



# BUTTE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

## Conservation Tour Held in the Little Lost River Valley

The Butte SWCD hosted a conservation tour on August 17<sup>th</sup> in the Little Lost River Valley. Tour participants visited three sites and learned about local conservation efforts and research trials being implemented. Rory Pancheri provided a tour of his Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) funded seasonal high tunnel. Participants gained insights into the advantages of gardening in a high tunnel, management considerations, how the NRCS program works, and saw first-hand how much produce can be locally grown inside a single high tunnel. The next stop on the tour featured water conservation efforts being installed by the Blaine County Canal Company through a project partially funded by the NRCS to convert an open irrigation ditch to a buried pipeline.

Discussion was made on the water savings of the project and anticipated outcomes for irrigation



*UI Extension agent David Callister talks about the tillage test plots*



*42" diameter irrigation pipeline being installed through a NRCS program*

water users. The final stop allowed participants to view tillage test plots created by University of Idaho Extension agent David Callister. Plots were created for conventional – chisel plowed and disked twice between crops, minimal tillage – disked once between crops, no tillage between crops, and no tillage with a cover crop planted in the fall after harvest.

Participants viewed the differences and were presented with preliminary data and observed a soil compaction test.

Twenty-two people attended the tour, including Idaho State Senator Julie VanOrden. Board chairman, Randy Purser, stated, "It was really nice to see such a good turnout for this year's conservation tour. It is our hope that area producers can see how their conservation and production goals can be met by utilizing NRCS programs."



*Rory Pancheri talks about gardening in his high tunnel*

## **Zollinger Joins District Team**

The Butte Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) received a fifth year of funding to provide an employee to assist the Natural Resource



*Sara Zollinger, new District employee*

Conservation Service (NRCS) office in Arco. “This grant has been a great asset to our District and our NRCS office. Two of our past employees are now NRCS employees in the Arco NRCS office. Their employment with the District gave them the experience needed to make the transition into federal employment easier.” stated District secretary Stephanie Barnes. Sara Zollinger of Mackay was recently

hired to fill the role. An Idaho native, Sara earned a B.S. in animal science from the University of Idaho in 2017. She will be assisting agricultural producers in Butte, Custer and Blaine Counties prepare and fulfill conservation plans through NRCS programs. “We are excited to have Sara on the team and the ranching experience and local knowledge she brings with her will be invaluable.” said Barnes.

## **Educational Scholarship Awarded**

Sara Zollinger was awarded an educational scholarship grant for the Fall 2022 semester. The grant will be utilized to earn additional college credits needed for employment with the NRCS. Way to go Sara!



*Chairman Randy Purser presents Sara Zollinger with grant award*

## **Annual Speech Contest**

This theme for this year’s annual speech



contest was “Healthy Soil, Healthy Life”. High School aged contestants shared a five-minute long speech with the Board members and were ranked according to content and delivery. This year’s winner was Eliana Cecil and second place was Tannabe Cecil. Both girls competed again



at the Division level. Eliana placed first and Tannabe second, winning \$100 and \$75, respectively. Both girls were able to compete at the State competition held in Burley and...

### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade Natural Resources Tour**

In September, fifty students from Mackay and Arco schools attended the annual 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Natural Resources Tour sponsored by the District. Students visited educational booths from the NRCS, University of Idaho Extension, BLM, Trout Unlimited/Forest Service, the Idaho Rangeland Commission, and the Custer County Rural Fire Department. The kids were treated to a lunch of hot dogs

and ice cream following the event.

### **Forest Education Grant**

The District received a \$250 forest education grant from the Idaho Forest Products Commission/Project Learning Tree. The goal of the grant is to provide education to youth about all aspects relating to



*Students hold up their tree seedling*

*Learning materials for the 6<sup>th</sup> graders*

Idaho forests, from ecology to economy.

The District utilized funds to provide trees and educational materials to 7<sup>th</sup> grade students on Arbor Day and again at the annual 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Natural Resources Tour in September.

### **Rocky Mountain Power Grant**

The District was awarded a \$3,000 grant from the Rocky Mountain Power Foundation to help install fish screens on the new irrigation pipeline system in the Little Lost River valley. The new system will require five screens to prevent fish, including the federally threatened bull trout, from entering the pipeline as water is diverted from the Little Lost River.



*RMP representative presents grant award check to the Butte SWCD board*

Butte SWCD  
P.O. Box 819  
Arco, ID 83213

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Todd Perkes	Treasurer
Walt Johnson	Member
Hayden Isham	Member

**Butte SWCD Staff**

Mindy Hawley	Outreach Coordinator
Stephanie Barnes	Admin. Assistant
Sara Zollinger	NACD Technician

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Berett Erb	Range Mgm’t Specialist

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# BUTTE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

## Youth Activities Kick-off District's New Year

The Butte Soil and Water Conservation District participated in several youth educational activities during the Spring. Outreach Coordinator Mindy Hawley and NACD technical assistant Samantha Spaulding assisted IU Extension and Custer SWCD with Mackay Ag Days to provide agricultural educational activities for the elementary school students. Staff also teamed up with the Butte County UI Extension Educator David Callister to host the 2022 Ag Bowl at Mackay High School. The Seniors won this year's event, followed by the Junior class.



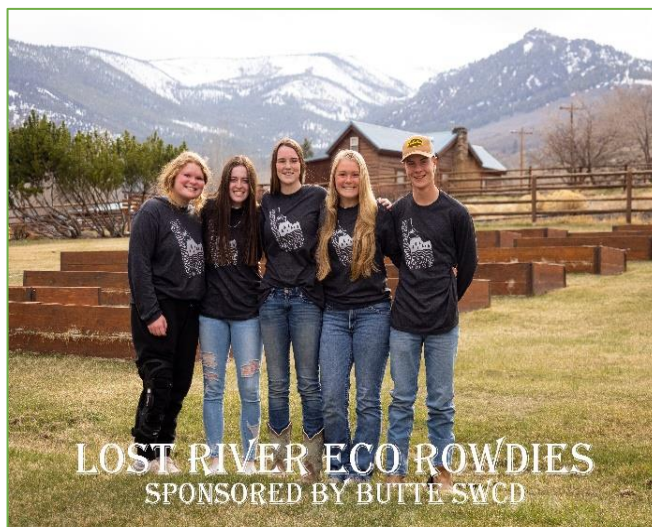
*UI Extension Educator David Callister with junior and senior Mackay High School Students during the 2022 Ag Bowl*



*Students completed ag related crafts and activities at the Mackay Ag Days*

Envirothon was held in-person after a two-year COVID hiatus at Living Waters Ranch in Challis. The District sponsored a team from Butte County to attend the event. Students were quizzed on their knowledge of soil, water, wildlife, and

agriculture. Coach Anne MacConnell along with Samantha Spaulding and Mindy Hawley assisted with the two-day event. The team also spent a day at the fish hatchery in Mackay learning about its operation and helping with daily tasks.



*2022 Envirothon Team*

## Invasive Species Spotlight

A study<sup>1</sup> published in 2022 investigated cheatgrass suppression with herbicide and subsequent seeding success on arid rangelands in Nevada. They found that the pre-emergent herbicide Imazapic reduced cheatgrass densities by over 95%. This reduced the competition for resources and helped seedings become established at a significantly higher rate than un-treated plots. They also found that seed mix composition, seeding rate, seeding methods, and precipitation amounts all played a role in successful re-seeding establishment.

<sup>1</sup>Clements, et al. 2022. Seed Mix Performance and Cheatgrass Suppression on Arid Rangelands. *Rangelands* 44: 129-135.

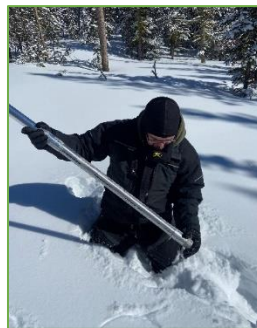
*The Butte SWCD monthly board meetings are held the third Thursday of each month at the District's office at 260 W. Grand Ave. in Arco. Meeting information can be found at [www.butteswcd.org](http://www.butteswcd.org).*

## NRCS Snow Survey

The Arco NRCS office staff collected snow survey data from January – April. This data helps farmers and ranchers make water and irrigation decisions for the coming growing season. Thank you for your hard work Berett and Jesse!



NRCS' Berett Rosenkrance



NRCS Team Lead Jesse Fullmer

## New Office Location

The Butte SWCD recently moved to a new office location in Arco. Our new physical address is 260 W. Grand Avenue, Suite 5, and our new phone number is 208-423-8911. Our e-mail address will remain the same: [butteswcd@outlook.com](mailto:butteswcd@outlook.com).

## Idaho Forest Products Commission Grant

A \$250 grant was received from the Idaho Forest Products Commission to fund



Trista Hawley plants her blue spruce seedling

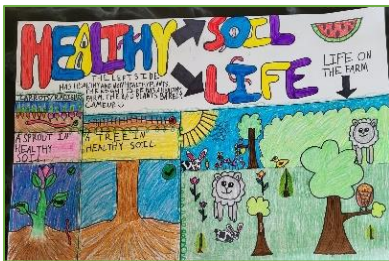
Arbor Day activities and forest education



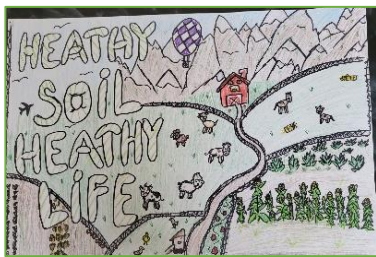
for the District's 6<sup>th</sup> grade natural resources tour. Trees and educational material were handed out to 7<sup>th</sup> grade students at Arco and Mackay schools for Arbor Day. Trees were also provided to the public at the NRCS office on Arbor Day.

## 2022 Poster Contest

The District sponsored their annual 6th Grade Poster Contest at both Butte Middle School and Mackay



1st Place



2nd Place

Elementary in April. A 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winner were chosen overall. 1st received \$25, 2nd - \$15 and 3rd - \$10. Each participant also received a certificate of appreciation for entering the 2022 Poster Contest. The theme this year was "Healthy Soil: Healthy Life". The Butte SWCD overall winners will be entered in the Division VI contest this fall, with the potential of advancing to an Idaho State contest and then a national contest.

Butte SWCD overall winners were- 1st: Breyan Barger, 2nd: Raven Williams and



3rd Place

3rd: Jerzi Gonzolez.

Congratulations and thank you to each student who entered our contest and to Mrs. Kimball and Mrs. Wood for letting us visit their classrooms.

## WQPA Reinstated

The 2022 legislature session reinstated the State's Water Quality Program for Agriculture (WQPA) by allocating \$5 million to be spent toward water quality and quantity projects. The funds will be administered by the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission and eligible entities and individuals can submit an application for consideration. More information can be found on the Commission's website at [www.swc.idaho.gov](http://www.swc.idaho.gov).

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Jennifer Weathered	Soil Conservationist

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# BUTTE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

## Commission Awards District \$300,000 for Conservation Project

An Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission committee recently selected a conservation project in the Butte SWCD for Water Quality Program for Agriculture (WQPA) funding. The 2022 legislative session put \$5 million towards re-funding the WQPA program and projects were selected throughout the state based on their water quality and quantity improvement merits. The District will act as the project sponsor and provide oversight as the project is being completed. The chosen project will



*Wheel lines will be converted to a pivot with LESA nozzles. Butte SWCD stock photo.*

increase irrigation water efficiency, reduce energy usage, and add wildlife habitat on a farm near Moore. The farm producer had previously worked with NRCS staff to create a conservation and engineering plan to help meet the goals of this farm prior to applying for WQPA funding.

While not a necessary step, the

technical guidance from the NRCS helped form the producer's goals into a shovel-ready plan that fit WQPA objectives and their funding timeline. The project is expected to be completed in 2023. More information about WQPA can be found at <https://swc.idaho.gov/>.

## Invasive Species Spotlight

The multi-agency “Cheatgrass Challenge” adheres to the battle cry, “defend the core!”, but just what does that mean? As the battle against invasive grasses such as cheatgrass and medusahead continues, it is hoped that a new strategy to protect large expanses of native vegetation through preventative and proactive measures will turn the tide in the land manager’s favor. Actions that reduce intact ground from exposure and sensitivity to invasive weeds as well as increase the adaptive capacity of communities surrounding these core areas are being explored. In Idaho, Butte County is on the forefront of an identified core area. The NRCS office

offers technical and financial assistance to help landowners eradicate invasives and establish native vegetation. For more information, contact the NRCS office at 208-527-8557.

## County Fair Fun

The District was able to set up an educational display at the Custer and Butte County Fairs. The display board featured soil health and invasive weed information.



2022 County Fair Display

Handouts about NRCS and FSA programs were also available.

## Natural Resource Camp Draws Area Youth

This year the Butte Soil and Water

Conservation District sent eleven excited campers to Natural Resource Camp through their scholarship program: Jaida Rodriguez, Trista Hawley, from



Custer and Butte County Campers

Custer County and Daphne Bingham, Kaylee Stone, Journie Landon, Dean Rogers, Tier Gavin, Mason Reynolds, Taine Hollist, Garrett Waymire and Scarlett MacConnell from

Butte County. The camp was held at the central Idaho 4-H camp near Ketchum from June 20th to June 25th. Each camper got to spend a week near beautiful Sun Valley exploring and studying Idaho’s

natural resources. This is a hands-on camp so campers got to learn about wildlife, forestry, soil, range land, and water. They also got to enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking, fishing, volleyball, archery, survival, target shooting, and fireside sing-alongs.

### **Project Neighborly Grant**

The District was awarded a \$3,500 grant from the Idaho Community Foundation's Project Neighborly program.



The funding was utilized to purchase tables, equipment, signage, and advertisements for the Up-Winders Farmer's Market in Arco. The District

was pleased to offer support for local farmers to have the equipment necessary to sell their produce.



*Vendors at the Farmer's Market use canopies and tables provided by the Project Neighborly grant*

The equipment will also be used during the gardening support classes being held at Lost River Gardens every Thursday at 4pm. Everyone is welcome to attend these educational classes. The Up-Winders Farmer's Market will be held every Thursday from 5-7



*A class on fermenting foods draws public attendance*

p.m. at Lost River Gardens in Arco through the end of September. To learn more about Project Neighborly, visit [www.idahocf.org](http://www.idahocf.org).

**Thank you!**

We would like to thank the following businesses for supporting our conservation activities and projects!

Pickles Place  
Walt Johnson Family  
Golden West Café  
Ivie's Foodliner  
Valley Insurance  
Lost River Electric  
Butte County  
Custer County



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*UI Extension agent David Callister talks about the tillage test plots*



*42" diameter irrigation pipeline being installed through a NRCS program*

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Plots were created for conventional – chisel plowed and disked twice between crops, minimal tillage – disked once between crops, no



*Rory Pancheri talks about gardening in his high tunnel*

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employees are now NRCS employees in the Arco NRCS office. Their employment with the District gave them the experience needed to make the transition into federal employment easier.” stated District secretary Stephanie Barnes. Sara Zollinger of Mackay was recently hired to fill the role. An Idaho native, Sara earned a B.S. in animal science from the University of Idaho in 2017. She will be assisting agricultural producers in Butte, Custer and Blaine Counties to prepare and fulfill conservation plans through NRCS

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## **Annual Speech Contest**

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Eliana Cecil and Tannabe Cecil placed second. The girls went onto the Division level contest where they placed 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, Eliana and Tannabe, respectively. They were both able to compete at the State level contest at the IASCD conference in Burley this November. Eliana Cecil placed 2<sup>nd</sup>

and Tannabe placed 4<sup>th</sup>. The girls did an excellent job!



*Eliana and Tannabe Cecil at the IASCD Conference in Burley*

## **Lots Learning and Fun at the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Natural Resources Tour**

Forty-six 6<sup>th</sup> grade students from Butte Middle School and Mackay Elementary gathered at the Lower Sportsman Access area to participate in a natural resources workshop sponsored by the Butte SWCD. The students attended presentations by the Salmon-Challis National Forest, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Trout Unlimited, Bureau of Land Management, Idaho Rangeland Resources Commission, Natural



Resources Conservation Service, South Custer Fire District, and the University of Idaho Extension Office. The Butte SWCD would like to thank all who participated in the tour!



*Students learn about microinvertebrates with the BLM*

### **Forest Grant Provides Outreach Opportunity**

The District received a \$250 forest education grant from the Idaho Forest Products Commission/Project Learning Tree. The goal of the grant is to provide education to youth about all aspects relating to Idaho forests, from ecology to economy. The District utilized funds to provide trees and educational materials to 7<sup>th</sup> grade students on Arbor Day and again at

the annual 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Natural Resources Tour in September.



*Students learning about forestry*

### **Rocky Mountain Power Grant Received**

The Rocky Mountain Power Foundation awarded the Butte SWCD an environmental grant in the amount of \$3,000.00 to assist with the installation of fish screens on the newly installed irrigation pipeline near Howe.

This grant will help to install fish screens designed to reduce fish mortality by preventing fish in the Little Lost River from entering the irrigation pipeline.

The Rocky Mountain Power Foundation is part of the PacifiCorp Foundation, one of the largest utility-endowed foundations in the United States. The foundation was created in 1988 by PacifiCorp, an electric utility serving 1.9

million customers in six Western states as Rocky Mountain Power (Utah, Wyoming and Idaho) and Pacific Power (Oregon, Washington and California). The foundation's mission, through charitable investments, is to support the growth and vitality of the communities served by Rocky Mountain Power and Pacific Power.



*The board accepts the grant award*

*Merry  
Christmas and  
Happy New  
Year from the  
Butte SWCD!*

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