

## Part I – Agency Profile

### Agency Overview

The Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission (ISWCC) was created in 1939 under Idaho Code § 22-2716, et. seq.) to form local conservation districts to work on reducing soil erosion generated by agricultural land management practices. ISWCC is now also the lead agency for a number of voluntary conservation programs that address water quality and other natural resource issues. ISWCC has no regulatory authority.

The ISWCC is led by five Commissioners appointed by the Governor: Chairman H. Norman Wright, Vice Chairman Gerald Trebesch, Secretary Leon Slichter, and members Dave Radford and Glen Gier. The agency administrator is Teri Murrison. In FY 2015, the administrator oversaw 17.75 administrative and technical staff located in Boise and in offices around the State.

### Core Functions/Idaho Code

1. **District Support and Services:** provides technical, financial, and other assistance to Idaho's 50 local conservation districts.
2. **Comprehensive Conservation Services:** provides/promotes non-regulatory incentive and science-based programs to support voluntary conservation activities enhancing the environmental quality and economic productivity of the state.
3. **Administration:** ensures continuity of operations and establishes protocols to support Commissioners and staff.
4. **Outreach:** engages local, state, and federal partners, non-governmental organizations, and resource and agricultural production groups to coordinate, collaborate, and cooperate on voluntary conservation efforts.

### Revenue and Expenditures <sup>1</sup>

Revenue	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
General Fund	\$2,249,800*	\$2,306,400	\$2,364,100*	\$2,531,000
Receipts	0	6,700	5,600	6,800
RCRDP Loan Program	1,621,209	1,793,900	1,447,600	1,033,700
SRF Loan Program	12,815	147,270	31,900	84,300
Federal Grant Funds	0	80,000	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,883,824*</b>	<b>\$4,334,270*</b>	<b>\$3,849,200*</b>	<b>\$3,655,800</b>
Expenditure	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
Personnel Costs	\$953,306	\$1,137,421	\$1,151,400	\$1,149,700
Operating Expenditures	312,583*	421,341	286,200	346,400
Capital Outlay	52,860*	10,526	0	71,400
Trustee/Benefit Payments	1,103,200	1,103,198	1,169,200	1,203,200
RCRDP Loan Disbursements	524,244	232,623	794,100	352,400
DEQ Loan	44,972	116,322	44,300	71,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,991,165*</b>	<b>\$3,021,431*</b>	<b>\$3,445,200</b>	<b>\$3,194,800</b>

<sup>1</sup> “\*” indicates where numbers have been updated in FY 2016 to correct prior year errors.

### Profile of Cases Managed and/or Key Services Provided

Cases Managed and/or Key Services Provided	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
Conservation systems implemented on all cropland (acres)	133,967	133,625	186,076	97,432
Conservation implemented on other land uses (acres)	18,855	107,090	78,925	83,255
Grazing/pasture management systems implemented (acres)	379,157	539,007	531,613	486,449
Riparian acres implemented with protection, restoration, enhancement or creation (acres)	1,347	487	289	1,201
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) – Private agricultural land removed from tillage-induced erosion through financial incentive for a contractual time period.	518,341	349,617	589,484	583,135

- Numbers in FY 2012 did not include data from federal and local partners. Beginning in FY 2013, NRCS and district statistics are included.
- While a formal analysis by partners has not been conducted, it is likely that in FY 2015 overall acres in conservation systems on all cropland and grazing/pasture management systems are down due to the fact that the amount of land treated by NRCS by the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) went down. There were also several large projects still in the middle of construction in other programs - those acres affected data will be reported in FY 2016.

### Performance Highlights

- **District Support and Services** As in previous years, ISWCC solicited district input on the prior year's technical assistance allocation process in FY 2015 and made changes to allow for a greater degree of flexibility by increasing staff discretionary (non-project and district assigned) hours and customizing allocation models/processes by Division. In FY 2015 districts received Trustee and Benefit funding that included the usual base funding (\$8,500), local matching funds (capped at \$50,000 per district), \$2,000 in operating funds per district, and capacity building awards. District satisfaction with Commission services reported in the table below shows that district support continued to strengthen. Overall, district satisfaction trended away from "neutral" to "agree" and "somewhat agree", while about 3% of those who previously "disagreed" now only "somewhat disagree".
- **Comprehensive Conservation Programs and Services** New loan volume in the RCRDP fund declined from 12 loans made for \$841,624 in FY 2014, to 7 loans made totaling \$392,517 in FY 2015. Commercial lender rates are still low, making the additional paperwork required for a public funds loan less attractive, and consumer interest was not as robust as it was over 3 of the last 4 years. New in FY 2015, is reporting on inquiries and their disposition. Anecdotal evidence is that loan volume declined as a result of an increased number of incomplete applications, application withdrawals, and credit denials, but statistics for those weren't previously recorded. The average size of the loans requested also decreased from the previous year. As indicated in the table below, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) acres were down in FY 2015 due to a large number of dairies and other agricultural industries that put acreage into production upon moving to the Eastern Snake Plain. Due to ongoing streamlining adopted with input from DEQ, the Commission increased TMDL Implementation Plans finalized by 2 in FY 2015.
- **Outreach** The Commission published 12 issues of Conservation the Idaho Way in FY 2015 to a distribution list of over 725 subscribers. Topics covered included: bank stabilization, restoration, grazing exchange program, youth and women engagement in conservation, soil health, the Boise River (urban and ag), and more. Newsletter articles focusing on Idaho success stories are frequently reprinted by other agencies including in the Farm Bureau statewide magazine.

**Part II – Performance Measures**

Performance Measure	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	Benchmark
<b>DISTRICT SUPPORT &amp; SERVICES</b>					
# of District Surveys on Commission Satisfaction	47 of 50	40 of 50	36 of 50	35 of 50 <sup>2</sup>	50 of 50
- Strongly agree	34%	18%	22%	28.6%	34%
- Somewhat agree	47%	45%	50%	45.7%	47%
- Neutral	15%	30%	11%	8.6%	7%
- Somewhat Disagree	4 %	8%	11%	14.3%	10%
- Disagree	0%	0%	6%	2.9%	2%
N/A	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
District five-year plans updated	50	50	50	50	50
Technical Assistance Provided to districts:					
- # of districts w/projects	35	31	38	40	39
- # of new projects	47	24	57	81	50
- # of ongoing projects	45	41	103	106	100
- # of landowners served	271	246	386	229	300
<b>COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION PROGRAMS</b>					
CREP Program Deliverables					
- Total Contracts	157	159	156	155	175
- Total Acres	17,210	17,236	16,792	16,729	21,000
- Certified Contracts	11	0	28	7 (82 total acres)	15
- Certified Acres	327	0	2,537	300 (8,880 total acres)	1,500
Ground Water Quality/Nitrate Priority Areas					
- Acres Treated	40,606	35,685	27,918	39,863	37,700
- Nitrates Reduced (lbs.)	151,020	114,797	141,779	138,247	132,100
- Phosphorus Reduced (lbs.)	28,677	24,473	32,084	27,745	26,500
- Sediment Reduced (tons)	144,482	137,414	54,618	143,670	142,600

<sup>2</sup> A new process was established to allocate ISWCC technical field staff time in FY 2013. The decrease in satisfaction that year correlates with the implementation of that process. A number of changes were made to improve the process in subsequent years, and satisfaction has returned to levels expressed in FY 2012. Overall, satisfaction with district support was 74.3% vs. 72% in FY 2014. In 2015, there was a 2.4% reduction of neutral responses, and a 2/10% increase in unsatisfied districts.

RCRDP Loan Program					
- # of new loans	12	4	12	7	12
- Total \$ conservation projects	\$664,193	\$128,100	\$841,624	\$392,517	\$850,000
-Inquiries received <sup>3</sup>				48	50
-Applications submitted				20	25
Pending @ end of FY				5	2
-Applications denied or withdrawn				6	5
<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>FY 2012</b>	<b>FY 2013</b>	<b>FY 2014</b>	<b>FY 2015</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>
TMDL Ag Implementation Plans (subject to DEQ priorities)	3 Completed 23 In progress 30 pending	5 Completed 19 In Progress 31 Pending	6 Completed 15 in Progress 19 Pending	8 completed 16 in progress 18 pending	6 Completed 12 In Progress 19 Pending
<b>OUTREACH</b>					
Communications					
- Website (Total Visitors)	320,000	383,964	N/A	71,822	N/A
- Facebook impressions (I)/posts	10,075	49*	220	153	275
- Twitter (# of tweets)	N/A	29	89	36	150
- Newsletter subscriptions	N/A	N/A	505	725	750

\*FY 2011- FY 2012 counted total impressions, a statistic that may not represent the number of people who actually read the post). From FY 2013 on, # of posts are reported.

#### For More Information Contact

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<sup>3</sup> New performance measures have been established in FY 2015 to track overall program activity in addition to funded loans.