

**Annual & Performance Measures Report  
SENATE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
February 7, 2023**

**SLIDE 1:**



Thank you, Madam Chair Hartgen, Vice Chair Nichols, and members of the Committee. My name is Delwyne Trefz, I'm the administrator of the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission and I appreciate this opportunity to present the Commission's FY 2022 Annual and Performance Report. Crystal Rosen is with me to help run the power point and Devin Fielding, President of the Idaho Association of Conservation Districts (IASCD), is here to speak from the Conservation Districts' perspective at the conclusion of my remarks.

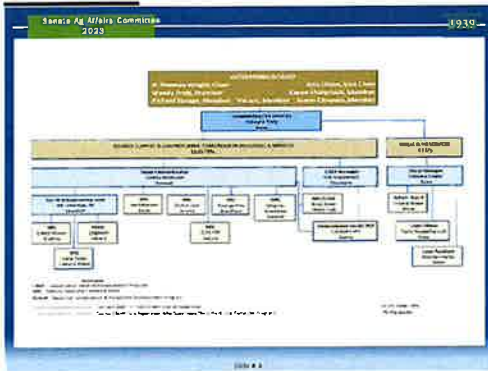
Our mission is to assist private landowners in the conservation and enhancement of Idaho's natural resources by facilitating and coordinating local, state, and federal programs to implement locally led, voluntarily initiated, and non-regulatory conservation projects and programs.

## SLIDE 2:



We accomplish this most effectively when we coordinate our efforts with our local partners—the 50 Conservation Districts and their voice, the IASCD—and our federal partners at the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Together, our three entities make up what can be thought of as a three-legged stool—all three of us must be holding up our share of the load if the partnership is to provide the greatest benefit to private landowners. This graphic illustrates our partnership well. While each of us operates within our own sphere of unique priorities, authorities, and responsibilities, the area of three-way overlap, right there in the center, is where our expertise and resources all come together to focus on assisting private landowners in their efforts to conserve the natural resources under their stewardship.

### SLIDE 3:



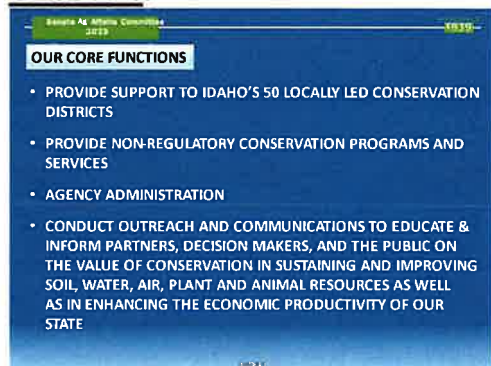
The Commission is governed by a board of seven Commissioners who are appointed by the Governor to staggered 5-year terms. Commissioners oversee the administrator who manages day to day operations.

Major programs and their managers are reflected on the organizational chart. In addition to distributing financial and technical assistance to conservation Districts, we administer a loan fund, the Resource Conservation and Rangeland Development Program (RCRDP), provide technical support to participants in the Idaho Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), and are the designated agency responsible for developing Total Maximum Daily Load implementation plans for agricultural and grazing land.

We are authorized no more than 18.75 FTPs and currently have 2.75 vacancies. One of these is a position which we expected to be funded with federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funds passing through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). This position will administer

federal grants to conservation districts which will enable districts to build capacity by hiring conservation planners. Due to issues related to both the 2023 Farm Bill reauthorization and the rules governing the expenditure of IIJA funds, we are still working with NRCS to develop this program and so the federally funded FTP has remained vacant. Of the remaining 1.75 vacancies, 0.75 is for a field staff position vacated when a staff person was promoted within the agency, and 1.0 is an engineer position originally vacated in October 2020 when our engineer in SE Idaho accepted a position with another state agency. After 20 months of searching, we hired a promising candidate in June 2022 who, unfortunately, resigned in December to return to university. We continue to explore every opportunity to enhance our chances of attracting the right candidates to fill these vacancies.

#### SLIDE 4:



I'll turn now to the FY 2022 Performance Measures Report in your packets.

As reflected in our Agency Profile on pg. 1, the Commission has 4 core functions:

1. District Support
2. Conservation Services & Programs

3. Administration, and

4. Outreach and Education

**SLIDE 5:**

REVENUES	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
General Fund	2,659,200	2,723,600	2,695,800	2,867,200
Receipts	11,100	0	2,006	10,939
RCRDP Loan Program	722,600	937,439	745,910	554,314
SRF Loan Program	92,300	77,282	78,408	139,356
Federal Grant Funds	201,800	193,144	12,149	12,149
Total	3,687,000	3,931,465	3,534,273	3,683,958
EXPENDITURES	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Personnel Costs	1,620,127	1,343,950	1,255,777	1,267,957
Operating Expenditures	341,802	317,968	252,924	294,862
Capital Outlay	3,425	0	0	0
Trustee/Benefit Payments	1,253,200	1,240,700	1,166,700	1,428,100
RCRDP Loan Disbursements	305,800	486,077	349,169	785,344
DEQ Loan	104,700	134,800	79,147	93,450
Federal Grant Funds	270,000	179,881	0	0
Total	3,899,054	3,703,376	3,103,717	3,869,713

The chart of Revenue and Expenditures shows that in FY 2022 our revenues came from the General Fund, miscellaneous Receipts, and dedicated funds which include the Resource Conservation and Rangeland Development loan program, State Revolving Fund Program, and a federal grant. Total annual revenues were just shy of \$3.7M.

Expenditures included personnel, operating, and Trustee/Benefit payments, RCRDP loan disbursements, and DEQ loan payments. We disbursed RCRDP loan funds to borrowers and State Revolving Fund loan funds to IDEQ. Total expenditures were almost \$3.9M.

Attachment 3  
February 7, 2023

## SLIDE # 6

**FY 2022 STATE GF DISTRICT SUPPORT**

- \$ 1.43 million from Trustee & Benefits Funds Distributed to Districts per statute & rule-
  - \$14,500 /District (\$725,000, total) base & operations funding
  - Balance (\$703,100) divided proportionately as match for the local support each District received
    - Local support ranged from \$0-\$60k per District, totaling \$561k
    - State match ranged from \$0- \$50k per District, totalling \$703,100
    - \$11,185/District, median State match
    - State match-to-local support ratio, 1.25:1

Photo: ISWCC's Eileen Rowan pulling soil samples.

Our original \$1.43 million FY22 appropriation for district support was distributed per statute. Each of the 50 conservation districts received \$14,500 as a base allocation. The \$703,100 of our appropriation that remained after base funding had been disbursed was distributed as match for the local support each district received during the previous fiscal year. Available match funds were divided proportionately between the districts based on how much eligible local support they received. The median value of match allocations provided to districts in FY22 was \$11,185, and the ratio of state match-to-local support was 1.25:1.

## SLIDE 7:

KEY SERVICES	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Landowners assisted in their conservation efforts (number).	536	436	328	973
Administrative, technical & engineering assistance provided to Conservation Districts (staff hours).	9,347	10,791	10,860	11,697
Technical assistance provided to landowners enrolled in the USDA Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (staff hours).	3,250	3,620	3,230	4,279
Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Agricultural Implementation Plans developed (number).	5	12	7	5

Madam Chair, I'd like now to turn to the Profile of Key Services Provided on the first page of our FY22 Performance Report. We delivered 11,697 hours of

*Attachment 3  
February 7, 2023*

Commission staff time to assist Districts with their projects and programs and assisted 973 landowners in their conservation efforts. Staff expended an additional 4,279 hours providing technical assistance to landowners participating in CREP and wrote 5 TMDL implementation plans, which Conservation Districts and other stakeholders in a watershed use as a framework for planning and implementing projects to improve water quality.

**SLIDE 8:**

District Support and Services		FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Percentage of those Conservation Districts who responded to the ISWCC annual survey and expressed satisfaction with the services & programs provided	actual	--	--	78	82
	target	--	--	90	90
Percentage of those Conservation Districts who responded to the ISWCC annual survey and expressed satisfaction with the effectiveness of the communications received from the Commission	actual	--	--	89	87
	target	--	--	90	90
Percentage of requests submitted by Conservation Districts through the Technical Assistance Allocation Process (TAAP) that received the requested assistance	actual	--	--	93	90
	target	--	--	90	90

The Performance Measures (PMs) we adopted effective FY 2021 are displayed on pages 2 and 3 of our report. Here you see the PMs related to District Support and Services. The first measures the percentage of Conservation Districts who responded to our annual survey indicating they are satisfied overall with the services and programs we provide. We strive for 90% district satisfaction, and you can see that for FY 2022 we fell short of that target. We take this as an opportunity to improve and are busy listening and responding to District supervisors and staff.

*Attachment 3  
February 7, 2023*

Eighty-seven percent of responding Districts also indicated they are satisfied with the effectiveness of the communications received from the Commission, also a little short of our target of 90% satisfaction.

During FY 2022, we provided assistance to 90% of the requests we received from Districts seeking our assistance, thus attaining the goal we set for that measure.

**SLIDE # 9**

PERFORMANCE MEASURES		FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
<b>Conservation Programs &amp; Services</b>					
Number of Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) acres for which technical assistance was provided	actual	-	-	18,432	18,262
	target	-	-	20,000	15,000
Acres improved with conservation practices financed by Resource Conservation and Rangeland Development Program (RCRDP)	actual	-	-	331	1,482
	target	-	-	600	600
Acres with Best Management Practices (BMPs) implemented to maintain and improve Ground Water Quality	actual	-	-	47,264	48,813
	target	-	-	54,000	50,000
Percentage of Total Maximum Daily Load implementation plans completed on schedule	actual	-	-	90	90
	target	-	-	100	100

Moving now to the Performance Measures related to Conservation Programs and Services, you see commission staff provided technical support for 18,262 acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), a USDA program which strives to conserve the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer.

Our Resource Conservation and Rangeland Development Program loaned \$1.2 million to help finance conservation projects on 1,482 private acres across Idaho.

*Attachment 3  
February 7, 2023*



We helped implement Best Management Practices selected to maintain and improve ground water quality on 48,813 acres, and in our role as the designated management agency for implementing Total Maximum Daily Loads on grazing and agricultural land, we completed 90% of the Ag Implementation Plans assigned to us in a timely manner.

Perhaps the most exciting program-related news is related to the rebirth of our Water Quality Program for Agriculture (WQPA), which was brought about by the \$5 million supplemental appropriation passed during the 2022 legislative session. Let me quickly finish covering the performance measures in our report and then I'll bring you up to date with the WQPA program.

**SLIDE # 10**

Communication & Outreach		FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Increase the number of newsletter subscribers	actual	-	-	22	25
	target	-	-	20	20
Increase annual percentage of social media reach, likes, and follows	actual	-	-	6%	9.50%
	target	-	-	10%	10%
Increase number of additional partner projects in Tracker	actual	-	-	7	5
	target	-	-	6	6

Looking at performance measures related to communication on the third page of our Performance Measures Report, we continue to make progress in our outreach efforts. In addition to our presence on social media, we put out a

*Attachment 3  
February 7, 2023*

monthly newsletter and recently published an informational brochure, a copy of which is in your packet.

### SLIDE # 11



Inside the brochure is a QR code that links to a nine-minute video which illustrates the value WQPA is providing the state. Madam Chair, if it's alright with you I'd like to run through a WQPA program update and then share the condensed, two-minute version of this video.

### SLIDE # 12



The WQPA program provides cost-share assistance for conservation projects on private lands. The majority of WQPA projects are administered by conservation districts who work with landowners to develop and implement conservation plans

Attachment 3  
February 7, 2023

and practices. The program had been unfunded since 2011 until last year, when \$5 million was appropriated as a supplemental to our FY 2022 budget.

Within 11 weeks of the FY 2022 supplemental appropriation taking effect, conservation districts and other eligible entities, e.g., NGOs and canal companies, had submitted 93 project proposals requesting a total of \$12 million of WQPA funds which they intended to combine with other funds to accomplish conservation work with a total price tag of \$31 million. Our board spread the available \$5 million between 48 projects to assist with financing conservation activities valued at \$18.4 million. Commissioners were pleased to award funding for at least one project to each of the 33 conservation districts who submitted WQPA project proposals.

### SLIDE # 13

**WQPA Implementation Status**

- > 48 of 93 proposed projects approved
- > 7 projects completed
- > 32 projects currently in implementation
- > 9 projects scheduled for Spring implementation
- > Approx \$2M of WQPA funds paid out
- > Governor's Revised FY 2024 Budget Recommendation includes \$5,000,000 to fund WQPA for FY 2023- FY 2024
- > The FY 2023-24 appropriation will be used to fund the highestranked of the 45 unfunded projects currently on file

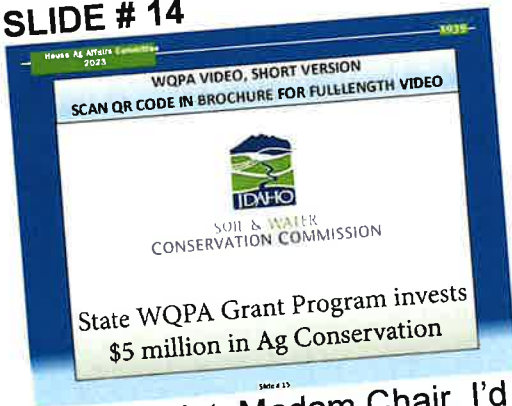
Photo: Piping an earthen ditch to reduce sediment loading.

Our FY 2022 supplemental appropriation included reappropriation authority enabling projects to be completed and WQPA cost-share to be available through FY 2023. As of the end of January, 7 projects are complete, over 80% of projects are being implemented, \$2 million of the \$5 million has been distributed and the Governor's Revised FY 2024 Budget Recommendation, provided to JFAC January

Attachment 3

16<sup>th</sup>, recommends another \$5 million for WQPA as a supplemental to our FY 2023 budget. We could not be more grateful for, nor more humbled by the opportunity to play a role in putting these dollars to work conserving Idaho's natural resources.

### SLIDE # 14



At this point, Madam Chair, I'd like to roll the Reader's Digest version of our new video.

### SLIDE # 15



From providing information about appropriate conservation practices to assisting with project implementation, grant writing, and navigating the requirements of funding programs, commission staff assist conservation districts to provide Idaho's private landowners with grass-roots level leadership in non-regulatory

Attachment 3  
February 7, 2023

natural resources conservation. The technical assistance our staff provide, and our comprehensive statewide programs, are vital tools for the economic and environmental success of private landowners throughout our State.

We are fully aware that what we do to facilitate voluntarily initiated natural resources conservation would not be possible without willing private landowners, committed conservation district supervisors and staff, effective local, state, and federal partnerships, and the support we receive from the Legislature and our Governor.

Thank you.

Madam Chair, I'm happy to stand for questions now, before turning the podium over to my partner, Devin Fielding.

Devin---

