

Mini-Cassia Conservation Update

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

Volume No. 2017.3
December 2017

SOIL HEALTH WORKSHOP

The 4th Annual **Soil Health Workshop** sponsored by the soil districts in the Mini-Cassia area will be held on **February 8, 2018**. The workshop will include soil health training and provide free **Pesticide Credits**. The workshop is part of the educational goals of the Direct Seed & Cover Crop Project that Minidoka, West Cassia, and East Cassia Soil & Water Conservation Districts have been implementing.

The workshop will spotlight **Gabe Brown**, a pioneer of the current soil health movement. Gabe owns and operates a diversified 5,000 acre farm and ranch near Bismarck, North Dakota. He teaches the importance and power of healthy, functioning ecosystems.

The workshop will also include Regional Agronomist **Marlon Winger**, a passionate soil health specialist educator, Dairy Nutrition Consultant **Shane Holt**, and pesticide instruction by **Joel Packham**, Cassia County Agent.

Also included in the workshop will be a panel discussion with workshop presenters and a Meet & Greet session to visit one-on-one or in small groups to discuss local concerns and issues. **Pesticide Credits** will be available. The workshop includes continental breakfast, lunch and breaks. **The workshop and credits are free of charge but you must RSVP** as space is limited.

RSVP to dmcmurray6@gmail.com or 208-878-5556 to secure your spot.



COVER CROP TOUR HELD

In November, Soil Districts sponsored a Cover Crop Tour. Land owners rode a bus to farms around the mini-cassia area where cover crops are being used.

On the bus ride, farmers discussed the cover crop practices they have been implement-



Continued on page 3.

RESERVE DRILLS NOW (for Spring)

Renting the Direct-Seed/No-Till Drills is a great way to try out the direct seeding practice and plant cover crops on your farm. The benefits are many. Drill rental information is available in both Burley and Rupert NRCS offices. The upcoming Soil Health Workshop is also a good place to learn from farmers currently working with cover crops.

Both Cassia and Minidoka offices are taking direct seed drill reservations for the upcoming Spring 2018. They will work around weather conflicts. Call the Cassia office at 208-572-3369. Call the Minidoka office at 208-436-4202.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships are available to students planning to attend college fall of 2018 and major in an Ag related field. The Soil & Water Conservation Districts support agricultural education and encourage ag learning.



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.....	Justin Hunter
Member.....	Jonathan Harper.....		Aaron Firth
Associate Members.....			

District Employees

Megan Heward.....Cassia Administrative Assistant
Madi Patterson.....Cassia Office Assistant
Sharon Hardy-Mills.....Minidoka Administrative Assistant
Doreen McMurray.....Cassia Information & Education Specialist

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Personnel

David Mabey.....District Conservationist
Carolyn FirthISWCC Ag Program Specialist
Dinah Reaney.....Soil Conservationist
Connor WhiteRange & Wildlife Conservationist
Haydn Carson.....Soil Technician
Nathan Huber.....Soil Conservationist



NEWSLETTERS

are available by
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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. They are interested in farming issues and want to make a positive difference.

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

Burley Office — 208-572-3369

Rupert Office — 208-436-4202

CONTACT OUR OFFICES:

Minidoka Office 208-436-4202

Burley 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.



COVER CROP TOUR HELD

Continued from page 1.

ing and the outcomes they have seen so far. Each farmer discussed things they would change but each spoke of the benefits they've seen so far, their successes and each spoke of plans to continue. Farms visited include Heglar Creek Farms, the Rulon Spear Farm, both in the Raft River Valley, Luke Adams Farm north of Rupert, and Allen Sanderson farm near Paul.



DIRECT SEED DRILLS

It's not too early to reserve the Direct Seed/No-Till Drills. The drills are available to rent so farmers can try out cover crops on their own farm without the need to purchase their own drill. These drills can be used for any planting but are excellent for **Direct Seeding** into stubble from previous harvest. Contact either the Burley (208-572-3369) or Rupert (208-436-4202) office to reserve a drill or for details.

Districts are also offering **seed rebates**. A generous portion of your seed cost will be paid to those land-



owners meeting the minimum requirements: Check with one of the offices for details. Seed recommendations are available by contacting the NRCS offices in Burley or Rupert.

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 run and supervise the project which provides education to landowners, seed reimbursements, and access for rental use of direct seed drills for cover crop plantings.

--At A Glance--



West Cassia Chairman Richard Kunau presents check for donation toward completion of the Oakley FFA building and greenhouse Spring 2017. West Cassia made a donation toward the new Burley FFA Ag building in 2014.



Minidoka Board provides seeds for pollinators.

There has been a decline of healthy bee colonies and the need for pollinators such as bees and butterflies is greater than ever. Minidoka Board invites everyone to participate in an easy way to help increase pollinators in our area. Planting species that attract these pollinators can be a great attraction for bees and butterflies.

Through a grant from the PMT Foundation, Minidoka is providing these flower seed variety packets to encourage people to provide habitat specific to these declining species.

This is a fun interactive way for youth and adults to enjoy nature while helping with the food production. Without bees and butterflies to pollinate crops, fruit trees, or gardens, our world would become very different as we would not be sustained with out the food that these insects pollinate.



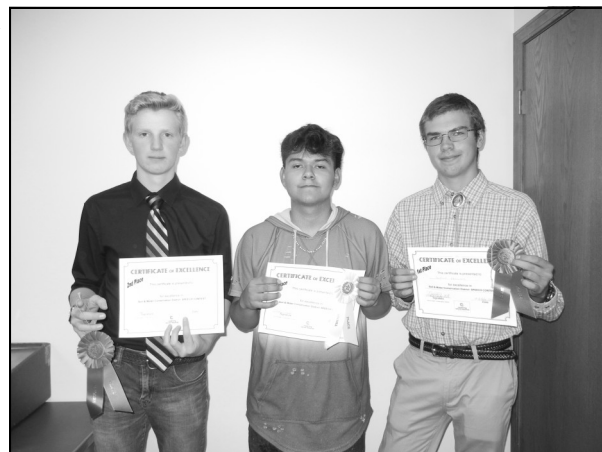
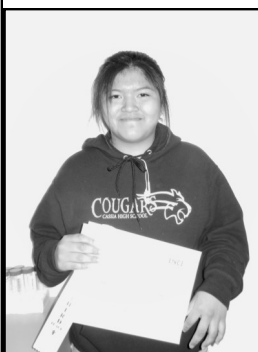
West Cassia Speech Winners (pictured above): 1st place - Blake Redhead, 2nd place - Broc Hanks, and 3rd place - Dominic Lemos.

28 Students Speak Up About Soil

28 High School students from Minidoka and Cassia Counties competed in a local Conservation Speech Contest. Students researched and wrote their own 3-5 minute speech on the topic "Healthy Soils are Full of Life". Students were judged on their presentation, their appearance, and speech content.



East Cassia Speech Winners (pictured above): 1st place - Maddie Landrum, 2nd place - Yarelle Marquez, and 3rd place - Haley Ponzo.



Minidoka Speech winners (pictured above): 1st place - William Harrison, 2nd place - Aaron Lofgran, and 3rd place - Frankie Versara.

2018 Seedling Tree Sale

The Annual Seedling Tree Sale will begin February 1st, 2018. Seedlings are an excellent way to get started on a windbreak or shelterbelt project. Seedlings are inexpensive and hardy.

Start planning your project now. Select the desired location where you need protection from the wind such as around a feedlot, on a property line, down a roadway or lane, surrounding your yard or livestock pens, or along a field for either wind protection or wildlife habitat shelterbelt. The seedlings selected are primarily for windbreaks but can also be used for beautification projects on your property or in your community.

Seedlings on the 2018 order form will be:

Common Purple Lilac,	Redosier Dogwood,	Lombardy Poplar,
Rocky Mountain Juniper,	Norway Poplar,	Colorado Blue Spruce,
Black Hills Spruce,	Cranberry Bush,	Russian Almond,
Smooth Sumac,	Blue Arctic Willow.	



East Cassia Chairman Mark Webb counting seedlings.

Remember:

1. *Seedling trees are very small – just “babies”, but their cost is minimal and their survival rate is excellent. Nearly all windbreaks are started with seedling-size plants to keep the costs down.*
2. *Do some careful planning before you begin. You can find many excellent sites on the internet that will give you guidance and direction to help with your plans. Consider proper distance between the windbreak and the area you want to be protected, and distance between trees and the distance between rows.*
3. *Ground preparation improves survival and health of plants,*
4. *Irrigation is vital,*
5. *Decide how many rows of trees and/or shrubs to plant, and the varieties that would be best.*

Also take into consideration protection for the seedlings from livestock and animals during the first few years. With good conditions, your seedlings should produce noticeable protection within 4-5 years. (7-12 years on dry-land).

SOIL & RANGE JUDGING

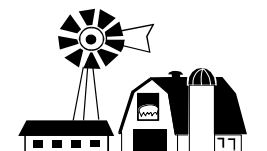
FFA & 4-H students from around the state of Idaho who have won at regional Soils and Range contests, advanced to the Idaho State Career Development Contests held in October.

The West Cassia and East Cassia Soil & Water Conservation Districts host the state contest with the assistance of Minidoka Soil District, Burley High School AG and FCCLA students and advisors, and NRCS and community volunteers.

Winning Rangeland teams were: Rockland, Rigby, and Gooding. Winning Land & Soil Evaluation Event teams were Kuna FFA, Rigby FFA, and Preston FFA. Thanks to the many businesses and individuals who support these contests.



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CONSERVATION POSTER CONTEST FOR 5th & 6th GRADERS

Students in 5th and 6th grades participated in a Conservation Poster Contest. The 2017 contest theme was “**Healthy Soils are Full of Life**”. Students planned their posters around the theme incorporating the natural resource areas of soil, water, wildlife, forestry, and range.



Declo Jr High top winners were: Alyssa Anthon, Alexys Rodriquez, and Ellie Erickson. Honorable Mention award to Jaden Dixon.



Marcelio Leon placed first at Declo Elementary and 1st overall East Cassia.



Declo Elementary School top winners were: Marcelio Leon, Jordan Taylor, and Alexis Osterhout. Honorable Mention awards were presented to Osiel Guerrero, Adelyn Stokes, Amelia Chesley, Alivia Kowitz, Dodge Edgar, Jennifer Garduno, Conner Jimenez, Ambree Fawcett, Ellie Darrington, Gabriel Crockett, and Lizania Martinez.



Oakley Elementary School (left) top winners were: Jentry Hawker, Bryce Oldham, and Kaycee Conant. Honorable Mention awards were presented to: Avery Bell, Jessica Pulsipher, Mia Lara, Alyssa Dewsnup, Kyler Robinson, Chloe Larson.



Raft River Elementary School (above) top winners were: Lily Hall, Ryan Udy, and Naomi Campbell. Honorable Mention awards to Charlee Udy, Thomas Harper, Allie Black, Sadee Sears, and Maicie Harper.



White Pine Intermediate School top winners were: Kennedy Chavez, Vincent Condon, Kenzie Crowley. Honorable Mention awards were presented to: Tate Larson, Isabelle Macias, Jessi Larsen, Michael Martinez, Bryce Duncan, Dallys Jones, Brandon Bonetti, Nicole Badachi, Keileigh Tolman, Llareli Gonzalez, Luis, Lillie Hollins, Tala Freiburger, Abby Noble, Noemi Tapia, Lohanny Nielsen, Anahy Gonzales, Rachel Nebeker, Natalie Kornbau, Eli Withers, Abby Montoga, Susie Larios, Emily Tran, Ezra Morgan, and Ivy Russell.

Cassia Winners



West Minico Jr. High School top winners were: 1st place Karelly (also the district winner), 2nd Haleigh, and 3rd Meliah.



Paul Elementary 5th grade left to right 1st place Aslynn, 2nd place Alejandra, 3rd place Kessiva



Rupert Elementary winners: 1st place Gabriela, 2nd place Roxy, 3rd place Lainee.



Above - St. Nicholas School winners: 3rd place Xavier, 2nd place Zackary, 1st place Valentino.



Above - Acequia Elementary Poster Winners: 3rd place Emilee, 2nd place Grayson, 1st place Evelyn.



Right - Poster winners from East Minico: left to right are 1st place Kate, 2nd place Trinity and 3rd place Brooklyn.

Minidoka Poster Winners

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MINICO FFA STUDENTS TOUR A&B Water Diversion

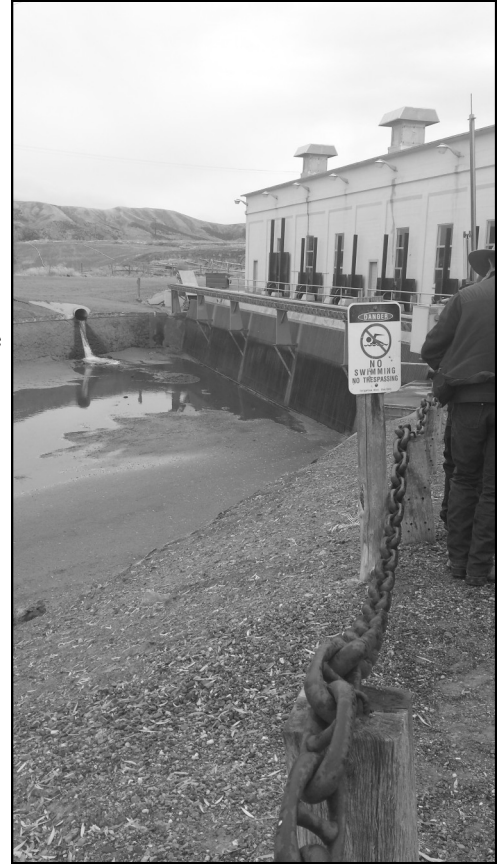


The Minidoka SWCD in conjunction with the Albion Historical Society prepared a one-day "LIQUID GOLD" seminar and excursion for the Minico High School FFA. 23 students and some advisors participated on 20 October 2017.

Survey equipment from the early 1900's and current up to date equipment was available for the students to use and learn on. Students learned about the history and the beginnings of the Minidoka and Oakley Dams and the canal systems in the Mini-Cassia area. The event included a view of the valley and a stop at a lift station on the A&B water diversion.

Right: Lift Station, part of the A&B Irrigation System.

Left: FFA students touring the big pumps in the lift station on the A&B irrigation system.



WHAT IS THE LAND & SOIL EVALUATION CDE?

Land Judging. That's what the Land & Soil Evaluation Career Development Event used to be called. Basically, it is making judgments about the soil. This land and home site evaluation is an event designed to "evaluate" a soil or set of soils. The purpose of land and home site evaluation is to teach participants to recognize soil factors and to assess soil characteristics. This will help the participants to make wise decisions in managing and using soil and land resources. Land evaluation can help participants understand:

1. Basic soil properties.
2. How physical and chemical soil properties affect crop growth.
3. Why various soils respond differently to management practices.
4. The influence of topographic features on soil productivity and conservation.
5. Soil and water conservation practices.
6. How soil properties may be used as a basis for selecting a home site.



The purpose of the Land & Soil Evaluation CDE is to:

- ◆ Enable each participant to learn how to recognize the physical features of the soil.
- ◆ Determine land capability for crop production
- ◆ Evaluate management practices needed for proper stewardship
- ◆ Investigate the soils in the region, the environment that surrounds them and their effect on their daily lives.

The West Cassia, East Cassia, and Minidoka Soil & Water Conservation Districts are proud to host the state event in the Mini Cassia area each October and they encourage and support agricultural education.

IASCD STATE CONFERENCE 2017

Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts' annual conference was held in November in Boise. The theme "Coach to the Goal" was the focus for speakers and presentations.

Supervisors attended a variety of awards meetings, guest speakers, and training sessions. During the IDEA (Idaho District Employee Association) Luncheon, employee Doreen McMurray was presented with the 25 Year Service Award.

Doreen is the Information & Educational Specialist for East Cassia & West Cassia Soil and Water Conservation Districts. She has been instrumental in planning the Idaho State FFA & 4-H Land & Soil Evaluation Event, as well as many awards, banquets, picnics, and meetings for the Soil Districts. She calls herself a "glorified party planner"! She was heavily involved in the district's seedling tree sale for many years being known to many as "the Tree Lady". She has also been heavily involved with the Mini-Cassia Direct Seed & Cover Crop Project focusing on the CIG grant, organization of the committee, and plans educational highlights like the Cover Crop Tours and the Annual Soil Health Workshops. She is responsible for the agricultural educational programs for youth within the county, the soil district newsletters (called "Mini-Cassia Conservation Update"), district publicity, and a variety of other district activities.

Doreen loves working for the Soil District Boards. She and her husband Kerry have 6 children. Doreen is active in church and community volunteer work. Her hobbies include family, quilting, sewing, and gardening.



*IDEA President Robbie Taylor presents
25 Year Service Award to District Employee
Doreen McMurray.*

DIVISION IV FALL MEETING

Minidoka District hosted the Fall Division IV Fall Meeting on October 24, 2017. Minidoka Chairman Brian Kossman welcomed the 11 Soil Districts to Minidoka County (Balanced Rock, Blaine, Camas, East Cassia, Gooding, Minidoka, North Side, Snake River, Twin Falls, West Cassia, and Wood River Soil & Water Conservation Districts).

Richard Kunau, Division IV Chairman facilitated the program which included state agency reports, guest speaker Pat Laubacher (Amalgamated Sugar Rep.), District Presentations from Snake River SWCD, Twin Falls SWCD, and Minidoka SWCD. Following dinner, high school students competed in the Division IV Speech Contest and awards were given for the Division IV Poster Contest.

THE PURPOSE of the Mini-Cassia Direct Seed/Cover Crop Project is to increase education in:

- ♦ The use of **direct seed farming**,
- ♦ The use of **cover crops**,
- ♦ How to **improve Soil Health**,
- ♦ To provide access to **equipment**, **seed information**, and **seed rebates** toward implementing these practices.

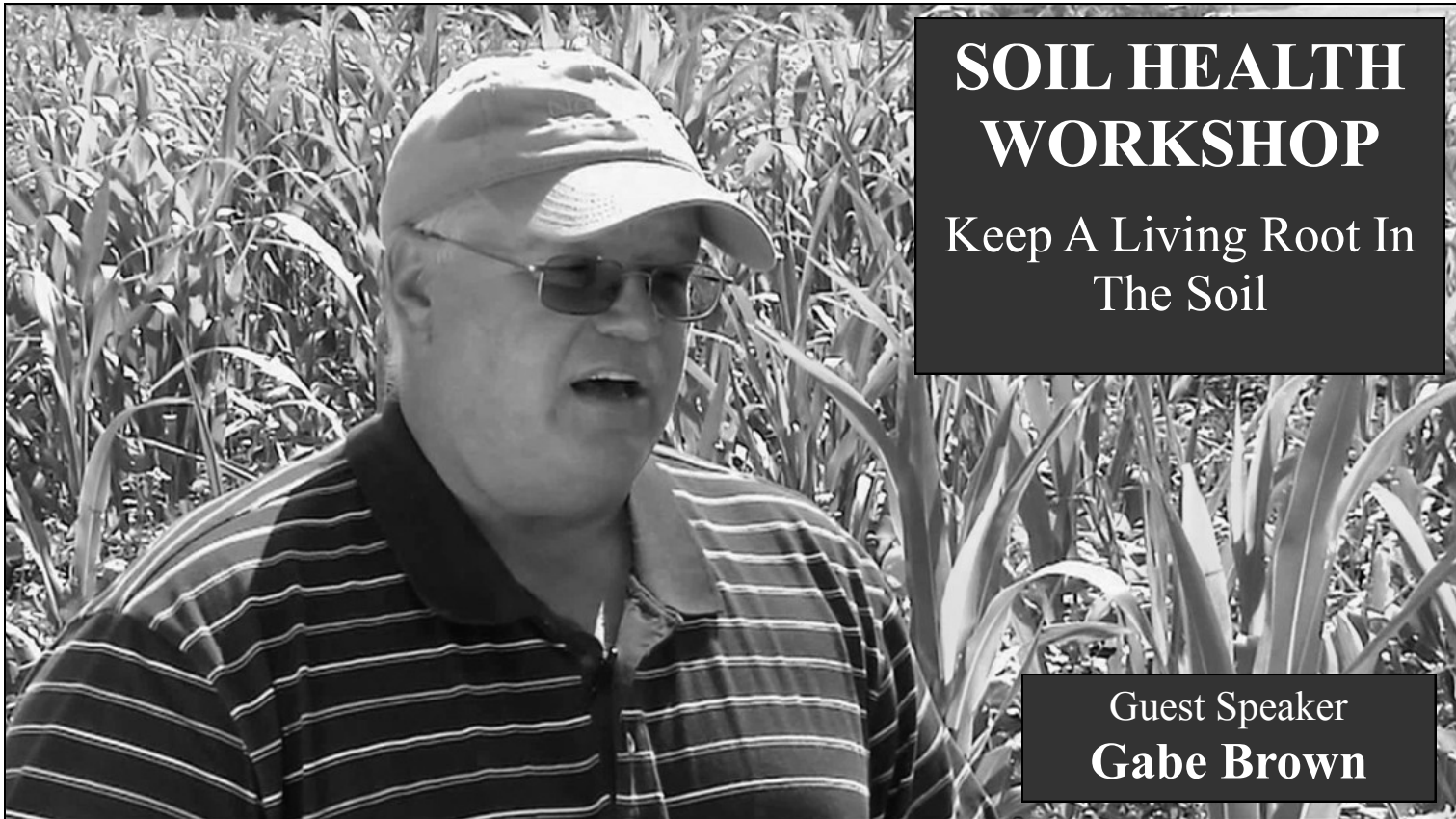
Direct Seed Drill
Information & contracts
can be picked up in either the
Rupert or Burley USDA offices,
or can be found online at
www.minicassiaswcd.com.

Cover Crops **Diversity Brings Benefits and** **Spreads Out The Risk**

Cover Crops allow crops to be grown with:

- **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.

Visit our webpage at: minicassiaswcd.com



SOIL HEALTH WORKSHOP

Keep A Living Root In
The Soil

Guest Speaker
Gabe Brown

February 8, 2018

8:30 Registration

9:00 am - 4:00 pm

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

- Pesticide Applicator Credits
- Lunch & Breaks Provided
- Marlon Winger, Regional Agronomist
- Shane Holt, Dairy Nutritionist
- Meet & Greet / Q & A opportunities

Workshop , Luncheon, & Credits are **FREE**

RSVP required *to Doreen at*
208-878-5556 or dmcmurray6@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
1361 East 16th Street
Burley, ID 83318

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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.

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Liquid Gold **FFA Tour** of Pump Station

Cover Crop Tour



Gabe Brown, Keynote Speaker for the upcoming Soil Health Workshop.

