



BUTTE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

No-Till Drill Hits the Ground Running

Last fall, the Butte Soil and Water Conservation District purchased a 12' Great Plains no-till drill to assist landowners in the District. The drill has the capacity to plant small grains, native grass, flower and forb seeds. Board Chairman Randy Purser said, "This drill will allow landowners to plant cover crops, do no-till farming, establish pollinator plots, and seed areas to native grasses without having to purchase expensive equipment." Randy added, "One of the goals of this purchase was to help landowners who have conservation plans in place with the Natural

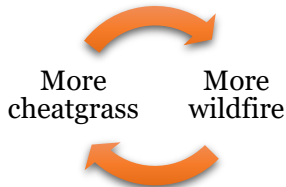


Board Members Todd Perkes and Randy Purser with Northwest Farm Credit Services' Cody Hendrix

Resources Conservation Service to complete their scheduled practices. This drill will make it easier for landowners to install conservation practices, such as planting cover crops, that will increase the soil health of agricultural fields and to re-establish native plants after cheatgrass treatment." To date, the drill has been used to plant over 700 acres of cover crops and native grasses within the District. The drill was purchased with District funding along with grant funding from the Office of Species Conservation, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and Northwest Farm Credit Services. The drill can be rented for \$12/acre with a \$100/day minimum by contacting Randy Purser at 208-589-3831.

Invasive Weed Spotlight

Cheatgrass, *Bromus tectorum*, can double the risk of wildfire in areas that have been



invaded with this annual invasive species. A vicious cycle can be established where more cheatgrass promotes more wildfire and more wildfire damages and eliminates the native vegetation, promoting more cheatgrass.

Furthermore, the shallow root system of cheatgrass and its ability to green up early in the season, robs soil of moisture early in the season. This can extend the fire season and exacerbate dry conditions. For more information about cheatgrass treatment and the USDA NRCS' Cheatgrass Challenge, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov.

District Participates in Mackay School's Ag Day

District employees Mindy Hawley and Jennie Weathered participated in the Mackay Ag Day event. The event, aimed at educating students about Idaho agriculture, was held in



Cow Puppet from Mackay Ag Day

conjunction with UI's Custer County Extension. One activity included students making butter out of buttermilk to enjoy on some wheat pancakes while another activity had students create unique cow puppets. We would like to thank Mackay schools for

their participation in Ag Day!

Recycling Event Held

A recycling event was held in the Butte SWCD in May as part of the Butte County clean-up campaign. The event provided residents with an opportunity to recycle old appliances, metal, electronics, and furniture rather than place them in the landfill. The two-day event generated a large pile that was collected by Recycle Old Material in Rexburg where the items will be broken down and recycled. Thank you to all who participated.



Recycling Event Collection

Series of LWG Meetings Held

The Blaine SCD and Butte SWCD hosted a series of local work

group meetings in April, May, and June. These meetings were to discuss natural resource concerns within the two-district area that ended with two special project proposals being submitted to the NRCS. Private landowners, District board members, NRCS staff and partner agency personnel met during these meetings to help shape each proposal.

One proposal will focus on addressing open irrigation ditches with shrink greater than 50% and will also focus on increasing energy efficiency of irrigation systems.

The second proposal will address wildlife habitat by focusing on fence rehabilitation in the pronghorn migration route and also address fish passage along irrigation water routes. If funded, the award announcement is expected in August. If you would like to be

put on an e-mail list to receive meeting notifications, please contact our office at 208-527-8557.

Irrigation Efficiency Application Period Open

The Butte SWCD and Blaine SCD, are accepting application for irrigation efficiency project applications. Applications will be chosen for priority funding at the fall local working-group meeting. Applications can be picked up at the USDA-NRCS Service Center in Arco. Interested applicants are encouraged to make an appointment with the NRCS staff to discuss their project.

Demonstration Site Established in the Little Lost

University of Idaho Butte County Extension Agent David Callister has established a demonstration site at his farm near Howe. The site will compare harvest

data and soil health factors among plots receiving varying degrees of tillage. The Butte SWCD donated the use of the no-till drill to assist with this plot establishment. We are looking forward to the harvest



Butte County Extension test plot, photo credit David Callister

data and David's experience with minimal and no-till farming in our District!

Poster Contest Winners Announced

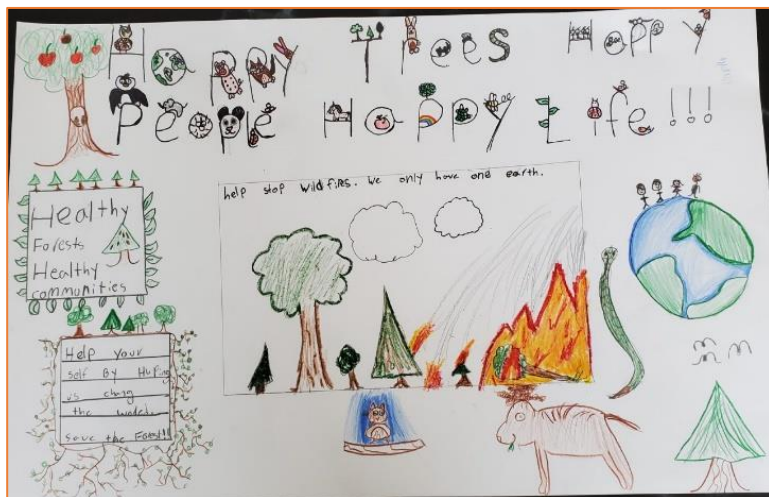
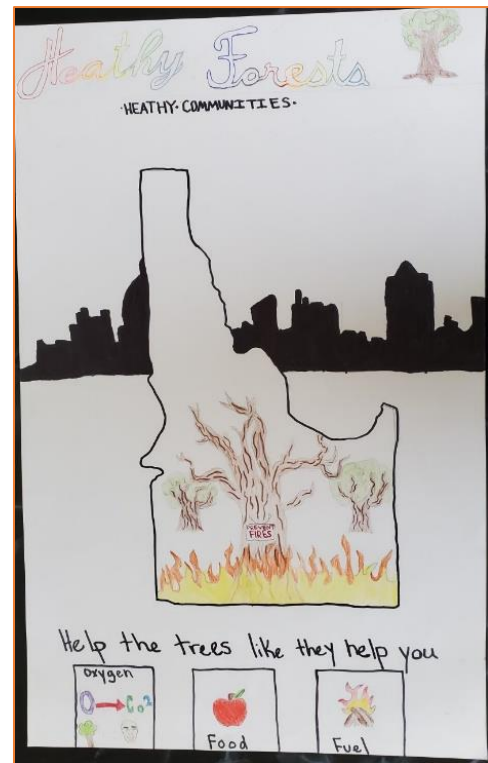
Butte SWCD's annual 6th Grade Poster Contest was held at both Butte Middle School and Mackay Elementary in May. A 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winner were chosen overall. First place received \$25, 2nd place - \$15 and 3rd place - \$10. Each participant also received a certificate of appreciation for entering the 2021

poster contest. The theme this year was “Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities”. 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 potentially the National contest.

Butte SWCD overall winners were- 1st place: Aiyzelin King, 2nd place: Rachel Hutchinson and 3rd place: Autumn Gamett.

Congratulations and thank you to each student who entered our contest and to

Mrs. Kimball and Mrs. Wood for letting us visit their classrooms.

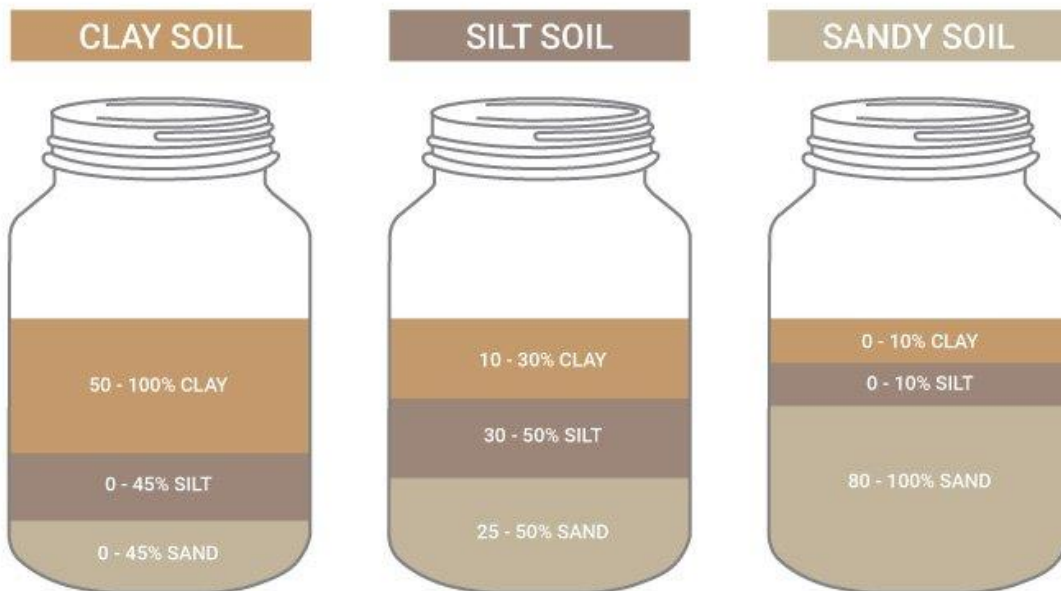


Try this easy at-home soil type test!

JAR TESTING FOR SOIL TYPE

1. Fill a large clear glass jar about halfway with your soil sample.
2. Fill the remaining part with tap water, leaving 1" of air.
3. Attach the lid, then shake the jar vigorously until you have broken up any clods in the soil.
4. Put the jar in an out of the way place so that it can rest undisturbed overnight.

After 24 hours, your jar's contents will have settle into distinct layers, Clay, Silt, and Sand. By examining the relative proportions of these layers, you can gain a sense of which type of soil you have shown below.



Graphic from windowbox.com

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Stephanie Barnes	Admin. Assistant
Jennifer Weathered	Technician

NRCS Staff

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Lara Fondow	Resource Conservationist
Berett Erb	Range Mgm't Specialist

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