

**The WEST CASSIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
MINUTES -May, 2026 BOARD MEETING**

Place: NRCS Field Office, Burley, Idaho
Date: May 12, 2026
Time: 11:00 AM
Presiding: Richard Kunau

Supervisors Present
Richard Kunau – Chairman
Ken Black- Treasurer
Chad Searle- Member
Scott Yost- Member

Employees, Guests, and Agency Representatives:
Rachelle Osterhout, Admin
Doreen McMurray, I&E Specialist
David Mabey, NRCS
Betty Carlson, Cotterell Station Manager
Carolyn Firth, ISWCC

Supervisors Not Present
Jordan Searle- Vice-Chairman

- I. Meeting called to Order by:** Chairman Richard Kunau at 11:09 AM
- II. Changes to Agenda:** No Changes
- III. Minutes for previous meeting:** February 2026 Minutes: Ken Black moved to approve the February 2026 minutes. Chad Searle seconded. Motion Carried.
- IV. Treasurer's Report:** Ken Black reviewed the February, March, & April 2026 Treasurers Report. Ken Black made the motion to approve the February, March, & April 2026 Treasurers' Report. Chad Searle seconded the motion. Motion Carried.
- V. Calendar of Events:**
1. **Next Board Meeting:** June 23, 2026: Following award banquet
 2. **Mid-Snake RC&D:** June 12, 2026 11:00AM – 1:00 PM, Twin Falls
 3. **IASCD Conference:** November 17-19, 2026 University Inn, Moscow, Idaho
 4. **Division IV Fall Meeting:** First week in November
- VI. NEW BUSINESS**
1. **LGIP Update:** Rachelle Osterhout informed the board the funds have been moved into the LGIP account. She will be looking into admin access to print statements and moved funds when it is approved.
 2. **Amendment to WQPA:** Rachelle Osterhout updated the board on the amendment to the WQPA- Searle project. Additional funding was added to cover a portion of the survey costs. Chad Searle reported the project is complete, and they are awaiting a few final reports before closing out the project.
 3. **Cotterell Station Employee Handbook:** Rachelle presented updates made to the Cotterell Station Employee Handbook for the Board's review. After reviewing the changes, Ken Black made the motion to accept the updates made to the Cotterell Station Employee Handbook. Chad Searle seconded the motion. Motion Carried
 4. **Local Government Registry:** The due date for the Local Government Registry Report has changed to July 1, 2026. Rachelle will be working on getting the information for the report organized to submit in June 2026.
 5. **ISWCC Survey:** The ISWCC survey is due July 31, 2026. The board completed the survey. Rachelle will email the completed survey to the Commission.
 6. **College Scholarships:** Doreen McMurray presented two scholarship applications to the Board. There was discussion about the wording on the scholarship application. Doreen will update the application and present it to the board at a future meeting. It was also suggested that the application be distributed to schools in the Fall and Spring to encourage greater interest and participation. Chad Searle made the motion to award a \$1,200.00 scholarship to Tristan Vega and \$1,200.00 Azalea Walker. Scott Yost seconded the motion. Motion Carried.

7. **Natural Resource Camp:** Doreen McMurray shared two applications have been received for the camp. West Cassia has budgeted \$560.00 which will cover the majority of the cost for two students to attend the NRC camp. Chad Searle made the motion to reimburse Amanda Bowers \$560.00 for 2 children attending the Natural Resource Camp. Ken Black seconded the motion. Motion Carried. The amount to attend the 2026 camp was increased to \$310.00 per student. West Cassia will review the budgeted amount during the FY27 budget process.
8. **Awards Banquet:** Doreen McMurray shared information regarding the annual awards banquet. Minidoka SWCD will be hosting the banquet at the Minico FFA Facility on June 23, 2026. Invitations will be extended to supervisors, partners, scholarship recipients and parents, NRC attendees and parents, Commissioner and Legislatures, along with spouses. The board discussed individuals to be honored at the banquet. Craig Searle with Sage View Ag will be honored for his two WQPA projects.
9. **Other:**
 - **Poster Awards:** Doreen McMurray shared the awards that are presented to the 5th & 6th grade students that participate in the poster contest. The top three West Cassia SWCD winners receive a rosette ribbon and the posters advance on to the division level. In years past, honorable mention students receive a \$1.00 coin. Doreen presented the idea of deleting the honorable mention coins, and using that money to provide a soda stand gift card to the top three district winners. Ken Black made the motion to purchase three \$10.00 gift cards from a soda shop to include with the rosette ribbons for the top three winners moving onto the Division contest. Chad Searle seconded the motion. Motion Carried.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

1. **Contract Employee Payments:** Rachelle Osterhout reminded the board about the MOU between East Cassia SWCD & West Cassia SWCD. In the agreement it states West Cassia SWCD contract the I&E Specialist employee, Doreen McMurray, employed by East Cassia SWCD and will pay one-half of employee expenses. The payment will be made in June 2026 for the FY2026 services. The agreement also states East Cassia SWCD will contract the Administrative Assistant, Rachelle Osterhout, employed by West Cassia SWCD and will pay one-half of employee expenses. East Cassia SWCD will send the payment to West Cassia SWCD, in June 2026 for FY2026.

VIII. AGENCY REPORTS/ REQUESTS

1. **Cotterell Boat Station:** Betty Carlson updated the board about the slow start of the inspection season. She will be increasing hours starting in June 2026 with employees each working 39.5 hours per week. The schedule created will rotate every two weeks rotating between days and nights, as well as weekdays and weekends. Betty updated the board with the current employees. The board supported Rachelle contacting McKenzie A. and offering her a part time/ fill in position and Betty contacting Faith O. to begin training on May 18, 2026. The ISP shift is from 1:00 PM to 11:00 PM. This has allowed AIS inspectors to maximize ISP assistance with drive by watercraft during peak hours of travel.
2. **NRCS Update:** David Mabey shared the NRCS update. There is a hiring freeze in place until December 2026. David does not anticipate any positions filled in the Mini-Cassia area until January 2027. Funding for the fiscal year will be split between the three areas. The NRCS is planning on the Local Work Group meeting in November or December 2026, with the possibility of combining the meeting with Division IV.
3. **ISWCC Update:** Carolyn Firth shared the Commission update. The Commission has had a few staffing changes. The merge between the ISWCC and the IDWR has passed the Legislature and signed by the Governor. There will be three concurrent processes to finalize the process of the merger. Carolyn shared a more detailed overview of what to expect over the next year. Cassia county had a large CREP sign up and is anticipated to be approved.

Adjourn: Adjourn at 2:03 PM

Respectfully submitted by Rachelle Osterhout.