



# BUTTE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

## Pollinator Plot Improves Habitat

With multiple benefits becoming apparent, more and more producers within the Butte SWCD are incorporating pollinator habitat establishment as a conservation practice within their NRCS conservation plans. A late May trip to Nickerson Farms near Howe showed a beautiful display of blue flax and native grasses. Kirk Nickerson, who operates a hay and small grain farm with his family, said that they added a pollinator habitat plot to their



Kirk Nickerson in front of his pollinator plot

NRCS Conservation Stewardship Program contract to help improve the habitat. Kirk is able to provide irrigation to the plot, which he says is a key element in seed establishment. Like many producers who plant pollinator habitat, Kirk said the first year was rough as the area became overrun with weeds. During the first year, Kirk cut, baled, and removed the weeds and continued irrigating. Since then, the plot has evolved into a

beautiful wildflower bed and wildlife magnet. Kirk said he appreciated the NRCS technical and financial assistance he utilized to establish the plot. Since then, he and his wife have made a practice of collecting seeds from the flowers in the Fall and manually spreading them to increase the size of the plot. Kirk said, “It keeps getting better every year!” Seed mixes are developed by the NRCS staff to fit the producer’s preferences, location, and goals. Kirk’s mix was designed to have flowers blooming from Spring until Fall and includes native forbs, flowers, grasses, and shrubs. Pollinator plantings have been popular to fill unfarmed pivot corners or other small areas that are typically un-grazed. If you are interested in establishing a pollinator plot, contact the NRCS office at 208-527-8557.



A bee hovers over a blue flax flower at Nickerson Farms

## Invasive Weed Spotlight

Puncture vine, *Tribulus terrestris*, is named for its stout-spined burs that are



Puncture vine near Arco

strong enough to puncture bicycle tires. Puncture vine prefers recently disturbed sites such as roadways, walkways, disturbed pastures, and cultivated fields. Seeds can survive for 20 years and are distributed by lodging into the feet of animals or tires. Biological, chemical, and mechanical control methods are available for puncture vine. For large infestations, chemical and mechanical methods are recommended.

For small infestations, removing plants before they flower will greatly reduce the population.

## Tree Sale Summary

The District held a tree sale this Spring in conjunction with the Madison SWCD. In total, 165 trees were sold to District residents.



Trees awaiting pick-up

## Butte Team Places Second in State Envirothon Competition

The Butte SWCD Envirothon team placed second overall in the state-wide competition. The team ranked first place in the current issue and wildlife topics. Team

members included Montana MacConnell, EmmaRae Darland, Alyssa Hawley, Josie MacConnell, and Hadley MacConnell. Special accommodations to the state contest were made this year due to COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings, making 2020 the first year the event has been held entirely online. We would like to thank District employees Frances Perkes, Mindy Hawley, Stephanie Barnes and Jennie Weathered for their assistance with the Butte SWCD team and the State Competition. We would also like to thank Lara Fondow (NRCS) for advising this year's team.



2020 Envirothon Team

## Roller Crimper Available for Rent

The Nature Conservancy has a 15 foot roller crimper available for rent statewide. The rental rate is \$6/acre plus a delivery fee. Interested producers should contact Brad Johnson with the Nature Conservancy at 208-521-8058.



Roller crimper. Photo courtesy of The Nature Conservancy.

## Farmer's Markets Provide Outreach Opportunities

While many educational outreach events have been cancelled this year, District employees have participated in the Arco Farmer's Market to provide conservation outreach. Outreach

events this year have focused on the National Association of Conservation District's 2020 educational theme, "Where would we BEE without pollinators?" The District plans to attend more Farmer's Markets events as the summer progresses. Be sure to stop and see us!



Farmer's Market Outreach

## TMDL Updated for the Big Lost River Subbasin

The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality has recently published an updated Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for the Big Lost River Subbasin. Temperature and sediment were the

major pollutants identified for several streams. The new TMDL reviewed past TMDL determinations for water Quality improvements and to update the pollutant list for all streams. The full TMDL can be found online at [www.deq.idaho.gov](http://www.deq.idaho.gov).

## Back in the day...

Historical board meeting minutes generated these highlights from 1969:

- ❖ The District worked with the Counties to fly the District and develop flood contingency plans
- ❖ The District distributed educational materials at the Arco Swimming Pool Smorgasbord
- ❖ Six students were sent to Conservation Camp
- ❖ First newsletter was printed

# Conservation Convoy 2020

Join the Butte SWCD's 2020 Conservation Convoy Tour in  
the Little Lost River Valley!

September 3<sup>rd</sup>  
9:00 A.M. -12:00 P.M.  
Little Lost River Valley Park, Howe

Stops on the route will feature:  
L.E.S.A. irrigation systems, rotational grazing, seasonal high tunnel system, and a  
pollinator plot

**LUNCH provided – please R.S.V.P. by  
August 31st**

To comply with CDC guidelines for social distancing, we are asking that everyone bring their own vehicle and join  
the convoy from stop to stop. *Stops will be outdoors and require some hiking though tall grass, please dress  
accordingly.*

**Butte SWCD · 208-520-2001 · butteswcd@outlook.com**

Free and open  
to the public!

A Butte SWCD  
Tradition Since 1963!




**Butte SWCD Board of Directors**

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

**Butte SWCD Staff**

Frances Perkes	Office Manager
Mindy Hawley	Outreach Coordinator
Stephanie Barnes	Admin. Assistant
Jennifer Weathered	Technician

**NRCS Staff**

Jesse Fullmer	District Conservationist
Lara Fondow	Soil Conservationist
Chris Merrill	Engineering Technician
Berett Erb	Range Mgm't Specialist

<b>In This Issue:</b>	
Pollinator Plot .....	1
Envirothon Team .....	2
TMDL Update .....	3
Back in the Day .....	3