

**WEST CASSIA SOIL and WATER  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

**1361 East 16<sup>th</sup> Street  
Burley, ID 83318**

**ANNUAL PLAN**

**FIVE-YEAR RESOURCE CONSERVATION**

**BUSINESS PLAN**

**JULY 1, 2015 – JUNE 30, 2020**

## **Executive Summary**

The West Cassia Soil and Water Conservation District is one of 50 Conservation Districts in Idaho. Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Districts are political subdivisions of state government but are not state agencies. Conservation Districts are charged with carrying out a program for the conservation, use and development 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, channeling expertise from all levels of government into action at the local level. Programs are non-regulatory; science-based technical assistance, incentive-based financial programs and informational and educational programs at the local level.

Both by legislation and by agreement the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service provides technical assistance to landowners and land users through Conservation Districts. Each Conservation District in Idaho has a signed Mutual Agreement with the Secretary of Agriculture and the Governor of Idaho that establishes a framework for cooperation.

This Annual Plan/Five-Year Resource Conservation Business Plan was developed not only to guide the Conservation District, but also to encourage cooperation among landowners, government agencies, private organizations, and elected officials. Through knowledge and cooperation, all concerned can ensure a sustainable natural resource base for present and future generations in the West Cassia Soil and Water Conservation District.

**Certificate of Adoption**

The Board of elected supervisors of the West Cassia Soil and Water Conservation District this 31<sup>st</sup> day of March, 2015, does hereby approve the following document known as the Resource Conservation Business Plan. This Plan will be in effect for a five-year period ending June 30, 2020 during which time it will be updated annually and/or amended, as necessary.

As evidence of our adoption and final approval, we do hereby affix our signatures to this document.

\_\_\_\_\_ Richard Kunau, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_ K. Wells, Vice Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_ Kathy Poulton, Secretary/Treasurer

\_\_\_\_\_ Brent Stoker, Member

\_\_\_\_\_ Ken Black, Member

\_\_\_\_\_ Member

\_\_\_\_\_ Member

Supporting Idaho Conservation Partners:

\_\_\_\_\_ Natural Resources Conservation Service

\_\_\_\_\_ Soil Conservation Commission

\_\_\_\_\_ Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts



# Five-Year Resource Conservation Plan Business Plan (2015 to 2020) West Cassia Soil & Water Conservation District

**For More Information Contact: Richard Kunau, Chairman, 654-2747**

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## Organization and function of the West Cassia Soil & Water Conservation District

A political subdivision of the State of Idaho – authorities, powers and structure contained in Soil Conservation District Law, Title 22, Chapter 27, Idaho Code.

- Officially organized on September 22, 1958 to provide voluntary land and water conservation technical and financial assistance to landowners and users within the West Cassia SWCD boundary.
- To make available technical, financial and educational resources; to meet the needs of the local land manager with conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources.



*Idaho State Land & Soil  
Evaluation Event*

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## Who We Serve

- We serve the people in the West Cassia SWCD by educating and assisting them in the conservation of natural resources for beneficial and sustainable use by all.

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## Mission of the West Cassia Soil & Water Conservation District

- To set high standards for conservation of natural resources.
- To educate both youth and adults in conservation practices and needs.
- To encourage cooperation among landowners, government agencies, private organizations, and elected officials to accomplish conservation goals.
- To carry out a well balanced resource conservation program centered around reduced soil erosion, water management improvements, animal waste management improvements, and utilization of BMPs.

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## Values of the West Cassia Soil & Water Conservation District

- Sustainable use of natural resources
- Support for agriculture activity that uses sustainable, economic feasible practices
- Value and respect for the Idaho Conservation Partnership
- Conservation education for adults and youth.

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## Natural Resource Priorities Areas:

- Animal Waste Management
- District Operations
- Information and Education / Public Outreach
- Irrigated Cropland
- Pasture/Hayland
- Water Quality-ground water and surface water
- Water Resources & Erosion Control

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### Land Ownership within West Cassia SWCD:

▪ Water	5,713 acres	0.8%
▪ State Land	18,650 acres	2.8%
▪ BLM	130,420 acres	19.3%
▪ National Forest	227,430 acres	33.6%
▪ Private Land	294,423 acres	43.5%

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### Physical Characteristics:

West Cassia SWCD is located in the south central part of Idaho and encompasses the entire western part of Cassia County, some 676,636 acres. Elevations range from 4,156 feet above sea level in Burley to about 10,000 feet in the higher mountain areas. The valley floor and lands along the Snake River Plain and Goose Creek drainage are generally flat to very gently sloping to the mountainous area ranging from sloping to very steep. For more information on the physical characteristics of the district, please refer to the published soil Survey of Cassia County, Idaho, Western Part.

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### Economic Conditions and Outlook:

Population within the district is approximately 18,000 residents. Most of this population is concentrated in the Burley area. Urban areas include Burley, Declo, and Oakley. Most goods and services are obtainable in Burley. Burley and Rupert are the centers for the Cassia-Minidoka area.

The main economic base of the West Cassia SWCD is agriculture. Crops grown include wheat, barley, alfalfa, corn (sweet and field), sugar beets, potatoes, dry beans and peas and other specialty seed crops. Much of the harvested agricultural products are sold and processed locally. McCains in Burley processes potatoes, and sugar beets are processed in Paul, Idaho by Amalgamated Sugar Company. The county is diversifying beyond agriculture. Marketing Cassia and Minidoka counties together through a community partnership has attracted new businesses. The area offers an abundance of natural resources and recreational opportunities with Burley located on the banks of the scenic Snake River. The City of Rocks National Reserve and the Pomerelle Ski Area are close recreational destinations.

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### Flooding:

Flooding occurs frequently above the Oakley Reservoir as a result of high spring flows. Some flooding occurs each year. Major flooding occurs once every five to 10 years. Drainage is only a problem on a year having high water yields and affects levels along Goose Creek, where lands remain in their native conditions as pastureland, hayland, and rangeland for livestock grazing. Flash flooding from summer storms can occur if and when the Oakley Reservoir fills to overflowing. This occurs rarely, 2 times since the reservoir was constructed in 1911.

A system was developed and installed that would handle the excess run-off waters from the Cottonwood Creek and the Oakley Reservoir. The Oakley Fan Aquifer Recharge Site is a series of infiltration trenches that absorb excess water into the aquifer. Also included in the project are gravity-fed abandoned deep wells. These injection systems provide disposal options for heavy spring run-off waters.

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### Stream Segments of Concern: (followed by pollutants addressed)

#### Goose Creek

- Goose Creek – temperature, sediment
- Trapper Creek – nutrients, sediment
- Birch Creek – nutrients, bacteria
- Cold Creek – temperature

- Beaverdam Creek – nutrients, temperature, bacteria, sediment, dissolved oxygen
- Little Cottonwood Creek – bacteria
- Left Hand Fork Beaverdam Creek – nutrients, sediment, bacteria

#### Lake Walcott Watershed

- Snake River – sediment, oil & grease, total phosphorus
- Milner Reservoir – sediment, oil & grease, total phosphorus

#### Lake Walcott

- Marsh Creek - total phosphorus, bacteria, temperature

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### **Trends Impacting Conservation in the West Cassia Soil & Water Conservation District**

- Water and soil erosion concerns
- Outdated irrigation techniques
- Increased CAFOs with waste management needs
- Limited availability of State funds for conservation
- Focus on water quality compared to other conservation and environmental issues.

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### **Strategies to Address Trends**

- Continued education through tours and publications.
- Reducing water and dust erosion through
  - Conversion to sprinkler systems,
  - Crop residue,
  - Conservation tillage
  - Cross slope farming practices
  - Windbreak education and seedling tree sale
  - Continued education.
- Improve animal waste management practices and composting efforts including odor and pest controls and nitrate and phosphate levels.
- Encourage use of BMPs, especially target Burley/Marsh Creek Groundwater Improvement Project area.
- Raising awareness of conservation values with state legislature and elected officials – help decision makers be better informed.
- Becoming a working partner with County and City Conservation activities.
- Supervisors become more informed on current issues impacting working lands, Farm Bill programs, Information from agencies instead of relying on NRCS District Conservationist
- Become more involved with County Planning and Zoning issues impacting natural resources.
- Work with weed supervisor to increase education on noxious and invasive weeds.
- Work together with East Cassia and Minidoka Districts.
- Advertise Board Meetings where district goals are discussed to improve public awareness.
- Training for Conservation District Supervisors and staff.
- Look for new and innovative ways for funding, i.e.; grants, projects, etc.

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### **Staffing Needs**

- Part-time Conservation District Administrative Assistant.
- Information & Education Specialist.
- Other employees as needed for implementing district projects.

## Annual Budget Needs

- Annual budget completed to carry out the plan of the West Cassia Conservation District based on the included needs and information. *Estimate \$80,000. District would need additional funds to meet this goal.*

## Key Decision Makers

- Citizens in West Cassia Soil & Water Conservation District
- Cassia County Commissioners
- Cassia County Planning and Zoning Board Members
- Elected City Officials including City Mayors and City Council Members and/or Planning and Zoning Board Members for Burley, Albion, Declo, Malta, and Oakley cities.
- State legislators representing District 27  
Dean Cameron, Scott Bedke, and Fred Wood
- Idaho's U.S. Senators, Representatives and Staffers
- West Cassia Conservation District Supervisors
- Burley City Administrator
- Cassia County Administrator
- Chamber of Commerce

## Priority Actions – 6 Months

Action	Begin Date	End Date
▪ Seek public comments on Annual Plan/Five-Year Resource Conservation Business Plan	April 2015	October 2015
▪ Board of Supervisor review of Annual Plan/Five-Year Resource Conservation Business Plan priorities, actions, and public comment	April 2015	October 2015
▪ Complete written update of Annual Plan/Five-Year Resource Conservation Plan	April 2015	October 2015
▪ Identify budget and staff needs	April 2015	October 2015
▪ Develop, adopt and submit annual budget	March 2015	October 2015
▪ Adopt and submit Annual Plan/Five-Year Resource Conservation Business Plan		March 31, 2015

# FY2016 (7/1/2015 – 6/30/2016) Annual Plan of Work

## West Cassia Soil & Water Conservation District

### Priority Area Number 1: WATER RESOURCES / EROSION CONTROL

**Objective: To improve conservation practices throughout West Cassia SWCD**

**Goals:**

- ◆ To encourage good conservation practices which reduce water and dust erosion, conversion to sprinkler systems, promoting the benefits of crop residue, conservation tillage, and cross slope farming practices.
- ◆ To promote animal waste management practices including odor and pest controls, and nitrate and phosphate levels. Support Animal Waste Composting efforts through conservation plans and providing information to the public. Encourage use of BMP's.
- ◆ To educate landowners on the importance of soil health.
- ◆ To have available for rent a direct seed drill where landowners will be able to test plots on their land to see the benefits of this practice.
- ◆ To educate farmers around the county on available conservation programs.



*Cleaning out the Windbreak near Cottrel Port of Entry.*

**Action(s):**

Actions for FY2016	Dates	Person Responsible
1. Help to plan and carry out a tour for the Direct Seed and Cover Crop Project.	Sep.-Oct.	Richard Kunau, Doreen McMurray
2. Satisfy TMDL goals and work to reduce nitrate levels in groundwater. Continue to work with land owners on restoration work through programs such as EQIP, WQPA, 319 grants, Conservation Improvement grants and other programs.	On-going	Entire Board
3. Encourage good conservation practices which reduce water erosion and dust erosion through education including emphasis on converting to sprinkler systems, cover crops, and water resource information. (Through tours, newsletters, and press releases.)	Yearly	Richard Kunau, Brent Stoker, Doreen McMurray, Madi Patterson, Megan Heward
4. Promote the benefits of crop residue, conservation tillage, and cross slope farming practices through education. Inform land owners of irrigation practices available to them. Support new technology with tours, newsletter, or press releases. Promote CCPI project in conjunction with NRCS. Promote and encourage landowners to participate in the Direct Seed and Cover Crop Project.	Quarterly	Entire Board, Doreen McMurray,
6. Request NRCS assistance to help with design, layout, and approval of plans.	On-going	Richard Kunau, NRCS staff
7. Keep current on animal waste management practices a pest controls and nitrate and phosphate levels) Support Animal Waste Composting efforts and concerns. (including odor and through conservation plans. Inform the public through newsletters of acceptable practices.	On-going	All Board Members
8. Promote no till/low till practices and the use of cover crops.	Year round	Entire Board, Megan Heward, Doreen McMurray, Madi Patterson



# FY2016 (7/1/2015 – 6/30/2016) Annual Plan of Work

## West Cassia Soil and Water Conservation District

### Priority Area Number 2: PASTURE & HAY

**Objective: To improve irrigation and pasture management which will aid in reduction of erosion and improved yields.**

**Goal(s):**

- ◆ To educate landowners concerning rotation techniques which will help to improve yields.
- ◆ Encourage the use of windbreaks to control erosion through the annual seedling tree sale and assistance of East Cassia’s windbreak clean-up efforts.
- ◆ Print newsletters providing information regarding noxious weeds, stressing current weed control practices.

**Actions(s):**

<b>Actions for FY2016</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
1. Educate the landowners concerning rotation techniques to improve yields through tours and newsletters.	Year Round	Richard Kunau, Kathy Poulton, Brent Stoker
3. Educate landowners concerning BMP's for watering and irrigating which reduces erosion and provides optimum moisture for crops.	Annually	Richard Kunau, Kathy Poulton, Doreen McMurray
4. Encourage use of windbreaks to control erosion by providing information through the newsletter and tree sale.	Spring	Entire Board, Doreen McMurray, Megan Heward
5. Manage the annual tree sale providing seedling trees for windbreaks and other conservation purposes.	Annually	Doreen McMurray, Megan Heward
6. Encourage continued education by donating extra trees from spring tree sale to schools, with the intent trees be used to help beautify and enhance cities within the school district, and also with expectation that proper Thanks and Advertising be given to the District.	Annually	K. Wells, Doreen McMurray, Megan Heward
7. Provide information regarding noxious weeds, stressing weed control practices.	Annually	K. Wells, Doreen McMurray



# FY2016 (7/1/2015 – 6/30/2016) Annual Plan of Work

## West Cassia Soil and Water Conservation District

### Priority Area Number 3: Information / Education and Public Outreach

**Objective: To Promote Environmental Awareness and Provide Information to cooperators, the general public, and to youth about agricultural information, activities, and opportunities.**

**Goal(s):**

- ◆ Sponsor and host events that will educate and recognize conservation programs and efforts.

**Actions(s):**

<b>Actions for FY2016</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
1. Prepare, publish, and distribute three newsletters to approximately 800 local land owners. Solicit and collect advertising money. District Activities and conservation issues will be included.	March, July, November	Doreen McMurray, Megan Heward
2. Publicize tours, activities, and special events through district newsletters, local radio, newspapers, and the Cassia County Fair.	As needed	Doreen McMurray
3. Co-sponsor, along with East Cassia, the Idaho State Land & Soil Evaluation Event. (including arrangements, awards, banquet, and raising funds to support the contest). Participate in state committee meeting in Spring.	Contest held in October	Doreen McMurray, Megan Heward
4. Provide information to school age students within the district on the Natural Resources Workshop Camp, Know Your Government, 5th & 6th grade Poster Contest, High School Speech Contest, Envirothon, and annual Scholarship Awards.	Year Round	Doreen McMurray
5. Seek out worthy recipients for Conservation and Education Awards. Conduct an Annual Awards Banquet to honor Cooperator of the Year and present other conservation awards.	January/February	All Board Members, Doreen McMurray
6. Prepare and mail quarterly Newsletters which includes an Annual Report of work activities accomplished during the fiscal year. Secure advertising to cover printing and postage costs.	Quarterly	Doreen McMurray
7. Be active in County Planning and Zoning meetings and activities.	Monthly	All Board Members



# FY2016 (7/1/2015– 6/30/2016) Annual Plan of Work West Cassia Soil and Water Conservation District

## **Priority Area Number 4: DISTRICT OPERATIONS**

**Objective: To manage the ongoing business and activities of the District.**

**Goal(s):**

♦ To manage and run the affairs of the district including the management of supervisors, employees, finances, monthly board meetings, and to evaluate and make new goals.

<b>Actions for FY2016</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
1. Revise the Annual Plan and update the 5-year plan.	January to April	All Board Members, Megan Heward
2. Conduct and attend monthly board meetings to be held the second Tuesday of each month. The meetings are open to the public and the media. Guests are invited when appropriate along with county officials and agency and state personnel.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month	All Board Members, Megan Heward
3. Review the USDA Memo of Understanding and the supplemental Memo of Understanding with the NRCS District Conservationist.	Annually	All Board Members
4. Have representation to the Summer Picnic, Awards Banquet, Division IV Meetings (Mar. & Oct.), and the IASCD Conference (Nov.)	Jan, Mar, Oct, Nov	All Board Members, Megan Heward, Doreen McMurray
5. Attend quarterly WAG meeting.	Quarterly	Brent Stoker
6. Manage Supervisor elections in the even numbered years. Will organize an outreach program to recruit and educate new supervisors.	Yearly, elections in Oct. '16	Entire Board, Megan Heward, Madi Patterson
7. Develop a budget, prepare monthly financial statements, and have an audit annually or as needed.	Monthly, July 2015	Entire Board, Megan Heward
8. Inform board members of potential or existing legislation that impacts the district. Draft appropriate legislation for presentation at the IASCD annual conference.	On-going	All Board Members
9. Meet with County Commissioners to review District Activities and present the proposed budget as a basis for requesting county funding.	February	All Board Members, Megan Heward
10. Review, revise if necessary, and approve the agreement with the Administrative Assistant, I & E Specialist, and other employees.	January, as needed	All Board Members, all employees

**IDAHO SOIL & WATER  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**DISTRICT:** West Cassia SWCD

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

**FOR FISCAL YEAR:**

FY2016

**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.

*Richard Kunou*

Board Supervisor Signature

*Richard Kunou*

Printed Name

*3-30-2015*

Date

*208-678-1225 x 100*

District Telephone

*ewcswwcd@pmt.org*

District Email Address

**FOR SWC USE ONLY:**

**DATE OF CONFIRMATION:**