

FY 2024-2027 Strategic Plan

Conservation the Idaho Way: Sowing Seeds of Stewardship



IDAHO SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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Private forest, range, and croplands account for 37% of all land in Idaho, including significant acreage of wetlands and as much as 80% of endangered species habitat. Private lands support urban areas and agricultural production and provide energy and transportation corridors as well as fish and wildlife habitat. By facilitating locally led and voluntarily initiated stewardship of private lands we play an important role in improving water quality and restoring forest, range, and cropland health. Voluntarily initiated conservation balances our economic health with that of our natural resources and helps landowners comply with environmental laws without requiring action by state or federal regulators.

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MISSION

To assist Conservation District supervisors in the carrying out of their non-regulatory and voluntarily initiated natural resources conservation programs and to coordinate with local, state, and federal partners the implementation of conservation systems to sustain, improve, and enhance Idaho's soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources.

VISION

Natural resources conservation in Idaho is driven by local leadership and priorities, is voluntary and incentive-based, non-regulatory, and demonstrates scientifically sound stewardship. The Conservation Commission and local Conservation Districts are the primary entities that provide assistance to private landowners and land users in the conservation, sustainment, improvement and enhancement of Idaho's natural resources.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Address 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 and meet statutory authorities
- Promote fiscal responsibility
- Strengthen existing and build new conservation partnerships
- Incorporate valid scientific data and practices
- Benefit conservation work on natural resource priority issue areas
- Promote established and innovative conservation measures

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CORE FUNCTIONS

The Conservation Commission focuses on core functions and responds to Executive Orders outlining other Strategic Plan Requirements:

1. Providing support to Idaho's 50 locally led Conservation Districts
2. Providing incentive-based and general voluntary conservation programs and services
3. Conducting outreach and communications to educate and inform the public, decision makers, partners, and other stakeholders



KEY EXTERNAL FACTORS

There are key external factors that could affect the agency's ability to meet the goals and objectives contained in this Strategic Plan.

They include:

- Changing demographics and land use designations
- State and federal regulatory pressure and mandates that could shift priorities and resources away from current activities
- Changing economics and pressures of agricultural and natural resource dependent industries which could result in significant increases or decreases in conservation program participation
- Changing economics of local, state, and federal budgets, which could result in reductions in agency personnel, services and/or fewer conservation dollars.

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CORE FUNCTIONS & KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

FY 2024 GOALS	FY 2024 OBJECTIVES	FY 2024 KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES	FY 2024 PERFORMANCE TARGETS/BENCHMARKS
1. Support Districts' Voluntary Conservation Efforts	Build Support in State & Local Partnerships Work to develop strong partnerships with Conservation Districts and facilitate implementation of conservation projects throughout the state; provide Conservation Districts technical guidance and capacity building assistance	Percentage of Conservation Districts satisfied with services & programs provided ¹	Satisfy 90% of Conservation Districts with Commission services and programs
		Percentage of Conservation Districts satisfied with the effectiveness of the communications received from the Commission ²	Satisfy 90% of Conservation Districts with communication effectiveness
		Percentage of requests submitted by Conservation Districts through the Technical Assistance Allocation Process (TAAP) that receive the requested assistance ³	Provide 90% of Conservation District requests for technical assistance in whole or in part
Provide Conservation Programs & Services	Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Provide technical leadership and guidance to private landowners in coordination with Federal, State, and other partners to reduce ground water consumption on cropland within the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer	Number of CREP-enrolled acres over which technical leadership and guidance is provided ⁴	Provide technical leadership and guidance for 20,000 acres enrolled in CREP

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¹ Developed in collaboration with legislators and partners in 2012.

² Targeted to determine achievement of IC 2217(4)(b).

³ Established by Board to track delivery of Technical Assistance hours to Districts.

⁴ Developed to determine progress toward meeting state goals per Memorandum of Agreement between ISWCC and the Idaho Ground Water Appropriators, October 23, 2006 and subsequent agreements.

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FY 2024 GOALS	FY 2024 OBJECTIVES	FY 2024 KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES	FY 2024 PERFORMANCE TARGETS/BENCHMARKS
2. Provide Conservation Programs & Services (continued)	Resource Conservation & Rangeland Development Program (RCRDP) Encourage farmers and ranchers to improve water quality and conserve natural resources by providing low-interest conservation loans	Acres improved with implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and facilitated by RCRDP funding ⁵	Implement BMPs on 600 acres facilitated by RCRDP funding
	Ground Water Quality/Nitrate Priority Areas Provide technical assistance in developing Ground Water Quality Improvement Plans within Nitrate Priority Areas; Maintain and improve ground water quality by promoting and supporting conservation projects through implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs)	Number of acres with BMPs implemented to maintain and improve ground water quality ⁵	Facilitate BMP implementation on 54,000 acres of cropland
	Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Planning Program Write plans to provide a framework for Conservation Districts, landowners, and other partners to use to reach Idaho's non-point source water quality goals	Percentage of TMDL implementation plans completed within 18 months of the TMDL having been approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ⁶	Complete 100% of TMDL implementation plans within 18 months of EPA approval and DEQ assignment to the Commission

⁵ As defined in Idaho Agricultural Best Management Practices Field Guide for Evaluating BMP Effectiveness (rev. April 2013).

⁶ Established in Idaho Nonpoint Source Management Plan 1999.



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3. Conduct Outreach & Communication	Conduct Outreach & Communication Keep the public, decision makers, Conservation Districts and others informed of the activities and experiences of partners participating in Conservation the Idaho Way	Increase the number of newsletter subscribers ⁷	Increase subscriptions by 20 annually
		Increase annual percentage of social media reach, likes, and follows ⁷	Increase social media reach, likes, and follows by 10% annually

⁷ Established to drive expansion of reporting on voluntary conservation projects in Idaho.

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