



BUTTE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

District Winter Workshop Held

Twenty-five residents attended the Butte SWCD's Winter Workshop held in the Business Incubation Center in Arco in early March. The focus of the workshop was upon improving irrigation efficiency and nutrient management. Dr. Neibling, University of Idaho Extension, spoke on the science, economics, and

efficiency of low elevation spray application (L.E.S.A.) irrigation sprinkler packages. Discussion centered around how to achieve the best irrigation efficiency for every dollar spent. David Callister, Butte County Extension Agent, provided a presentation on the importance of soil sampling, strategies for soil sampling, and



Dr. Schott presenting information on nutrient management during the Winter Workshop

provided a demonstration on taking a proper soil sample. University of Idaho Extension Specialist, Dr. Linda Schott, provided a presentation on nutrient management's role in soil health and considerations when using manure fertilizer. A presentation on water moisture sensors, placement, and data was presented by representatives from PivoTrac. Jesse Fullmer, District Conservationist from the Arco NRCS field office provided an update on the new farm bill and NRCS programs. We appreciate everyone who attended and the presenters for making the drive to Arco.

Invasive Weed Spotlight

Japanese brome, *Bromus japonicus*, is found in both Butte and Custer Counties. Japanese brome is similar in appearance to cheatgrass, but has more compacted seed



Japanese Brome, photo from IDFG

spikelets and an awn that is equal to or shorter than the seed (cheatgrass awns are longer than the seeds). Like cheatgrass, Japanese brome forms dense patches of early maturing grass. These dense patches create hazards for wildfire and reduce the quality of wildlife habitat. Treatment for Japanese brome includes chemical applications, mechanical disruption followed by re-seeding with desired species, and biological control

such as targeted grazing.

Student Earth Team Volunteer

The Arco NRCS Field Office has enjoyed hosting an Earth Team Volunteer this Spring. EmmaRae Darland, a senior at Butte High School, spent 27.5 hours assisting the NRCS and Butte SWCD office with conservation activities. Emma was able to experience first-hand the daily operations of the NRCS. Some of her accomplishments included creating fence markers for sage-grouse habitat projects,



EmmaRae Darland, Earth Team Volunteer

accompanying NRCS staff to field projects, helping with project preparation, attending

an irrigation efficiency workshop, and helping with office tasks. The NRCS Earth Team Volunteer program was created in 1985 to provide individuals with an opportunity to share their skills and enthusiasm to assist the NRCS with their conservation goals.

District Welcomes New Employee

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) announced that the Butte Soil and Water Conservation District received a third year of technical assistance grant funding. The Butte SWCD is one of 300 conservation districts nationwide receiving the funding. The grant award will allow for continuation of the District's technical assistance position that provides a full-time employee for the District. This position works directly with the NRCS to provide assistance with writing conservation plans and

providing customer service. One of the goals of this position is to transition these technical employees into NRCS employees.

New District employee Jennie Weathered



Butte SWCD Board Chairman Randy Purser stated that “So far, for the Butte SWCD and the Arco NRCS office, this has been a successful program as evidenced by the newest Arco NRCS employee coming to us from this grant award last year.” The District is pleased to announce that the grant position has been filled with Jennie Weathered. Jennie was raised in Utah and recently obtained a Masters of Ecology degree from Utah State University. Jennie’s family have farmed

and ranched in Montana for many generations and she is looking forward to getting back to her agricultural roots. Jennie stated “I am passionate about applying my knowledge of ecological systems for the benefit of this wonderful community and Idaho’s natural resources.”

District takes part in Agricultural Days in Mackay

The Butte SWCD and Custer SWCD joined



Mackay Agricultural Days

forces to bring fun and educational activities to the Mackay elementary students for Agricultural Days. Butte SWCD employees Mindy Hawley and Jennie Weathered, Custer SWCD’s Karma Bragg

and several Mackay FFA students presented information on the importance of agriculture to over 50 students.

District Receives “Be Outside, Idaho” Grant Award

The Butte SWCD was awarded \$1,913.50 to upgrade and expand their youth educational outreach programs. With the grant funds, the District will purchase equipment and supplies to add additional outdoor and natural resource related educational events for the 2020 year. The grant will also provide needed support for the long-standing educational outreach activities conducted by the District. The goal of



the “Be Outside, Idaho” coalition is to promote enjoyment of Idaho’s outdoors among our youth and fight “nature deficit disorder”. For more information about “Be Outside, Idaho” and to find ideas for outdoor fun, visit www.beoutsideidaho.gov.

NACD Photo Contest Winner

The 2019 NACD photo contest netted a winner from our District! Stephanie Barnes won first place in the Conservation Practices category for a photo of a pivot with a L.E.S.A. nozzle package located near Mackay. The photo contest runs each year



NACD photo contest winning photo

and the deadline for entries is December 1st, 2020. Visit NACD.org

for more information and contest guidelines.

CREP Program Offers Incentives to Conserve Groundwater

Aquifer (including the southern portion of Butte County, see map below) by taking marginal farm ground out of production. For more information, visit



Map of CREP Area and the Snake River Plain Aquifer from swc.idaho.gov

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a program offered by the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation

Commission and their partner agencies to provide financial incentives to reduce groundwater consumption within the Snake River Plain

www.swc.idaho.gov or contact CREP coordinator Chuck Pentzer at 208-332-1794.

“A nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased; and not impaired in value.” – President Theodore Roosevelt

Butte SWCD
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