

Mini-Cassia Conservation Update

East Cassia, West Cassia, & Minidoka
Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Volume No. 2018.3
December 2018

5th Annual SOIL HEALTH WORKSHOP

A FREE Soil Health Workshop will be held on Wednesday, February 6, 2019 in Burley. The 5th Annual event is sponsored by the Minidoka, West Cassia, and East Cassia Soil & Water Conservation Districts. The workshop is part of their Mini-Cassia Direct Seed & Cover Crop Project. Topics addressed will include:

Regenerative Agriculture,
Building Carbon for Soil Health and Profit,
Choosing Cover Crops,
Optimum Nutrition from Cover Crops for DAIRY FEED,
Nematode Resistant Cover Crop Solutions,
Biofumigation Pest Control and FREE Pesticide Credits.



The WORKSHOP is free and includes continental breakfast, lunch, class sessions, and breaks. RSVP is required. To register, send e-mail to ewcswcd@gmail.com or call 208-572-3369.

2019 Workshop Speakers Include:

Master of Ceremonies-Regional Soils Specialist-**Marlon Winger**, Soil Specialist **Jay Fuhrer** (pictured right), Cover Crop Innovator-**Keith Berns** (pictured below), Dairy Nutrition Specialist-**Shane Holt**, County Agent-**Joel Packham**, and Cover Crop Specialist-**Kent Whittig**. The workshop will also include local farmers presenting how they implement the principles of soil health.

Jay Fuhrer



Keith Berns

President, Green Cover Seed

More information on the workshop can be found throughout this newsletter on pages 3, 5, and 6.

District Board of Supervisors

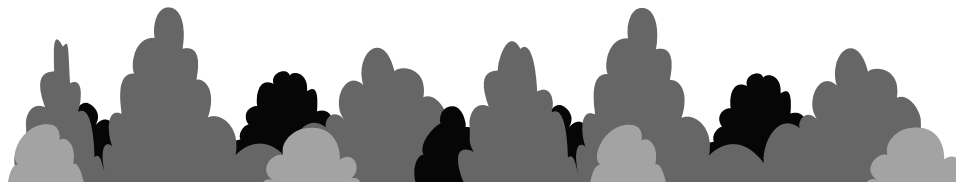
	<u>East Cassia SWCD</u>	<u>West Cassia SWCD</u>	<u>Minidoka SWCD</u>
Chairman.....	Mark Webb.....	Richard Kunau.....	Brian Kossman
Vice-Chair.....	Steve Ward	Ken Black.....	Russ Suchan
Sec/Treasurer.....	Ken Woodworth.....	Kathy Poulton.....	Dusty Wilkins
Member.....	Brook Holtman.....	Brent Stoker.....	Aaron Firth
Member.....	Jonathan Harper.....	Jordan Searle.....	Luke Adams
Associate Members.....			Justin Hunter

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Megan Heward.....	Cassia Financial Assistant
Sharon Hardy-Mills.....	Minidoka Administrative Assistant
Jessica Anderson	Cassia Administrative Assistant
Doreen McMurray.....	Cassia Information & Education Specialist

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Personnel

David Mabey.....	District Conservationist
Carolyn Firth	ISWCC Ag Program Specialist
Dinah Reaney.....	Soil Conservationist
Connor White	Range & Wildlife Conservationist
Haydn Carson.....	Soil Technician
Nathan Huber.....	Soil Conservationist



NEWSLETTERS

are available by
e-mail!

If you are interested in receiving this and future newsletters electronically, send your e-mail address to:
ewcswcd@pmt.org

Type "NEWSLETTER" in the subject box.

If you want your name removed from the newsletter mailing list, just let us know.

SUPERVISOR BOARD MEETINGS

Supervisors for the Soil and Water Conservation Districts are landowners in Cassia and Minidoka Counties who volunteer their time. They are interested in farming issues and want to make a positive difference in their communities.

Serving as a Supervisor is a great opportunity to learn how to improve your own operation as well as helping to make a difference within our community.

If you are interested in serving on the Soil & Water Conservation District in your area, contact a current board member or call one of the NRCS offices for information.

Monthly Board Meetings: (Public Welcome)

East Cassia SWCD - 1st Tuesday of ea month

West Cassia SWCD - 2nd Tuesday of ea month

Minidoka SWCD - 2nd Thursday of each month

*Date Changes for Cassia
January Board Meetings*

*West Cassia SWCD
January 8, 2019 @ 10:00*

*East Cassia SWCD
January 8, 2019 @ 1:00*



CONTACT OUR OFFICES:

Rupert Field Office 208-436-4202
Burley Field Office 208-572-3369

Minidoka e-mail:
minidokaswcd@gmail.com

Cassia e-mail: ewcswcd@pmt.org

Web page:
www.minicassiaswcd.com

*Spanish translation is available in
the office upon request.*

The "Conservation Update" is published quarterly by the East Cassia, West Cassia, & Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation Districts and mailed to approximately 1,100 landowners. The distribution mailing list is maintained by the Information & Education Specialist in Burley, Idaho. Names may be added to or removed from the mailing list for the next publication by calling 208-878-5556.

East Cassia, West Cassia, & Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation Districts are non-profit organizations. All programs and services of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts are offered on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, marital status, or handicap.

NRCS can **“HELP YOU, HELP YOUR SOIL”**

By Haydn Carson, Soil Technician (Burley Office)

“Soil health, No-Till, Cover Crops” These are just a few of the buzz words circulating around the farming community. But what do they really mean? How do they help farmers? What good are they? Do they work here in Southern Idaho? Cover crops are really taking off in Southern Idaho, thanks in part to the Conservation Districts hosting both the Cover Crop field days and the Soil Health Workshops. With guest speakers like Gabe Brown promoting No-Till and Cover Crops, we have farmers and land owners climbing on board and trying it out on their property and incorporating it into their rotation.

Think about your operation and what happens to your soil after harvest and before planting again in the Spring. Our soils are exposed to the ravages of the wet and windy weather that abounds in Southern Idaho from Fall to Spring. Planting a cover crop protects your soil from the fierce winds that would blow it away and covers also help collect precious moisture that falls on your field. Implementing no-till helps keep your soil structure intact which aids in moisture retention. There is a myriad of other benefits to using no-till and planting cover crops such as: nutrient availability, water retention, weed suppression, grazing, erosion control, wildlife forage and cover, and many more.

We at the NRCS want to “help you, help your soil” through funding available for farmers wanting to incorporate cover crops or reduced tillage into their operation through the EQIP program. If you are interested, please come into your local NRCS office and discuss the options available to you.



SOIL HEALTH WORKSHOP **MASTER OF CEREMONIES**

The Minidoka, West Cassia, & East Cassia Soil & Water conservation Districts are proud to welcome **Marlon Winger as the 2019 Master of Ceremonies for the 2019 Soil Health Workshop.**

Marlon is a dynamic soil health enthusiast. He grew up on a family owned dairy farm in Dayton Idaho, where he found is passion for life - Agriculture.

He earned a MS and BS degree at Utah State University in Plant Science. He worked as a County Agricultural Agent for Utah State University Extension service for 9 years in

Price, Utah. He worked for the USDA - Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) for about 9 years, as area agronomist and State Agronomist in Idaho. Marlon now works as the Regional Soil Health Specialist for Idaho, Montana, & Wyoming where he works tirelessly promoting soil health.



Marlon Winger, Regional Agronomist, presenting at 2017 Soil Health Workshop.

Cover Crops Provide Diverse Benefits to Soil

Visit our webpage for Direct Seed Drill and Cover Crop Seed information:
minicassiaswcd.com

**2019 Soil Health Workshop,
Luncheon, & Credits are FREE**

RSVP required
to 208-572-3369 or
ewcswcd@gmail.com

Ad page goes here.

Soil Health Workshop

February 6, 2019

8:00 Registration & Continental Breakfast

8:30 am - 4:00 pm Workshop Sessions

Best Western Burley Inn & Convention Center

800 North Overland Ave. Burley, Idaho (just off I-84 exit 208)

WORKSHOP (continued
from page 1)

Guest Speaker - Jay Fuhrer is a Soil Health Specialist employed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Bismarck, North Dakota.

Jay has boots on the ground the last 38 years working with cropping systems,



Jay Fuhrer - Soil Health Specialist

grazing systems, cover crops, and gardens.

Jay has an extensive background working with groups and entities, such as; soil and water conservation districts, national and international no-till organizations, grazing clubs, watersheds, farm organizations, urban groups, and more. Jay's interest in soil health has resulted in numerous speaking engagements within the US and includes Argentina, Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Russia, and South Africa.

Recently, Jay spends his time at the Menoken Farm minimizing soil disturbance, adding soil armor, maximizing plant diversity, maintaining living roots in the soil, and integrating livestock.

STUDENTS TEST THE SOIL...

at Idaho State FFA & 4-H Land & Soil Evaluation Career Development Event held in the Mini-Cassia Area. See page 7 for details.



Thanks to our Advertisers.
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Why Plant Cover Crops?

- **less soil disturbance,**
- Increased **water holding capacity** in soil,
- Increased **organic matter** in the soil,
- **Decreased wind erosion,**
- **Decreased water erosion,**
- More **soil stability,**
- Natural **Weed control,** and
- **Increased nutrients in the soil** provided by certain cover crop varieties chosen ie: legumes for nitrogen or plants with long tap root systems which pull mobile nutrients and moisture back up to the surface from lower layers of the soil and provide moisture pathways.

**Cover Crops Provide Diverse
Benefits to Soil.**



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5th Annual SOIL HEALTH WORKSHOP



February 6, 2019

8:00 Registration & Continental Breakfast
8:30 am - 4:00 pm Workshop Sessions

**RSVP
Required**

Best Western Burley Inn & Convention Center
800 North Overland Ave. Burley, Idaho (just off I-84 exit 208)

2019 SOIL HEALTH Sustainability WORKSHOP

Direct Seed / Cover Crop Project

Wednesday, February 6, 2019

Best Western Burley Inn & Convention Center
800 North Overland Ave.
(just off I-84 exit 208)

- 8:00 am Registration
8:30 Welcome - Marlon Winger, Regional Agronomist
8:35 Direct Seed & Cover Crop Project - Brian Kossman, Minidoka SWCD
8:45 Regenerative Agriculture - Jay Fuhrer, Soil Health Specialist
10:30 Hospitality Break
10:45 Carbonomics-The Wonderful Economy of the soil - Keith Berns
12:30 Lunch
1:15 Local Farmers - Implementing the Principles of Soil Health
Rob Giesbrecht
Luke Adams
1:45 1st Break-Out Session w/ Group Discussions
A) Pesticide Credits/Biofumigation/Pest Control - Joel Packham
B) Dairy Feed/Optimum Nutrition from Cover Crops - Shane Holt
C) Cover Crops/What Does My Farm Need? - Keith Berns
D) Soil Health /How To Get Started - Jay Fuhrer
E) Nematode Resistant Cover Crop Solutions - Kent Whittig
2:50 Hospitality Break
3:00 2nd Break-Out Session (same choices as 1:45 schedule)
4:00 Adjourn



Jay Fuhrer



Keith Berns

Workshop , Luncheon, & Credits are FREE

RSVP required

to 208-572-3369 or ewcswcd@gmail.com

**Mini-Cassia
Direct Seed &
Cover Crop Project**

**Minidoka, West Cassia, & East Cassia
Soil & Water Conservation Districts**

East Cassia, West Cassia, & Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation Districts are non-profit organizations. All programs and services of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts are offered on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, marital status, or handicap.

2018 Idaho State Land & Soil Evaluation

By Doreen McMurray

Information & Educational Specialist for East & West Cassia SWCD

Students tested the soil in Minidoka County during the 48th Annual **Idaho State FFA and 4-H Land & Soil Evaluation Career Development Event** which was held on October 10, 2018. This contest is hosted each year by West Cassia & East Cassia Soil and Water Conservation Districts. High school age students trudged through mud following heavy rains enjoy as they worked to verify soil textures and slope at each of the 5 testing sites.



Students are not afraid to get their hands dirty (or muddy) as they test soil texture. These FFA and 4-H students have learned to

“evaluate the soil” and gain practical knowledge of the soil resource. They learn to look deeper than the plow layer to make determinations about the soil and learn to recognize soil factors and soil characteristics. This teaches students to make wise decisions in managing and using the land. It also teaches management, understanding, and an appreciation of the soil which will bring about informed decisions that can affect the future for all of us.

Regional Field Contest Days held throughout the state of Idaho involve approximately 450 youth and 50 advisors each year. FFA and 4-H teams winning at these regional contests advance to the State Contest held in Burley each year. Approximately 78 youth competed at the Idaho State event this year seeking honors to attend the National Event held in Oklahoma City each spring. Congratulations to the 2018 top teams Preston FFA and Troy FFA.

It takes the work of many people to make the regional and state events possible. Appreciation for the success of these events goes to the Land owners, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and to the many financial sponsors and volunteers.



Juniper Removal Continues in Cassia County

By Connor White, SGI Range & Wildlife Conservationist



Partnership based juniper removal projects, spearheaded by Pheasants Forever, continued this fall with over 4,000 acres treated across private, state, and BLM lands. This brings the total to over 30,000 acres treated since 2011, a large accomplishment for the efforts in the county. The work is being done primarily for sage grouse benefits; research has shown that sage grouse tend to avoid sagebrush landscapes with as little as 4 trees/acre (Google “conifer removal sage grouse” to find more information about this). However, there are range health benefits of doing this type of work as well. Junipers simply out-

compete all other rangeland vegetation on the landscape, eventually reducing the understory’s productivity to near nothing. Additionally, sagebrush landscapes hold snow more than a juniper covered landscape for an additional 9 days due to a lack of thermal reflectivity. This may not sound like much, but can be a big deal in a drought year for holding soil moisture and ensuring good grass growth.

Projects planned for this winter include doing a little bit of juniper skeleton work on recent fire areas, and burning some slash piles that have been drying out for a year. BLM just completed the planning process for a lot more areas

of treatment, so we will be staying busy improving rangelands for several years to come.

Photos on left show before/after photos from a state land parcel on the Jim Sage Mountains from a project we did in fall of 2017.

Photo to right shows work near the Castle Rocks State Park in Oct 2018.





COVER CROP SEED REBATES AVAILABLE

Seed rebates are available to landowners who have rented one of the Soil District's no-till drills and have planted a minimum 3-seed cover crop mix (See office for complete details). The direct seed/no-till drills can be used for any planting but are excellent for **Direct Seeding** into stubble from the previous harvest. Assistance with seed recommendations is available by contacting the NRCS offices.

Minidoka and Cassia Soil & Water Conservation Districts continue working together to help educate farmers on soil health issues and the benefits of planting cover crops. Supervisors from all 3 local Soil Districts donate their time to serve on the **Direct Seed/Cover Crop Project** Committee to supervise the project which provides education to landowners, seed reimbursements, and access and rental use of direct seed drills for cover crop plantings.

Contact either office for details: Burley (208-572-3369) Rupert (208-436-4202)



CONSERVATION SPEECH CONTEST

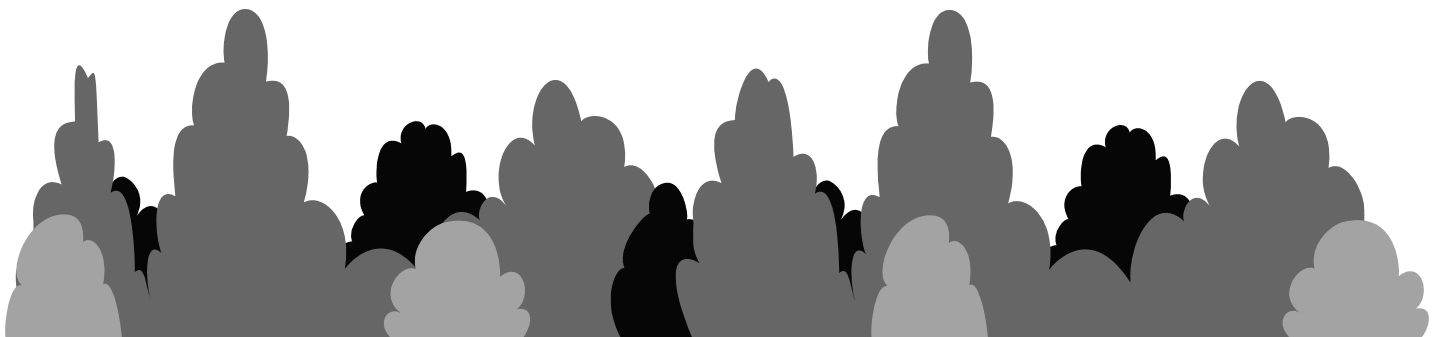
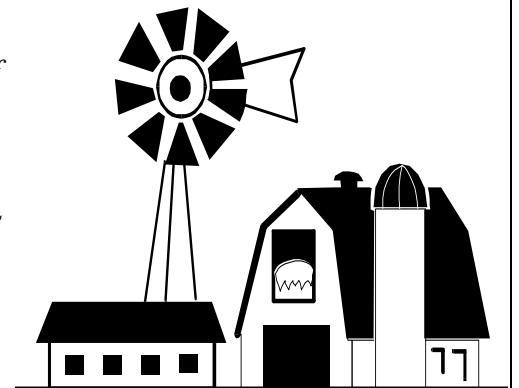
Districts held a Speech Contest for High School Students. The theme was "Watersheds - Our Water, Our Home". Photo shows winner: William Harrison from Minidoka SWCD.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Keeping weeds at bay is an ongoing issue. Spraying weeds is the common cure to our problem - or so we think. Spraying without a plan for the future leads to the same treatment, spraying more herbicide.

The objective of cover crops is to build soil health which reduces the need for toxic inputs such as herbicide and synthetic fertilizers.

In other words, in farming, as in life, if we keep doing the same thing over and over while expecting different results, that is insanity. Change the farming/gardening practice and the situation will change also.



How Can I Stop The Wind?

*By Doreen McMurray,
I & E Specialist
East & West Cassia SWCD*

“Will the wind ever stop blowing?” That’s a question you hear all the time when you live in Southern Idaho. On any windy day, you can look across the valley and the sky looks brown! The sky is full of blowing dirt. One danger



created by airborne soil is visibility for drivers on roadways. Soil & Water Conservation Districts consider wind erosion one of their highest priorities. East Cassia, West Cassia, and Minidoka Soil & Water Conservation Districts, located in the Mini-Cassia area, are focusing on 2 possible solutions to the wind erosion problem: Cover Crops & Windbreaks.

COVER CROPS: When you plant cover crops, you keep a living root in the soil which provides **many** benefits such as improved soil health, reduction of pesticide & herbicide use, reduction of fuel/tractor costs, increased water holding capacity in the soil, and livestock grazing possibilities. Cover Crops help to keep the soil on the ground and drastically reduce wind erosion.

The Districts which are made up of volunteers from our community, are currently planning their **5th Annual Soil Health Workshop**. It is free to the public. Topics will include: Regenerative Agriculture, Carbonomics - The Wonderful Economy of the Soil, Implementing the Principles of Soil Health, Dairy Feed for Optimum Nutrition from Cover Crops, What Cover Crops Does My Farm Need? How to get started in Soil Health Improvements, Nematode Resistant Cover Crop Solutions, and Pesticide Credit/Biofumigation & Pest Control. The workshop will be held on February 6th in Burley. Call 208-572-3369 to register.

WINDBREAKS: Planting windbreaks around your home, along roadways, or near livestock feeding areas can really make a difference in reducing wind velocity, and blowing snow and dirt. Windbreaks can reduce wind chill in the winter or provide shade in the summer. A windbreak properly placed near a roadway reduces the need for plowing snow and increases visibility. Planting trees increases property value, can work well as a sound barrier, and will provide wildlife habitat.

A **Seedling Tree Sale** is provided each year by our Soil & Water Conservation Districts. Tree orders are taken between February and April. The bare root seedling trees arrive mid-late April. For windbreak success, start planning now and place your order early. Consider location, irrigation, and protection for your seedlings. Bare root seedlings have an excellent survival rate. Special orders can also usually be accepted.

Information on the Seedling Tree Sale and the Soil Health Workshop can be found online at www.minicassiaswcd.com or in both the Burley (208-572-3369) and Rupert (208-436-4202) Field Offices.

EAST CASSIA, WEST CASSIA, & MINIDOKA
Soil and Water Conservation Districts
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District Board Meetings: Public welcome.

East Cassia — 1st Tuesday of each month.

West Cassia — 2nd Tuesday of each month.

Call 678-1225 x100 for details.

Minidoka — 2nd Thursday of each month.

Call 436-4202 for details.

Changes for Cassia SWCD
January Board Meetings

West Cassia SWCD
January 8, 2019 @ 10:00

East Cassia SWCD
January 8, 2019 @ 1:00

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Soil Health Workshop info & Speaker Bios
Cover Crop Assistance & Drill Rental Information
Cover Crop Seed Rebates Available
FFA Land & Soil Judging Event
Juniper Removal Project in Cassia County

Minidoka SWCD
98B South 200 West Rupert
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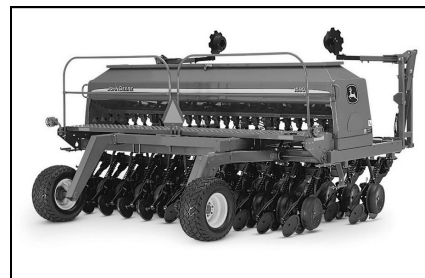
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RESERVE Direct Seed
DRILLS

Renting a Direct-Seed/No-Till Drill is a great way to try out direct seeding and cover crop practices on your farm. The benefits are many. Drill rental information is available in both the Burley and Rupert NRCS offices and on our web page at www.minicassiaswcd.com.

Both Cassia and Minidoka offices are taking direct seed drill reservations for the 2019 planting season. They will work with you around weather conflicts.



The upcoming 2019 Soil Health Workshop is also a good place to learn from experts and farmers currently working with cover crops. Call 208-572-3369 for info or to register for the workshop.