



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
P.O. Box 819
Arco, ID 83213

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Mark Telford	Vice-Chairman
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Walt Johnson	Member
Jeff Isham	Member

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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.

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 3rd
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!




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BUTTE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Conservation Tour Highlights Little Lost River Valley

The 2020 Conservation Tour was held in September within the Little Lost River Valley near Howe. The



L.E.S.A. pivot system at Brian Harrell's farm

tour highlighted several landowners and their work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). At each stop, the landowners, along with NRCS Team Lead Jesse Fullmer,

presented information on their project and how it has increased efficiency, production, and profits of their operations.



Rory Pancheri talks profit margin at his irrigated grass pasture

Stops along the tour included a Low Elevation Spray Application (LESA) pivot that increases water use efficiency, a seasonal high tunnel, a pollinator plot, and an irrigated pasture coupled with rotational grazing. The District provided lunch for the participants after the tour and Butte County University of Idaho



Pollinator Plot at Nickerson Farms

Extension agent, David Callister, provided a short presentation on an

invasive weed, White Byrony. We appreciate the landowners for allowing us to visit their farms and hear their perspective on their innovative projects.



Colleen Madarieta shares about her seasonal high tunnel

Invasive Weed Spotlight

Field bindweed, *Convolvulus arvensis*, is a noxious weed found within the Butte SWCD boundaries.



Field Bindweed near Arco

Identified by its long, creeping stems and white morning glory style flowers, field bindweed can quickly spread and form dense mats that outcompete native vegetation. Field bindweed is very drought tolerant and prefers sunny, disturbed sites such as roadside ditches and farm ground. Field bindweed can readily spread from its rhizomatous root system, making mechanical weed control unsuccessful.

Herbicide control of field bindweed is recommended.

Contact the County Weed Department for more information.

District Participates in County Fairs

The Butte SWCD was able to participate in the Custer County and Butte County Fairs with a pollinator-themed display board. Attendees were able



County Fair Display

to gather pollinator information from the display board to complete a knowledge quiz that entered them into a prize drawing for Butte SWCD goodies. We would like to

thank everyone who stopped by our booth!

Grant Funds Chemical Container Recycling Bin

The Butte SWCD was one of four conservation districts nationwide to receive a \$2,500 Friends of the NACD (National Association of Conservation Districts) grant award. The grant allows Districts to increase their capacity and provide outreach opportunities for residents. The Butte SWCD utilized the funding to partner with Valley Ag in Arco to build a



Recycling bin located at Valley Ag, Arco

weather-proof recycling bin for empty chemical containers.

Once the bin is full, the containers will be recycled. The District was thrilled to be able to provide our residents with a local recycling option for containers that might otherwise end up in the landfill, potentially leaching chemicals into our water supply. The bin is open 24/7 and is free for the public to use. Please follow the instructions for prepping your containers before placing them in the bin. To learn more about Friends of the NACD, visit nacdnet.org.

District Speech Contest Held

The Butte Soil and Water Conservation District held their annual speech contest on October 15th. The contest is

held annually and is open to all 9th-12th grade students



*Speech contest winners
Tannabe Cecil and George Cecil*

that reside within the District's boundaries. Winners at the District level compete at the Division level and potentially at the State level. Due to in-person meeting cancellations this year, the winners will only compete at the District level. Each contestant presented a three- to five-minute speech following the theme "Where would we BEE without pollinators?" and were scored based on content, delivery, and presentation. Two

contestants competed this year and a tie for first place was declared. The winners were presented with \$50 and a goodie bag.

Website Gets a Facelift

The District website has recently been updated with new information and a new look. Visitors can find links to the monthly board meeting agenda, past meeting minutes, photos of outreach events, updates on landowner programs, and can order the



District's Stockmanship manual by Steve Cote. Visit www.butteswcd.org to check out our updated website!

Annual 6th Grade Tour a Success

Fifty-six 6th grade students from Butte Middle School and Mackay Elementary gathered at the lower sportsman’s access area to participate in a natural resources workshop sponsored by the Butte SWCD. Students attended short presentations by the U.S. Forest Service, Trout Unlimited, the Bureau of Land Management, Butte SWCD, and the Idaho

Rangeland Commission.



Steve Wright, BLM, shows students historical weapons and tools used by the Native Americans



Mathilde Perez-Huet, U.S. Forest Service, shows students how to measure trees



Jackie Ingram, IRC, discusses rangeland issues



Ken Day shows students fire-fighting equipment



Cassi Wood with Trout Unlimited, discusses fish populations with the students



Jennifer Weathered, Butte SWCD, talks about the importance of pollinators

A special thanks to the “Be Outside, Idaho” coalition for providing grant funding to purchase equipment and handouts used during the 6th Grade Natural Resources Tour and other educational events this year!



Visit www.beoutsideidaho.gov for more information



Butte SWCD LOCAL WORK GROUP MEETING



Local Work Group Meetings are a valuable part of the NRCS planning process, providing an opportunity for local land managers to be part of a collaborative effort to improve natural resources within your county.

You are invited to:

- ✓ Review performance of the past year's projects.
- ✓ Help shape plans and priorities future projects.
- ✓ Connect with partners and new audiences to seek opportunities to leverage partnership funds.
- ✓ And learn about other NRCS programs which may prove beneficial to you.



Natural
Resources
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www.id.nrcs.usda.gov

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WHERE:

- **Conference Call:**
Dial: 1-346-248-7799

OR:

- **Join via Zoom:**
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89494246433?pwd=VWQ4UDZ0U2VUM2cydzQvSWUzQktZQT09>

Meeting ID: 894-9424-6433

Passcode: 898705

DATE: November 20th

TIME: 9:00am - Noon

For more information, contact:
Stephanie Barnes
butteswcd@outlook.com

Butte SWCD
PO Box 819
Arco, Idaho 83213

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BUTTE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Butte SWCD Presents Service Awards



Frances Perkes

The Butte Soil and Water Conservation District recognized Board Supervisors and staff for their dedicated service during the 2019 Annual Meeting in Arco. Each were presented with a service award plaque and a certificate of appreciation signed by Governor Little. **Frances Perkes** was presented an award for 35 years of service. Frances has served as the administrative assistant, educational outreach coordinator, and is the current financial advisor and office manager. Frances has created environmental education materials for youth, coordinated farming and ranching workshops for residents, and been actively involved in local and state levels of Envirothon. Board Supervisor **Randy Purser** was recognized for 33 years of service with the District. Randy has been very hands-on during his time as Supervisor and does everything from attending conservation meetings across the state to cooking hotdogs during the Annual 6th Grade Natural Resources Tour. Randy is the current Board Chairman and has been instrumental in keeping the District active in environmental conservation. **Jeff Isham** was recognized for 30 years of



Randy Purser



Jeff Isham

service as a Board Supervisor representing the Little Lost River Valley. Jeff is a leader in conservation within his community and is always willing to share his experiences with his neighbors. We appreciate all our Board Supervisors and staff for their hard work to keep natural resource conservation a priority within the Butte Soil and Water Conservation District and we look forward to serving you for many more years to come. To learn more about the District and their projects, visit butteswcd.org.

Invasive Weed Spotlight

Leafy spurge is classified as a noxious weed in



Leafy spurge near Mackay

several states, including Idaho. Leafy spurge is an invasive and aggressive weed that is hard to eradicate once established. Leafy Spurge is characterized by heart shaped leaves arranged on an umbel shaped head that produces a milky white sap when damaged. The sap is toxic to cattle, horses and humans if injected. Control measures include chemical, physical and biological. Interestingly, there are seven beetles, two flies and three moth

species used for biological control of leafy spurge. Pictured below is a hawk moth larva feeding on a leafy spurge plant near Arco. For help identifying and treating leafy spurge, please contact your county weed department, extension office, or NRCS service center.



A hawk moth larva feeds on leafy spurge near Arco

District Speech Contestant Places Second in State Competition

Last fall, Jennifer Schaefer, of Moore, participated in the

Division VI speech contest during the Fall Division VI meeting, representing the Butte SWCD. She won first place and was awarded a check and a trip to the state competition in Boise. The state competition was held during the annual IASCD conference in Boise where contestants competed in front of a large crowd of District and NRCS employees. Jennifer's speech focused on the importance of soil health in agriculture. Jennifer placed second and received a \$200 check. Way to go Jennifer!



Jennifer Schaefer at the Speech Contest in Boise

Arco NRCS Receives Special EQIP Project Funding

The Arco NRCS office was awarded special funding provided through the Bureau of Reclamation’s WaterSmart grant. The award provided



Pipeline installation near Arco

cost-share funding to convert an existing irrigation ditch into a pipeline and retrofit existing pivot nozzles with low elevation spray application (LESA) sprinklers. The project will increase irrigation efficiency by eliminating water loss from shrink and evaporation. Additional funding and in-kind support for the project was provided by the Big

Lost River Irrigation District, the Munsey Ditch Committee and the Butte SWCD. The project was completed last Fall.

Staff Attend Annual IASCD Conference

Three staff were able to attend the annual Idaho Association of Soil Conservation District’s conference in Boise. The three-day conference provided attendees with opportunities to attend educational sessions on various natural resource related topics and administrative updates. An educational field trip was conducted to Vine and Branch Ranch and McIntyre organic farm near Boise. The staff obtained useful information and appreciated the opportunity to attend the conference.

Learn more about the Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts by visiting IASCD.org

Local Work Group Meeting Held

The Butte SWCD and Blaine SWCD held a joint local work group meeting in December at the Craters of the Moon National Monument Visitor’s Center. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss local natural resource concerns and provide the NRCS with direction for 2020 funding priorities. Twenty-nine people were in attendance representing local



Local Work Group Meeting

landowners and partner agencies. The meeting was very productive and informative. We appreciate everyone who attended. Minutes from the

meeting can be found on our website at butteswcd.org.

2019 Division VI Fall Meeting Held in Moore

The Butte SWCD hosted the annual Division VI meeting at the Valley Community Center in Moore last October. The division meeting gives the Districts with the Division VI area (includes Butte, Custer, East Side, West Side, Jefferson, Lehmi, Madison, Teton and Yellowstone SWCDs) a chance to gather and discuss current events taking place across the state and



Division VI meeting in Moore

2020 Redbooks are available at the Butte and Custer County Extension Offices

District Annual Performance Report Now Available Online

The Butte SWCD annual performance report is now available on the District’s website. The report features highlights of District activities, accomplishments and goals for the coming year. The report is submitted to the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission and our local senators and representatives.

Range Management Specialist Added to NRCS Office

A range management specialist position was added to the Arco NRCS field office. We are pleased to welcome Berett Erb to the NRCS team. Berett has been employed by the Butte SWCD since July 2019

under the District’s technical assistance grant. Berett is from Mackay and obtained a B.S. in Environmental Science from the University of Montana Western. Berett has been previously employed by the BLM as a range technician. Berett will work with producers to create livestock grazing plans and focus on rangeland management conservation projects.

District Facebook Page Created

The District has a Facebook page that can be found by searching “@ButteSoilAndWaterConservationDistrict” in Facebook. Updates, notices, photos, and conservation related articles will be posted on the page. Be sure to “like” us to stay connected.

Butte SWCD's Winter Workshop

Focus: Irrigation Efficiency

Featuring U.I.
Extension/N.R.C.S.
Presentation Topics:

- ❖ L.E.S.A. Systems
- ❖ Soil Sampling
- ❖ Water Sensor Technology
- ❖ Nutrient Management
- ❖ N.R.C.S. Programs

Please Join Us!

March 9th, 2020
1:00-3:30pm

B.I.C., 159 N. Idaho St., Arco

**FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
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Free and Open to the Public!

Butte Soil and Water Conservation District

For more information contact: 208-527-8557, ext. 101



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