



# Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District

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2025  
Performance  
Report

The Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District was organized on July 1, 1955, celebrating 70 years of being of service to area growers and ranchers this year. Minidoka SWCD provides a wide variety of programs and guides for farming, water and soil conservation practices, during many significant weather events over the years from extreme draught to flooding, and disastrous crop prices and failures in the 70 years of operations.

The Mission of the District is: deliver natural resource technology and education, to promote wise use of management practices ensuring a sustainable natural resource base for present and future generations of producers/growers in Minidoka County.

The Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District covers Minidoka County located in Southern Idaho with the southern boundary being the Snake River. Power County to the East, Blaine County at the Northern side and Jerome County to the West. Minidoka County has 278,599 acres in agriculture production. The average size farm is 432 acres. The topography is very unique, the Southern portion is riverbed from the original flow of the Snake River, with the Northern and Eastern boundaries consisting of lava flows that are interspersed with arable land. Although the surface structure is varied there is only 180 feet difference in elevation from the lowest point at the Southwest corner being 4180 feet to the highest point in the Northeast corner of 4360 feet.

Water is the life blood of agriculture, business, and families. There is large reservoir created by a diversion dam that provides irrigation for farming on the original Minidoka Project to today uses. Water was first delivered to the Minidoka project in 1907 with the completion of the Minidoka Dam. The old project consisted of 72,221 acres. Deep wells provided 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. Irrigated farmland covers the Southern part of the county, while lava beds cover the Northern portion. According to the latest farm census information (2022) Minidoka Farm-gate receipts were \$547,338,000. While farm production expenses were \$484,262,000. The number of farms in 2022 is 454 and the average of 432 acres, while in 1954 there were 2,019 farms and the average size was 160 acres. Currently 77% of Minidoka County is irrigated cropland/pasture. While 23% is woodland, towns, roadways, schools, business, waterways or lava flows.

The activities that the Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation District participate in and encourages are varied. The District co-sponsors with East Cassia and West Cassia Soil and Water Conservation districts a workshop for local producers. The information assists with pesticide credits, with the main concern being the issue of problematic voles invading our area. There were 106 attendees at the workshop that was held in January 2025. The Districts (East Cassia, Minidoka SWCD, West Cassia SWCD) work together to promote tree sales which help to mitigate wind and water erosion and provide habitat.



The Community Conservation classes for our urban farmers have been very successful, with topics from pollinators and their habitat to pruning trees and creating berms or retaining walls to assist with water erosion and flow.

(Extension educator Andy West)

The District provided 3 college scholarships this year for students pursuing further education in ag related fields.

(3 Scholarship winners and Supervisor Luke Stevenson)

Other youth projects that are supported by the Soil and Water Conservation District are KYG (know your government for 4-H) there were 7 participants, NRC (natural Resource camp) had 3 participants from our District this year. We provided financial support for Envirothon, and Forestry Contests held in Northern Idaho and



Land Judging which is a state competition for FFA held in the Mini-Cassia area. There were 16 teams from across the state (average 5 students per team). Guest speaker was Debbie Critchfield State Education for the Land Judging event.

(Debbie Critchfield)

We also sponsor an information booth at the county fair where we handout information on soil health, wind breaks and the benefits of habitat for pollinators.

(Minidoka County Fair)



The Poster contest this year handed out 706 posters with the theme being Home is Where the Habitat is.. it will be interesting to see the talent from the students in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades and the High school students who will participate in the speech contest this year.

The District also has an ongoing project of the Direct Seed no-till Drill, this is the 9<sup>th</sup> year, and the drill has 18917.9 acres on it, the average number of acres planted per each rental has been around 35 acres this year. Crops have been varied with barley, wheat, alfalfa, oats, sorghum, triticale, and various cover crops.

The District is winding down a three-year joint project of moisture monitors with 17 growers who are seeing benefits in reduce irrigation through the data collected from the monitors.

The year of 2025 the District provided a seed rebate for cover crops, requiring a least a 3 species variety of planting. This opportunity is for land in Minidoka County only.