

Conservation the Idaho Way

FEBRUARY 2018

IDAHO SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

ISSUE FIFTY-SIX



Cobbin Hickey and Bill L. Barabgo, reviewing options.

IDAHO CONSERVATION PARTNERS WORK TO FIX WEISER RIVER LEVEES

By Steve Stuebner

In early February 2017, it warmed up after 2 months of severe winter weather in Weiser, Idaho.

Deep snow covered the ground everywhere. The river was frozen with thick ice. When the weather warmed up rapidly, things began to melt, fast.

The Weiser River rapidly rose to flood stage, and the ice-covered river spread out, flooded farm fields and low lying areas around the city of Weiser.

Rain falling on deep snow caused roofs to collapse. It was a difficult time.

Former Cablin Hickey, chairman of Flood

District #3, worried about the damage and erosion that the ice flows would cause to the river banks and levees.

"When it's moving, it scours the banks," he said. "Where it gets plugged up, that's where it causes the damage, but when it's moving, it's an awesome thing to see. It's rumbling, crunching, moving, there's trees flowing by, and ice ... it's just a solid flush of ice."

Vicki Ludehart, district administrator for the Weiser River Soil Conservation District, worried about the damage as well.

"It was heart-breaking when we first saw this," she said. "This whole area was covered with ice, it looked like a foreign

Flooding persisted for months after the initial event.

planet, it was indescribable. But it was heart-breaking because it was a beautiful structure ... we just look forward to repairing it and getting it going again."

Several years ago, the Weiser River Soil Conservation District created a large wetlands area to filter out sediment from an irrigation canal as part of a \$4,56,000 Section 319 water quality project funded by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality and the Environmental Protection Agency.

"The whole idea in here has been damaged in several areas," she said. "The trees have been shaved off, as if they never existed, you've never been able to see through here."

LEVEES, cont. on Page 2

SENATE
AGRICULTURAL
AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 2018

Idaho Soil & Water
Conservation Commission

FY 2017 ANNUAL REPORT



SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Conservation the Idaho Way: Sowing the Seeds of Stewardship

Senate Ag Affairs
February 2018

Commissioners

established
1939



FY 2017/18
17.75 FTPs, 4 t-FTPs

Conservation the Idaho Way: Sowing the Seeds of Stewardship



SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

CORE FUNCTIONS

PROVIDING:

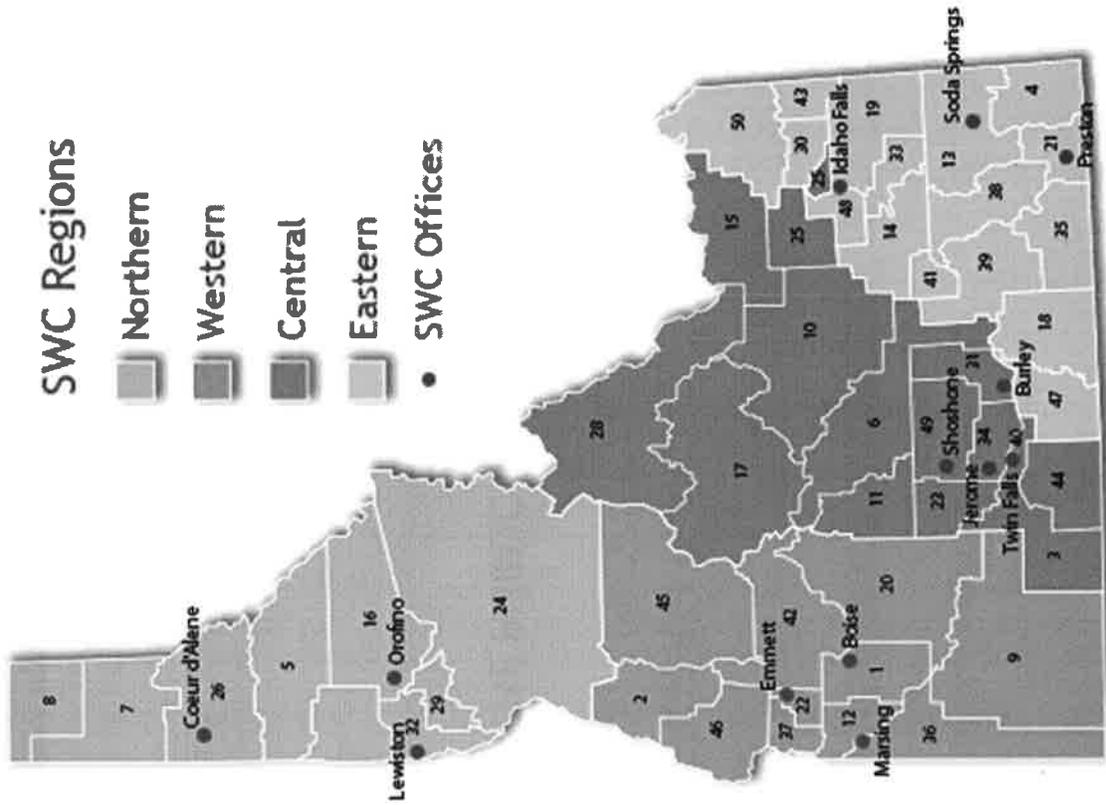
- DISTRICT SUPPORT
- NON-REGULATORY, SCIENCE BASED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
- AND ENGAGING PARTNERS, AG, AND THE PUBLIC IN VOLUNTARY CONSERVATION

ISSUE 1: DISTRICT SUPPORT

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Ada | 17. Custer | 34. North Side |
| 2. Adams | 18. East Cassia | 35. Oneida |
| 3. Balanced Rock | 19. East Side | 36. Owyhee |
| 4. Bear Lake | 20. Elmore | 37. Payette |
| 5. Benewah | 21. Franklin | 38. Portneuf |
| 6. Blaine | 22. Gem | 39. Power |
| 7. Bonner | 23. Gooding | 40. Snake River |
| 8. Boundary | 24. Idaho | 41. South Bingham |
| 9. Bruneau River | 25. Jefferson | 42. Squaw Creek |
| 10. Butte | 26. Kootenai Shoshone | 43. Teton |
| 11. Camas | 27. Latah | 44. Twin Falls |
| 12. Canyon | 28. Lemhi | 45. Valley |
| 13. Caribou | 29. Lewis | 46. Weiser River |
| 14. Central Bingham | 30. Madison | 47. West Cassia |
| 15. Clark | 31. Minidoka | 48. West Side |
| 16. Clearwater | 32. Nez Perce | 49. Wood River |
| | 33. North Bingham | 50. Yellowstone |

SWC Regions

-  Northern
-  Western
-  Central
-  Eastern
-  SWC Offices



ISSUES, CHALLENGES, AND SOLUTIONS

Conservation the Idaho Way: Sowing the Seeds of Stewardship



ISSUE 1: DISTRICT SUPPORT

CHALLENGES

- Districts' inability to access desired amount of technical assistance from Commission
- Districts' limited access to funding for project implementation

SOLUTIONS

- Commission continues to refine technical assistance allocation process
- Districts encouraged to be creative, seek new partners



ISSUE 2: PROGRAMS - CREP

CHALLENGES

- Producer participation sluggish for variety of reasons
- No imminent threat of water curtailment
- Program acreage limitations in 3 counties, and more-

SOLUTIONS

- FSA granted increased rental rate request (except in 3 counties) to max rate of \$160/acre for 5-year term
- Participating ground water districts to offer additional incentives

ISSUE 3: PROGRAMS - RCRDP

CHALLENGES

- Low program interest after Great Recession
- Reduced interest rates (from 5% to 2.5%) generating lower returns to fund
- Reduction in state treasury interest rates (from 5% to 3/10ths of 1%)
- Personnel and Operating costs exceed interest generated

SOLUTIONS

- Increase loan volume via policy and rule changes, streamlining process, and
- Work collaboratively with partners to identify feasibility and other options



ISSUE 4: ENGAGING PARTNERS

CHALLENGES

- Increasing opportunities for collaboration constrain existing Commission resources

SOLUTIONS

- Requesting agencies encouraged to involve other partners

ISSUE 4: ENGAGING OTHERS



Like our page: Idaho
Soil and Water
Conservation
Commission

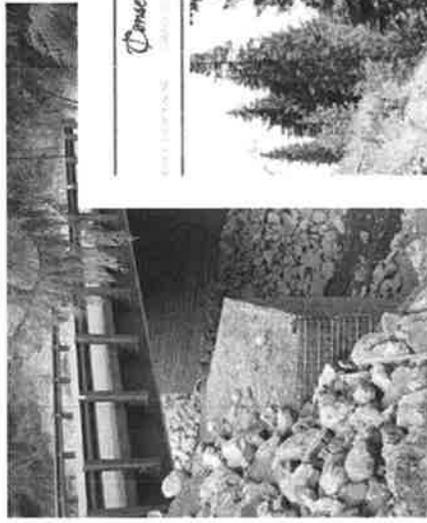
Sign-up for our newsletter at:

www.swc.idaho.gov



Follow us at:
#iswccnews

Conservation the Idaho Way
FINDING SOLUTIONS FOR RIVER, SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS



CLEARWATER RIVER-B
PROJECT REDUCES S
SNAKE & REEDS

Conservation the Idaho Way
WATER QUALITY
DAN'S SO & WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

COMMISSION, PARTNERS EMPLOY BMPs TO REDUCE
NITRATE CONTAMINATION IN GROUND WATER



Landscape systems in ground water can be tested by three things, according to the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality:
• Inorganic fertilizers used to grow crops leaching into ground water
• Animal waste leaching into ground water
• Nutrient waste - typically from farm forms - filtering into ground water
The IDQ has been tracking nitrate levels in the state. Over time, it has tracked the Idaho's ability to grow crops in the ground water. The area around Idaho has been listed as a "high priority" area for nitrate contamination. The state is working to reduce nitrate levels in the state's water supply by 2020, a goal that is 37% among all priority areas statewide with a decreasing tendency.
In 2012, a number of projects were implemented in the state, including the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality's partnership with the Idaho Department of Agriculture to test the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality's partnership with the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality.

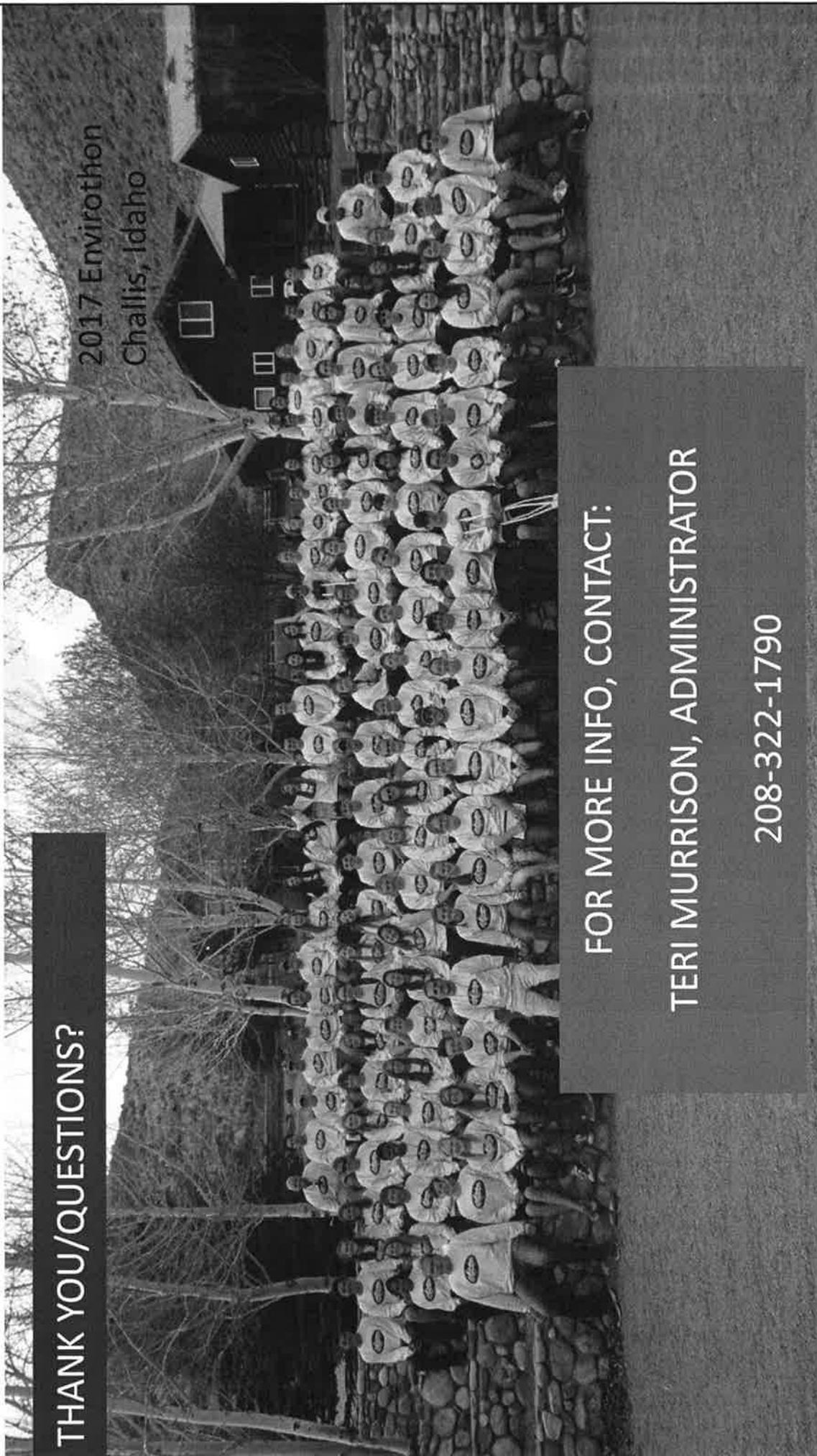
Conservation the Idaho Way
PARTNERS COMPLETE ST. MARIES PROJECT



Conservation the Idaho Way: Sowing the Seeds of Stewardship

THANK YOU/QUESTIONS?

2017 Envirothon
Challis, Idaho



FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT:

TERI MURRISON, ADMINISTRATOR

208-322-1790

Conservation the Idaho Way: Sowing the Seeds of Stewardship



SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Slide #11

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Funds in FY 2017	Appropriation	Actual Expenditures
General Fund	\$ 2,686,500	\$ 2,700,000*
Dedicated	412,000	348,800**
Federal	0	0
Other	60,000***	11,800
Total		

* Includes encumbrances from FY 2016 sale of vehicles and laptops for capital purchase (vehicle)

** Expenditures are purposefully minimized in the operating fund of loan programs (RCRDP and State Revolving Fund) in light of reduced loans in the last few years, and to preserve the amount in the Other fund for future one-time purchases.

*** Spending authority, not actual receipts



Encumbrances

1. Flood mitigation grant writing: \$29,000 to contract with grant writers, engineer. Spent to date: \$ 6,300
2. \$14,689 in professional services operating funds to fulfill a multi-year contract to sample and test deep soil nitrate levels in nitrate priority areas.

Replacement Items

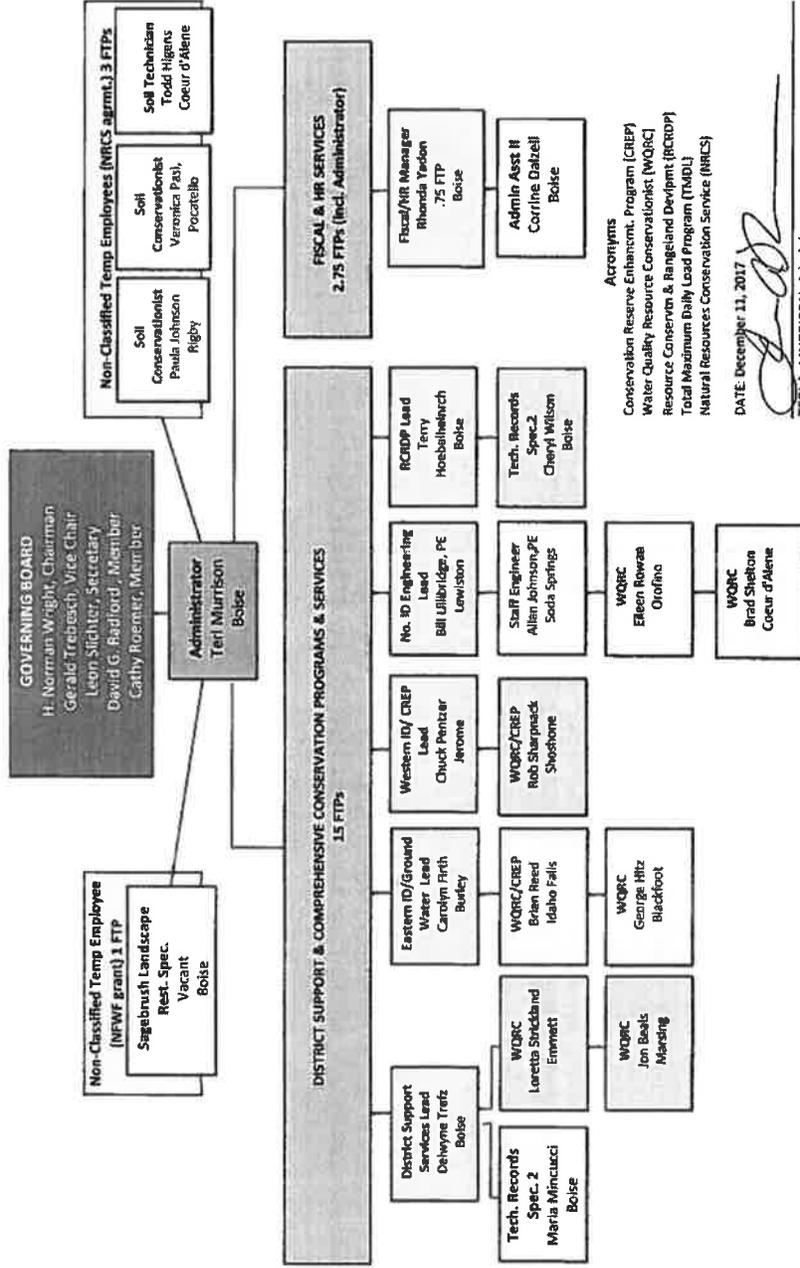
- 2 vehicles purchased, purchased 3rd out of proceeds of capital item sales

Unspent Funds

0001 (GF)	\$ 1,800	Personnel and Operating, reverted
0450 (ProSvcs)	\$23,200	spending authority
0522-01 (RCRDP)	\$ 7,398	(Personnel), \$67,593 (Operating) spending authority
0529-16 (SRF)	\$24,977	(Operating) spending authority

FY 2017/18 ORG CHART

CONSERVATION COMMISSION
FY 2018 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



SENATE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
FY 2017 FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT NARRATIVE
Tuesday, Feb. 13, 8:00 AM – WW 53

Narrative ~7 mins, video –7 mins

SLIDE 1: INTRODUCTION

Private lands – forest, range, and croplands - care for 71% of the lower 48 states, 82% of wetlands, and 80% of endangered species. They support urban areas, agriculture, provide energy and transportation corridors, habitat for fish and wildlife, and contribute to water quality goals. In Idaho, just under 30% of all lands are privately-owned. They're in large part responsible for the health of the economy and steward much of our natural resources.

Conservation the Idaho Way is locally led agricultural stewardship on private lands. It depends on voluntary actions – projects that improve water quality, restore streams, rivers, forest, range, and croplands, and contribute to healthy soils. It balances our economic health with that of our natural resources, and helps satisfy environmental laws and regulations.

SLIDE 2: WHO WE ARE This is who we are. Governor Otter appoints our five member Board and our total FTPs are capped at 17.75 (plus another 4 temporary FTPs).

SLIDE 3: CORE FUNCTIONS The Conservation Commission focuses on several core functions:

1. Serving conservation districts: providing financial and technical assistance;
2. Providing incentive-based and other conservation programs; and
3. Educating about voluntary conservation.

SLIDE 4: DISTRICT SUPPORT The way the conservation partnership works is: the state supports Commission operations, programs, and districts. We help districts plan and implement local projects. We work closely with our federal partner, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Districts recruit partners to build upon state support.

It's helpful to understand how projects come about. **PLAY VIDEO SHORT HERE**

SLIDE 5: ISSUES Now, to discuss some issues we face.

SLIDE 6: ISSUE 1 DISTRICT SUPPORT

We provide districts with financial assistance and also with technical assistance based on the expertise and availability of our staff. Because we have other program obligations, districts receive about 50% of our field staff hours, less than what they request and say they need. Also, because other project funding sources are scarce, they are slower to address work plans and priorities.

We continue to refine our technical assistance allocation process to deliver as much assistance as we can. Partners are increasingly realistic in their expectations and precise in projections and scheduling. Given our constrained resources, the most feasible solution to this issue is for districts to write technical assistance into grant applications and take on new partners. We continue to look for improvements to our technical assistance allocation process.

SLIDE 7: ISSUE 2 CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (CREP)

The Commission is the state lead for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Its intent is to retire irrigated cropland, reducing consumptive ground water use in the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA). CREP provides an annual rental payment for every acre enrolled. Our current CREP goal is to enroll up to 50,000 acres of groundwater-sourced irrigated cropland into the program, saving a projected 100,000 acre-ft. (AF) of water annually.

For a number of reasons, producers have been slow to enroll acreage, likely because:

- Annual payment rates didn't keep pace with increasing cropland rental rates spurred on by high commodity prices.
- CREP's 15-year fixed annual rental rate had no allowance for inflation.
- Native grass seed is expensive.

- Extreme drought combined with weed and pest infestations made stand establishment difficult. and
- There was no imminent risk of mandatory water rights curtailment.

To address these, at the petition of the Idaho state coordinating committee, last fall FSA increased rental rates in all but a few counties. Rental rates increased by \$30 per acre for the 15-year contract term. Participating ground water districts will offer additional annual incentives - payments or credits against assessments - after a producers' initial water usage reduction requirement under the surface water coalition agreement has been met.

The increase in rental rates and ground water districts' additional annual enhancement is expected to spur renewed interest in the program.

SLIDE 8: ISSUE 3, RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND RANGELAND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (RCRDP)

The Resource Conservation and Rangeland Development Program (RCRDP) provides loans to landowners to implement conservation practices on private property. Since 1985, over 535 projects and \$28 million in loans have funded about \$40M worth of conservation projects.

Its dedicated fund was originally established with Estate and Transfer Taxes, generating \$8.1M over time. Accumulated interest on those dollars and from loans is \$1.6M (after expenses). The present cash and loan balance is \$9.7M. RCRDP no longer receives external funds. Program personnel and operating expenses are funded by annually-generated treasury and loan interest, and accumulated interest.

At issue is the fact that since the Great Recession, loan volume and interest generation has dropped off likely due to lower Ag commodity prices and lack of consumer confidence in the economy. In recent years, to remain competitive in the ag loan market RCRDP interest rates were cut from 5% to 2.5%. Further, state treasury interest rates dropped to 3/10ths of 1% compared to 5%. So, in the past few years the program has been spending some of the \$1.6M of accumulated interest - an average of \$71,000 a year - to pay personnel and operating expenses. At that rate it would take 21 years to consume the fund's \$1.6M in accumulated interest and reduce the portfolio total to the \$8.1M initially appropriated.

Last August, we initiated a review of statute and rule to determine what changes need to happen to make the program more attractive to potential borrowers. We met with partners around the state, asking for input. We've identified some

internal policy changes we will implement now. We will also work with our partners, the Governor's office, and interested legislators to propose Rule changes next year.

In the meantime, during the first six months of FY 2018, loan volume and interest in the program has rebounded significantly. More loans were made over the first two quarters of FY 2018 than in the entire FY 2017.

SLIDE 9: ENGAGING PARTNERS TO EXPAND CONSERVATION

We're experiencing strong interest from new potential partners.

- Sister state agencies (*compensate us for some technical services*),
- NRCS (*contracted with us to hire and supervise three FTPs due to the federal government's hiring cap*).
- The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (*is giving us a 2.5 year grant to hire a sagebrush landscape restoration coordinator. We're working with the Governor's Office of Species Conservation, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and others on this*).
- Idaho Ground Water Assoc. on their \$5M grant application to make available matching loans to install flow meters on private wells in the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer.

Although these new partnerships help achieve our mission, our human resource capacity is a constraint. Consequently, we now direct potential partners and projects to seek assistance from other agencies.

SLIDE 10: ENGAGING OTHERS This annual report is a small slice of the available info about the Commission. We invite you to learn more by following us on Facebook and Twitter, and signing up for our newsletter.

SLIDE 11: THANK YOU/QUESTIONS

Voluntary agricultural stewardship would not be possible without willing private landowners – farmers and ranchers – and a strong and effective local, state, and federal partnership. Thank you for your support, time, and attention.

SLIDE 12: MISC FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY SLIDES (p 12 – 14)

SLIDE 12: FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

- Appropriations, Expenditures in all funds

SLIDE 13: FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

- Encumbrances, Replacement Items, Unspent funds

SLIDE 14: FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

- Org Chart

Ada Soil & Water Conservation District

2017 Fact Sheet

General Information

The Ada Soil & Water Conservation District has achieved over 60 years of successful conservation implementation, and is fully engaged in meeting present day conservation needs. Over ¼ of the State's farmland is in the Treasure Valley; the District is actively seeking to create mechanisms to assist in the preservation of our remaining farmlands.

Vision

The vision for the Ada Soil & Water Conservation District is to develop partnerships throughout Ada County to promote the wise use of natural resource conservation and planning.

Location

Ada County and a small southwest portion of Boise County. The District includes the City of Boise, the State's Capitol.

Legislative District 8, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22

FY 2017 Accomplishments

- Partnered with several organizations to apply for a Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) to study the use of biocontrol agents to control invasive weeds in the Boise Foothills.
- The District's two no-till drills were rented by 18 producers this year for use on over 600 acres in the Treasure Valley, reducing soil erosion and increasing soil health.
- Held three 5th Grade Conservation Field Days for 600 students from Boise, Kuna and Meridian schools. At each event, environmental and industry leaders educate students about soil health, agriculture, watersheds, animal habitat, healthy food and pollinators.
- Provided education to 180 students on soil health and its importance to the community.
- Sponsored four students to UI's Natural Resources Camp.

9173 W Barnes Drive, Suite C
Boise ID 83709

Board meets the 1st Friday of each month At 9:00 a.m.

FY 2017 Accomplishments (Cont'd)

- Awarded Ada Community Conservation Grants to the Treasure Valley Food Coalition (TVFC) and the Boise Urban Garden School (BUGS.)



Future Plans and Projects

- Agriculture contributes \$1.7 billion to the Treasure Valley's economy, but acreage dedicated to farms is declining rapidly. Over ¼ of Idaho farm acres are located in the Treasure Valley; the District continues to advocate to make preservation and enhancement options available to landowners.
- Continue the CIG-funded experimentation of the biocontrol agent D7 to address the threat of invasive annuals (cheat grass.) Three sites with 10 plots each are located throughout Southern Idaho to study 2 strains, combined with 2 commonly-applied herbicides. Impact on cheat grass and non-targeted species are being recorded and analyzed.

FY 2017 Funds

State	\$ 61,300
County	\$ 45,000
Avimor Easement Management	\$ 5,000
No-Till Drill Rental	\$ 11,505
SWID RC&D Admin Assistance	\$ 950
5th Grade Field Day Partners	\$ 3,500
Total	\$127,255

Chair: Glen Edwards
208.685.6981

Admin Assistant: Jessica Harrold
Jessica.Harrold@id.nacdnet.net



Calvin Hickey and Bill Lillibridge, reviewing options.

IDAHO CONSERVATION PARTNERS WORK TO FIX WEISER RIVER LEVEES



Flooding persisted for months after the initial event.

By Steve Stuebner

In early February 2017, it warmed up after 2 months of severe winter weather in Weiser, Idaho.

Deep snow covered the ground everywhere. The river was frozen with thick ice. When the weather warmed up rapidly, things began to melt, fast!

The Weiser River rapidly rose to flood stage, and the ice-covered river spread out, flooded farm fields and low-lying areas around the city of Weiser.

Rain falling on deep snow caused roofs to collapse. It was a difficult time.

Farmer Calvin Hickey, chairman of Flood

District #3, worried about the damage and erosion that the ice flows would cause to the river banks and levees.

"When it's moving, it scours the banks," he said. "Where it gets plugged up, that's where it causes the damage, but when it's moving, it's an awesome thing to see. It's rumbling, crunching, moving, there's trees flowing by, and ice ... it's just a solid flush of ice."

Vicki Lukehart, district administrator for the Weiser River Soil Conservation District, worried about the damage as well.

"It was heart-breaking when we first saw this," she said. "This whole area was covered with ice, it looked like a foreign

planet, it was indescribable. But it was heartbreaking because it was a beautiful structure ... we just look forward to repairing it and getting it going again."

Several years ago, the Weiser River Soil Conservation District created a large wetlands area to filter out sediment from an irrigation canal as part of a \$456,000 Section 319 water quality project funded by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality and the Environmental Protection Agency.

"The whole dike in here has been damaged in several areas," she said. "The trees have been shaved off, as if they never existed, you've never been able to see through here."

LEVEES, cont. on Page 2

LEVEES cont. from Page 1

The Weiser River spiked two more times in the spring of 2017, causing more damage, and then the river flow finally started to recede. At this point, it was time for Calvin Hickey to take stock of the damage to the river banks and the levees that protect lands from flooding. Starting at the Galloway Diversion, Hickey surveyed the damage.

Snake River Horizons, a drone video company with digital marketing services, documented the damage with aerial drone video footage to help Hickey get a fix on how much damage had occurred.

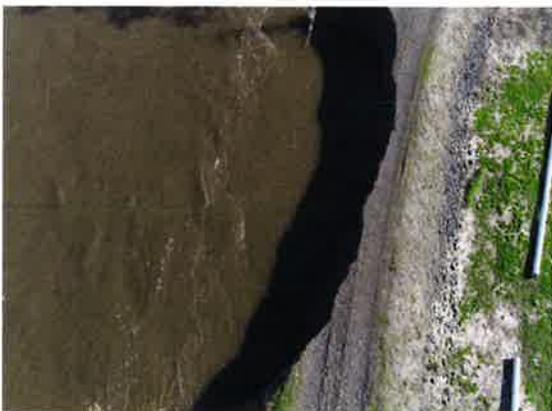
Through the survey, Hickey found numerous levees that had been damaged or breached in a 10-mile reach of the river. At a site upstream of the Unity Bridge, the river had cut away the levee like a knife.

“Well this used to be complete roadway, and the river has cut in during the ice and flood,” Hickey says. “It’s eroded this levee away, and it’s kind of typical of what’s happened in several places where it’s done that.”

Closer to Weiser, aerial footage showed the damage to the sediment-retention ponds and the levees by Twin Bridges.

“We are very proud of this project,” Lukehart said. “It was a beautiful project before the flood hit and it will be again. The Payette Ditch Co. will get it back to the original beauty that it was. Everything is fixable.”

In May, Hickey and Lukehart reached out to multiple state and federal agencies for help with funding and technical assistance to repair the damage. “It takes money.



Flood waters washed away a levee road on the Weiser River. Photo credit Snake River Horizons, 2017.



Several years earlier the Weiser River SCD created a sediment-capturing wetlands project that was inundated by flooding in 2017.

That’s why we’re all here, and I’ve been out here with NRCS, and just about any agency I can think of to come out and take a look, get involved, and help us get the money. The flood district is on a pretty short, limited budget,” Hickey said.

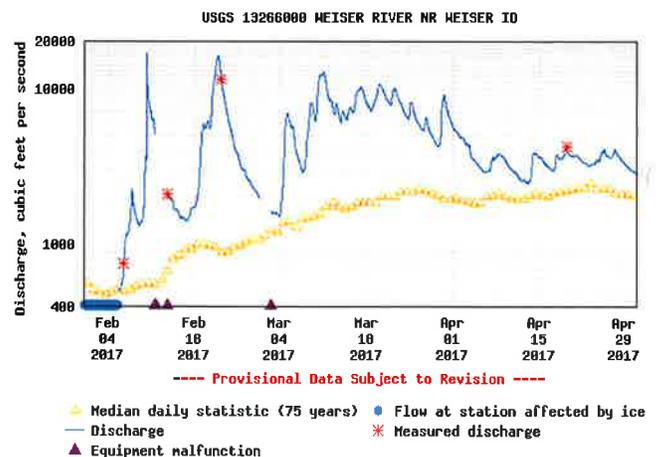
Washington County had been designated a disaster area by Gov. Otter during the winter to assist with getting federal funding to repair damaged infrastructure from the ice flows and floods.

They hoped to get funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and possibly the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which had built the Weiser River levees in the 1960s.

On a sunny day in May, Lukehart invited the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission and the Natural Resources Conservation Service to tour the levee damage to see what resources they could provide.

The Conservation Commission frequently assists local soil and water conservation districts with projects statewide. They were eager to help. Commission administrator Teri Murrison and Delwyne Trefz, district support services specialist, attended the tour and were concerned about the damage.

“I think with the amount of damage we’ve seen here today, it speaks to the scope of the work that needs to be done,” Trefz said. “It’s a very broad scope. It’s going to take a partnership, going to need some financial assistance, need some pots of money.



“They recognize that we can’t just in slapstick fashion go out and throw band-aids on these problem areas out here. We need good, sound engineer science-based solutions. We can offer that.”

Understanding the urgent need, the Conservation Commission immediately offered 200 hours of technical assistance via staff engineer Bill Lillibridge. He could draw up engineering plans for repairs and handle the permitting with multiple agencies.

The two men met on the river bank to plan the next steps. “So where do we start? What do I need to do?” Hickey asked.

LEVEES, cont. from Page 2

“Well, the first thing is to figure out where we want to do work, and what needs to be done,” Lillibridge said. “We need to prioritize where our money goes and where we want to do the work. We can’t do it all in a year. And we might not have the funding to do it all like we’d like to do it, so it’s back to prioritizing.”

“I think I’m looking at repairing the levees that either breached or had severe damage, I think that’s what the landowners are looking for, and getting it done before the next season comes and the flooding comes again,” Hickey said.

And that’s what they set out to do. In the summer, Lillibridge did the engineering drawings and permitting to repair about 10 damaged levees and the sediment ponds area. They worked on getting funds from FEMA, but as time went on, the Hurricanes in Texas and Florida diverted the agency’s attention. They would have to wait.

In the meantime, in October, Hickey was ready to get to work on the repairs. The permits only allowed a short window of time to work in the river to rebuild the levees and river banks.

He started on shoring up a tall river bank that’s been eroded by high water and ice flows. The Sunnyside Canal runs on top of the bank. “We’re trying to repair that bank. Our canal system is located right on top of there. If we lose any more of that bank, we’ll lose the canal,” he pointed out.

Hickey has been working with a contractor to install rock barbs along this section of the river. The rock barbs protect the bank, and slow the river down as it passes through the rocks and willows. “It makes a dead pool, when the water comes down and hits it, and then it slows down until it hits another one, and the sediment drops out,” he said.

The flood district has installed a whole series of rock barbs in this area to protect the vital river bank next to the Sunnyside Canal.



Aerial footage captured by Snake River Horizons shows the flooding, damaged sediment-retention ponds, and levees by Twin Bridges.

Above the Unity Bridge, Hickey worked with a contractor to restore the levee along the Weiser River and integrate a series of rock barbs in the riverbank to slow down the water and protect the bank from the strong river current and future ice flows. Willows will quickly grow back on the river bank and help anchor the levee.

An aerial view shows how the contractor followed the engineering design provided by Bill Lillibridge. The river current hits the toe of the rock barbs, slows down, and forms an eddy behind it the rocks, thereby reducing streambank erosion overall.

By the Twin Bridges area, Hickey worked with a contractor to restore the levee on both sides of the river, following the Commission’s engineering designs.

“He took all the material in the ponds, came in with a cat and cleaned it back up, filled the hole, had 19 loads of this big rock and put some gravel on top to keep a nice road bed and bring it back up to grade,” he said.

Lillibridge designed the river bank repairs so that the new levees would meet Army

Corps of Engineers standards, an important consideration for any future damage that might occur. An official with the

LEVEES, cont. on Page 4

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



www.swc.idaho.gov • 208-332-1790

LEVEES, cont. from Page 3

Corps liked the project, Hickey said.

“Well, the lady from the Corps came and inspected it, and she thought it looked really good,” he said. “In fact, she said it exceeded Army Corps standards. She was tickled to death to see this big armored type rock here. I felt good about it, real good.”

The Payette Ditch Company also helped clean up the sediment ponds adjacent to the levee, so the water quality project will function correctly.

“This wetland was put in to reduce the sediment and the phosphorous and the nitrogen before it dumped into the Weiser River. And clean up the Weiser River for the TMDL established by EPA,” Lukehart explains. “The integrity of the pond is fine. It’s fixable ... definitely fixable.”

Both Lukehart and Hickey appreciated the engineering assistance provided Bill Lillibrige and the Conservation Commission.

“It was a huge help for him to do all the

engineering,” Hickey said. “He came down and looked at all the sites. He did all the paperwork and technical work, got the permits, that was huge. He’s been here and given me personal advice a couple of times, that was big, too, you know, it’s nice to have that professional opinion. I’ve done a lot of this and I’ve learned a lot ... but it’s nice to have that professional opinion.”

Hickey managed to pay for the highest priority projects with Flood District funds and landowner cost-share funds. He got more than five areas repaired.



Hickey directs a contractor installing rock barbs to protect against future floods.

“Thank God that the flood district actually had some money,” Lukehart said. “Because if we had waited for money from FEMA it wouldn’t have come because the, had quite a few things to address because of the hurricanes and stuff in Florida, and that put us on hold. Then, here we are in December, and we’ve gotten a lot of things repaired we couldn’t wait. The flood district got a lot of work done when they had to get it done.”

Adds Hickey, “Oh yeah, I feel real good about what we got done for the money we’ve spent. These two sites here, any flooding that happens here goes into the town of Weiser, both sides, so I’m tickled to death to have these repaired.” □

Steve Stuebner is a regular contributor to Conservation the Idaho Way.



COMMISSION

- H. Norman Wright, Chairman
- Jerry Trebesch, Vice Chairman
- Leon Slichter, Secretary
- Dave Radford, Commissioner
- Cathy Roemer, Commissioner
- Teri Murrison, Administrator



SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

322 East Front Street, Suite 560 • Boise Idaho 83702 • P: 208-332-1790
F: 208-332-1799 • info@swc.idaho.gov www.swc.idaho.gov

Conservation the Idaho Way: Sowing Seeds of Stewardship