



# BUTTE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

*Serving Butte and Southern Custer Counties since 1953*

## Awards Presented at Annual Meeting

The Butte Soil and Water Conservation District's Annual Meeting was an evening filled with honoring conservation partners and members of the community for their unwavering commitment to natural resource conservation.

Service awards were presented to board members Mark Telford and Todd Perkes for their exceptional contributions to the District. Mark Telford, who has served on the volunteer board for 10 years, has been an active participant in the District's annual conservation tours and is a staunch advocate for the conservation programs available through the Natural Resources

Conservation Service (NRCS). In 2023, Mark and his wife Paige were chosen as the regional Hugh Hammond Bennett award winners for their innovative farming practices.

Todd Perkes, who was recognized for his 15 years of service on the Butte SWCD board, serves as the board treasurer and represents the District at local and state-level meetings. Todd has been instrumental in supporting grants received by the District and promoting NRCS programs.



*Jordan Hennefer (Partner), NRCS Team Lead Jesse Fullmer, Tom Darland (Contractor), Mark Telford (Service), and Todd Perkes (Service)*

The awards ceremony also recognized the Producer of the Year, Contractor of the Year, and Partner of the Year. The awardees were chosen based on their commitment to natural resource conservation and excellence in collaboration with private landowners and partner agencies to complete conservation projects.

Byron Pehrson was awarded the prestigious title of Producer of the Year for his outstanding contribution to water conservation in the valley. Byron has devoted years to research and countless hours to meetings and leadership, bringing water users together to update and improve the efficiency of water delivery systems for irrigation users in the valley. His efforts have led to the successful completion of

large-scale conservation projects that would not have been possible without his ability to bring the users together for a common goal.

Tom Darland, owner of Darland's SkidSteer Services, was awarded the Contractor of the Year award for his exceptional contributions to the producers within the Butte SWCD. With his skilled staff and extensive knowledge of various types of ground preparation, pipe laying, and rock installation, Tom has been an invaluable asset to the valley. From pipeline installation, dam repairs, and streambank restorations to various other project installations, Tom and his crew have been critical in the success of improving irrigation water delivery and erosion control throughout the District.

Jordan Hennefer of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Brett Gullett of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game were named Partners of the Year for their outstanding contributions to the Lost River Valley. Jordan has been a strong advocate of collaborative efforts with landowners, BLM, NRCS, and others to complete projects with the Butte SWCD. He has been instrumental in supporting collaborative efforts with the NRCS' Cheatgrass Challenge program as well as various water projects installed to encourage more sustainable use of resources while improving resiliency against fire and promoting habitat for sage grouse and other wildlife. Jordan's dedication to producers and conservation in the valley and his tireless efforts in seeing projects through have been invaluable assets for advancing the goals of the Butte SWCD and the NRCS.

Brett Gullett, the Regional Habitat Biologist based in Idaho Falls, was also chosen as a Partner of the Year for his pivotal role in the success of improving the antelope migration corridor across the southern portion of the District. In partnership with the local NRCS office, BLM, National Park Service, and the Butte SWCD, Brett has sought and secured funding for numerous landowners to ensure that they have minimal financial impact for retrofitting their fence lines to reduce obstructions to antelope as they move to and from winter range sites. Brett has been a critical asset in securing Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and Fish and Game funds, which have been instrumental in the success of the project.

Congratulations to all the awardees for their remarkable achievements and contributions to natural resource conservation!

**The Butte SWCD Board of Supervisors meets the third Thursday of each month. Visit [www.butteswcd.org](http://www.butteswcd.org) to obtain a current copy of the agenda and for the meeting location.**

## Cecil Wins State Speech Contest

Eliana Cecil won first place at the Idaho Association of Soil Conservation District's annual speech contest in November. Sponsored by the Butte SWCD, Eliana won the local- and division- level contests prior to the state-contest held in Boise. She was awarded a \$300 cash



*Eliana Cecil*

prize and plaque for her speech on the topic "One Water". Board members Todd Perkes and Walt Johnson, District employee Mindy Hawley and proud parents Jesse and Mindy Cecil were all in attendance at the contest to support and cheer for Eliana. Congratulations Eliana!



## NRCS Townhall Informational Meeting Held

An informational townhall meeting was hosted by the Natural Resources Conservation Service on January 8<sup>th</sup>. Attendees received information on Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, Idaho Soil Water Conservation Commission, and Butte SWCD programs. University of Idaho Extension Agent David Callister also presented information on Extension services. Attendees were provided lunch and door prizes were awarded to a few lucky attendees!



*Town Hall Informational Meeting*

## Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Grant Award

The District received a \$50,000 grant from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation to complete fence projects in the pronghorn migration corridor in Butte County.

The projects will focus on retrofitting existing fence to NRCS wildlife friendly specifications and/or removing fences. Funding will be utilized to increase the payment incentive offered through by the NRCS. Participants with NRCS contracts are eligible for this funding and will receive technical assistance from the NRCS and Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG). We would like to thank the NRCS and Brett Gullett with IDFG for their assistance with this grant! For more information, contact the NRCS office at 208-527-8557.

## Snow Survey

The NRCS' Snow Survey program is underway! Data collection sites are located at Bear Canyon, Copper Basin, Dry Fork, Hilt Creek, Lost-Wood Divide, Smiley Mountain, Stickney Mill, Meadow Lake, and Moonshine. The District submits the data weekly to the Arco Advertiser, but current conditions can be found at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/idaho/snow-survey>.



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

---

**Butte SWCD Board of Directors**

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

**Butte SWCD Staff**

Mindy Hawley	Outreach Coordinator
Stephanie Barnes	Administrative Assistant
Timothy Barnes	NACD Engineering Technician

**NRCS Staff**

Jesse Fullmer	Team Lead
Berett Rosenkrance	Range Mgm't Specialist
Sara Zollinger	Soil Conservationist
Tricia Rogers	Natural Resource Technician

**In This Issue:**

Annual Meeting.....	1
Speech Contest Winner.....	3
Grant Award.....	3