

LWG--- Local Working Group

15 July 2025

Burley NRCS Field Office

Minutes

Those In Attendance:

Rob Cottle – East Cassia SWCD

Kurt Heward – East Cassia SWCD

Luke Stevenson – Minidoka SWCD

Chad Searle – West Cassia SWCD

Richard Kunau – West Cassia SWCD

Katlyn Scarrow – Idaho Dairymen

Ellie Burken – Pheasants Forever

Carolyn Firth – ISWCC

Gwen Taylor – NRCS, Farm Bill Specialist

Ethan Jayne – Idaho Rural Water Assoc.

David Mabey – NRCS

Sharon Hardy – SWCD admin

Doreen McMurray – SWCD admin

Rachelle Osterhout – SWCD admin

LOCAL WORKING GROUP BUSINESS - None of the LWG Officers were in attendance today. The SWCD representatives nominated Luke Stevenson (Minidoka SWCD Supervisor) to take charge of the meeting. Luke Stevenson called the meeting to order at 10:10 AM. Luke Stevenson made the motion to move forward with the committee leadership as is currently in place; ie: Dusty Wilkins – Chairman, Jordan Searle Vice-Chairman, and Brogan Higley – Co-Vice Chairman. Chad Searle seconded the motion. Motion passed.

2024-26 LWG Officers

Chairman – Dusty Wilkins (Minidoka SWCD)

Vice Chairman – Jordan Searle (West Cassia SWCD)

Co-Vice Chairman – Brogan Higley (East Cassia SWCD)

Local Working Group Discussion - Everyone in attendance can have a voice in discussions, but each organization represented at the meeting gets only one vote. The time was turned over to David Mabey who served as facilitator. Introductions were made around the room. David Mabey, NRCS Team Lead, discussed the purpose of the Local Work Group and the objective of Locally Led Conservation, sharing the importance of using the money we receive to provide the best and largest impact. He reviewed the history of monies received. David discussed last year's FY2025 Resource concerns; giving examples in each area. He then opened the floor for suggestions regarding objectives to consider for FY2026. Immediately, the first priorities brought up were water quantity and water quality, with some discussion on specific needs. Chad Searle recommended we follow last year's Resource Concern Priorities (list #1-8) since the committee observed that our priorities remain the same. Kurt Heward supported the recommendation. Submitted projects will be ranked in order of their compliance to the priority list below.

FY2026 LWG Priority Resource Concerns

- 1) Source Water Depletion (with ditch to pipe being the top priority)
- 2) Wind and Water Erosion (use of Cover Crops and other measures)
- 3) Soil Quality Limitation (soil health, cover crops)
- 4) Field Sediment, Nutrient, and Pathogen loss (cover crops)
- 5) Degraded Plant Condition (Range re-habilitation, Invasive species control, high tunnels)
- 6) Livestock Production Limitation (Range re-habilitation, water for livestock)
- 7) Storage & Handling of Pollutants (Ag waste)
- 8) Habitat (Pollinators)

The committee discussed distribution of money. Funding Pools will be distributed as follows:

70% Irrigation

1) Water Application

2) Conveyance

3) Ground water management areas (TMDL or listed areas 303d)

20% Water Quality / Soil Health

1) Soil Health

2) Animal Waste Management

3) Erosion

4) Nutrient Management

- 5% Range & Pasture
 - 1) Livestock Water
 - 2) Grazing, Invasive species, fire barriers
 - 3) Habitat / Plant Community
- 5% High Tunnels commercial or private & food insecurity
High Tunnels will take approximately the first \$30,000
- 0% Special Collaborative Projects (Dependent upon additional funding)
 - 1) Multiple Partners
 - 2) Address one or more of the 8 priority areas. (increased points for each additional priority area addressed)

Applications are accepted and assigned points based upon the Local Work Group committee's priorities and funding allotments for this year. Projects that meet the highest points get funded.

Any funds remaining in each fund pool, after all possible applications are funded, will be consolidated and go to the next eligible application(s) in the Irrigation fund pool.

The Local Working Group supports a practice cap where \$25,000 per year with a 3-year limit, be applied per contract where cover crops are being implemented.

Meeting adjourned 1:10 PM

Respectfully submitted by:

Doreen McMurray – East Cassia SWCD & West Cassia SWCD Admin
Sharon Hardy - Minidoka SWCD Admin