

West Cassia

Soil and Water Conservation District



Performance Report FY2024

(July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024)



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Board Meetings: 2nd Tuesday of the month at 11:00am

Mission Statement

To encourage responsible natural resource management and to implement conservation goals which improve air, soil, and water quality while improving wildlife habitat.

To educate both youth and adults about our local conservation practices and needs.

Top Priorities and Resource Concerns

1. Water Resource

Encouraging good conservation practices which conserve water and reduce soil erosion such as conversion from flood irrigation to sprinkler systems, promoting benefits of crop residue, conservation tillage, and cross slope farming practices. Make efforts to improve the groundwater within the Marsh Creek Nitrate Priority Area and Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer. Manage the Invasive Species Watercraft Inspection Station.

2. Rangeland

Education and encouragement of practices such as brush control, range seeding, pest and noxious weed control, and fire control practices. Address drought concerns through stock water improvements and planned grazing systems.

3. Direct Seed and Cover Crops

Encouraging farmers and landowners to implement new and innovative conservation farm practices such as the use of cover crops to improve soil health. Encourage direct seeding and cover crop plantings by renting a Direct Seed drill to landowners. Organize and provide a Soil Health & Water Conservation workshop.

4. Education

Education is a main focus for the districts. By educating students, while young, it helps them to understand the importance of being good stewards of the land. Education is encouraged by providing scholarships, poster and speech contests, Land & Soil Evaluation Event, and more. Education to the general public includes press releases, newsletters, active website, workshops and Local Work Group Input Meeting.

District Operations / Accomplishments

Board/Business Meetings

West Cassia SWCD holds monthly board meetings with agendas posted at the office and on the website. Supervisors and district employees attended the Fall 2023 Division IV meeting hosted by Camas SCD and the Spring 2024 Division IV meeting hosted by Wood River SWCD. Supervisors and employees attended the 79th annual IASCD conference in November 2023, in Boise, Idaho. Richard Kunau, chairman of West Cassia SWCD, also serves as Division IV Director, and Treasurer on the IASCD Board.

Operations

In February, board supervisors met with elected Cassia County Commissioners to review the proposed budget and activities as a basis for requesting county funding. The district requested a \$1,000.00 increase for the upcoming fiscal year. The districts completed yearly reports including an Annual Plan and a 5-Year Plan and completed a proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2025. West Cassia SWCD has an official financial audit conducted each year. Financial information and audit review and findings are available for public review. Employees manage the www.minicassiaswcd.com website spotlighting and recording district business and projects.



FY2024 Revenue 7/1/23 - 6/30/24

\$ 23,861.94	State Base & Match Funding
\$ 8,000.00	County Appropriations
\$ 1,899.60	Tree Sale Profits
\$ 22,603.98	Administrative Funds from Boat Station
\$ 2,279.25	Admin Fees Direct Seed & Cover Crop Project
\$ 450.00	Admin Fees for LSEE
\$ 59,094.77	TOTAL

West Cassia Soil and Water Conservation District

Awards Banquet

In the summer of 2024 Cassia Soil and Water Conservation Districts along with Minidoka held their annual Awards Banquet. West Cassia honored, retiring board member, Brent Stoker for 22 years of service. The district awarded Dale Darrington and Val Darrington with Conservation Farmer of the Year Award for their EQIP water management project. The board welcomed Chad Searle as a new Supervisor.

To honor former board member, Kathy Poulton's memory, donations were made in her name to be used towards continuing education for our youth. Kathy's children, Kaye Poulton-Timm and Michael Poulton chose one recipient from each of the High Schools in the Mini-Cassia area to each receive a \$1,000 scholarship.

Education and Outreach

West Cassia awarded 6 college scholarships of \$500.00 each to Hannah Groves, Parker Hanks, Chloe Larson, Malia Tolley, Aspen Osterhout and Hudson Kunau.



West Cassia contributed to Idaho Ag in the Classroom, Envirothon, Idaho State Forestry Contest, Know Your Government and Natural Resource Camp. The districts published a Conservation Update Newsletter 3 times a year to approximately 1,000 landowners.

Idaho State FFA & 4-H Land & Soil CDE

West Cassia District manages the annual Idaho State FFA & 4-H Land & Soil Evaluation Event. We provide contest planning, fundraising and volunteers. Preston FFA placed 1st and Troy FFA placed 2nd in the 2023 contest. Over 20 volunteers assisted, including SWCD District Supervisors, County Commissioners and soil scientists.



Cotterell Inspection Station

West Cassia partnered with the Idaho State Department of Agriculture for the 7th year to run The Cotterell Invasive Species Watercraft Inspection Station. The station runs on a calendar year, they opened in March 4, 2024 and closed November 30, 2024. They inspected a total of 9,133 watercraft, of which 378 came from infested waters. They hot washed 300 watercraft. Law enforcement returned 343 drive-by watercraft and assisted in keeping our employees safe. The district was responsible for day-to-day operations at the station, managing employees,



finances and payroll. The district received \$22,603.98 in administrative funds from the project.

Seedling Tree Sale

West Cassia Supervisors assisted with the annual Seedling Tree Sale. Over 3,021 seedlings were sold. Each of the three districts profited \$1,899.60. Income from the tree sale is used to help encourage good conservation practices in the community and help with student awards such as: college scholarships, Know Your Government (KYG) scholarships, Natural Resources Camp (NRC) scholarships, as well as prizes for speech and poster contest winners.

Direct Seed Drills

2023 was the 9th year to rent out the seed drills to landowners. Districts continued promoting good soil health practices which benefit landowners in many ways. Some benefits include improved water infiltration and increased water holding capacity of the soil, reducing the loss of top soil from blowing winds, and improving air quality and individual health.

Community Conservation Classes

East Cassia, Minidoka & West Cassia districts organized free Community Conservation Classes. The first class was held in June 2024 covering the topic of pollinators.



Moisture Monitoring Project

Soil District Supervisors welcomed growers to the Grower-Forum who are participating in their Moisture Monitoring Cost/Share Project. Growers learned about the moisture monitoring sensors and how to use the online technology to collect information about moisture levels and patterns in their soil. 13 Growers are participating in the project.

West Cassia SWCD Board of Supervisors

Richard Kunau	Chairman	137 N Hwy 77 Declo, ID 83323	richardkunau@gmail.com
Jordan Searle	Vice-Chairman	635 South 450 East Burley, ID 83318	jordansearle@gmail.com
Ken Black	Treasurer	352 S Hwy 27 Burley, ID 83318	ken.nina@msn.com
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