



Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts

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January 9, 2012

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Dear Sir/Ma'am,

Welcome back to the 2012 legislative session! We hope you have had an enjoyable holiday season, and are ready for an eventful few months in the state capitol. While we know your first few weeks in Boise will be hectic, we would like to give you a brief background on the Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts (IASCD) and the fifty individual soil conservation districts in Idaho.

Idaho saw its first soil conservation district law passed on March 1, 1939, and the first conservation districts were formed in 1940. These were Latah, Bear Lake, Portneuf, Squaw Creek, and Mayfield (later Elmore). Today, Idaho has 50 conservation districts and state statute identifies the districts, along with the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission, as the primary entities to provide assistance to private landowners and land users in the conservation, sustainment, improvement, and enhancement of Idaho's natural resources. IASCD is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit and we are the unified voice for the districts.

The fifty soil conservation districts we represent have a remarkable track record in working with farmers, ranchers, private land owners, rural and city residents, and communities to protect and preserve our state's natural resources. We all serve on local conservation district boards, and we have assisted willing land owners to develop common sense solutions to environmental challenges they face. These solutions are crafted by people with significant knowledge of the local land and expertise in natural resource management, not an overreaching federal agency.

The work accomplished by our districts, in partnership with the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, is an example of good public policy and good government. This partnership provides useful information about land use change, soil erosion and health, water quality and quantity, and wildlife habitat.

Locally-led, non-regulatory conservation is the most effective way to help individual land owners and communities preserve natural resources using a voluntary approach to land stewardship. The state dollars invested in these programs ripple out into our communities and impact all facets of our economy; less sediment in rivers means a pristine river for fishing or rafting; healthy soil means a more plentiful crop; responsible land management means a balance between species habitat and grazing.

Our districts and IASCD will be in touch with you during this session to share successful conservation projects that have had positive impacts to their local environment and provide background to you on any natural resources issues that come before you. Districts and IASCD will also share their support for a fully funded 2-to-1 state fund match to districts. This would be consistent with the provision in Idaho Code 22-2727.

We are hopeful you will reach out to your local soil conservation districts or IASCD if you have any questions, or if we can be of assistance to you.

Thank you for your time and your support.

Sincerely,

Randy Purser
President

Kit Tillotson
Vice President

Steve Becker
Treasurer

Rick Rodgers
Director

Billie Brown
Secretary