

MINUTES
HOUSE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, January 16, 2017

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room EW42

MEMBERS: Chairman Boyle, Vice Chairman Dayley, Representatives Bell, Miller, VanOrden, Burtenshaw, Kerby, Troy, Stevenson, Amador, Armstrong, Hanks, Zito, Erpelding, Toone

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None

GUESTS: Steve Becker, Idaho Association of Soil Conservation District (IASCD); Kit Tillatsen, IASCD; Billie Brown, IASCD; Tom Daniel, Boundary County SCD; Matt Woodard, IASCD; J. Kent Foster, IASCD/Ada SCD; Richard Kuneu, IASCD; Benjamin Kelly, IASCD; Mitch Coats, Food Producers; Curtis Elke, Natural Resources Conservation Services; Brent Olmstead, College of Agriculture and Life Science; Dennis Tanikuni, Idaho Farm Bureau; Teri Morrison, Idaho Soil and Water Conservation.

Vice-Chairman Dayley called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.

Mr. Steve Becker, Treasurer of the Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts, introduced the Board of Directors and Executive Director to the committee members. He explained the conservation districts were created in 1930 with Idaho following in 1939 assuming the task of being the lead agency to perform voluntary non-regulatory conservation on lands in the State of Idaho. Mr. Becker explained the Idaho Association of Soil Conservation's philosophy is conservation decisions should be made by local people with technical and funding assistance from federal, state and local governments and the private sector. He said the stewardship of our state's soil and water resources is a responsibility all Idaho citizens share.

Mr. Becker updated the committee on the North Central Idaho Wildfire Restoration Group. He explained the group was formed in response to the wildfires that occurred in 2015 in North Central Idaho. In 2015 wildfires raged through North Central Idaho burning approximately 226,000 acres. He said a technical team was formed in September 2015 to complete the assessment work needed in order to develop a plan. The goal of the restoration group was that projects be scientifically based and developed at the local level. He reported the assessment has been completed and proposed projects have been ranked, selected and implementation has started.

In response to a committee question concerning the eight proposed projects identified, **Mr. Becker** explained only three are fully funded at this time.

Curtis Elke, State Director of Natural Resources Conservation Services, addressed the committee stating his office has received 6,800 requests for volunteer conservation. They have been able to either give technical service or contract with 2,200 of those requests. Coming from out of state, he said he appreciated the cooperative nature in Idaho of those willing to work together in conservation projects.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Representative Dayley
Chair

Joan Majors
Secretary