



BUTTE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Butte SWCD Enters 66th Year of Supporting Conservation

The Butte SWCD will mark its 66th year in 2019. Officially formed during the summer of 1953, the District included all of Butte County, except for land owned by the Atomic Energy Commission. Southern Custer County was added to the District in 1967. The first Board of Supervisors focused on assisting area farmers with improving irrigation water use efficiency and delivery of irrigation water. Today, the Butte SWCD's Board still maintains irrigation water use efficiency as a priority as well as focusing on water quality, proper animal waste management, enhancing pasture and rangeland conditions, maintaining riparian areas, and environmental education.

The formation of conservation districts across the nation allowed for federal funding distributed through the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to be led by a locally elected board to address area conservation concerns. This local leadership is evidenced in special Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funding that has addressed recent flooding and wildfire damage within the Butte SWCD over the past few years.



Farming in the Lost River Valley, 1965

“It is the goal of the Butte Soil and Water Conservation District directors to set high standards for conservation and wise use of the natural resources within the District.”

The Butte SWCD actively engages with other conservation agencies within the District, local government, and the University of Idaho Extension to promote wise use of our natural resources. The Butte SWCD is one of 50 SWCD's in Idaho (see map above) and is part of the National Association of Resource Districts. For more information about the Butte SWCD, visit butteswcd.org.

Seasonal High Tunnel Informational Meeting Held

The Butte SWCD hosted an informational meeting for 2019 EQIP-Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative applicants. The meeting provided information regarding EQIP program details, basic management within the high tunnel and provided a question and answer session with local producers who have experience growing crops in a seasonal high tunnel.



Seasonal high tunnel meeting in February

Butte SWCD and NRCS Partner to Create 4-H Club

The Butte SWCD has made sponsoring teams of local high school students to compete in the statewide Envirothon competition a priority for the last several years. Butte SWCD Public Outreach

Coordinator Mindy Hawley and NRCS Soil Conservationist Lara Fondow have worked with teams to educate students about natural resources conservation while training for the Envirothon competition. This year, Lara has teamed up with Butte County 4-H to create an Ecology Club and Envirothon team. The Ecology Club will meet Fridays and will feature guest speakers and activities focusing on a different area of natural resource conservation each week. Students in the Ecology Club who wish to participate in Envirothon will also train to compete at the State Envirothon competition later this year. Envirothon is an annual natural resources themed academic competition that is sponsored by local conservation districts and the National Conservation Foundation. For more information, contact Lara at Lara.Fondow@USDA.gov.

"I consider the soil conservation districts movement one of the most important developments in the whole history of agriculture." – Hugh Hammond Bennett

Invasive Weed Spotlight

Cheatgrass, also known as Downy Brome, is an invasive annual grass that has become a dominant species in some areas of the Western U.S. Cheatgrass spreads easily because of its ability to outcompete native species. Cheatgrass can expand



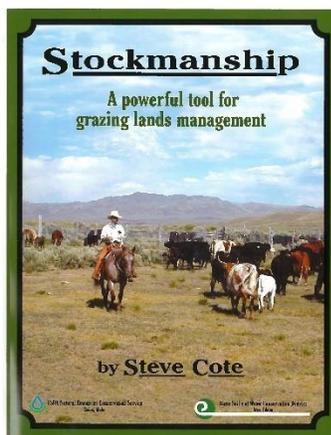
Cheatgrass graphic from the USDA Plants Database

its root system during the winter while other species are dormant and has a wide range of habitat and environmental tolerances in which it can thrive. Cheatgrass can produce an abundant seed crop each year and thrives in disturbed ground. Cheatgrass is of particular concern because it grows in dense

patches and is highly flammable. Cheatgrass has been effectively controlled by mechanical, biological and chemical treatments. Please contact your local County Weed Department, Extension office, or NRCS office to discuss potential management options.

Stockmanship Book Generates Funds for Conservation Activities

The Butte SWCD generates funds for conservation and youth projects from the sale of the book “Stockmanship: A Powerful Tool for Grazing Lands Management” written by former NRCS District Conservationist Steve Cote. The book covers



low-stress livestock handling techniques to achieve grazing plan goals. The District mails copies nationwide as well as providing the book to BYU-Idaho students. Copies can be purchased from the District for \$20.

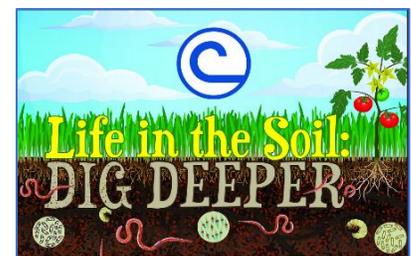
NRCS SNOTEL Measures Snowpack

Snow Telemetry, or SNOTEL, is a NRCS program that measures snowpack and estimates water for the year. The NRCS SNOTEL program has 800 sites in the western states, with over 80 in Idaho. While the system is an automated data collection system, NRCS personnel travel to select sites to collect manual snow pack data. The Arco NRCS Field Office District Conservationist, Jesse Fullmer, is part of the SNOTEL team and travels to sites within the Butte and Custer SWCD’s. SNOTEL data assists residents and local agencies with water management decisions. Data for individual sites and basin wide data can be viewed online at <https://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/> or by contacting

the state information line at 208-378-5740.

Butte SWCD to Hold Youth Poster Contest

The Butte SWCD will be hosting their annual poster contest for 6th grade students. The contest is open to public, private and home-schooled students with the winning poster receiving a \$25 cash prize. The posters must follow the contest rules (found at www.nacdnet.com or contact the Butte SWCD office) and follow the Conservation Stewardship theme. This year’s theme is “Life in the soil: Dig Deeper.” The winners of the local SWCD contest advance to the state contest where winners compete at the national level.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- March 21st – Board Meeting
- April 18th – Board Meeting
- May 17th – Board Meeting

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



Butte SWCD Board of Directors

Randy Purser Chairman
Mark Telford Vice-Chairman
Todd Perkes Treasurer
Walt Johnson Member
Jeff Isham Member

Butte SWCD Staff

Frances Perkes Admin. Assistant
Mindy Hawley Outreach Coordinator
Stephanie Barnes Technician

NRCS Staff

Jesse Fullmer District Conservationist
Lara Fondow Soil Conservationist
Chris Merrill Engineering Technician

In This Issue:	
BSWCD Celebrates 66 Years	1
High Tunnel Meeting Held.....	2
4-H Club Created.....	2
NRCS SNOTEL.....	3
Upcoming Poster Contest.....	3