

## PART I – AGENCY PROFILE

### AGENCY OVERVIEW

The Idaho Soil Conservation Commission (SWCC) was originally created in 1939 by Idaho's soil conservation district law (Idaho Code § 22-2716, et. seq.). Idaho's water quality law designated SWCC as a lead agency on conservation programs like the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), Total Maximum Daily Load Program (TMDL) for agriculture and grazing components only), voluntary planning, and implementation of projects related to grazing and agricultural activities (Idaho Code § 39-3602). SWCC has no regulatory authority. In addition to these responsibilities, SWCC also supports voluntary conservation activities of local soil and water conservation districts and operates incentive programs to promote voluntary conservation including the Resource Conservation and Rangeland Development Program (RCRDP), which makes low interest loans to agricultural borrowers for conservation purposes (Idaho Code § 22-2730).

The SWCC is led by five commissioners appointed by the Governor: Chairman Richard Bronson, Vice Chairman Dave Radford, Secretary Roger Stutzman, and members Gerald Trebesch and H. Norman Wright, and an administrator, Teri Murrison, who reports to them. The administrator oversees 16 administrative staff and technical experts located in offices around the State (most field staff are co-located with local conservation districts within U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) field offices).

The SWCC was administratively housed at the Department of Lands until 1997, when the Legislature transferred it to the Idaho State Department of Agriculture. In 2010, the Legislature recognized the importance of the independent, non-regulatory role and services that SWCC provides as a vehicle to reduce the need for environmental regulations. In FY 2011, the Legislature renamed the Commission the Soil & Water Conservation Commission, and granted SWCC autonomy by authorizing it to enter into contracts for the proper administration of its statutory authorities. The SWCC contracts with the Department of Administration for fiscal, human resources, and information technology support.

Over the last several years, the size and capacity of SWCC has been significantly reduced: at the beginning of fiscal year (FY) 2009, the SWCC had 33 full-time and contract staff responsible for technical and administrative program delivery. By the end of FY 2010, the SWCC had 15 full-time staff and two vacancies, and in FY 2012, SWC had 16 FTPs. This reduction of personnel has significantly impacted service delivery.

### VISION

Conservation in Idaho reflects locally-led natural resource conservation leadership and priorities, is voluntary and incentive-based, non-regulatory, and demonstrates scientifically sound stewardship. The Commission and local conservation districts are the primary entities to lead coordinated conservation efforts to provide landowners and land-users with assistance and solutions for natural resource concerns and issues.

### MISSION

To facilitate coordinated non-regulatory, voluntary, and locally-led conservation by federal, state, and local governments including Idaho's conservation districts and other partners to conserve, sustain, improve, and enhance soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources.

## VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY

The Commission is dedicated to guiding principles for each goal and related activity.

- Satisfy legislative intent and statute
- Benefit the environment and Idaho's agricultural-based economy
- Benefit conservation districts' locally led, voluntary, non-regulatory priorities and projects
- Benefit the Commission's ability to serve
- Promote fiscal responsibility
- Strengthen existing and build new conservation partnerships
- Incorporate valid scientific data and practices

## CORE FUNCTIONS

### DISTRICT SUPPORT AND SERVICES

The Commission provides leadership and technical and other assistance to Idaho's 50 local conservation districts as established in Title 22 Chapter 27, Idaho Code. Traditionally, the Commission has provided technical assistance to the districts in addition to disbursing annual legislative appropriations and ensuring state reporting requirements (Title 22 Chapter 27, Idaho Code; Title 39 Chapter 36, Idaho Code).

### COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION SERVICES

The Commission is required to provide and promote non-regulatory, science-based incentive programs to develop and accelerate development of voluntary conservation activities around the state. The SWCC also provides policy and program mechanisms to enhance the environmental quality and economic productivity of the state including programs that improve water quality and quantity within the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer, leading TMDL plan development related to agricultural and grazing components, assisting with planning and implementation efforts in Nitrate Priority Areas, and promoting computer-based conservation planning and reporting tools (Title 22 Chapter 27, Idaho Code; Title 39 Chapter 36, Idaho Code). A flagship program is the Resource Conservation and Rangeland Development Program, which provides low-interest loans to eligible applicants to implement resource management projects (Title 22 Chapter 27, Idaho Code).

### ADMINISTRATION

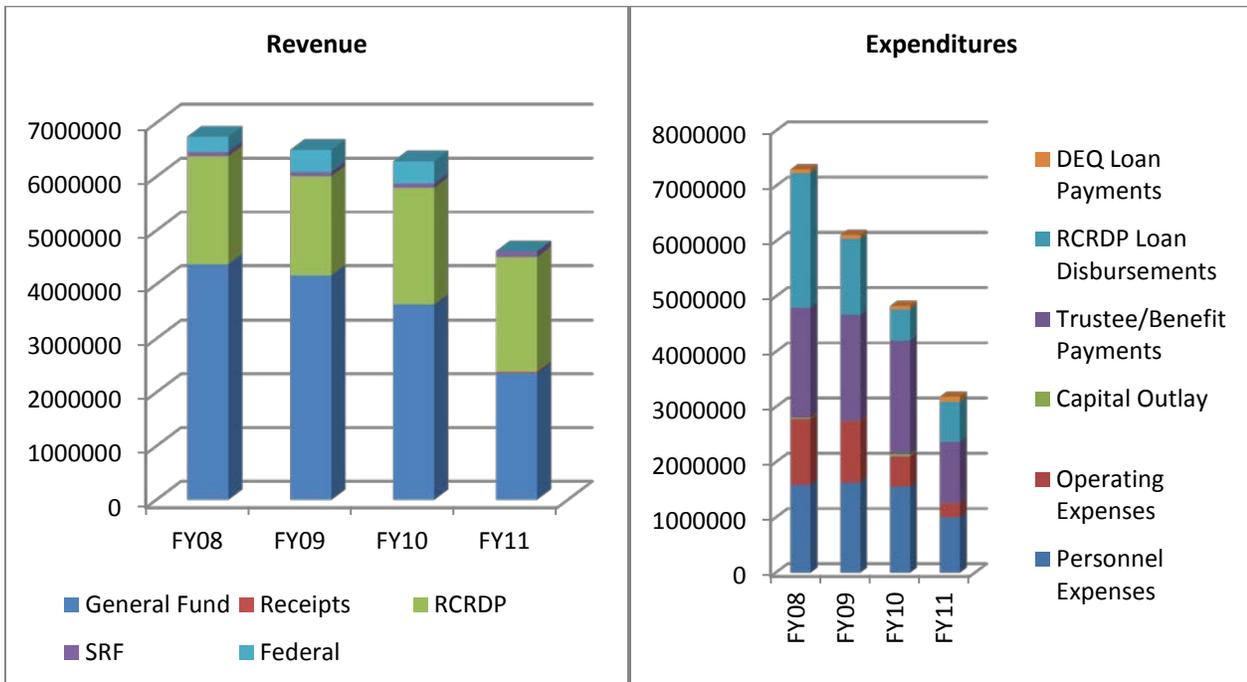
The Commission carries out and adopts measures as are necessary and proper to ensure continuity of operations and establish protocols to assist Commissioners and staff in the performance of duties. This includes the annual strategic planning process and performance reporting, along with a yearly budget that supports the annual activities of the Commission. Idaho Code authorizes the Commission to engage in rulemaking as necessary to carry out the purposes of Title 22 Chapter 27 (Title 67 Chapter 19, Idaho Code).

The Commission actively engages local, state, and federal partners, non-governmental organizations, and resource and agricultural production groups to coordinate, collaborate, and cooperate in Idaho's non-regulatory conservation efforts. Developing intergovernmental and other relationships to maximize scarce resources and harmonize non-regulatory conservation delivery with regulatory efforts is critical to meeting statewide conservation goals (Title 22 Chapter 27, Idaho Code).

GENERAL FUND REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES

Revenue	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
General Fund	4,163,800	3,621,679	2,357,740	2,265,932
Receipts	0	2,000	23,013	0
RCRDP Loan Program	1,843,881	2,169,543	2,125,270	1,621,209
SRF Loan Program	81,270	81,270	107,270	12,815
Federal Grant Funds	<u>408,400</u>	<u>410,730</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,497,351</b>	<b>\$6,285,222</b>	<b>\$4,413,293</b>	<b>\$3,889,505</b>
Expenditures	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Personnel Costs	1,626,700	1,559,579	1,000,810	953,306
Operating Expenditures	1,115,900	545,622	254,052	302,787
Capital Outlay	6,500	38,278	6,340	18,761*
Trustee/Benefits (includes District Allocations & WQPA)	1,920,300	2,057,918	1,105,190	1,103,200
RCRDP Loan Disbursements	1,374,411	562,165	724,664	524,244
DEQ Loan	<u>68,693</u>	<u>67,049</u>	<u>94,693</u>	<u>44,972</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,112,504</b>	<b>\$4,830,611</b>	<b>\$3,185,749</b>	<b>\$2,947,270</b>

\*capital funds for vehicle replacement encumbered in FY 2012



## DISTRICT ALLOCATIONS – BREAKDOWN BY DISTRICT

District	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Ada	\$53,664.61	\$95,187.11	\$52,196.04	\$58,500.00
Adams	10,199.85	12,876.47	12,364.67	14,280.52
Balanced Rock	14,381.96	19,977.15	16,122.53	19,901.29
Bear Lake	24,684.39	34,285.82	17,676.17	23,872.13
Benewah	10,817.66	13,806.54	12,869.60	15,035.77
Blaine	18,540.31	29,724.93	21,705.91	8,500.00
Bonner	20,322.46	29,903.79	15,054.41	18,303.66
Boundary	15,570.06	21,855.17	17,239.21	20,845.34
Bruneau River	8,916.70	11,284.55	10,830.46	12,711.94
Butte	11,992.75	15,309.91	14,811.65	21,305.75
Camas	10,223.61	12,912.25	12,384.09	14,890.53
Canyon	14,381.96	19,172.29	15,782.67	19,392.95
Caribou	16,164.11	23,757.91	19,379.10	23,023.93
Central Bingham	9,035.51	11,123.66	11,413.07	12,857.18
Clark	11,411.71	19,172.29	15,782.67	19,392.95
Clearwater	14,381.96	20,960.87	16,753.70	23,169.16
Custer	9,448.36	12,458.27	12,578.30	14,454.81
East Cassia	8,441.46	10,229.37	10,927.56	12,130.98
East Side	12,599.81	16,489.41	14,326.14	17,214.35
Elmore	12,599.81	17,383.71	14,811.65	18,231.04
District	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Franklin	28,526.29	48,257.92	29,031.51	25,381.89
Gem	19,621.29	23,643.75	13,355.12	15,761.97
Gooding	10,223.61	13,006.16	12,384.09	15,035.77
Idaho	12,599.81	18,278.00	15,297.16	18,666.75
Jefferson	11,411.71	14,700.83	13,355.12	22,297.73
Kootenai-Shoshone	13,883.11	21,408.02	16,996.45	8,500.00
Latah	30,421.31	43,318.17	28,891.48	39,000.25
Lemhi	11,649.48	14,700.83	13,355.12	15,761.97
Lewis	14,976.01	20,960.87	16,753.70	20,845.34
Madison	12,599.81	16,489.41	14,326.14	15,761.97
Minidoka	9,629.56	12,017.95	12,857.18	12,857.18
Mud Lake	10,817.66	13,806.54	12,869.60	8,500.00
Nez Perce	32,504.05	53,633.30	41,344.86	58,500.00
North Bingham	8,085.03	9,692.79	10,636.25	11,695.27
North Side	11,411.71	18,757.91	27,920.46	58,500.00
Oneida	19,134.36	25,208.27	23,987.82	25,202.52
Owyhee	8,441.46	11,123.66	10,927.56	12,130.98
Payette	15,273.04	20,066.58	14,811.65	13,583.38
Portneuf	25,694.16	35,627.26	24,567.52	32,402.03
Power	12,671.10	25,015.59	14,568.89	17,577.46
Snake River	13,787.91	18,904.00	16,996.45	21,208.44
South Bingham	7,847.41	9,335.08	10,442.05	11,404.78
Squaw Creek	12,145.36	16,131.70	13,913.45	16,197.68

<b>Teton</b>	11,649.33	15,720.32	14,070.76	16,832.38
<b>Twin Falls</b>	13,787.91	18,904.00	15,637.02	19,175.09
<b>Valley</b>	32,797.51	50,114.79	28,934.21	46,870.77
<b>Weiser River</b>	16,164.11	23,643.75	18,210.23	23,023.93
<b>West Cassia</b>	8,441.46	10,229.37	10,927.56	12,130.98
<b>West Side</b>	11,114.69	14,253.68	13,112.36	15,398.86
<b>Wood River</b>	9,035.51	12,134.95	12,384.09	15,035.77
<b>Yellowstone</b>	15,924.11	20,357.88	16,151.66	19,944.86
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$780,048.92</b>	<b>\$1,117,314.80</b>	<b>\$872,583.00</b>	<b>\$1,053,200.28</b>

### PROFILE OF KEY SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE IDAHO CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP

Foundational to the partnership is the concept that locally led conservation districts identify and inventory resource needs and make contact with landowners while the Federal Natural Resources Conservation Service and the State Conservation Commission typically provide financial and technical assistance to assist districts in achieving their goals. The Conservation Partnership has been called a “three-legged stool”, each equally necessary to sustaining ongoing voluntary conservation efforts in Idaho.

Over the past five years, working together the Idaho Conservation Partnership has provided the following key services benefitting both private land and natural resources in Idaho. The premise of the partnership, going back many years in the conservation movement, was that the locally led districts would identify the resource needs and make contact with landowners. Then the federal and state agencies would provide both financial and technical assistance to accomplish the district’s mission. The Idaho Conservation Partnership has provided key services to benefit private land and natural resources in Idaho, which is evidenced in the table above.

Key Services Provided by the Conservation Partnership	FEDERAL FY2009	FEDERAL FY2010	STATE FY2011*	STATE FY2012
Conservation systems implemented on all cropland (acres)	210,000	186,527	178,080	133,967
Conservation systems implemented on other land uses (acres)	410,000	291,162	15,687	18,855
Grazing/pasture management systems implemented (acres)	205,000	257,358	269,295	379,157
Riparian acres implemented with protection, restoration, enhancement or creation (acres)	58	72	705	1347
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) – Private agricultural land removed from tillage-induced erosion through financial incentive for a contractual time period. *	757,348	711,540	670,935	518,341**

\* Prior to state FY 2010, conservation data had been reported by federal fiscal year. Starting with state FY 2010, the SWCC will provide conservation data based upon the state fiscal year. Due to the transition, the fourth quarter data for federal FY 2009 has been included as part of the state FY 2010 data.

\*\* CRP acres are down significantly in FY 2012 due to a large number of contracts that expired and fewer new contracts were enrolled.

## FY 2012 SWCC PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

### DISTRICT SUPPORT SERVICES HIGHLIGHTS

As noted above, SWCC distributed state funding to districts in FY 2012 (\$8,500 per district in baseline funding and an additional allocation was made to each, recognizing the amount of matching funding each district was able to secure - up to a \$50,000 per district cap) as prescribed by statute. In addition, SWCC utilized unique, field-based experience to provide technical and engineering assistance to Idaho's conservation districts and private landowners to address local resource issues, and assist the State of Idaho in meeting statewide and national mandates. On the ground, the SWCC field staff worked to identify problems, determine the landowners' objectives, inventory resources, formulate alternatives, and assist with implementation activities. Many times, SWCC technical assistance and assessment is leveraged with other state and federal funding opportunities for implementation.

In recognition of SWCC's reduced staffing level and districts' reliance on SWCC for technical assistance, FY 2012's Strategic Plan called for the formation of a transparent and inclusive Technical Advisory Work Group (TAWG) to develop an allocation process to ensure the maximum efficacy of SWCC efforts. The TAWG met 10 times in FY 2012 to develop a recommendation for the allocation process including ranking criteria to be used in spring of FY 2013. The TAWG recommendation will be considered by the Commissioners in FY 2013.

In FY 2012, SWCC made transparency and cooperation with local districts a priority, and the responses to the District Survey indicate overall efforts were successful in both increasing satisfaction and reducing the number of districts dissatisfied with SWCC's services. Those satisfied or somewhat satisfied with overall SWCC services and support increased from 79% in FY 2011 to 81% in FY 2012. Those ranking their satisfaction as "neutral" went from 10% to 15%, and districts that were somewhat dissatisfied or dissatisfied in FY 2011 decreased from 10% to 4% in FY 2012.

### ANTIDEGRADATION PLANS (FIVE YEAR PLANS)

All 50 districts successfully completed the requirement to update their individual five-year plans this year. Districts considered their plans during regular public meetings and incorporated public feedback before submitting them to SWCC. SWCC technical field staff typically assists the local districts with requests to inventory and assess the resource concerns required in the plan.

## COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND RANGELAND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (RCRDP)

This program provides long-term, low-interest loans to farmers and ranchers for conservation improvements. Loans were available in FY 2012 for up to \$200,000 with interest rates of 2% to 4%, and terms up to 15 years. Projects addressed environmental issues, including but not limited to: soil and water resource conservation; efficient and beneficial use of water resources; riparian area improvement; fish and wildlife habitat restoration and preservation; and the increased agricultural productivity of croplands, pasture and hay land, rangeland, and woodland.

RCRDP Loan Program Statistics	FY2012 Totals	Program Totals
Loans Approved	12	589
Total Loan Commitments	\$664,193	\$30,786,088
Current Active RCRDP Loans	152	
Total RCRDP Principal Balance at FY 2012 Year End	\$5,702,103	

Loans approved during FY 2012 involve projects that reduced soil erosion and consumptive water use including:

- Improving irrigation efficiency by converting acres of flood irrigation to pipeline, pump, and sprinkler systems;
- Purchase of no-till or direct-seed drills to replace traditional tillage equipment;
- Installation of pumping facilities to livestock watering troughs, improving riparian areas and reducing nonpoint source pollution in waterways; and
- Reconstructing animal feeding operations that reduced nutrient, waste, and sediment runoff into streams.

After operating several years on reduced budgets and decreased loan staff hours, loan activity slowed in the RCRDP Program. To increase volume, the loan officer and loan assistant positions (which had been reduced to part time) were restored to full time positions at the end of FY 2012. This combined with extensive outreach and marketing is expected to increase the volume of applications and loan approvals for the implementation of conservation activities in FY 2013.

#### CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is designed to address water shortages within the Eastern Snake River Plain. The Program area extends from King Hill to Ashton and is approximately 250 miles long and 70 miles wide. (*See Appendix A, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Map FY 2012.*) Idaho's CREP goal is to retire up to 100,000 acres of groundwater-irrigated land. This reduction is forecasted to provide a water savings of approximately 200,000 acre-feet annually. Challenges to meeting that FY 2012 goal included:

- The economy - FY 2012's high value of commodities compared to Program annual compensation rates.
- Producers' sense of security that there is no need for water conservation due to ample groundwater available.
- Risk of loss of income due to making 15 year commitment to the Program in light of the potential for ongoing high commodity values
- Producer ineligibility due to USDA limits on average adjusted gross income (AGI).

The CREP area includes 26 local soil conservation districts, 20 Farm Service Agency county committees, and seven groundwater districts. Commission staff works closely with Farm Service Agency (FSA), Idaho Department of Water Resources, and Idaho Department of Fish & Game, Pheasants Forever, and Idaho Groundwater Users.

The Commission is the technical lead for CREP. Staff checks all enrolled fields at least once per year; however many fields are actually checked multiple times. Enrolled acres are seeded to cover of native grasses and

legumes and work towards the goal of “establishment” - permanent establishment of this vegetative cover (heavily dependent on weather patterns and other vegetative growth). In FY 2012, 11 completed contracts (327 acres) were certified established. To date, a total of 6,025 acres on 48 contracts have been certified established.

Based on acreage enrolled in FY 2012, CREP produces an estimated water savings of 34,419 acre feet per year, equivalent to average annual water consumption of 308,000 people or the amount of water used by 143 pivots covering 120 acres each for 15 years. The estimated annual power savings is 67,977,920 kilowatt hours. In addition, an estimated 137,677 tons of soil were saved due to decreased wind and water erosion. Fifty three contracts have wildlife enhancement plantings on 9,243 acres.

The summary of CREP acres enrolled by Soil Conservation District boundary as of June 30, 2012. Though the coverage area includes 20 districts, 12 districts enrolled acres in FY 2012:

SCD/SWCD	Acres	# of Contracts
Blaine	80	2
Central Bingham	4,498	40
East Cassia	1,502	2
Jefferson	1,694	17
Madison	9	1
Minidoka	3,740	51
North Side	791	3
South Bingham	2,679	16
Twin Falls	43	1
West Cassia	721	3
West Side	327	6
Wood River	1,026	8
Total	17,210	157

#### IDAHO GROUNDWATER QUALITY PLAN

The SWCC encourages and facilitates voluntary implementation and outreach activities to benefit groundwater. Implementation efforts in FY 2012 were focused on Idaho’s Nitrate Priority Areas (NPAs) as designated in 2008 by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality.

In addition to SWCC’s working on the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs), several soil conservation districts and SWCC conducted public outreach in various locations throughout the state in the form of grower workshops, county fair displays, and school activities. The SWCC worked with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and six soil conservation districts located within the Twin Falls, Cassia, and Minidoka NPAs to secure funding for nutrient management (including precision agriculture) and irrigation water management through the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative. Implementation of this program began in March 2012, so performance measures will be reported next year. The total amount of acres currently enrolled in this program is 2728, with up to 2000 additional acres expected to be enrolled during the next sign-up period. *(See Appendix B for a map of Groundwater and Nitrate Priority Areas within the state.)*

## IDAHO ONEPLAN

Idaho OnePlan provides data and software to help growers develop a single conservation farm plan that can be pre-endorsed by the various agencies, streamlining and simplifying the regulatory process that farmers face. Idaho One Plan is a multi-agency project to combine government regulations and current best management practices for agriculture into a single plan, integrating federal, state, and local regulations for: nutrient, pest and waste management, water quality and wetlands, air quality, financial assistance, endangered species, and petroleum storage tanks. SWCC is responsible to “encourage and promote” OnePlan and convenes an annual Executive Committee meeting of agencies involved.

SWCC submitted an unfunded grant application to the NRCS National CIG grant program to significantly enhance OnePlan and include an online inventory of voluntary conservation efforts (across multiple state and federal agencies), and worked with Montana Extension to determine the possibility of customizing OnePlan components for their use. Also in FY 2012, Google maps were integrated for the Pesticide Application Recordkeeping (PAR) application. Ongoing operational funding for OnePlan remains uncertain, although participating landowners (and agencies) are said to find it useful (due to OnePlan’s protection of landowner-related statistics, quantitative data on usage can’t be reported).

## TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOADS (TMDL) PROGRAM

The Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) requires that states restore and maintain the integrity of the nation’s waters. Pursuant to section 303 of the CWA, states are to adopt water quality standards necessary to protect fish, shellfish, and wildlife while providing for recreation in and on the waters whenever possible. Section 303(d) of the CWA establishes the requirements for states to identify and prioritize water bodies that do not meet beneficial uses. For impaired waters identified on this list, states must establish a total maximum daily load (TMDL) for the pollutants, the maximum level of pollutants that can exist in a water body and still meet water quality standards. *(See Appendix C – Idaho TMDL Agricultural Implementation Plan Map FY 2012.)*

After much negotiation, in 2002 a settlement agreement was reached between the EPA, the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and several environmental groups that filed a Complaint alleging that EPA failed to undertake nondiscretionary duties imposed by section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act (“CWA”), 33 U.S.C. § 1313(d). They claimed that the EPA failed to comply with CWA § 303(d), which relates to the establishment of Total Maximum Daily Loads (“TMDLs”) for water quality limited segments identified pursuant to the CWA, for the State of Idaho. As a result of the settlement agreement, the DEQ was required to address 303(d) listed waterbodies pursuant to the schedule outlined in the agreement.

The SWCC is the designated agency responsible for implementation plans relative to grazing and agricultural activities. It generates Agricultural TMDL Implementation Plans for 303(d) listed water bodies as an ongoing process in cooperation with the DEQ. SWCC also contributes updated data for 5-year reviews of Subbasin Assessments (SBA) and TMDLs. Technical field staff provides assistance to local conservation districts on implementation projects and activities, and facilitates an interagency coordination and planning committee.

It takes approximately a year and a half to complete a TMDL implementation plan from start to finish. This includes the time it takes to review and provide comments on DEQ’s draft SBA-TMDLs, to conduct field inventories and stream assessments, to write the implementation plan, and to present and modify the plan with input from local soil conservation districts.

## WATER QUALITY PROGRAM FOR AGRICULTURE (WQPA)

The WQPA was created to protect and enhance the quality and value of Idaho's waters by controlling and abating water pollution from agricultural nonpoint sources. This program, unfortunately inactivated in FY 2012 due to lack of funding, provided cost-share assistance to conservation districts implementing water quality projects with local cooperators. WQPA was a valuable financing mechanism for implementation projects under the TMDL Program. The SWCC selected projects for funding, evaluated program effectiveness in reducing agricultural nonpoint source pollution, provided technical assistance, and supported conservation districts in further planning and implementation. (See *Appendix D – Water Quality Program for Agriculture Map*).

Over the past 12 years, WQPA implementation projects have generated impressive results: the conservation partnership (state, local, and federal partners) has treated over 638,457 acres or 997 square miles in the state. The financial partnership and matching effort has been huge, as well: landowners have contributed \$9,537,388, the state has matched \$8,726,408, and the federal government has contributed \$5,774,183. The total of combined funding dedicated to WQPA projects over the last 12 years is over \$25,000,000!

In FY 2012, SWCC distributed the last of available funds to 5 conservation districts located in 5 different WQPA priority areas. Local efforts included completing 4 contracts for conservation planning activities and the implementation of best management practices (BMPs) to improve agricultural operations and resource conditions. The SWCC expended \$132,105, landowners contributed \$62,738, and the federal government contributed \$105,848, for a total of \$300,591 in conservation dollars implemented on WQPA efforts in FY 2012.

The result of the WQPA investment in FY 2012 was the treatment of 29,672 critical acres including:

- 48,367 feet of fencing
- 11,741 acres of cropland with a nutrient management plan
- 9,784 acres of residue management
- 39 watering facilities

## ADMINISTRATION HIGHLIGHTS

### STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE (FY 2013-2016)

SWCC initiated an inclusive, transparent process to update the Strategic Plan in March 2012. District representatives and other partners participated in an ad hoc advisory committee that reviewed staff recommended updates and proposed additional updates for consideration. Most changes were minor, however, FY 2012-2015's Goal #3, Administration, was eliminated from the Strategic Plan and Goal #3, Communication and Outreach Services, was added. Objectives and Performance Measurements were added for Partner Participation (to engage districts and other partners in public meetings, planning processes), External and Internal Outreach (to inform and educate the public, partners, and others (Legislature, Executive Branch, staff, etc.) on SWCC activities, Intergovernmental Relations (to facilitate non-regulatory, voluntary, and locally-led conservation activities by and between the SWCC and local, state, and federal agencies), and Collaboration with stakeholders (IASCD, IDEA, etc.) to achieve SWCC's mission.

One of the external factors affecting results in the SWCC Strategic Plan is "required budget cuts". Since the FY 2010 strategic plan was adopted, the SWCC has experienced approximately 50% decrease in available state general funds and permanent full time staff has been reduced correspondingly. As a result, during FY 2011 SWCC worked through a collaborative process with districts and other conservation partners to identify and make the best use of available staff and resources. While there was considerable negotiation over the content of that

Strategic Plan, FY 2012's update was negotiated over the course of two meetings with partners. Subsequently, SWCC received no negative comments about the proposed update and it was adopted unanimously in June 2012.

## PART II – PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS

New Performance Measures were established with the adoption of the FY 2012-2015 Strategic Plan and updated in the FY 2013-2016 Strategic Plan.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	Benchmarks 2013
<b>District Support &amp; Services</b>					
Number of Surveys Received	N/A	51 of 51	49 of 50	47 of 50	50 of 50
Survey Results					
- Satisfied		22%	22%	32%	36%
- Somewhat Satisfied		37%	57%	44%	49%
- Neutral		20%	10%	14%	10%
- Somewhat Dissatisfied		20%	8%	4%	5%
- Dissatisfied		2%	2%	0%	0%
Assist with five-year plans	N/A	51	50	50	50
Technical Assistance <sup>1</sup> :	N/A				
- # of districts w/projects		37	31	35	35
- # of new projects		59	42	47	47
- # of ongoing projects		62	50	45	45
- # of landowners served		942	812	271	271
<b>Comprehensive Conservation Programs</b>					
CREP					
- Total Contracts	159	158	161	157	175
- Total Acres	18,189	17,422	17,457	17,210	18,500
- Certified Contracts	7	23	10	11	9
- Certified Acres	685	4,239	725	327	1,000
Groundwater/Nitrate Priority Areas	N/A				
- Acres Treated		39,855 <sup>2</sup>	49,320	40,606	36,400 <sup>3</sup>
- Nitrates Reduced (lbs)		115,910	254,105	151,020	114,650
- Phosphorus Reduced (lbs)		20,167	24,200	28,677	24,450
- Sediment Reduced (tons)		121,865	128,367	144,482	140,900
RCRDP Loan Program					
- # of new loans	13	12	17	12	21
- Total \$ conservation projects	\$924,701	\$790,864	\$1,116,908	\$664,193	\$1,300,000

<sup>1</sup> The Commission began conducting a district assessment and ranking along with a workload analysis of Commission staff in FY 2012. These numbers will adjust in next year's report.

<sup>2</sup> FY 2010 NPA measures were inaccurate and corrected in FY 2011 PMR.

<sup>3</sup> FY 2013 numbers reduced to reflect West Cassia/Burley/Marsh Creek NPA WQPA project completed in FY 2012

TMDL Ag Implementation Plans (subject to DEQ priorities)	N/A	10 Completed 15 in Progress 35 Pending	4 Completed 16 In Progress 38 Pending	3 completed 23 in progress 30 pending	Complete 7 13 In Progress Initiate <sup>4</sup> 5 Pending
WQPA - Ongoing Priority Areas - Completed Priority Areas - Acres Treated	N/A	19 3 18,337	13 5 6,400	13 13 29,672	N/A
<b>Administration</b>					
Communications <sup>5</sup> - Website (Total Visitor Hits) - Facebook (Total impressions) - Twitter (# of tweets)	N/A	N/A	N/A	321,588 8,387 N/A*	320,000 10,000 75

\*not activated due to staffing constraints

## PART III: ADDITIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### GOAL #1: DISTRICT SUPPORT SERVICES

#### OBJECTIVE # 1.1: PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO DISTRICTS

- SWCC technical staff assisted local conservation districts with 47 new and 45 ongoing projects. The value of these projects totaled \$6,615,102. Conducted hearing to consider unmet needs of 26 participating districts based on district budgets, budget requests, programs and work plans. Prioritized Unmet Needs for funding were valued by the districts at \$3,437,335. Priority 1 funding needs totaled \$804,825, Priority 2 funding needs totaled \$2,183,610, and Priority 3 needs totaled \$448,900. Staffed process (Technical Advisory Work Group, or TAWG) to rank and prioritize district applications for technical assistance. Conducted 10 meetings over 4 months.

#### OBJECTIVE # 1.2: DISTRICT ALLOCATIONS

- Convened workgroup in October 2011 to review Financial & Match Reports and make recommendation to Commission. Base allocations to districts distributed in July 2011. Match allocations distributed to districts in October 2011.

#### OBJECTIVE # 1.3: DISTRICT CAPACITY BUILDING

- Delivered District Supervisor Handbook draft to IASCD for finalization and distribution in late October 2011. Awarded capacity building funding to 40 districts for outreach activities and to four Northern Idaho districts to attend grant training and train other districts at IASCD convention or other regional venues. Participated in IDEA report training in Division 5 and staff participated in a district administrator training at the IASCD annual convention in November. Provided training in November 2011 IASCD annual conference on intergovernmental coordination. Prepared draft coordination resolutions for

<sup>4</sup> Pending plans and addendums are subject to DEQ priorities and may affect projected numbers for FY 2013.

<sup>5</sup> New benchmark for FY 2012.

district and SWCC use (January 2012). Put on hold to work with sister agencies to establish clear understanding and agreement on roles and statutory authority.

## GOAL #2: COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION SERVICES

### OBJECTIVE # 2.1: INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

#### 2.1.1 RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND RANGELAND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (RCRDP).

- Established Loan Committee and held 3 meetings in spring 2012 to review and propose changes to loan policies and processes to ensure continued accountability and recommend improvements. Application forms redesigned and flyers designed for interim marketing purposes (pending development of marketing plan). On Committee recommendation, Commission granted staff authority to approve loans up to \$50,000. Began outreach to SWCC staff and districts in November 2011 (Northern Idaho), also targeted active geographic regions with flyers and presentations by SWC technical staff at monthly district meetings. Committee appointed in spring 2012 to develop recommendation to Commission for SWCC District Incentive compensation for funded referrals.

#### 2.1.2 STATE REVOLVING FUND

- Administered one existing loan. Assessed and reported to Commission that potential to increase administered loans is limited.

#### 2.1.3 WATER QUALITY PROGRAM FOR AGRICULTURE (WQPA)

- Finalized program obligations, processed remaining pre-approved projects in 13 priority areas (submitted by Burley, several Northern Idaho, Valley, and Idaho districts) resulting in \$ 132,388 spent in FY 2012 (\$83,388 encumbered from FY 2011 and \$50,000 pre-approved for FY 2012) with remaining funds by June 30, 2012. Reported to Commission in spring 2012 that future program funding opportunities are not evident.

#### 2.1.4 CONSERVATION IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

- Evaluated feasibility of continuing program. Reported to Commissioners that future funding has not been identified and will likely not be available in the foreseeable future due to the economy and budget constraints.

#### 2.1.5 WORKING LANDSCAPES CONSERVATION PROGRAM

- No work in FY 2012.

### OBJECTIVE # 2.2: CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

#### 2.2.1 CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (CREP)

- Initial investigation of feasibility of enhancing Idaho OnePlan for interagency data sharing and reporting was conducted (and an unsuccessful grant application submitted in January 2012 to NRCS).

#### 2.2.2 TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOADS (TMDL)

- Initiated TMDL deliverables schedule update for delivery in August 2012 to incorporate into annual Overall Work Plan (OWP), field staff conducted annual meetings with six DEQ regional offices to coordinate TMDL activities, completed 3 TMDL Ag Plans (total 85 to date), 23 plans or addendums were

in progress, provided field assistance, data analysis, technical writing for two 5-year reviews, initiated work on 8 plans or addendums upon EPA approval, worked on 47 new and 45 ongoing projects

#### 2.2.3 IDAHO GROUNDWATER QUALITY PLAN

- SWCC was directly involved in treating 40,606 acres with best management practices (BMPs) including nutrient management, irrigation water management, sprinkler and drip irrigation systems, sediment ponds, and direct seed that will directly benefit ground water quality and surface water quality. The WQPA and DEQ's §319 non-point source grant program helped fund implementation. The estimated total reductions to pollutants were:
  - 151,020 pounds of nitrates eliminated
  - 28,677 pounds of phosphorus eliminated
  - 144,482 tons of sediment erosion reduced

The SWCC worked with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and six soil conservation districts within the Twin Falls, Cassia, and Minidoka Nutrient Priority Areas to secure funding for nutrient management (including precision agriculture) and irrigation water management through the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative. Implementation began in March 2012, so performance measures will be reported next year. The total amount of acres currently enrolled is 2728, with up to 2000 additional acres expected to be enrolled the next sign-up period.

#### 2.2.4 IDAHO AGRICULTURAL POLLUTION ABATEMENT PLAN

- Met with DEQ staff regarding potential updates to Best Management Practices (BMP) for Ag Abatement Plan and reconvening BMP Technical Review Committee.

#### 2.2.5 IDAHO ONEPLAN

- Conducted annual Executive Committee meeting with stakeholders in May 2012. Met with private individuals interested in enhancing water quality reporting capabilities in late 2011 on possibility of submitting grant proposal. Developed conceptual proposal in January 2012 to enhance Idaho OnePlan online conservation planner (not funded by NRCS). Worked with representative of Montana Extension to prepare a scope of work and proposal to customize OnePlan components for use in Montana. Scheduled presentation to Commission on potential for enhancements, ongoing funding, and operation for July 2012.

#### 2.2.6 CARBON SEQUESTRATION

- No activity in FY 2012. No funding sources identified.

#### 2.2.7 WATERSHED IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

- Received no requests to oversee creation and discontinuance of watershed improvement districts as provided for in statute. Conducted research to determine applicability of utilizing watershed improvement districts as funding mechanisms for district projects and programs, reported outcome (districts can contact one of approximately nine watershed improvement districts that have taxing authority to partner on projects).

## GOAL #3: ADMINISTRATION

### OBJECTIVE # 3.1: STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Leadership team met in July 2011 (and ongoing in FY 2012), developed principles to guide planning efforts, goals, and objectives. Worked with partners to draft and adopt FY 2012-2015 Strategic Plan. Conducted multi-stakeholder meeting to review revisions to draft. Adopted FY 2012-2015 Strategic Plan on August 30, 2011. Distributed annual district and partner survey in April 2012. Adopted FY 2012 Performance Measurements Report August 30, 2012. Convened advisory team of partners to advise on Strategic Plan update in April 2012. Received recommendation on updated FY 2013-2016 Strategic Plan, adopted by SWCC on June 5, 2012. Reported to germane committees in February 2012 (House and Senate Agricultural Affairs Committees, House and Senate Environment and Resource Committees). SWCC was not required to submit an updated Information Technology Plan in FY 2012.

### OBJECTIVE # 3.2: ANNUAL BUDGET & OVERALL WORK PLAN

- Prepared and submitted annual budget request on September 1, 2011. Leadership Team prepared multiple iterations of SWCC staff workload analyses between October 2011 and June 2012 in preparation for new technical assistance allocation process. Leadership team developed new time coding system to track expenditures and personnel time spent on district assistance, programs and projects, communication, and administration. Leadership team developed draft OWP for FY 2013 that contains project management work flow requirements, objectives, and budget details associated with programs and activities.

### Objective # 3.3: Statutes, Rules, and Policies

#### 3.3.1 RULEMAKING

- Loan Committee convened to evaluate program policies and procedures and will determine in FY 2013 the need for further rulemaking. Presented pending rule for allocation of funds to conservation districts before germane committees in January 2012. Rule adopted and codified in January 2012.

#### 3.3.2 COMMISSION PROTOCOLS

- Templates created and informal guidelines established in August 2012 for Commission agenda preparation and distribution no later than one week prior to Commission meetings. Policy established for agenda distribution.

### OBJECTIVE # 3.4: EXTERNAL RELATIONS

#### 3.4.1 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Held 12 public SWCC meetings in FY 2012, provided timely online access to agendas and where feasible, supporting documentation for Commission meetings. Utilized live audio streaming for approximately 6 Commission meetings, investigated and purchased video conferencing equipment to conduct video conference meetings to increase district and public participation in FY 2013.

#### 3.4.2 COMMUNICATIONS.

- Development of Communication Plan scheduled for FY 2013.

### 3.4.3 INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

- Considered adoption of draft Commission coordination resolution and policies in February 2012. Tabled to work with other state agencies to determine statutory authority overlap and roles first. Provided training on intergovernmental coordination to districts and Commission staff at IASCD annual conference in November 2011. Participated in natural resource groups and processes including Idaho Environmental Forum (attended 3 meetings – BLM, USFS, and Senator Crapo briefing – in spring 2012), NRCS meetings including Quarterly Partnership (April 2012), NRCS Blowing Dust management meeting (May 2012), Office of Species Conservation Sage Grouse Task Force meeting (April 2012) to focus attention on the roles, policies, and plans of the Commission and districts to attract partners and resources.

### 3.4.4 COLLABORATION

- Collaborated with non-governmental organizations including the Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts (IASCD) (2 Board meetings), the Idaho District Employees Association (IDEA) (2 Board meetings), and others to advance on the ground conservation in Idaho. Worked with IDEA to co-sponsor report training at IASCD annual Conference and at regional training in Pocatello (spring 2012). Met with representatives of Idaho Farm Bureau regarding Strategic Plan, presented RCRDP program information to industry groups (November 2011). Attended multiple district tours, events, and visited projects with districts and field staff (Madison, Franklin, Bear Lake, Latah, Portneuf, Blaine, Benewah, Custer, West and East Cassia, Butte, etc.) and Administrator attended district meetings (Madison, Bear Lake, Latah, Blaine, Benewah, Bruneau, Northside, Balanced Rock, Twin Falls, Gooding, Ada, Canyon, Owyhee, Bonner, Boundary, etc.), all staff attended annual IASCD Conference in November 2011, selected staff attended all six Division meetings around the state in October 2011 and April 2012, staff regularly assigned to attend all district meetings.

## OBJECTIVE # 3.5: COMMISSION ADMINISTRATION

### 3.5.1 COMMISSIONERS

- Staffed 12 regular and special Commission meetings to provide assistance to Commissioners in carrying out their responsibilities. Implemented videoconferencing system with SWCC staff, Commissioners, and interested stakeholders in June 2012.

### 3.5.2 STAFFING AND RETENTION

- Conducted workload analysis in March – June 2012. Prepared staffing plan to maintain statewide presence by strategically locating personnel and resources March – June 2012. Conducted annual all-staff meeting for training and development in July 2011. Technical field staff attended an average of 4 trainings each throughout the year. Administrative staff attended an average of two trainings each. Evaluated compa-ratio survey of existing positions with other state agencies in April 2012. Determined adjustments may be appropriate for up to six staff members, but funding is not available to implement.

### 3.5.3 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- Loan Committee convened to recommend development of new policies, forms, and online application process in April 2012 and continues to meet (held 3 meetings in FY 2012). Recommend for FY 2012-2015 in consultation with the Office of the Chief Information Officer. Initial meetings held in winter 2012 to determine feasibility of updating and enhancing Idaho OnePlan in accordance with the Commission's Information Technology Plan. Update and enhancements are on hold pending identification of funding.

Staff began update of Tracker (software in use since 1998 to keep track of SWCC voluntary conservation activities) in fall of 2011. Data will be incorporated into OnePlan when funding is secured. Video conferencing system was purchased in June 2012 to enable better communication with staff and partners and to limit travel time for field staff to attend meetings (district and SWCC).

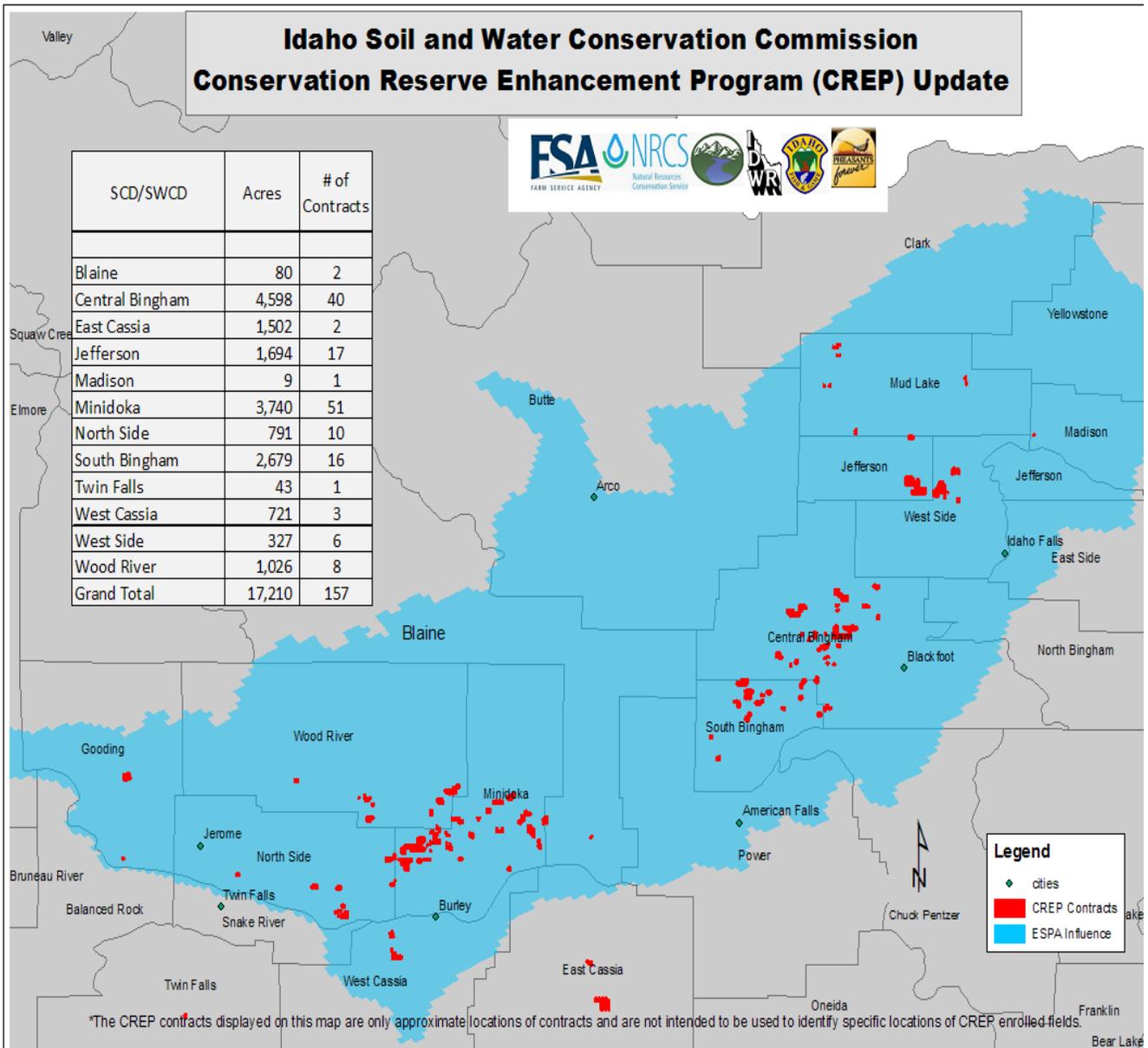
#### 3.5.4 FLEET MANAGEMENT

- Draft vehicle usage policies were circulated to staff for comment in June 2012.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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# APPENDIX A – CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM MAP FY 2012



# APPENDIX B – GROUNDWATER/NITRATE PRIORITY AREA MAP FY 2012

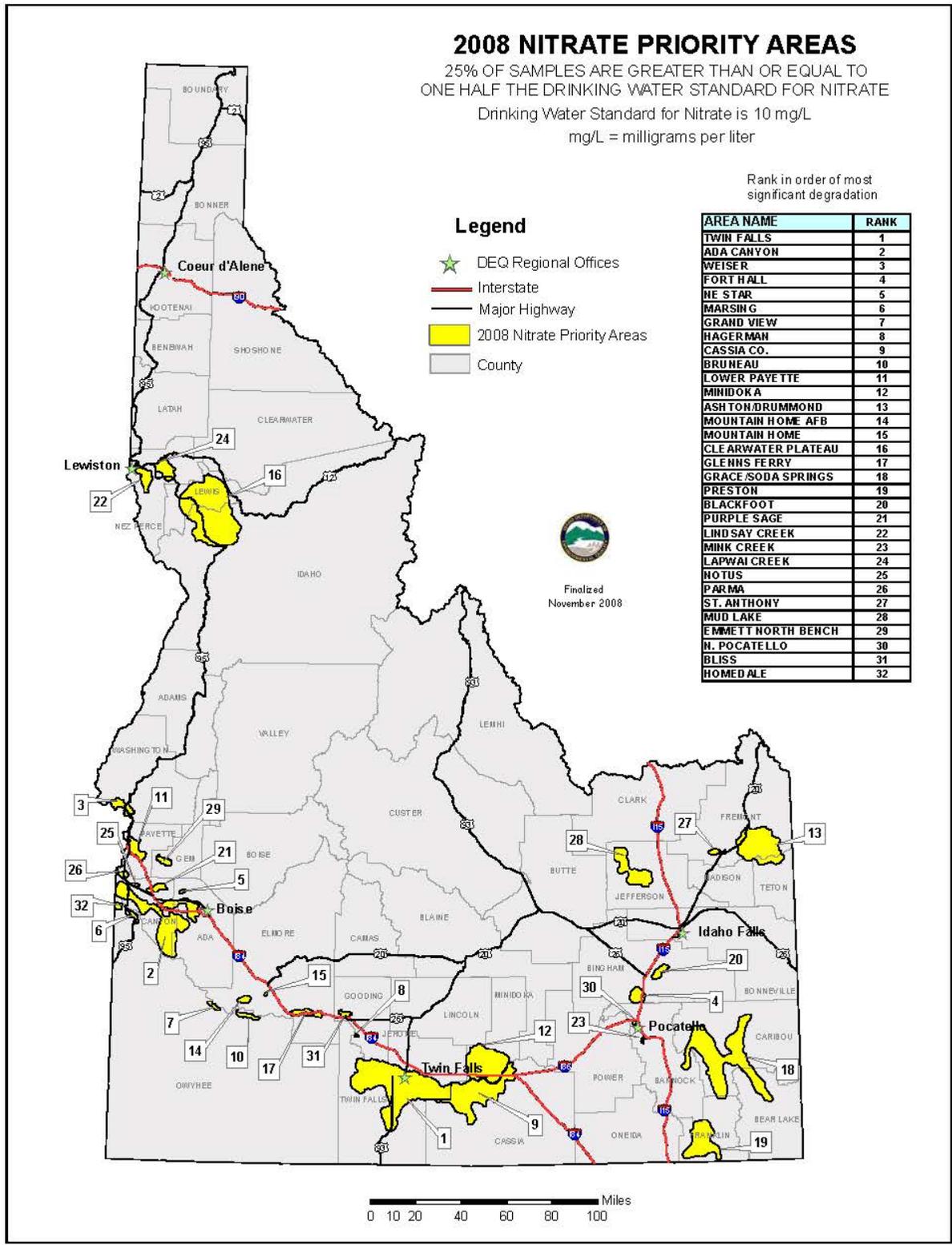
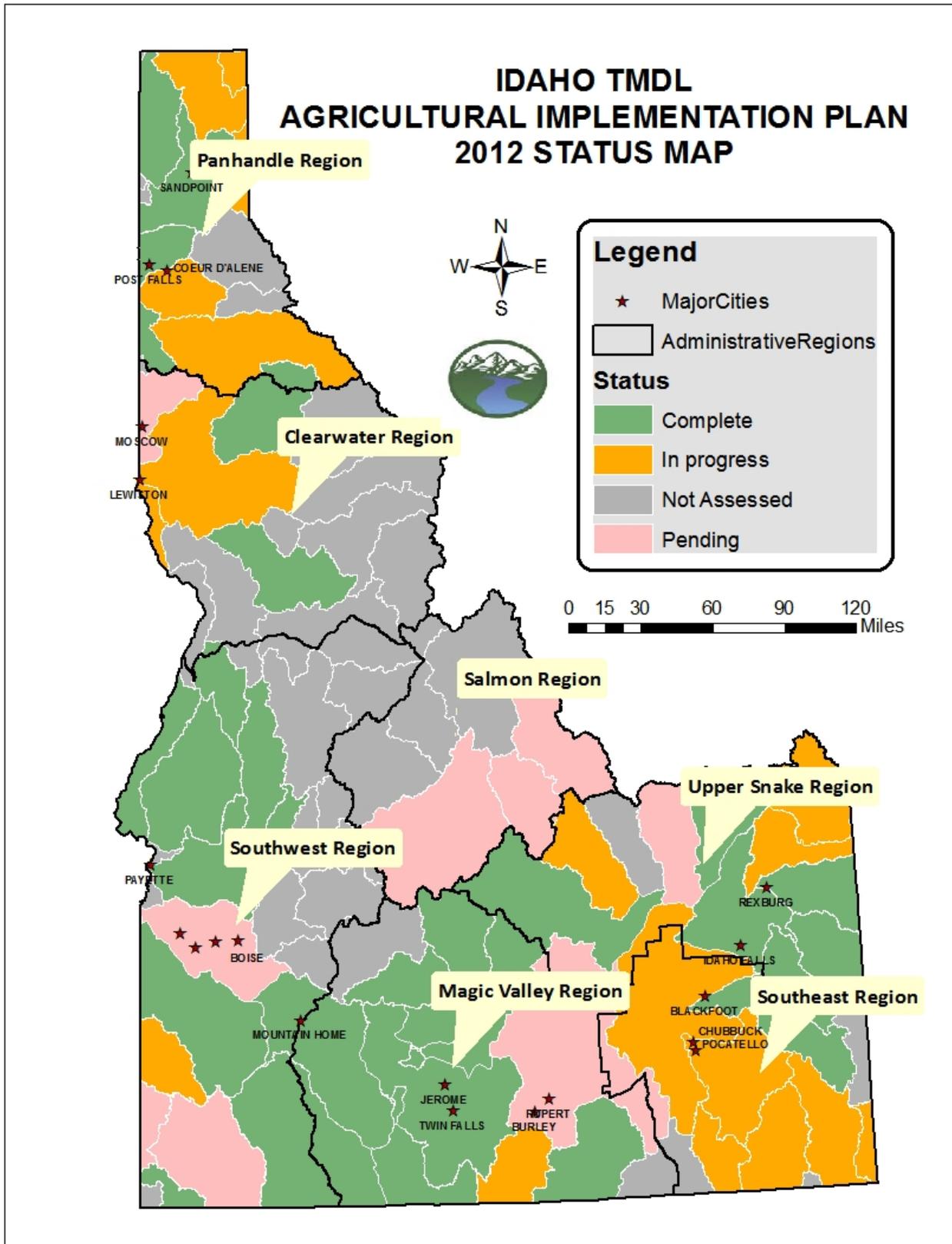


Figure 2. 2008 Nitrate Priority Areas statewide with the ranked list.



APPENDIX D – WATER QUALITY PROGRAM FOR AGRICULTURE MAP FY 2012

