

Lemhi Soil and Water Conservation District

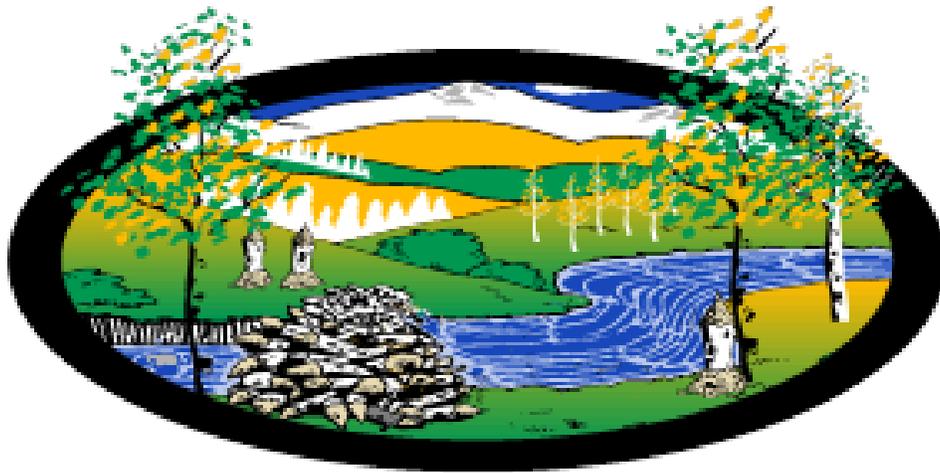
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Five Year Resource Conservation Plan

July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2020

Annual Plan of Work

July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2020

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Forward

The Lemhi Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is one of fifty conservation districts in the state of Idaho and encompasses most of Lemhi County. As subdivisions of state government, conservation districts are charged with carrying out programs and projects promoting the conservation of soil, water and other natural resources.

Conservation districts are the primary entities to provide assistance to private landowners and land users in the conservation, sustainment, improvement and enhancement of Idaho's natural resources. They are catalysts for coordinating and implementing conservation programs and channeling expertise, whatever the source, into on the ground action. At the local level, conservation districts focus on non-regulatory programs, science based technical assistance, incentive based financial programs and information and education programs.

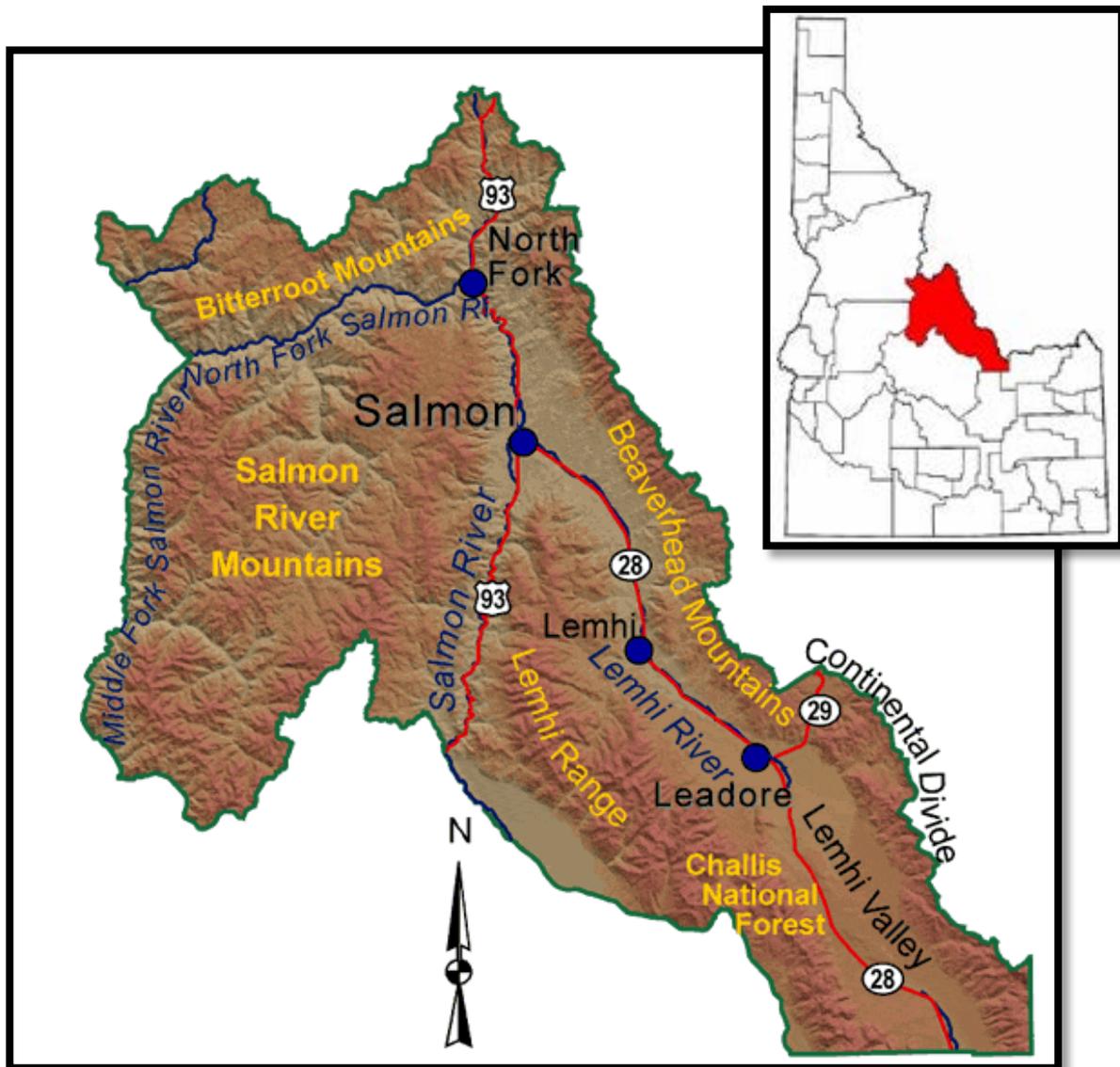
Through legislation and agreement, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service provides technical assistance to landowners and land users through conservation districts. Each conservation district in Idaho has signed a mutual agreement with the Secretary of Agriculture and Governor of Idaho that establishes this cooperative framework.

This Five Year Resource Conservation Plan and Annual Plan of Work was developed to not only guide the Lemhi SWCD, but to encourage cooperation among landowners, government agencies, private organizations and elected officials. This document specifically identifies those needs in the Lemhi SWCD and presents a plan for meeting those needs. Through knowledge and cooperation, all concerned can ensure a sustainable natural resource base for present and future generations.

Section 1: Physical Characteristics

(IDAPA 60.05.02.025.01)

Following the physical boundaries of Lemhi County, Idaho, the Lemhi Soil and Water Conservation District encompasses 2,921,126 acres, only approximately 7% of which is privately owned. This isolated county in eastern Idaho is bordered by the state of Montana to the north and east and the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness area to the west. With the surrounding mountains rising to over 10,000 feet, Lemhi County has a mild climate with an average growing season ranging from 145 days at Shoup to 90 days at Leadore (Hoffman and Williams). Additionally, there are 189,644 acres in farms and 53,574 total acres of cropland (“Agricultural Statistics” 63).



Section 2: Economic Conditions and Outlook

(IDAPA 60.05.02.025.02)

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, with an increase of 1.7% in the last decade, Lemhi County currently has a population of 7,967. From its peak in 1997 of 8,064, Lemhi County has experience many swings in population. These swings can be mainly attributed to activities in the mining and lumber industries (“Relocation Guide”3). With 400 ranches and farms in 2009 and ranking 6th for employment, agriculture has long been a cornerstone industry. Livestock production makes up a significant portion of the local industry, particularly beef production, with 24,400 head of mother beef cows. Additionally, 1,100 sheep and 1,200+ head of goats contribute to local livestock production. Forage crops are also grown locally, with most utilized on the ranches or sold locally. Fifty-seven percent of land in agriculture is harvested cropland, principally grass and alfalfa hay, while the remainder is utilized as pasture (Hoffman and Williams 2).

Additionally, recreation and tourism play a significant role in the local economy. Known as the “Whitewater Capital of the World”, Salmon and Lemhi County are popular destinations for outdoor recreation, with approximately eighty percent of outfitted recreational sales in Central Idaho coming from whitewater rafting and the remaining twenty percent coming from hunting and fishing (“Relocation Guide” 4).

Section 3: Assessment

(IDAPA 60.05.02.025.03)

Trends Impacting Conservation

- Urban impact of agriculture production
- Poorly planned growth in agricultural areas
- Increasing small acreage farms of five acres or less
- Limited availability of state funds for conservation
- Focus on water quality compared to other conservation and environmental issues
- Increased paperwork to accomplish goals
- Trends to regulate agriculture and ranching

Staffing Needs

- Full time conservation district administrative assistant with benefits

Key Decision Makers

- Citizens within the Lemhi SWCD
- Lemhi County Commissioners
- State Legislators and State Department Officers (Office of Species Conservation)
- U.S. Senators, Representatives and Staffers
- Lemhi SWCD Supervisors
- Special Interest Groups

Section 4: Natural Resource Priorities

(IDAPA 60.05.02.025.04)

- District operations
- Fish and wildlife*
- Information and education*
- Irrigated cropland
- Rangeland*
- Water quality*

*Meets *Anti-degradation Plan for Agriculture* criteria

Section 5: Water Quality

(IDAPA 60.05.02.025.05)

Lemhi River Subbasin

According to the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality Lemhi River Subbasin overview, falling entirely within the boundaries of Lemhi County, the 800,000+ acre Lemhi River Watershed encompasses the eastern portion of Lemhi County beginning at the confluence of the Salmon and Lemhi Rivers. Major land uses within the subbasin are livestock grazing, irrigated agriculture and recreation, while sediment and fecal coliform bacteria are the major pollutants of concern with most of the sediment resulting from stream bank erosion. As the Lemhi River is known to provide critical spawning and rearing habitat for resident and anadromous fish, excessive sedimentation and altered flow conditions due to diversion of surface water for irrigation are of significant concern. Additionally, there are several §303(d) listed stream segments within the Lemhi River Subbasin, including the Lemhi River and Bohannon, Eighteen Mile, Geertson, Kirtley, McDevitt, Sandy, Canyon, Kenney & Little Eighteenmile and Wimpy Creeks. There are additional streams that are of concern due to impairment due to flow alteration.

Panther Creek Subbasin ***(Middle Salmon River)***

The Panther Creek Subbasin extends from the Continental Divide to the north to the town of Ellis, just north of Challis and encompasses a portion of the Salmon River and a small part of the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. Within the 1,810 square miles of this subbasin, sediment, pH, metals, dissolved oxygen and nutrients are known pollutants of concern, while agriculture, mining and recreation are the major land uses identified in the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality Middle Salmon River-Panther Creek Subbasin overview.

Seven §303(d) stream segments are included in this subbasin: Salmon River, Bucktail, Big Deer, Panther, Dump, Wallace and Cow Creeks. Streams associated with the Blackbird Mine, Panther, Big Deer and Bucktail Creeks, have well documented metals and pH contamination and cleanup activities are underway to restore water quality on Panther and Big Deer Creeks. Additionally, it is likely that these activities will have a positive impact on Bucktail Creek as well. Best management practices have been implemented by the U.S. Forest Service on Dump Creek and significant improvements in sediment levels have already been seen and while the Salmon River has been identified as a §303(d) stream, no specific pollutants have been identified.

Section 6: Projects **(IDAPA 60.05.02.025.06)**

- Fish and wildlife
- District operations
- Information and education
- Irrigated cropland
- Water quality
- Rangeland

Section 7: Fiscal Year 2016 Annual Plan of Work (IDAPA 60.05.02.025.07)

Priority #1: Fish and Wildlife		
Goals:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhance fish and wildlife habitat. 		
Objective:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Restore fishable populations of salmon and steelhead to the Lemhi River. ▪ Restore and maintain sage grouse habitat. 		
Actions	Target Date	Individual(s) Responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assist NRCS with 20 cost share program contracts. 	6/30/2016	Lemhi SWCD staff; NRCS staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assist 5 landowners in implementing conservation projects with Bonneville Power Administration funding or Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund. 	6/30/2016	Lemhi SWCD staff
Priority #2: District Operations		
Goal:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote conservation and manage LSWCD resources responsibly. 		
Objective:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involve supervisors, county commissioners and ISWCC to ensure responsible use of funding. ▪ Active supervisor participation in LSWCD activities. 		
Actions	Target Date	Individual(s) Responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare annual budget and five year/annual plan. 	3/30/2016	LSWCD staff; LSWCD supervisors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Request annual county appropriation from the Lemhi County Commissioners. 	6/1/2016	LSWCD staff; Minimum of 1 LSWCD supervisor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct an annual financial audit. 	12/1/2016	Bob Baker, CPA; LSWCD staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One supervisor and all staff members to attend the fall (if held) and spring Division VI meetings. 	10/2015 3/2016	LSWCD supervisor(s); LSWCD staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Two supervisors and administrative assistant to attend the annual IASCD conference. 	11/2015	LSWCD supervisors; LSWCD staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a subcommittee to review current policies and procedures and recommend new policies and/or procedures as necessary. 	6/2016	LSWCD supervisors

Priority #3: Information and Education		
Goal:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inform and educate producers and the public about conservation programs and practices. 		
Objective:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct conservation education activities. 		
Actions	Target Date	Individual(s) Responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Host a booth at the Lemhi County Fair in conjunction with the NRCS and USBWP. 	9/2015	LSWCD supervisors; LSWCD staff; NRCS; USBWP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote and participate in National Agriculture Week activities in Lemhi County. 	4/2016	LSWCD supervisors; LSWCD staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organize and conduct a 4th-6th grade poster contest in conjunction with the NACD Poster Contest. 	9/2015	LSWCD supervisors; LSWCD staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote & provide scholarship(s) for students to attend Natural Resources Camp. 	5/2015	LSWCD staff; Lemhi County Extension
Priority #4: Irrigated Cropland		
Goal:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve irrigation water management and soil health. 		
Objective:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assist irrigators and irrigation districts in optimizing water use. Educate irrigators on Soil health. 		
Actions	Target Date	Individual(s) Responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assist with the installation of improved irrigation systems through the EQIP program. 	4/2016	LSWCD supervisors; LSWCD staff; NRCS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote irrigation water management and soil health through tours and workshops. 	6/2016	LSWCD supervisors; LSWCD staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use existing information on the hydrology of the river systems to better understand and use water for irrigation systems. 	6/2016	LSWCD supervisors; LSWCD staff

Priority #5: Water Quality		
Goal:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a high level of water quality and improve waters of lesser quality. 		
Objective:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain water quality study on the Lemhi River to create baseline data for past and future comparison and address water quality issues in TMDL and lead the community in the TMDL efforts. 		
Actions	Target Date	Individual(s) Responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate the public on the TMDL process 	6/2016	LSWCD supervisors; LSWCD staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement TMDL using NRCS and state water quality programs. 	6/2016	LSWCD staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasize water quality for fish habitat with producers. 	6/30/2016	LSWCD supervisors; LSWCD staff
Priority #6: Rangeland		
Goal:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote holistic range management between private landowners, public land managers, USFWS and NOAA fisheries. 		
Objective:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and implement grazing management plans with landowners and users. 		
Actions	Target Date	Individual(s) Responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide input into public agency range management plans. 	6/2016	LSWCD supervisors; LSWCD staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and assist Lemhi County with weed control efforts and workshops. 	6/2016	LSWCD supervisors; LSWCD staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement range management practices for the benefit of fish and fish habitat with two producers 	6/2016	LSWCD supervisors; LSWCD staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and provide scholarship(s) for the Lost Rivers Grazing Academy. 	6/2016	LSWCD supervisors; LSWCD staff

Works Cited

Hoffman, Katie, and Williams, Shannon. *Position Context Statement*. 2011. Print.

United States Department of Agriculture National Statistics Service Idaho Field Office. *2011 Idaho Agricultural Statistics*. Boise, Idaho: Idaho State Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2011. 63. Print.

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<<http://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/surface-water/tmdls/table-of-sbas-tmdls/lemhi-river-subbasin.aspx>>.

"Salmon River (Middle) - Panther Creek Subbasin." *Table of Subbasin Assessments, TMDLS, Implementation Plans and Five-Year Reviews*. Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, n.d. Web. 16 Feb. 2012. <<http://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/surface-water/tmdls/table-of-sbas-tmdls/salmon-river-middle-panther-creek-subbasin.aspx>>.

**IDAHO SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**FIVE-YEAR (5) PLAN and
ANNUAL WORK PLAN
CERTIFICATION**

DISTRICT: Lemhi SWCD

FOR FISCAL YEAR:

2016

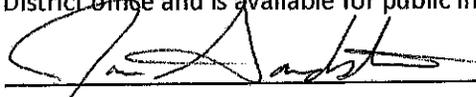
DUE :

March 31, 2015

CERTIFICATION

On behalf of my local Board of Supervisors, I hereby certify that the attached Five-Year (5) Plan and Annual Work Plan is true and accurate, and further submit said Plan for the above named District and fiscal year.

A copy of this Five-Year (5) Plan and Annual Work Plan shall be kept at the District office and is available for public inspection.



Board Supervisor Signature

Jane Sandstrom

Printed Name

3/25/15

Date

(208)756-3211 ext. 101

Telephone

lscd@custertel.net

District Email Address

FOR SWC USE ONLY:

DATE OF CONFIRMATION:
