

# Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) and Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) Potential Integration

March 2026



**THE  
LANGDON  
GROUP**

March 10, 2026  
Attachment 1

# Introductions



Bryant Kuechle, The Langdon Group,  
Executive Director



Mat Weaver, The Idaho Department of  
Water Resources, Director  
& Soil and Water Conservation  
Commission, Acting Administrator

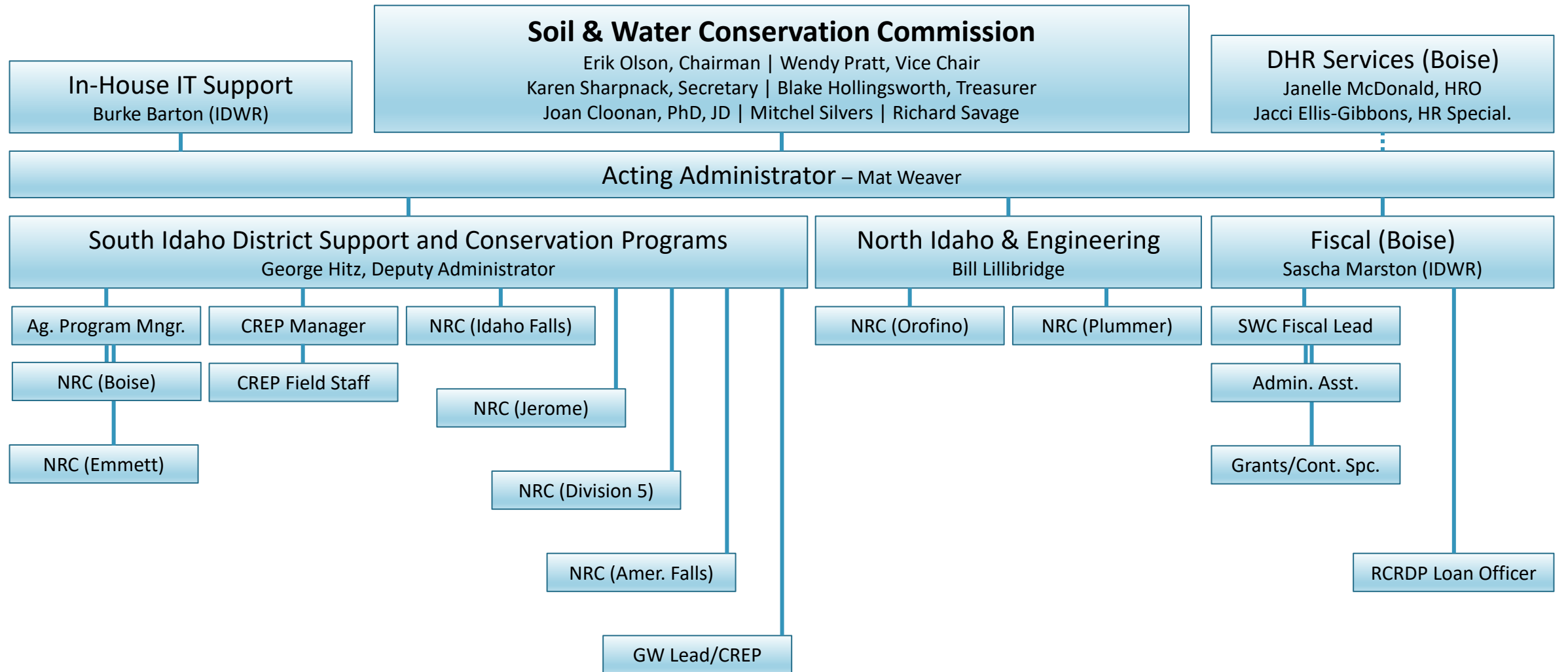


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# Potential Integration Background



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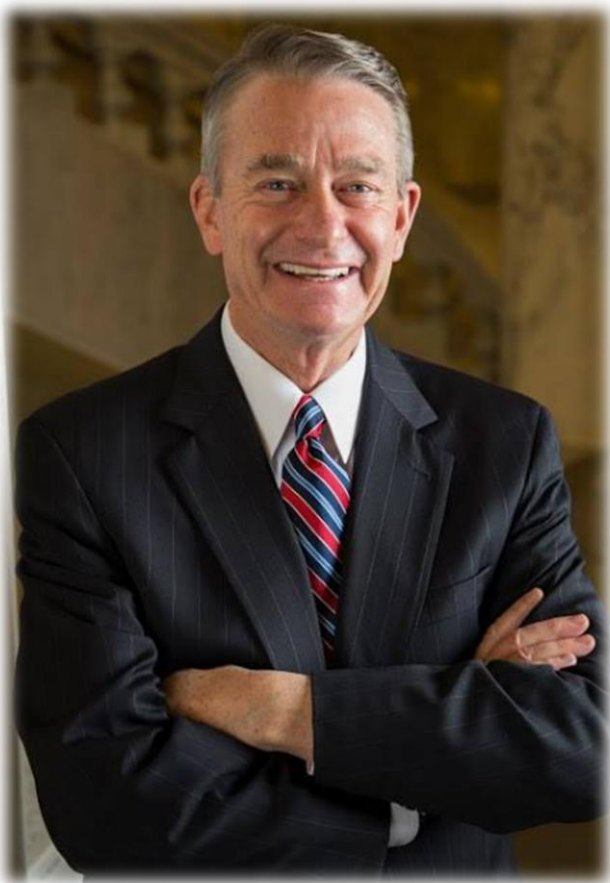


# Interim SWC-IDWR Organization Chart

May 21, 2025



# Message from the Governor: Evaluating a IDWR & SWCC Merger



“Idaho has been self-evaluating and identifying potential areas of increased government efficiency for years under myself and my predecessors. Because the DOGE effort is not new [in Idaho], we are better off than other states, and especially the federal government. **As it pertains more specifically to [the Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC)], we have an opportunity to examine possible efficiencies and the chance to leverage partnerships in state government in a pragmatic fashion.** To be clear, the conversations have been, and still are, ongoing between my staff, acting Administrator Mat Weaver, former Administrator Delwyne Trefz, [the Division of Financial Management (DFM)], and [the Division of Human Resources (DHR)]. Additionally, we’re connecting with the stakeholders to ensure their input on any potential changes are taken into account.

The Legislature has also taken an interest in government efficiencies and in an effort to partner with them on this effort, we are looking to consolidate wherever possible. The SWCC plays an important role and under the leadership of IDWR staff, you can continue to provide rural Idaho this important service. More importantly, it’s good practice to examine how our state agencies are truly helping constituents.

My staff are taking feedback on this review seriously, as are acting Administrator Weaver, DFM, and DHR. If you have any questions or comments for my office, please direct them toward Jamie Neill and Darren Damon.”



Governor Brad Little



# Evaluation of IDWR & SWCC Merger



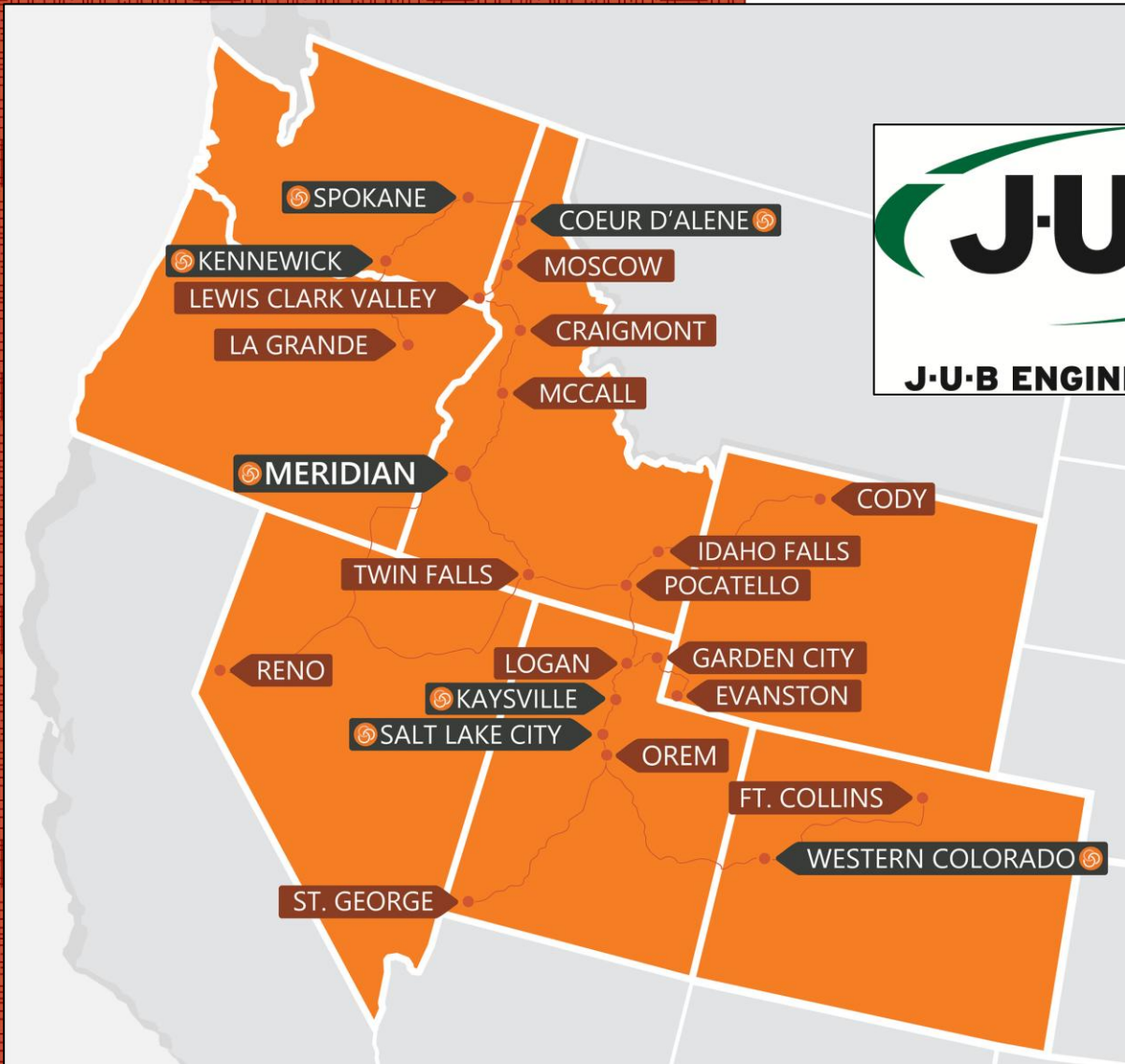
# The Langdon Group

Background, Process, and Methodology



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**J-U-B ENGINEERS, INC.**









**THE LANGDON GROUP**



**GATEWAY MAPPING INC.**

OTHER J-U-B COMPANIES

# Our Services

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <br><b>CONFLICT MANAGEMENT</b>  | <br><b>DIGITAL ONLINE ENGAGEMENT</b> | <br><b>FACILITATION</b>               | <br><b>PARTNERING</b> |
| <br><b>PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT</b> | <br><b>SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT</b>  | <br><b>STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS</b> | <br><b>TRAINING</b> |

# Schedule and Tasks

| Schedule                         | Tasks and Work Products   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| July 2025                        | Identify Situational Assessment (SA) participants<br><br>SA Guide   |
| August -September 2025           | Facilitate SA   |
| September 26, 2025               | SA Summary Report   |
| October 2 – October 23, 2025     | IASCD Division Fall Meeting Outreach  |
| September 29 – November 10, 2025 | Public Survey   |
| October 28, 2025                 | Integration Recommendations Workshop  |
| November 10, 2025                | Recommendations Report  |
| November 19-20, 2025             | Present findings and recommendations at the IASCD Fall Conference and Idaho Water Resources Board (IWRB) Fall Meeting |



# Situational Assessment and Survey Results

## Situational Assessment

- 48 Participants
- 25 Organizations
- Summer 2025

## Survey Results

- 17 Participants
- Open From October 2 to November 10<sup>th</sup>



# Situational Assessment Participants

- Idaho Association of Counties
- Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts
- Idaho Department of Human Resources
- Idaho Water Resources Board
- Idaho Department of Water Resources staff
- Idaho Division of Financial Management
- Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission Commissioners
- Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission staff
- Idaho State Department of Agriculture
- Idaho State Legislature
- Idaho Water Users Association
- Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
- Minnesota Board of Soil and Water Resources
- Natural Resources Conservation Service

Participants from each of the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Districts

- Division 1
- Division 2
- Division 3
- Division 4
- Division 5
- Division 6



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# Situational Assessment and Survey Results

To ensure that all interested parties have an opportunity to provide their input, the *Situational Assessment Summary Report* and an online survey was made publicly available.

The survey was shared via email to all SA participants to redistribute to their networks and in-person at the six October Soil and Water Conservation Division meetings by SWCC staff.



# Potential Integration Workshop

- October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025
- 18 Participants
  - IDWR staff
  - SWCC staff
  - SWCC Commission
  - IWRB
  - IASCD
  - Idaho State House of Representative
  - Idaho State Senate

## Goal

Recommendations developed through stakeholder workgroup discussion, visioning, and consideration of input collected during situational assessment interviews and survey, regarding the Governor proposed integration of the Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) with the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR).



# Potential Integration Workshop Small Groups



Actionable Goals



Organizations Structure



Legislative Approach



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# The Langdon Group Recommendations



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**IDWR is the appropriate state agency for SWCC to merge with, due to IDWR's:**

- Technical capacity to support SWCC.
- Focus on water issues, where the greatest synergy exists among SWCC's conservation programs.
- Overlapping services (Administrative, Human Resources, Information Technology, Fiscal, and Legal), appropriate for consolidation.
- Need to provide career growth opportunities for their Engineers in Training (EIT), through SWCC design work.
- Broader career growth opportunities for SWCC staff that currently have minimal growth opportunities within the SWCC organizational structure.
- Overlap with SWCC processes (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Programs (CREP), Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), stream restoration/headgates, and permitting), creating opportunities to streamline and expedite.
- Data overlaps, creating the opportunity to develop a shared data clearinghouse.



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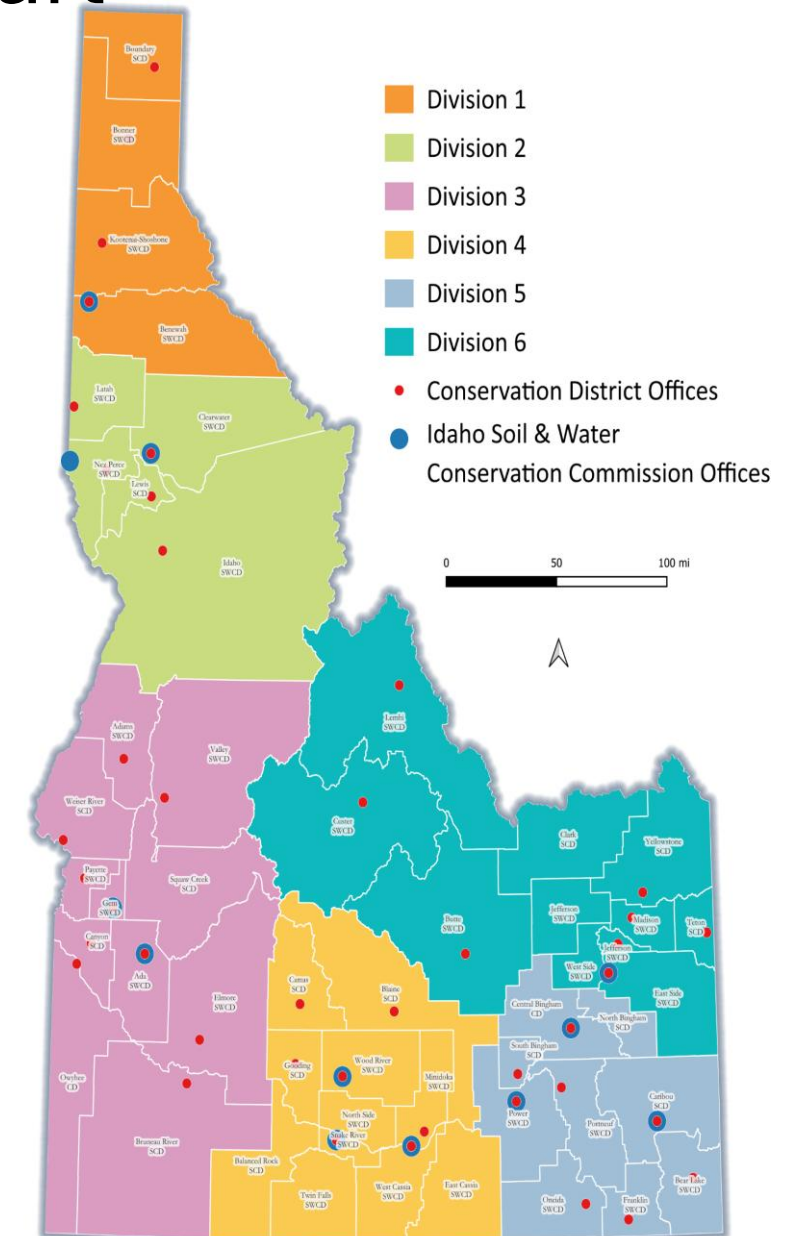
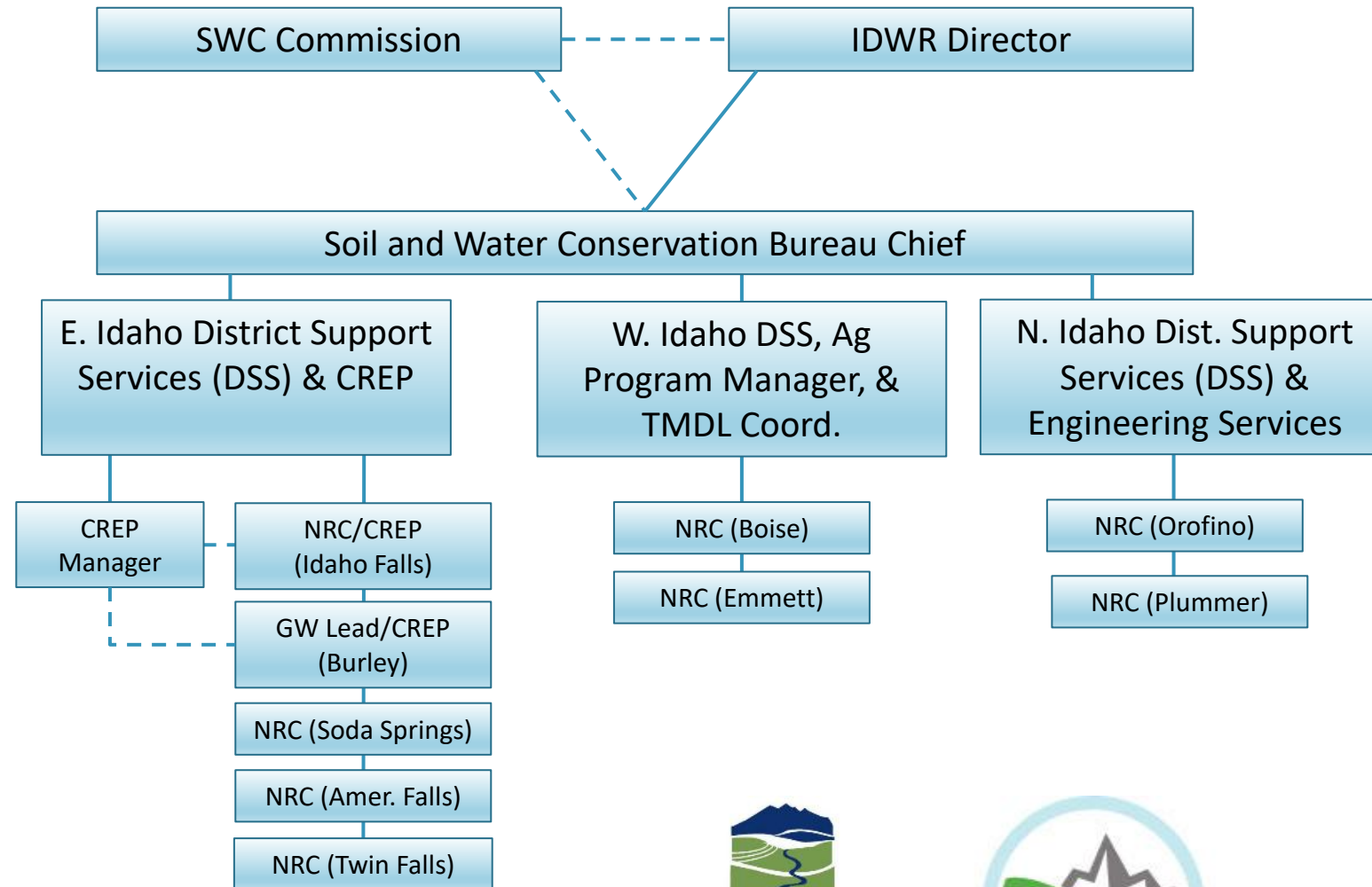
# The recommended organizational structure of the merged agencies is as follows:

- The IDWR Director manages the SWCC Bureau Chief as a direct report.
- The Bureau Chief oversees the coordination of daily activities under the direction of the SWCC Commissioners, as was the relationship with the former SWCC Administrator.
- The selection of the SWCC Bureau Chief is significantly informed by the commissioners as participants in the interview panel.
- Commission oversight includes responsibility and guidance over all programs under the SWCC. This includes the engineering staff, Water Quality Program for Agriculture (WQPA) program staff, CREP program staff, and all field staff working for those programs.
- Within this structure, SWCC retains all non-support service Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions. SWCC support service (Information Technology, Human Resources, and Finance and Accounts Payable) FTEs would be evaluated for inclusion within existing IDWR departments.



# Conceptual SWC-IDWR Organization Chart

Nov. 2025



Concerning the  
SWCC  
Commission, it is  
recommended  
that:

- The SWCC Commission Board functions in statue as it does today, nominated by the local conservation district divisions for consideration by the Governor. Conservation district commissioners are chosen by the public through a vote in local elections.
- The chairman of the SWCC Commission Board serves in an ex officio position on the IWRB and serves as a liaison between the two government bodies.
- The IDWR Director serves as an Ex Officio, non-voting Commissioner of the SWCC in the same way the IDWR Director plays this role with the IWRB.



It is critical to preserve the non-regulatory, voluntary independence of the SWCC in reality and perception. The following considerations are recommended to achieve this:

- Protect SWCC budget for the benefit of local conservation districts, match and/or through district operations.
- Preserve connections and relationships with Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and local conservation districts through shared offices where financially feasible.
- Maintain SWCC branding in all forms.
- Preserve independent SWCC agency reporting to germane committees in the legislature.
- Retain seasoned, experienced SWCC staff that have bought into the agency mission and are part of the agriculture community.
- Keep WQPA funding decisions with the SWCC and do not turn control over to the IWRB.
- Formalize a “Conservation Partnership Framework” that documents how IDWR and SWCC will coordinate non-regulatory programs. This framework should ensure that resource sharing never crosses into enforcement or policy interference.
- Recognize the broad mission of the SWCC and conservation districts beyond water resources, to include but not limited to issues involving wildlife habitat, rangeland, forestland, urban environments, and others as described in this report.



## In Idaho Code:

- Change § 22-2718 to replace “department of agriculture of the state of Idaho” with “department of water resources of the state of Idaho,” necessitating moving Title 22, Chapter 27 under Title 42 where most code associated with IDWR lives.
- Preserve “non-regulatory” in the code by making no additional changes to the language associated with the SWCC currently in Title 22, Chapter 27.



# Effectively communicating the merger will be key to a successful transition

- The preferred method for sharing information about the merger is via frequent email communications with all interested parties in an FAQ format. See the *information and outreach* section of the *situational assessment* chapter in this report for a list of recommended questions.
- For many participants not directly involved with the SWCC, a conservation district, or NRCS, the mission and purpose of the SWCC is not fully understood. It is recommended that the combined agency develop a unified, statewide conservation education and outreach campaign highlighting SWCC's 80-year history and accomplishments.
- Improve SWCC communication with the public, legislature, and districts by developing a new communications officer position or contractor for the combined agency.



# Questions?

To read the full summary report visit our website or Scan the QR Code

[https://www.langdongroupinc.com/idwr-swcc\\_report/](https://www.langdongroupinc.com/idwr-swcc_report/)



November 2025



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# Situational Assessment and Survey Themes

- Agency Perceptions – Regulatory vs. Voluntary Functions
- Appropriate State Agencies for Merger
- Information and Outreach
- Preserve and Avoid



# Situational Assessment and Survey Themes

- Organizational Structure
  - Statute
  - SWCC Commissioners
  - SWCC Staff



# Situational Assessment and Survey Themes

- Potential Gains
  - Communication with the public
  - CREP
  - Data and knowledge sharing
  - Funding
  - Office and equipment
  - Political positioning
  - Recruitment and retention of staff

