

MINUTES
HOUSE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, March 04, 2024

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room EW42

MEMBERS: Chairman Andrus, Vice Chairman Raymond, Representatives Boyle, Cannon, McCann, Ehlers, Gallagher, Garner, Nelsen, Pickett, Sauter, Mathias, Roberts, Achilles

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Reps. Mathias (Church), McCann, Boyle, Sauter, Roberts and Achilles

GUESTS: The sign-in sheet will be retained in the committee secretary's office; following the end of session the sign-in sheet will be filed with the minutes in the Legislative Library.

Chairman Andrus called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m.

MOTION: **Rep. Gallagher** made a motion to approve the minutes of February 22, 2024, and February 26, 2024. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

Delwyne Trefz explained the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission (ISWCC) initially assisted local conservation districts in reducing soil erosion from agricultural practices. It now also leads voluntary conservation programs addressing water quality and other natural resource issues.

CREP acreage decreased due to expired contracts amidst high commodity prices. RCRDP loans notably enhanced acreage, with two key loans contributing over 50%. Social media reach growth slowed due to methodological changes, while partner project entries in Tracker decreased as partners prioritized implementation projects funded by our Water Quality Program for Agriculture and others.

Devin Fielding, ISWCC, outlined how conservation districts in Idaho work to preserve soil, prevent erosion and flooding, and promote water conservation. They facilitate partnerships among landowners, state, and federal agencies, acting as advocates for conservation on private land. This is crucial for sustaining Idaho's economy, heavily reliant on food production, forestry, and mining. Their approach focuses on voluntary, locally led conservation efforts, ensuring these resources endure for future generations.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 3:38 p.m.

Representative Andrus
Chair

Jayne Feik
Secretary