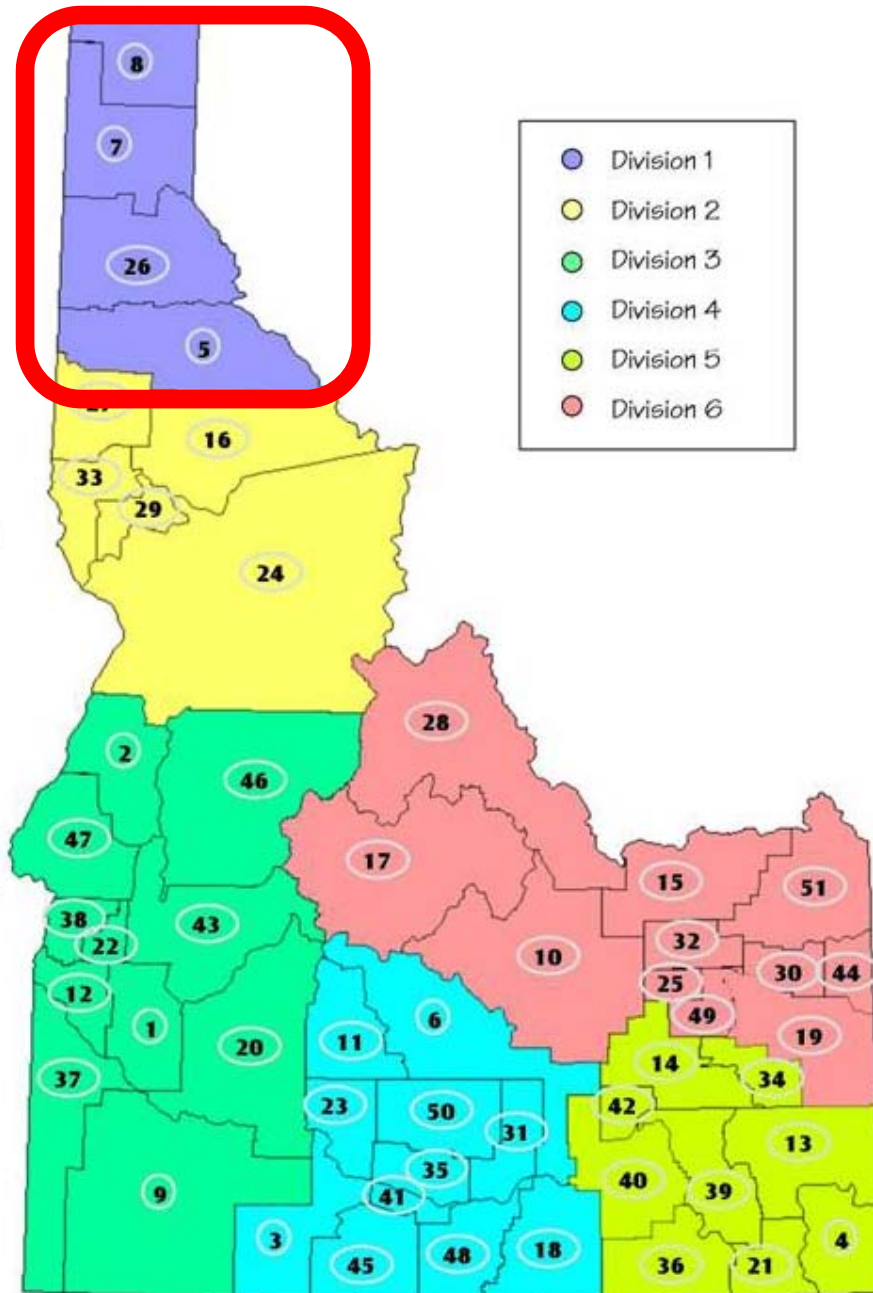
Benewah SWCD

Bonner SWCD

Boundary SCD

Kootenai-Shoshone SWCD

- Three part-time employees
  - One is vacant at this time
- One full-time employee
- One of four districts provide an insurance and retirement option.
- Any additional funding beyond state and county are project driven and obtained through competitive grants and/or contracts.



## *Division II Districts*

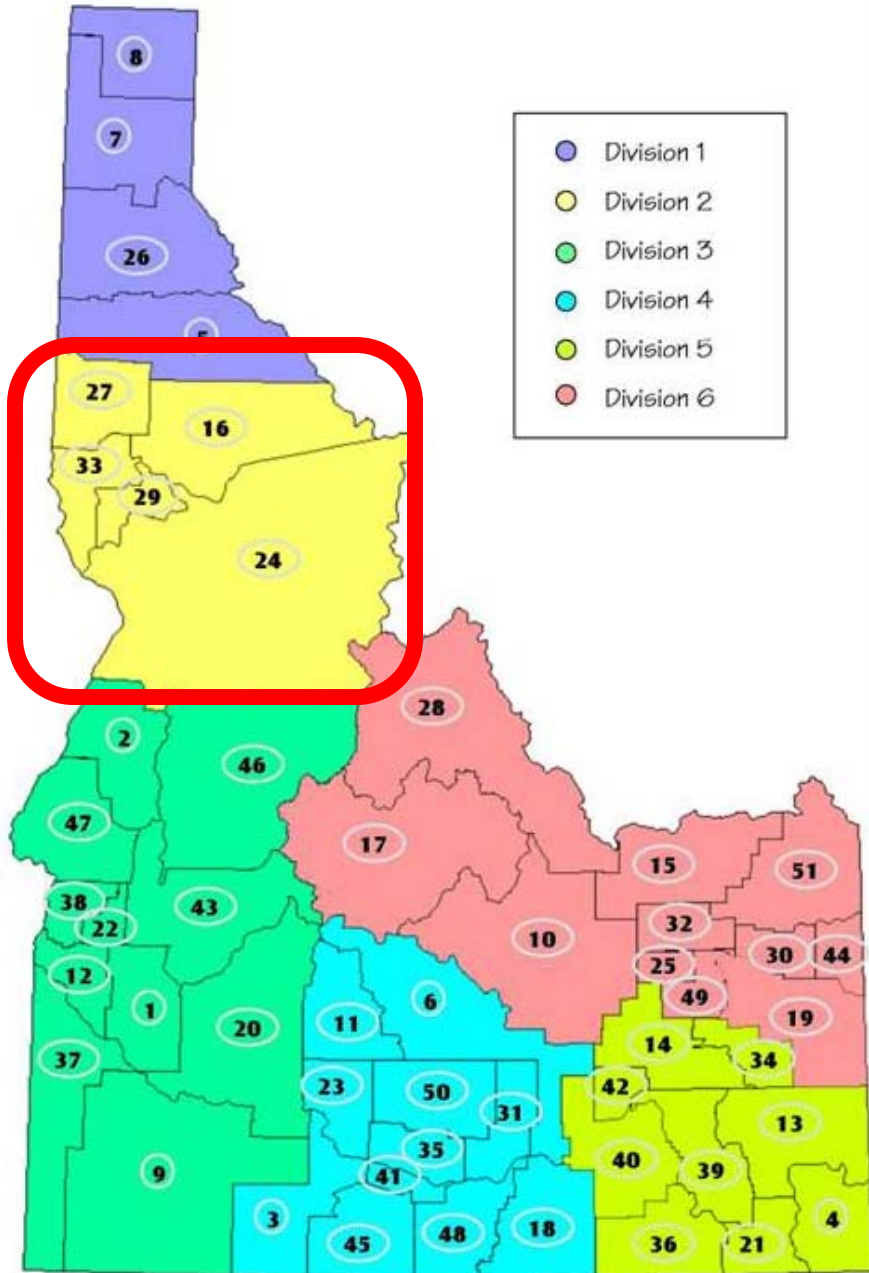
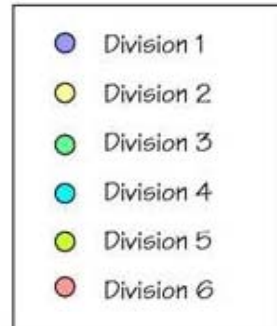
**Clearwater SWCD**

**Idaho SWCD**

**Latah SWCD**

**Lewis SCD**

**Nez Perce SWCD**



- Eleven part-time employees
- Eight full-time employees
- Three of five districts provides insurance options/stipends and/or retirement options.
- Any additional funding beyond state and county are project driven and obtained through competitive grants and/or contracts at the district and division levels.

# Division III Districts

Ada SWCD

Adams SWCD

Canyon SCD

Elmore SWCD

Gem SWCD

Owyhee CD

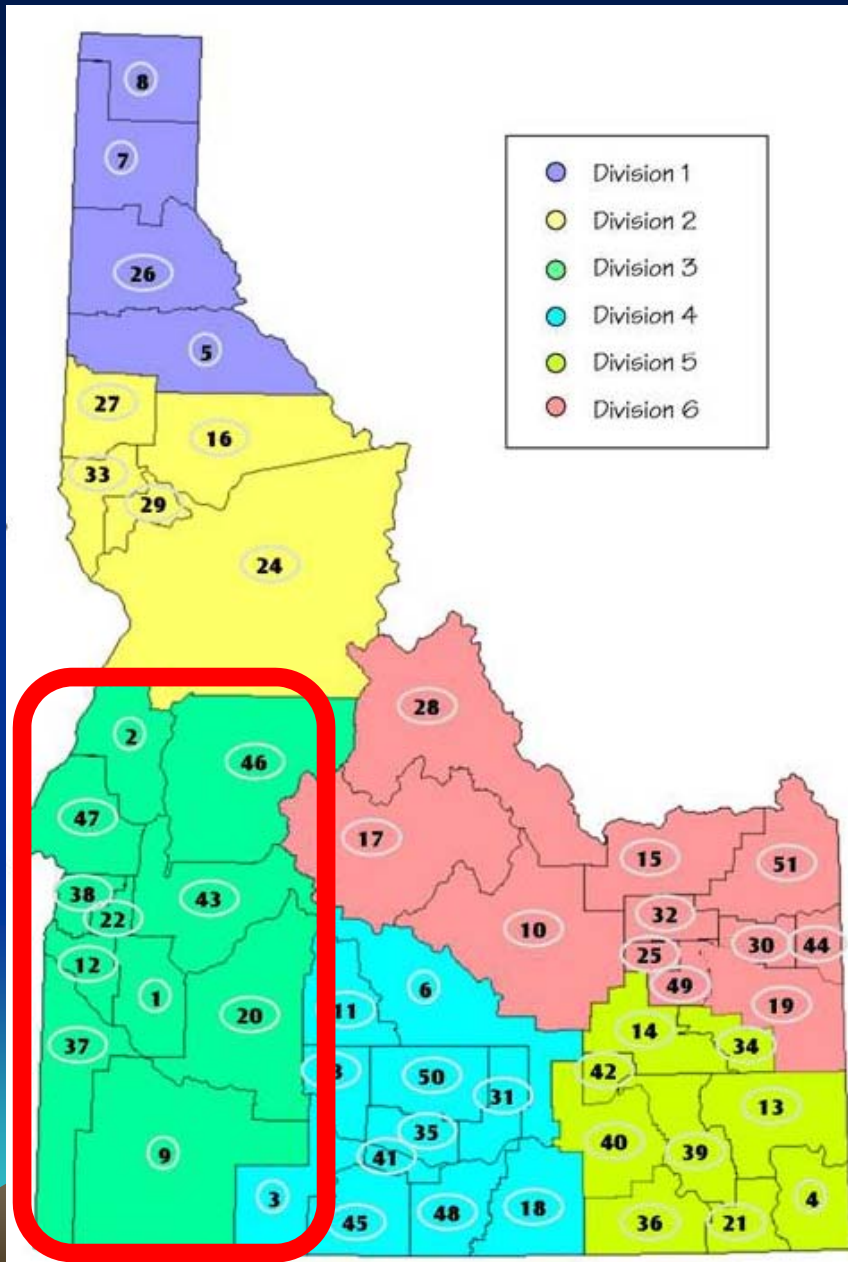
Payette SWCD

Squaw Creek SCD

Valley SWCD

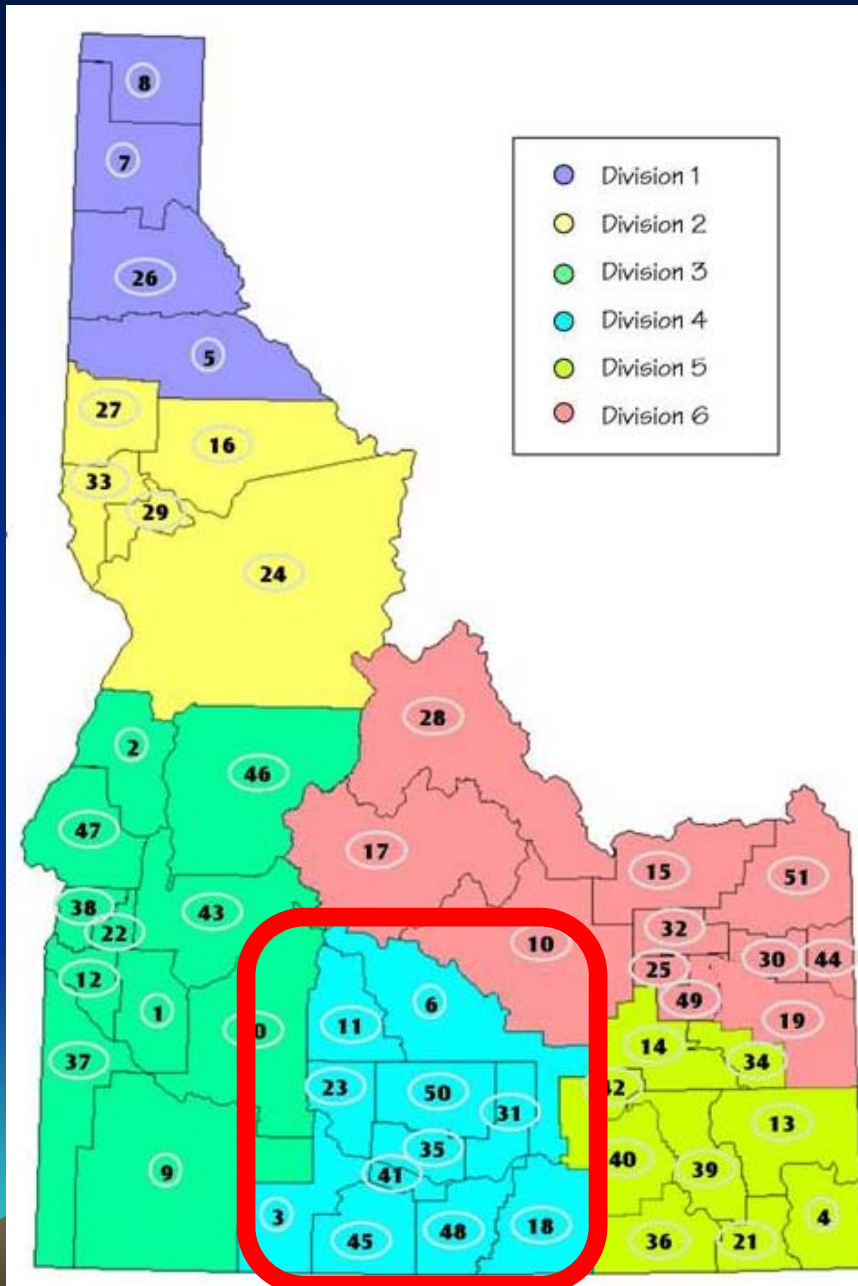
Weiser River SCD

Bruneau River SCD



- Ten part-time employees
- Three Full time employees
- Two Districts share an employee
- Two of eleven districts provides an insurance option (one a life insurance) for employees.
- No retirement options.
- Any additional funding beyond state and county are project driven and obtained through competitive grants and/or contracts.

# Division IV Districts



Blaine SCD  
Cassia SCD  
Minidoka SWCD  
Snake River SWCD  
West Cassia SWCD  
Balanced Rock SCD  
Camas SCD East  
Gooding SCD  
North Side SWCD  
Twin Falls SWCD  
Wood River SWCD

- Nine part-time employees
- Eight districts share administrative staff and public outreach staff.
- Two of eleven districts provide an insurance option.
- Any additional funding beyond state and county are project driven and obtained through competitive grants and/or contracts and tree sales.



# Division V Districts

Bear Lake SWCD

Caribou SCD

Central Bingham CD

Franklin SWCD

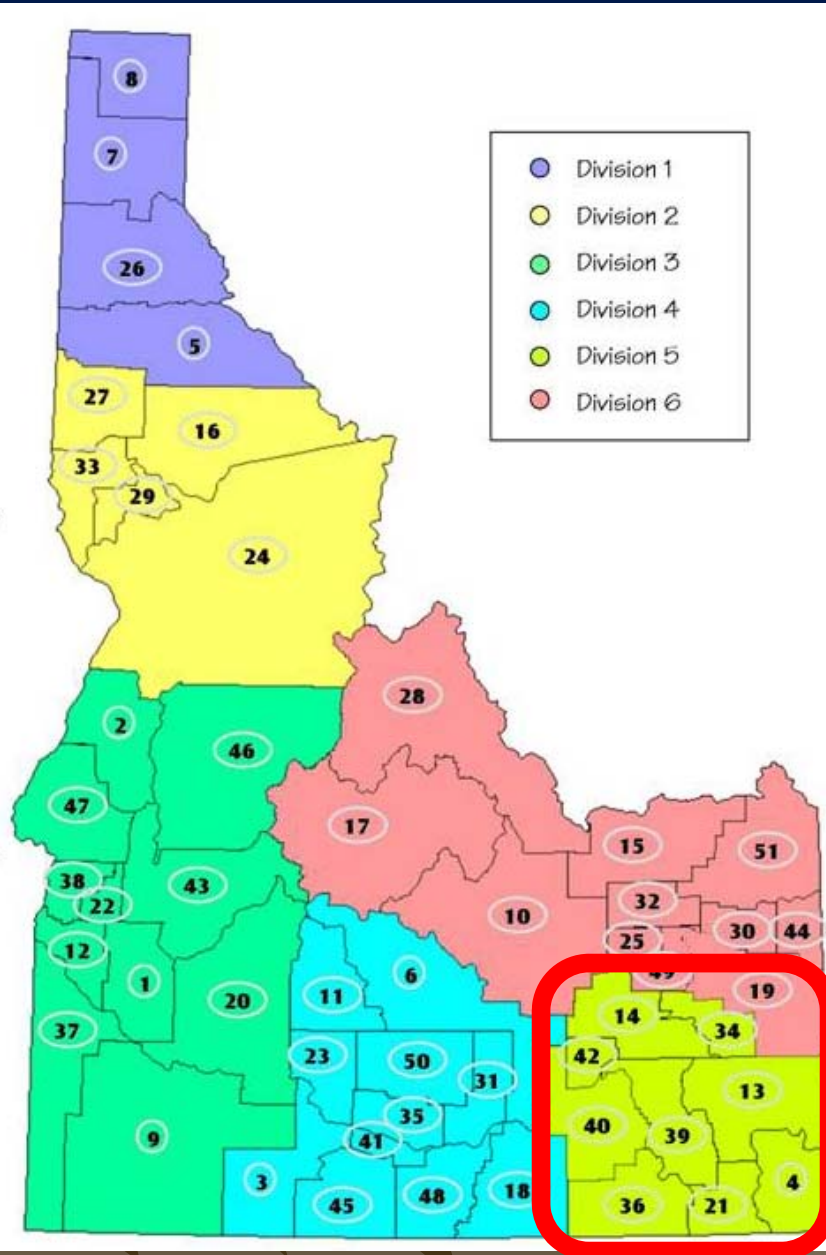
North Bingham SCD

Oneida SWCD

Portneuf SWCD

Power SCD

South Bingham SCD



- Eight part-time employees

- One employee serves more than one District

- One position is currently vacant

- Three full-time employee (two technical)

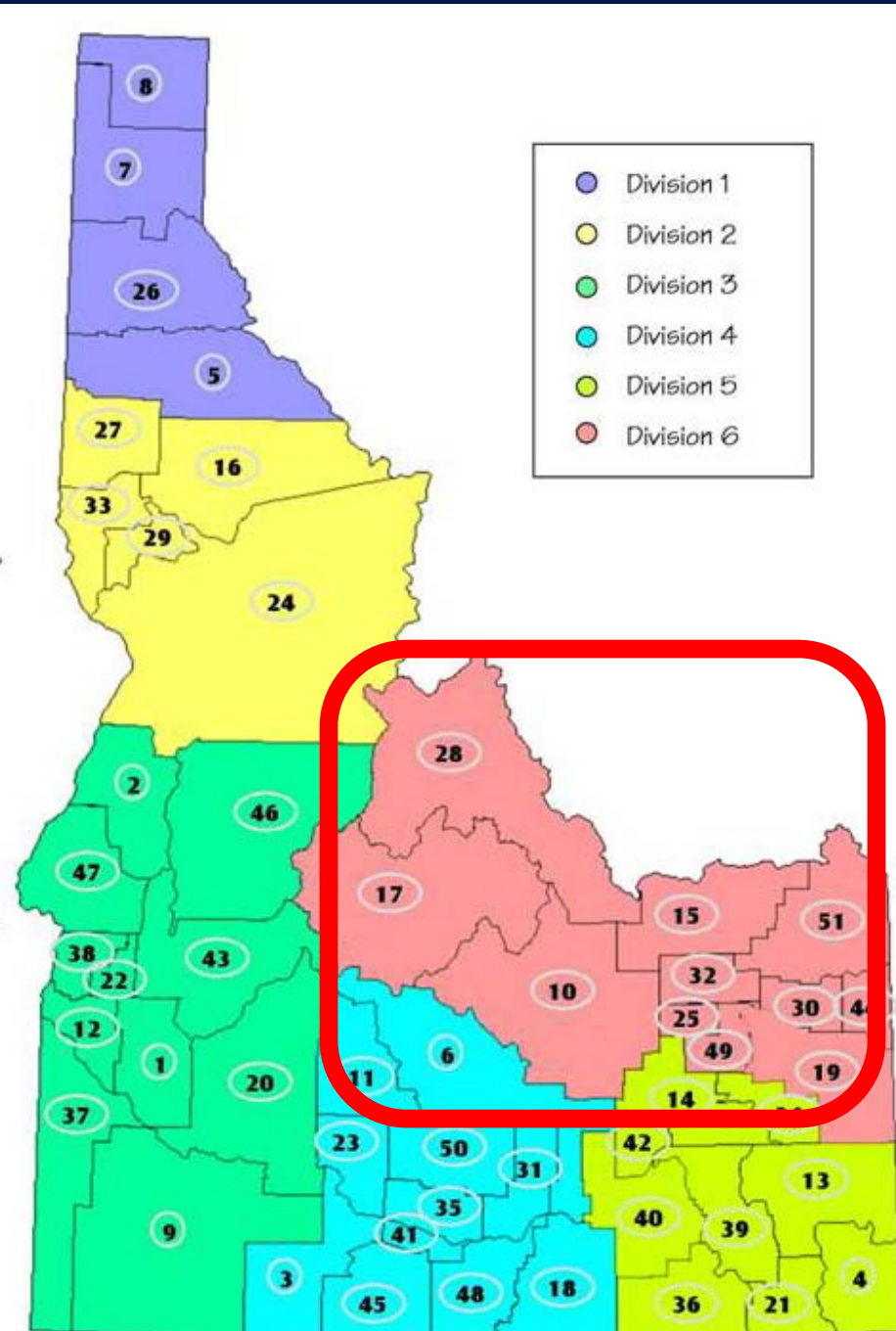
- Two of nine districts provide an insurance option.

- Any additional funding beyond state and county are project driven and obtained through competitive grants and/or contracts and tree sales.

## Division VI Districts

Butte SWCD                      Clark SCD  
Custer SWCD                  East Side SWCD  
Jefferson SWCD              Lemhi SWCD  
Madison SWCD                Mud Lake SWCD  
Teton SCD                      West Side SWCD  
Yellowstone SCD

- Twelve part-time employees
  - Two employees serve more than one District
- One full-time employee
- One of eleven districts provide an insurance and retirement option.
- Any additional funding beyond state and county are project driven and obtained through competitive grants and/or contracts or tree sales.



# Issues for Committee Consideration:

- *Partnership clarifications as related to State Law.*
- *Availability of health insurance and retirement benefits to district employees*
- *Consistent availability of adequate base funding to recruit and retain executive-level district staff*
- *Budget formula as outlined in State Law*



# Availability of District Employee Benefits

State Employee Compensation Philosophy as outline is Idaho Code §67-5309:

***“It is hereby declared to be the intent of the legislature of the state of Idaho that the goal of a total compensation system for state employees shall be to fund a competitive employee compensation and benefit package that will attract qualified applicants to the work force; retain employees who have a commitment to public service excellence; motivate employees to maintain high standards of productivity; and reward employees for outstanding performance.”***



# Current District Employee Benefits

**Out of 51 Districts and an estimated 67 District Employees in 51 Districts, Approximately 20% of the 51 districts are able to provide health insurance options and approximately 10% provide retirement options for approximately 67 district employees throughout the state.”**

**Conservation district boards need access to adequate and reliable funding to implement the State of Idaho’s employee compensation philosophy with respect to district employees.**

**Without comparable state benefits, recruiting and retaining professional staff is difficult for districts.**



# ***FY10 Funding to Districts***

***In FY10, Idaho's 51 Districts will receive \$255,000 as "base funds" (\$5000/district), and \$545,000 as "match funds". A total of \$800,000 is scheduled for distribution to districts for general operations.***

***In addition to these legislative funds, each district is scheduled to receive funding from their supporting counties/cities for a total of \$490,000 in FY10. This funding varies between individual districts.***



# Current Budget Process

- *District's receive the BASE funding of \$5,000 in July and ½ their match.*
- *Individual Districts set their funding based on the amount of the first allocation determined by a “letter of intent” from counties/cities.*
- *The second ½ of the allocation comes out in January based on “receipt of funds” and less District Insurance.*



# Example of Budget Process Dilemma

- *District 1, 2, and 3 receive 4 times the amount of their “letter of intent” as provided by counties/cities. This amounts to nearly \$60,000.*
- *Districts 4-51 will have this \$60,000 taken from their second allocation based on a formula tied to receipt of Count/City funds.*
- *Results: In January 1/3 of the District workforce will not have adequate funding to retain their employees for the remainder of the year.*
- *Increased funding from a few select counties can have a negative result on remaining districts. Something is wrong with this formula.*



# District Employee Comments Related to Funding

- *Working with public money it is essential that all Districts are fiscally and lawfully responsible for how it is used.*
- *Reducing the fiscal year allotments each year reduced the quality and quantity of Conservation Projects and Programs as well as providing technical assistance to producers and landowners.*
- *Districts are identified as lead entities for non-regulatory conservation programs. As such, districts need reliable and adequate funding and technical assistance to plan and implement conservation programs prioritized by district boards across the state.*
- *It is difficult if not impossible to budget when there are no “solid figures” for which to base the budgets on.*
- *If District employees were viewed the same as state employees we could receive options for benefits to retain valuable staff.*



# The Conservation Partnership

- District employees across the state acknowledge the model of the partnership is valuable.
- This “model” needs clarification of leadership rolls and authorities that provides clear guidance to all partners.
- Despite limited benefits and unstable year-to-year funding, Idaho’s conservation district boards, their staff and partners have proven to be one of the most effective and efficient delivery systems for non-regulatory conservation across the state.



# District Employee Comments on the Partnership

- *The partnership is valuable, better communication is needed to succeed. The lack of consistency in rules and regulations is confusing.*
- *The partnership is needed and very useful to Districts. Everyone in the partnership has always been willing to help with projects, questions, concerns or related issues.*
- *We need to appreciate and celebrate what one another do within the partnership. The partnership is like none other.*



# Why the Partnership?

*It's good to be individually brilliant and to have strong core competencies; but unless you're able to work in a team and harness each other's core competencies, you'll always perform below par because there will always be situations at which you'll do poorly and someone else does well.*



# Presentation Summary

- Equitable recognition and opportunities for district employees consistent with those the State of Idaho provides to state employees
  - *Maintain PERSI retirement eligibility for conservation districts*
  - *Create opportunities for conservation districts to participate in the state health insurance programs*
  - *Develop funding systems adequate enough to allow conservation districts to recruit and retain professional executive-level staff*



# District's Work

*“I truly believe that Conservation Districts are an invaluable resource and asset not only to the State but the Counties as well. Districts assist Federal, State and local governments in implementing Conservation practices in assisting producers and landowners when others are unable to”.*

Robbie Taylor, Clark and Madison

