

Mini-Cassia Conservation Update

December 2019
Volume No. 2019.3



East Cassia, West Cassia, & Minidoka
Soil and Water Conservation Districts

6th Annual SOIL HEALTH WORKSHOP

Workshop TOPICS

- ♦ Seed Choices for Southern Idaho Soils
- ♦ Microbes / Soil Micro-biome
- ♦ The Power of Plant Diversity
- ♦ Basic Soil Health Education
- ♦ Rangeland & Grazing
- ♦ The 5 Principles of Soil Health
- ♦ Dry Farming & Cover Crops
- ♦ Local Farmer Experiences
- ♦ Pesticide & CCA Credits
- ♦ Free Continental Breakfast, Lunch & Vendor Fair



Date: **February 6, 2020**
(Thursday)

Place: Burley Best Western
Inn & Convention Center
(just off I-84 exit 208)

Time: **7:45** Registration
8:30-3:00 workshop

*Workshop, Credits, &
Meals are **FREE** of charge,
PLEASE RSVP.*

RSVP Required.

Email: ewcsacd@gmail.com

Phone: 208-572-3369

Web page: www.minicassiasacd.com

**Click on the "Direct Seed & Cover Crop" tab, then
click on "2020 Workshop"*

*Information continued
on page 3*

SEEDLING TREE SALE WILL BEGIN FEBRUARY 1st

Start planning your windbreak NOW! Here's how:

By Doreen McMurray
East & West Cassia Soil & Water Conservation District I & E Specialist

Windbreaks provide protection from blowing wind and snow, provide habitat for wildlife, and add beauty for increased property value. Windbreaks around your home or livestock feeding areas can make a difference in reducing not only wind velocity, but reducing blowing snow and dirt. They also gentle temperatures by reducing wind chill during cold seasons, and by providing shade in the summer. A windbreak properly placed near a roadway reduces the need for plowing snow and increases visibility. Windbreak trees also provide wildlife habitat. Trees work well as a sound or visual barrier and increase property value.

The first step is to make a plan. Consider **where** a windbreak is needed or where you would like trees to be planted. For a windbreak, it is recommended to have 3 to 5 rows for maximum benefit, but even one row will provide positive results.

Measure the width of your area and determine how many rows you want or have room for. Decide which variety of tree would be best in each row. A windbreak needs to be dense near the ground. So select a bushy, dense deciduous shrub for the windward or outside row. Shrubs make ideal single row or double row low windbreaks around yards and gardens. They are often used for living snow fences and provide excellent wildlife habitat. Shrubs also provide the needed protection for evergreens in a wind-

Continued on page 3.



District Board of Supervisors

	<u>East Cassia SWCD</u>	<u>West Cassia SWCD</u>	<u>Minidoka SWCD</u>
Chairman.....	Mark Webb.....	Richard Kunau.....	Brian Kossman
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 LaRae Warren.....Cassia Administrative Assistant
 Doreen McMurray.....Cassia Information & Education Specialist

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Personnel

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 Connor White.....Range & Wildlife Conservationist
 Haydn Carson.....Soil Technician
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NEWSLETTERS

are available by
e-mail!

If you are interested in receiving this and future newsletters electronically, send your e-mail address to:

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Type "NEWSLETTER"
in the subject box.

If you want your name removed from the newsletter mailing list, just let us know.

SUPERVISOR BOARD MEETINGS

Supervisors for the Soil and Water Conservation Districts are landowners in Cassia and Minidoka Counties who volunteer their time. They are interested in farming issues and want to make a positive difference in their communities.

Serving as a Supervisor is a great opportunity to learn how to improve your own operation as well as helping to make a difference within your community.

If you are interested in serving on the Soil & Water Conservation District in your area, contact a current board member or call one of the NRCS offices for information.

Monthly Board Meetings

(Public Welcome)

East Cassia SWCD - 1st Tuesday of ea month
West Cassia SWCD - 2nd Tuesday of ea month
Minidoka SWCD - 2nd Thursday of each month



Minidoka e-mail:
minidokaswcd@gmail.com

Cassia e-mail:
ewcswcd@gmail.com

Web page:
www.minicassiaswcd.com

Spanish translation is available in the office upon request.

CONTACT OUR OFFICES:

Rupert Field Office 208-436-4202
Burley Field Office 208-572-3369



The "Conservation Update" is published quarterly by the East Cassia, West Cassia, & Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation Districts and mailed to approximately 1,000 landowners. The distribution mailing list is maintained by the Information & Education Specialist in Burley, Idaho. Names may be added to or removed from the mailing list for the next publication by calling 208-572-3369.

East Cassia, West Cassia, & Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation Districts are non-profit organizations. All programs and services of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts are offered on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, marital status, or handicap.

6th Annual **SOIL HEALTH WORKSHOP**

(continued from page 1)

To the pressing worldwide challenge of restoring topsoil, soil ecologist Dr. Christine Jones offers an accessible, inspiring perspective. Over several decades, Christine has worked with innovative farmers and ranchers to implement regenerative land management practices that enhance biodiversity, productivity, nutrient cycling, carbon sequestration, water quality and community and catchment health. Following a highly respected career in public sector R&D, she founded Amazing Carbon and organized a series of 'Managing the Carbon Cycle' forums to promote the benefits of soil carbon.

Christine has gained international recognition as a speaker, presenting on 'The Fundamentals of Soil' at workshops, field days, seminars and conferences throughout Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Western Europe, Central America, USA and Canada. Christine is known world-wide for her soil health advocacy and informative, interactive teaching style.

Dr. Christine Jones (*pictured right*) will be the keynote speaker at the **2020 Soil Health Workshop** to be held in Burley, Idaho on **Thursday, February 6, 2020**. The **free** workshop and luncheon is sponsored by the Mini-Cassia Direct Seed & Cover Crop Project Committee, and Minidoka, West Cassia, and East Cassia Soil & Water Conservation Districts.

Please **RSVP** to ewcswcd@gmail.com or call **208-572-3369**. A registration link is available on our website at www.minicassiaswcd.com (*click on the Direct Seed & Cover Crop tab and the 2020 workshop tab*).



Dr. Christine Jones, (above) is an Internationally renowned and highly respected groundcover and soils ecologist.

SEEDLING TREE SALE *Continued from page 1.*

break and add beauty with color and blossoms.

Do your research. Study tree and shrub types and choose ones that will meet your goals. A variety of shrubs and trees provide the greatest benefit. Deciduous trees are often used for a middle row in a windbreak. They are generally faster growing than evergreens and thus provide earlier protection. Evergreen trees are an important part of a windbreak because they provide excellent protection year-round. They should be included in a windbreak whenever possible. You can plant one or two evergreen rows on the leeward side of the windbreak. The final row could be another shrub row. Bear in mind that 3-5 rows are best, but you can plant more or less rows as room allows.

A few things to remember:

Do some research, plan your windbreak carefully taking into consideration the greatest benefits from wind and sun.

Measure your area and plan appropriate room for trees to grow to maturity. Consider irrigation options.

Plan for protection from animals while trees get established.

Keep roots damp before and during planting.

Order your seedlings early while supplies are available.

Consider cost. The most economical way to get a windbreak growing is to plant seedlings. Their success rate is very good. Seedling Trees are available to order from the Soil & Water Conservation Districts starting in February. The seedlings come in bundles of 10 trees per bundle for a cost of \$35 plus tax for each bundle. Pre-order your trees early as supplies are limited. The seedlings will arrive mid to late April.



Check out our website at www.minicassiaswcd.com where you can see detailed photos and information on seedlings. Information will be available in the Burley USDA Field Office at 1361 East 16th St. or the Minidoka USDA Field Office 98 B South 200 West in Rupert. You can also request information and order forms by e-mail at ewcswcd@gmail.com. For more information, call **208-572-3369** or **208-436-4202**.

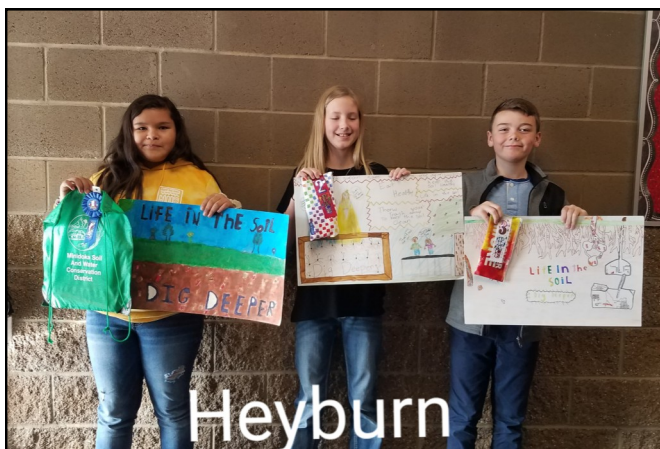
Minidoka SWED Poster Winners



East Minico: 1st place for District and 3rd place for Division - Madekine Serr, (2nd place moved) 3rd place Maria Alanis

2019 POSTER CONTEST

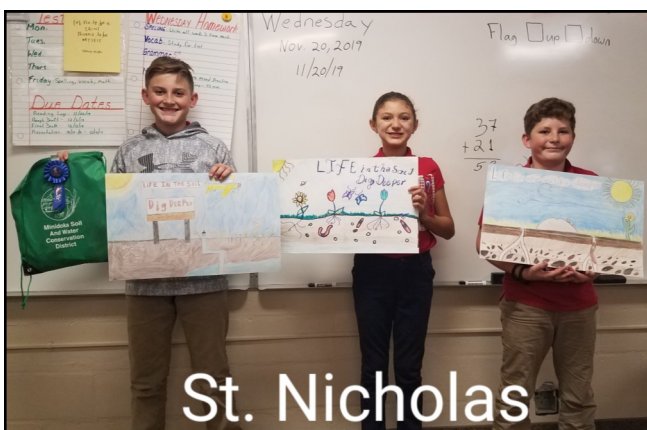
5th and 6th grade students in Minidoka and Cassia Counties participated in a poster contest with the theme: **"Life in the Soil—Dig Deeper"**. Winners were selected from each of the following schools:



Heyburn: 1st place and the Districts 3rd place Leilany, 2nd place Linkyn, 3rd place Jake



Rupert: 1st place Annahi, 2nd place Ariel (student not available so principal stood in), 3rd place Adamari



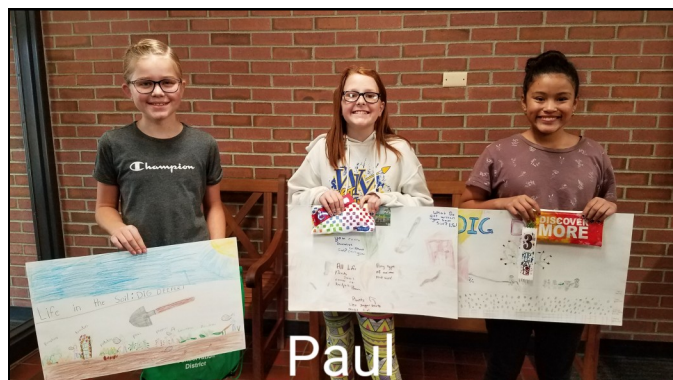
St. Nicholas: 1st place Will, 2nd place Harli, 3rd place Jeremiah



West Minico: 1st place Kamdyn, 2nd place Dylan, 3rd place Nidia



Acequia: 1st place Alina, 2nd place Kynzy, 3rd place Kessa



Paul: 1st place Brooke, 2nd place Prisley, 3rd place Ashley

Oakley



West Cassia



Dworshak



Mtn. View



JV Evans



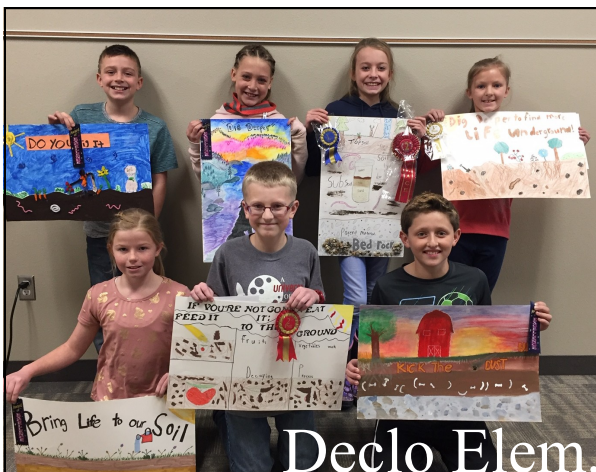
Declo Jr. High



East Cassia



Declo Elem.



Raft River



\$ REBATES AVAILABLE for COVER CROP PLANTINGS

Seed rebates are available to landowners who have rented one of the Soil District's no-till drills and have planted a minimum 3-seed cover crop mix (Check in the office for complete details).

Minidoka and Cassia Soil & Water Conservation Districts work together to help educate farmers on soil health issues and the benefits of planting cover crops. Contact either office for details:

Burley (208-572-3369) Rupert (208-436-4202)

5 Principles of Soil Health

1. **Soil Armor** - Keep soil covered to control weeds, reduce evaporation, maintain soil temperatures, reduce compaction, and more.
2. **Minimize Soil Disturbance** - This allows soil aggregates to rebuild, increases pore spaces, and improves soil productivity.
3. **Plant Diversity** - use crop rotation and cover crops to provide biodiversity and nutrient cycling, improves water infiltration, and reduces disease and pests.
4. **Continual Live Plant/Root** - Plant cover crops during dormant periods and after harvest. Benefits include building soil aggregates, controlling erosion, increasing moisture holding capacity, nutrient management, livestock integration, and more.....
5. **Livestock Integration** - recycles nutrients, minerals, vitamins, and carbon, provides higher nutritional diet for livestock, reduces livestock waste, and controls crop residues.



Photo courtesy of Georgia Grazing Lands Coalition.



SPEECH CONTEST 2019

Districts held their annual Speech Contest in October. High School students prepared 3-5 minute speeches on the theme:

“Life in the Soil - DIG DEEPER!”

Speech winners were:

Minidoka 1st Place - Clay Stapelman

West Cassia 1st Place - Emree Larson

2nd Place - Melissa Hardy

3rd Place - Rhodée Bedke

Emree and Clay both competed in the Division IV contest in Jerome. Emree won 1st place and advanced to the State Contest held in Boise in November winning 1st place there as well. Congratulations!

2019 IDAHO STATE LAND & SOIL EVALUATION EVENT

By Doreen McMurray

Information & Educational Specialist for East & West Cassia Soil & Water Conservation Districts



Above: Speech Contest Winner - Emree Larson pictured with (left) State NRCS DC - Curtis Elke and (right) West Cassia SWCD Chairman and Division IV Chair - Richard Kunau.

Students tested the soil in Cassia County during the 49th Annual *Idaho State FFA and 4-H Land & Soil Evaluation Career Development Event* which was held on October 9, 2019. This contest is hosted each year by West Cassia, East Cassia, and Minidoka Soil and Water Conservation Districts. High school age students braved bitter winds as they worked to verify soil textures and slope at each of the 5 testing sites.

FFA and 4-H students have learned to “**evaluate the soil**” and gain practical knowledge of the soil resource. This teaches students to make wise decisions in managing and using the land. It also teaches management, understanding, and an appreciation of the soil which in turn will bring about informed decisions that can affect the future for all of us.

Regional Field Contest Days held throughout the state of Idaho involve approximately 450 youth and 50 advisors each year. FFA and 4-H teams winning at these regional contests advance to the State Contest held in Burley each year. Sixty Eight students competed at the Idaho State event this year seeking honors to attend the National Event held in Oklahoma City each spring. Congratulations to the 2019 top teams Troy FFA and Cambridge FFA.



It takes the work of many people to make the regional and state events possible. Appreciation for the success of these events goes to the Land owners, NRCS personnel, FFA Advisors, Burley High School, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and to the many financial sponsors and volunteers.



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SOIL HEALTH PRINCIPLES

1. Keep the soil covered
2. Minimize soil disturbance
3. Increase crop diversity
4. Keep living roots in the soil
5. Integrate livestock

Why Plant Cover Crops?

- **less soil disturbance,**
- Increased **water holding capacity** in soil,
- Increased **organic matter** in the soil,
- **Decreased wind erosion,**
- **Decreased water erosion,**
- More **soil stability,**
- Natural **Weed control,** and
- **Increased nutrients in the soil** provided by certain cover crop varieties chosen ie: legumes for nitrogen or plants with long tap root systems which pull mobile nutrients and moisture back up to the surface from lower layers of the soil and provide moisture pathways.

Cover Crops Provide Diverse Benefits to Soil.

ASK YOURSELF —
HOW CAN COVER CROPS
HELP ME?

What are your goals / resource concerns? Generally speaking.....

1. The more specific your goals / concerns, the less diverse your cover crop mixes will typically be.
2. The tighter your planting windows, the fewer species will work and thus the less diverse your mixes will be.
3. Minimum of 6-8 weeks of growth necessary to achieve most benefits.

Soil Moisture Management - What do I need?

- Increase Infiltration
- Reduce Evaporation
- Remove Excess Moisture
- Terminate while cover crop is vegetative (before peak water use occurs)
- Six weeks of growth to achieve “rotation effect”

What is your Time Frame? What is your Availability?

1. Spring—fallow ground / prevent plant or prior to a summer crop
2. Early Summer—Right after small grain hay harvest
3. Late Summer—Delay after wheat harvest
4. Fall—After fall crops.



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Soil District Board Meetings: Public is welcome.

East Cassia - 1st Tuesday of each month.

West Cassia - 2nd Tuesday of each month.

Call 208-572-3369 for details.

Minidoka - 2nd Thursday of each month.

Call 208-436-4202 for details.

Soil Health MATTERS!

Learn more at the FREE
upcoming

**Soil Health
Workshop.**

See inside for details.

East & West Cassia
1361 East 16th Street Burley
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98B South 200 West Rupert
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Land & Soil Evaluation Event - Seedling Tree Sale starts February 1, 2020