

IDAHO SOIL & WATER  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

PERFORMANCE  
REPORT  
CERTIFICATION

DISTRICT:

Minidoka

Sun

FOR YEAR:

calendar year 2024

DUE :

December 30

December 20,

**CERTIFICATION**

On behalf of my local Board of Supervisors, I hereby certify that the attached Performance Report is true and accurate, and further submit said Report for the above named District and fiscal year.

A copy of this Performance Report shall be kept at the District office and is available for public inspection.



Board Supervisor Signature

Dusty Wilkins

Printed Name

12-4-24

Date

208 436 4202

District Telephone

minidoka.swed@gmail.com

District Email Address

FOR SWC USE ONLY:

DATE OF CONFIRMATION:



# Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District

85 East Baseline Road, Rupert Idaho 83350

## 2024 Performance Report

**General Information:** The Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District was organized on July 1 1955, spending the first five years helping farmer's level land, build irrigation structures and develop proper crop rotation. The District's efforts have evolved over the years, from equipment leases to producer, to education of the area school children and soil health workshops for the area growers.

**Mission:** Deliver natural resource technology and education, to promote wise use of natural resources and to promote management practices to ensure a sustainable natural resource base for present and future generations of producers/growers in Minidoka County.

**Location:** Minidoka County is in central southern Idaho, with the Snake River forming the Southern boundary, Power County to the East, Blaine County at the Northern end, with Lincoln and Jerome Counties to the West. Minidoka County has 267,567 acres in production agriculture, the average size farm is 432 acres. The county has a unique topography and elevation. Its Southern portion, which runs along the Snake River, was originally part of the riverbed. Its Northern and Eastern boundaries consist of lava flows with large and small areas of arable land. Although the surface structure is varied, there is only 180 feet difference in elevation from the lowest point at the Southwest corner, 4180 feet and its highest point in the Northeast corner, 4360.

**Water:** Water stored in reservoirs created by dams on the Snake River provide the mean of irrigation for the diversified farming on the original Minidoka Project. Water was first delivered to the Minidoka Project in 1907 with the completions of the Minidoka Dam. The old project consists of 72,221 acres. Deep wells provide the water for the 'new' Governmental Homestead Project consisting of 89,00 acres. Additional acres have been developed by private enterprise since the first Veteran Homestead drawing in 1953. Today there are approximately 160,000 acres of rich sagebrush land under irrigation by pumping. Irrigated farmland covers the Southern part of the county, while lava beds cover the Northern portion. Minidoka is the largest sugar beet producer in Idaho and in the 2017 census it showed that farmers and ranchers brought in \$354 million in far-gate receipts during that year.

**Legislative District 27** with Senator Kelly Anthon and Representatives Clay Handy and Doug Pickett

### Recap of the year 2024:

The 5-year Soil testing project has come to an end, the results will be made available as soon as the lab releases the information.

The Direct Seed Drill is staying active, there is a total of 13,354 acres so far on the drill, it went out 19 times with an average acreage planted being 47.4. There was a good variety of crops planted this year, being: Barley, Oats, cover crops, sorghum, alfalfa, triticale, and pasture grass. We will continue to maintain the Drill and provide the opportunity for area growers to try this form of conservation.

The Local Work Group (LWG) met and discussed possible needs for project money in the area for what NRCS calls Team 12.

Tree sales were brisk this year, with a good variety for windbreaks. Some folks get them for landscaping which helps with habitat. Some of the trees that were offered were Poplars, Quaken Aspen, Pines, Lilac, Artic Willow and Sumac.

We launched moisture monitor project in conjunction with the two Cassia Districts,. The plan was to have each grower place 4 monitors in a crop to observe the use of water for that particular crop. We are looking to obtain data that will support the past 9 years of workshops that promoted soil health protocols. One of the things noticed in some of the data that has been generated so far, is that most crops could be watered a little less and still maintain the yield desired.

We supported the FFA and 4-H in competitions around the state such as Land Judging, Envirothon, and Forestry contest along with KYG (Know Your Government) The Poster and Speech contests with the theme being May The Forest Be With You Always. Our District had one speech contestant make it to Division meeting this year.



We had one application for the High School scholarship, which goes to students who will be studying Ag in College.

Minidoka District sponsored a booth at the County Fair with the theme Small Town Big Hearts. As part of our display, we had a tall box with a clear front and a sugar beet planted in it so that folks could see the big root and the tops, also a chart showing the trail of the tiny seed to big root to a bag of sugar, that they eat. That display garnered a lot of interest with kids having their pictures taken with the sugar beet.



We also participated in sponsoring three Community Conservation classes. The first class was: Grow a Native Pollinator Garden, and what are Pollinators. We had guest speaker Heidi Tubbs of Tubbs Berry Farm speak on the Life of a Bee, and University of Idaho Extension Educator Jason Thomas who told about Meet the Beatles. And explained that not all bugs are bad bugs. The second class was titled Plant Whisperers, with topics such as summer gardening, pruning vegetables to produce more food, and flowers, and pest trapping. Our speakers were Vicki from Vicki's Country Gardens and Jason Thomas from U of I. The third class was Time to Hibernate/Preparing for Winter. The speakers were: Kathy Schmidt – Master Gardener: Preparing gardens for winter, Lindsey Schmitt – Pheasants Forever: Helping pollinators to winter over, and David & Viola Ricks – avid gardeners: Annuals and Bulbs.

There has been a huge interest in these Community Conservations Classes so they will continue into 2025



The Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District will host the District 27 legislative luncheon this year on December 16<sup>th</sup>. This will include East Cassia, Minidoka, Onieda and West Cassia Soil Conservation Districts, their Boards of Supervisors, and the Legislative people from District 27 – Lt Gov. Scott Bedke, Senator Kelly Anthon, Representative Doug Pickett, and Representative Clay Handy, along with a handful of agency people from NRCS, and ISWCD. This event will provide a casual opportunity to express concerns and possible issues for the area and the state that our growers would like addressed.