

**IDAHO SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

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

DISTRICT:

minidoka

FOR FISCAL YEAR:

2026

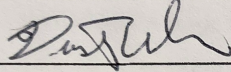
DUE :

March 31,

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

Dusty Wilkins

Printed Name

13 February 2026

Date

208 436 4202

District Telephone

minidoka-swcd@gmail.com

District Email Address

FOR SWC USE ONLY:

DATE OF CONFIRMATION:

Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District

98 West 200 South Suite B

Rupert Idaho 83350

208 436 4202

minidokaswcd@gmail.com

Annual Plan

1 July 2026- 30 June 2027

Five-Year Plan

1 July 2026- 30 June 2031

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Forward

The Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District is one of 50 Conservation Districts In the State of Idaho having been established in 1955 and recently celebrated its 70th anniversary. Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Districts are political subdivision of state government but are not state agencies. Conservation Districts are charged with carrying out programs for the conservation, use and development of soil, water, and other natural resources.

Conservation Districts are the primary entities to provide help to private landowners and land users in conservation, sustainment. Improvement, and enhancement of Idaho's natural resources. They are the catalysts for coordinating and implementing conservation programs., channeling expertise from all levels of government into action at the local level. Programs are nonregulatory, consisting of science- based technical assistance, incentive-based financial programs, and informational and educational programs at the local level.

By Legislation and by agreement, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission (ISWCC) and Idaho Department Water Resources (IDWR) who provide technical assistance to landowners and land users through Conservation Districts.

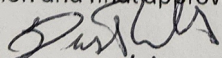
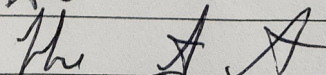
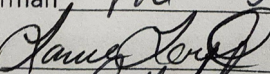
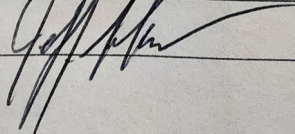
This annual plan and five-year Resource Conservation Business Plan was developed not only to guide the Conservation District, but also to encourage cooperation among landowners, government agencies, private organizations, and elected officials. Through knowledge and cooperation, all concerned can ensure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

This document identifies the resource needs in the conservation District and presents a resource conservation action plan for meeting these needs.

Certificate of Adoption

The Board of elected supervisors of the Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District this 11th day of March 2026 do hereby approve the following document known as the Annual and Five-year Resource Conservation Business Plan. This Plan will be in effect for a five-year period ending June 30, 2031, 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.

Chairman 
Vice Chairman 
Treasurer 
Supervisor 

Supporting Idaho Conservation Partners (as Applicable)

Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS)

Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission (ISWCC)

Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts (IASCD)

Minidoka County Extension (U of I)

Farm Service Association (FSA)

Community partners include

Minidoka County Commissioners

Mini-Cassia Chamber of Commerce

Citizens of the communities in Minidoka County

Businesses of Minidoka County

Minidoka Irrigation District and Ground Water pumpers

Lake Walcott association and Minidoka Dam

History

Southern Minidoka County was opened for Homesteading after the Minidoka Dam on the Snake River was completed and Lake Walcott was formed east of Rupert in 1907. The Minidoka Irrigation District now administers water in this area. In the late 1940's the Bureau of Reclamation found adequate underground water in the Snake River Plain aquifer and opened the Northside Pumping Division of the Minidoka Project to homesteading.

Public drawings for homesteads were held from 1953 to 1959 with 637 families taking up land in the project. They cleared sagebrush, leveled ground, laid out ditches, dug wells for drinking water and built barns and homes.

July 1, 1955, a homestead Committee that had formed to address local public concerns such as roads, telephone lines, fire protection, weed and pest control officially established the Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District for the northern three-fourths of the county.

The first supervisors of the Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) were Edward Smith, George Hedlind, Willard Warren and Roger Dean (all of Rupert) and George Falkner of Paul.

The first 5 years were spent helping farmers level land, build irrigation structures, and develop proper crop rotations for this area. Land-leveling equipment was in great demand, so the District obtained a government surplus TD-18 International track-tractor and purchased a land plane and carryall, which it leased to cooperators.

The Minidoka SWCD has assisted farmers and growers in converting to sprinkler irrigation, which lessens soil erosion on sandy or steep ground, while helping curb high water table problems. The District also promotes conservation practices to reduce erosion of surface-irrigated land. In many areas of the county. Concrete ditches, gated pipe, and pump backed systems made efficient use of water while reducing energy cost. With current information and standards of practice many of the old original concrete ditches and gated pipe have been replaced with wheel lines and pivots,

Minidoka SWCD participates in an annual tree sale that is targeted to help with planting wind breaks that also help with lessening of wind erosion, and water retention.

Over the years there have been major changes in the duties and priorities of the District. The 1985 Food Security Act bill required farmers receiving any form of federal funding to obtain a Conservation Plan of action for all actively farmed property. The District Board was given the responsibility of approving and monitoring these plans for effective implementation. In 1990, the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act (FACTA) expanded the government mandates and included water quality. Today, Minidoka SWCD is engaged in water quality, soil health and educational activities such as workshops, community education classes, displays at the county fair, supporting Forestry Contests, Envirothon contests, Land Judging, Ag in the classroom, FFA and 4-H. These involve people of all ages helping to understand and support agriculture in managing our lands for now and for the future generations.

Minidoka SWCD purchased a Direct-Seed or NO-Till Drill in 2015 to rent to growers while providing workshops on soil sustainability, soil health and water quality. This Drill is well maintained and still in use with over 13,300 acres of planting from small areas of 1 acre to over 100 at a time of use. Products that have been planted are mainly cover crops of at least 3 species, to wheat, grasses, sorghum, alfalfa, triticale, barley, and oats for example.

Administration and Funding

April 18, 1961 the southern part of Minidoka County was issued a certificate of organization as the Walcott Soil and Water Conservation District. The two Districts were consolidated into one, and a certificate of organization was issued by Pete Cenarusa, Idaho Secretary of State on April 16, 1969, to the Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District. The Minidoka boundaries make up the county boundaries while lands within the incorporated cities are not included in the District.

The District receives financing from the general fund of Minidoka County, the State of Idaho, revenue from the Direct Seed Drill, and the annual tree sales. The County is authorized by State law to provide the district with financial or other assistance. The State is authorized to match the county funds.

Minidoka SWCD is administered by a five-person board of supervisors elected by the local residents residing within the District. The board members serve four-year terms, they receive no salary but are entitled to reimbursement of expenses when carrying out responsibilities for the District. The five elected members select associate supervisors to assist them as needed. A regular meeting is held the second Wednesday of the month with special meetings called as needed. These meetings can be postponed with the seasonal demands of agriculture.

Policies

The Minidoka SWCD is governed by Chapter 27, Title 22. Of Idaho code. The Idaho Administrative Procedures Act IDAPA rule 60.05.02 and IDAPA rule 60.05.04 direct Soil Conservations Districts to establish a 5-year plan and Annual work plan to identify natural resource concerns within their boundaries and formulate strategies to address these concerns.

Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission (ISWCC) oversees the Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District through its powers and responsibilities. The Minidoka SWCD is a grassroots organization that has accepted the responsibility of overseeing the wise use and conservation of our natural resources.

The Board of supervisors also enlists the support of local, county, state, and federal agencies to assist them with their goals, when meetings are held to address local, state, federal issues that directly affect the conservation resources of this community, in order to preserve a locally administered voluntary approach for control and abatement of agricultural non-point source pollution with the responsibility inherent to districts as set forth in the 1987 Water Quality Act – Section 319; the Safe Drinking Water Act 1986; and the Clean Water Act of 1972 – Antidegradation Program. The District works to protect and enhance the quality and value of water resources of the State of Idaho.

Physical Characteristics

LAND: Minidoka County is in South Central Idaho. It is made up of the Snake River Plain section of the Columbia Plateau province. The District encompasses 487,794 acres. The land ownership is nearly split between private and public ownership; land use seems to remain relatively constant. The breakout of land is approximately: .4% water, 1.6% state owned, 15.8% National Park Service, 33% is Bureau of Land Management, 1.6% is Bureau of Reclamation, and 47.6 is Private Land.

The extreme 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 of 4180 feet, and its highest point in the northeast corner of 4360 feet. There is a butte in the western part of Minidoka County called Kamama Butte that is around 5,000 feet. A large portion of the Craters of the Moon National Preserve covers the northern part of Minidoka County.

Water: Water stored in reservoirs created by dams on the Snake River provides the means of irrigation for the diversified farming on the original Minidoka Project. Water was first delivered to the Minidoka Project in 1907 with the completion of Minidoka Dam. The old project consists of 72,221 acres. Deep wells provide the water for the new Governmental Homestead Project consisting of 89,000 acres. Additional acres have been developed by private enterprise since the first Veteran Homestead drawing in 1953. Today there is approximately 160,000 acres of rich sagebrush land under irrigation by pumping.

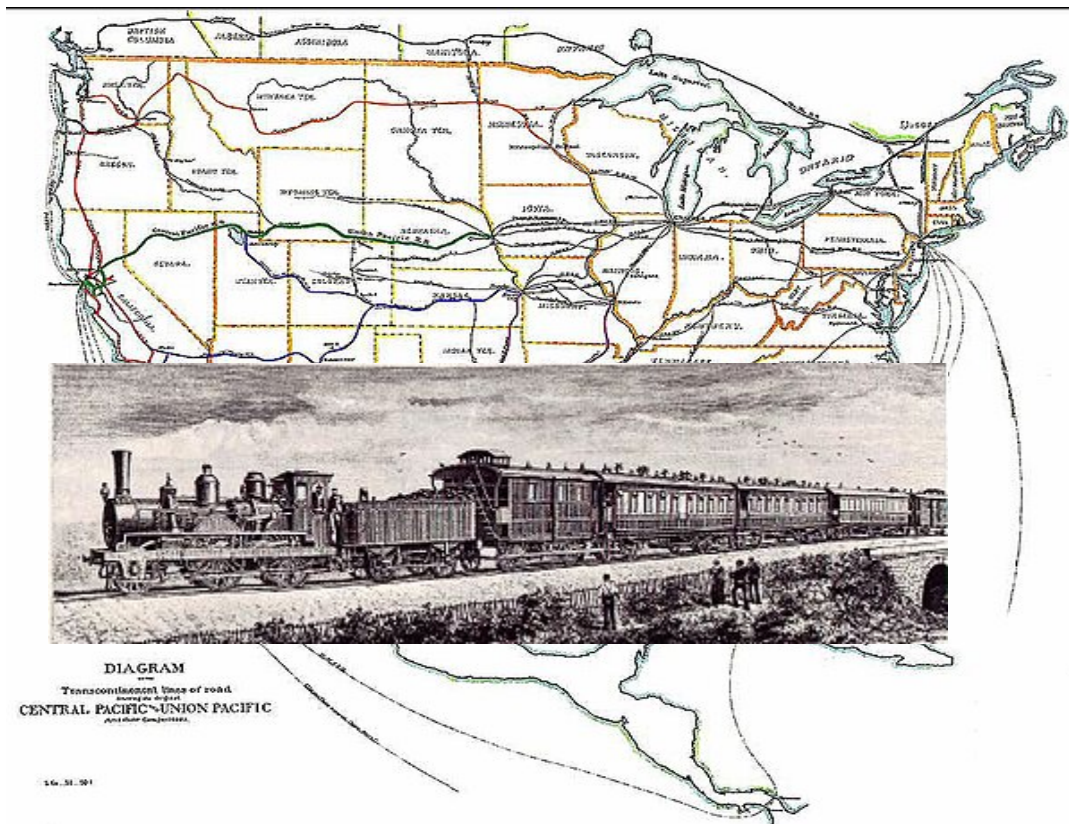
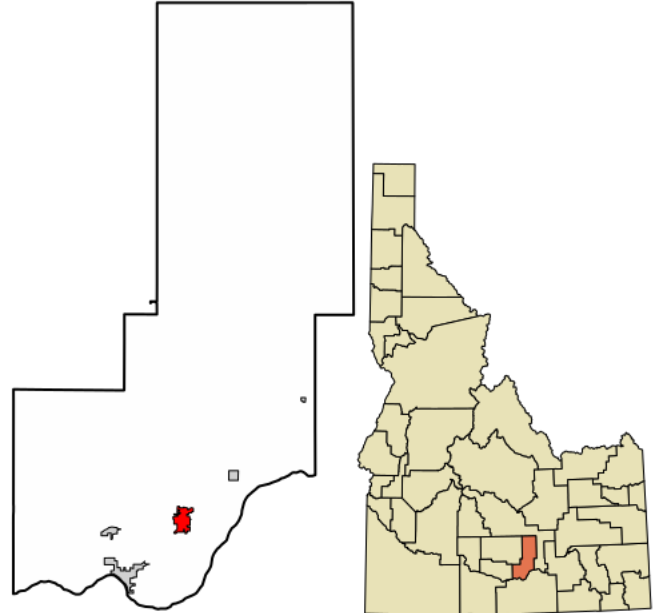
Climate: Minidoka County corresponds in general, with that of the semi-arid valleys of Southern Idaho. The annual precipitation is 9.48 inches coming primarily in the form of snow during the months of November through February. However, it did increase to 13.7 inches in 1968 and an unprecedented low of 3.38 as of September 1969. The mean temperature for Rupert is 62.2 degrees maximum, with highs of 105 degrees Fahrenheit recorded and minus 35 degrees Fahrenheit for the low. The Normal accumulative snowfall is 24 inches.

Population and Employment: There has been significant growth in Minidoka County in the past several years showing the current populations at 23,021 which is a .72% growth from 2024. The average income is \$42,369.00 yet there is a 14.89% poverty level in the county. Jobs are still heavily dependent upon agriculture and food processing, the county economy has diversified to include durable manufacturing, wholesale, and retail trade tied to agriculture, and hospitality. Along with the steady growth of population and the changing work force the demands for monitoring of moisture for crops has been observed with more practices of minimum tillage and technology to measure moisture needs for crops, to provide and sustain the cultivation and production of crops. Agriculture remains the number one business in Minidoka County. The major crops grown dry beans, hay, malt barley, potatoes, sugar beets, carrots, onions, wheat among other crops. Dairy cattle, feeder cattle, swine, sheep, goats and chickens are the primary animals raised in the county. Manufacturing is making a large

presence in the area, with cheese, powdered milk, butter, protein whey, potato and fruit packing, commodity shipping and warehousing of all variety are based in the area as well.

Map and District Boundary

The name Minidoka is said to be from Dakota Sioux origin which means 'a fountain of spring water.' Minidoka was first used in 1883 as a name for the Union Pacific's Oregon Short Line. A railroad spur in the middle of the Snake River Plain. The spur later became the site of a watering station along the line. The village of Minidoka grew up next to the station. The Minidoka name was then given to a reclamation project under President Theodore Roosevelt which included the construction of the Minidoka Dam that was completed in 1904. The Minidoka National Historic site (in Jerome County) was part of the original reclamation project, hence shares in the name. Minidoka County was created by the Idaho Legislature on January 28, 1913, by partition of Lincoln County.



Minidoka County Farming

There are 454 farms with an averages size of farm being 680 acres, only 94 of these are family farms. the market value of products sold by Minidoka farmers is about \$547,338,000 while farm production expenses run at \$484,262,000.

According to a University of Idaho study in 2022, agriculture is directly and indirectly responsible for 13 percent of Idaho’s total gross state product, one in every 9 jobs and 17 percent of the state’s total economic output.

Land in Farms by use (acres) according to the 2022 Census of agriculture which is provided every 5 years)

Cropland	278,599
Pastureland	24,335
Woodland	12

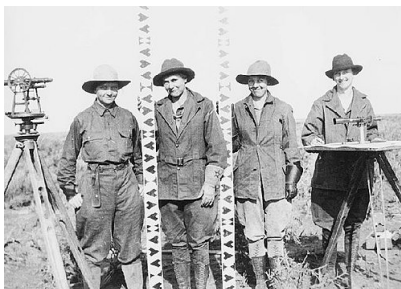
Other	5,616
Acres irrigated:	239,043

775 of land in farms



Land Use Practices (% of farms)

- No till = 4%,
- Reduced till = 9%,
- Intensive till = 33%,
- Cover Crop = 3%



Proposed Budget for FY 26. Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District

INCOME	Purposed		
County Appropriations	\$10,000	Dues and outreach continued	
State Base Operations	\$14,500	LSEE (land judging)	\$100
State Match	\$18,272	Poster Contest	\$400
Admin for projects	\$6,700	Speech Contest	\$250
Tree sales	\$1,600	Scholarships	\$3,000
Refunds or other	\$2,000	FFA	\$500
TOTAL INCOME	\$53,072	TOTAL DUES AND OUTREACH	\$10,016
EXPENSES		TRAINING	
PERSONNEL		LWG (Local work group)	\$100
Quarterly taxes	\$7,400	Board meetings/lunch	\$600
PERSI	\$5,500	Legislative Luncheon	\$1,000
Payroll	\$22,500	State Conference	\$2,000
TOTAL PERSONNEL EXPENSE	\$35,400	Classes	\$200
SUPPLIES		TOTAL TRAINING	\$3900
Computer/printer	\$800		
Postage	\$150	OTHER OPERATING EXPENSES	
Ink, paper, supplies	\$350	Special projects	\$2,000
TOTAL SUPPLIES	\$1,300	Soil testing or monitoring	\$1,000
PROFESSIONAL		PMT (telephone and internet)	\$1,000
CPA	\$250	Memorials	\$300
TOTAL PROFESSIONAL	\$250	TOTAL OTHER EXPENSES	\$5,300
DUES AND OUTREACH			
Div. IV	\$80		
IASCD	\$1,800		
Mid Snake RC&D	\$50		
NACD	\$190		
High Country RC&D	\$56		
IDEA	\$60		
Ag in the Classroom	\$150		
Banquets and Awards	\$2,100		
Envirothon	\$50	TOTAL INCOME	\$53,072
Forestry	\$50		
County Fair	\$100	TOTAL EXPENSE	\$58,491
KYG	\$300		
Natural Resource Camp	\$800	BALANCE	(\$5,418)

One-Year or Annual Plan

- 1) We have the completed data from the 5-year soil health assessment project. There were 3 farms across Minidoka County that participated in this project.
The take-away results are: All sites had an average of 75% reduction in total microbial biomass measurements via the PLFA test when compared to 2019. (could be the results of laboratory issue of storage length or testing procedure differences or it could have reflected on the abnormally hot June when samples were taken in 2021)
There were significantly higher CO₂ respiration rates in 2021 when compared with 2019 for most sites with higher rates of N mineralization. These results are likely explained by hot temperatures in June.
It was shown that there was not much change in organic matter content.
- 2) Minidoka SWCD will continue with the Direct seed Drill there are fewer large acre growers renting it, however, there are more of the 10 acre or less growers who are trying new to them practices in farming.
- 3) Minidoka SWCD will continue to work with NRCS in the local work group programs depending upon available funding.
- 4) Tree sales continue to be an important part of conservation and a priority. Sales begin mid-January and will culminate mid-April with the delivery the end of April first part of May all contingent upon the weather.
- 5) This is the last year of the moisture monitor project. Growers have found that they can reduce the amount of irrigation in many instances according to the data they are receiving.
- 6) Youth programs such as FFA and 4-H are a continued priority for the District. Our local FFA recently completed a new building for their projects and ongoing research. We are starting to see more local teams participate in competitions like land judging, Envirothon and others. We support KYG (know your government) and NRC (Natural Resources Camp) Ag in the Classroom, our Poster Contest is well received in the 5th and 6th grades. Speech contest is creating more interest in participation.
- 7) We will have at least one more Community Conservation class for our urban farmers teaching techniques of growing in a high desert area. We average 20 to 30 people in those classes.
- 8) Minidoka SWCD will continue to have a booth at the county fair where we display information of the benefits of trees for habitat and wind breaks, and the current farming practices.
- 9) Minidoka SWCD is providing a one – year cover crop rebate for growers in Minidoka County to encourage growers to keep cover on the ground during fall, winter and spring run-off time.
- 10) Minidoka SWCD is continuing to search out projects that will benefit the local growers.
- 11) The District continues to provide education concerning the current pest or weed control issues. In 2023-25 the concern was voles, now the concern is grasshoppers and crickets. And always weeds.



5- Year Plan



Water issues are an ongoing problem as we are in a continuing drought, and the winter of 2025-2026 has been very warm with very little rain and less snow. Minidoka county is a high desert region, with an annual rain fall for 8-10 inches in a good year, and even though we are in a drought according to the weather department Minidoka County received 8.5 inches of rain/snow in 2025. Water usage in eastern Idaho is an ongoing concern and how it could affect those down river. The amount of moisture received does not replenish what is being used, it just helps maintain.

Housing and business continue to grow in Minidoka County with some loss of farmland, and those who do not understand or appreciate farming and farming practices who have built homes in farming areas, this is causing concern with thoughts of ways to educate the urban dwellers to rural life and lifestyle. We have provided radio segments on conservation, and ag life. With the spread of housing and areas annexed it is changing the usage of the roads and making it more challenging to get commodities from field to processing and storage, and more difficult to move large ag equipment from field to field. Then there is the normal noises, equipment, trucks, buzz of pumps running, the smells of animals, and often blowing dust. These are issues that are continually being addressed and mitigated.

Priority and Plan of Action

This is the final year of a 3-year project partnership with East Cassia and West Cassia SWCD's. We contracted with a total of 17 growers to plant moisture monitors in their fields of various crops to obtain data helping to determine if there can be water savings and to see if cover crops provide benefit to those fields by retaining moisture. So far several growers have reported that they have seen a savings in water, they have shut off their sprinklers/pivots and used less rotations. Some growers have said they will continue with some form of monitors after this program is complete, they did find them helpful.

The Direct Seed Drill has been and is a means of contact with growers who may not try different practices otherwise in their rotation or on their property. We will continue to encourage cover crops, and plantings for habitat while renting the drill.

Forums and work group meetings and community conservation classes seem to be a good means of providing information, even though a lot of information can be found online it appears that people want that in person interaction and sharing of knowledge. So, we continue to provide that format.

There is a newsletter that is provided jointly with East Cassia, Minidoka, and West Cassia Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Each district contributes information and assistance in maintaining the newsletter which is mailed to 900 plus and emailed to 550 plus subscribers and can also be found online on the website - www.minicassiaswcd.com - This has proved to be a good resource for information, and acknowledgement of achievements in the communities. Some of the achievements noted have been the poster contest and speech contest winners from the schools in the three districts. There is often information on noxious weeds, various events such as the state Land and Soil

evaluation Career Development Event, recognition of area growers or cooperator of the year, information on the benefit of trees for windbreaks and habitat. Also included in the newsletter is information on projects that the three districts are supporting or working on.

Priority list:

Area of focus _____ time frame _____ who is accountable _____

Priority area Number 1: Moisture Monitor Project

We are in the final year of this 3-year project, with our last forum slated for March 2026, The data and how to use this information will be the final training. This is a joint project with the 2 Cassia SWCD's	2024-2026	Minidoka SWCD, East Cassia, West Cassia SWCD's Admins, SoilTech field man, 17 growers in the two counties.
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Priority area Number 2: Soil Health, Preservation and Education

Continue with the Direct Seed No-Til Drill with maintenance, renting it, education and benefits of cover crops through workshops, newsletters, radio, and personal contact	On going	Minidoka SWCD admin, Supervisors and area growers.
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Priority area Number 3: Trees and plants for habitat and Wind Breaks

Yearly seedling tree sales for habitat and wind breaks, combined with the two Cassia districts so that there are more options available. Education on planting, and purpose.	On going	Minidoka, East Cassia, and West Cassia SWCD's Admin, Supervisors, Extension Educators.
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Priority area Number 4: Partnership collaboration

Local Work group is one main component in our area partnerships, Setting goals, determine possible funding, areas of need, projects that need addressed, groups that need to be included and involved	On Going	Minidoka SWCD, NRCS, Supervisors, Ag related Groups, Extension office Educators, area Growers,
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Priority area Number 5: Seeking Projects

Be mindful of possible projects that meet the need for Soil and Water Conservation throughout Minidoka County. Seeking funding or partners to assist.	On Going	Minidoka SWCD, Supervisors, NRCS, ISSWC, Community members
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Priority area Number 6: Youth programs

Provide financial support and staff to various youth programs	On Going	FFA, 4-H, KYG, Land Judging, Envirothon, Forestry, Natural Resource Camp, Ag in the Classroom, Poster and Speech Contests, Admin, Local teachers, Supervisors
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Priority area Number 7: County Fair

Set up display booth at the County Fair, providing information on the SWCD projects and concerns for conservation in the county	Yearly	Minidoka SWCD, Admin, Supervisors, the public
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Priority area Number 8: Education of community on conservation and Grower workshops

Conservation updates on the radio, newsletter articles, workshops with speakers to address the current concerns and issues. Displays at the public library	Newsletter 3 to 4 times yearly Workshop yearly Radio as available Displays as needed	Website admin, Minidoka SWCD Admin, urban dwellers, hobby farmers, area growers, the public library
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Priority area Number 9: Cover Crop rebate

Encourage growers to keep cover on ground during fall and spring run-off and help mitigate blowing snow and dust	Currently in 2 nd year	Minidoka SWCD, Supervisors, Admin, and local growers
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Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District’s Elected Officials and Office Staff

Title	Name	Phone
	Dusty Wilkins	208 670 1641
	Luke Stevenson	208 431 7335
	Lance Lovell	208 431 3209
	Jeff Schow	208 219 9221
Admin	Sharon Hardy	208 430 3259

Minidoka SWCD is a political subdivision of the State of Idaho – authorities, powers, and structure contained in Soil Conservation District Law, Title 22, Chapter 27, Idaho Code. Organized July 1, 1955, to provide voluntary land and water conservation technical and financial assistance to landowners and uses within the Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District boundary. Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District is in Idaho District 27 being represented by Senate Pro Tem Kelly Anthon, Representative Doug Pickett and Representative Clay Handy.

VISION: To better co-ordinate and work with our partners and other districts to provide a higher level of assistance to the landowners and producers in each of our areas.

VALUES: Sustainable use of natural resources, support for agriculture activity that uses sustainable, economically feasible practices, value and respect for the Idaho Conservation Partnership, and Conservation education for adults and youth.

Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District; assisting land managers with their conservation choices.



What we grow

Best!

