

East Cassia

Soil and Water Conservation District



Performance Report FY23

(July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023)



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Board Meetings: 1st Tuesday of the month at 1:00 pm

Top Priorities and Resource Concerns

1. Water Resource

Encouraging good conservation practices which save water and reduce soil erosion, conversion to sprinkler systems, promote benefits of crop residue, conservation tillage, and cross slope farming practices.

2. Rangeland

Education and encouragement of brush control, range seeding, and pest control, fire control practices, drought concerns, stock water improvements, and planned grazing systems.

3. Direct Seed and Cover Crops

Encouraging farmers and landowners to implement new and innovative farm practices such as reduced tilling and planting cover crops. Educate landowners on the benefits of such practices.

4. Education

Education is a huge benefactor to the districts. The by-product of educating children is that information is then passed on to their parents.

FY2023 Revenue 7/1/22 - 6/30/23

\$ 24,119.08	State – Base, Match & Operating Funds
\$ 7,000.00	County Appropriations
\$ 1,479.52	Tree Sale Profits
\$ 2,436.88	Admin Fees Direct Seed Project
\$ 450.00	Admin Fees LSEE

\$ 35,485.48 TOTAL

Mission Statement

To encourage responsible natural resource management and to implement conservation goals which improve air, soil, and water quality while improving wildlife habitat.

To educate both youth and adults about our local conservation practices and needs.

District Operations/Accomplishments

Seedling Tree Sale

East Cassia manages the Mini-Cassia Annual Seedling Tree Sale. The three districts managed to sell over 2350 seedlings of the 10 different varieties offered. As always, we talked on the phone to many great people that are dedicated in promoting good conservation practices. This year each of the three districts profited \$1,479.52. Income from the tree sales is used to help conduct district educational activities such as: college scholarships, Know Your Government scholarships, Natural Resources Camp scholarships, and speech and poster contests.



Mini-Cassia Direct Seed Cover Project

The 2 Cassia and the Minidoka Soil & Water Conservation Districts in the Mini-Cassia area continue working together to promote the Direct Seed Drill program. 2022 was the eighth year to rent out the seed drills to landowners. Districts have continued promoting good soil health practices which benefit the landowners in many ways. They encourage the implementation of the 5 Soil Health Principles which include keeping the soil covered, minimizing soil disturbance, including plant diversity, keeping a living root in the soil, and integrating livestock. Our 8th Soil Health Workshop was held in January 2023. The theme for the workshop was “Managing Water for Tomorrow’s Agriculture”. There were 182 individuals attended the workshop free of charge. Speakers included a Project Overview given by Doreen McMurray, Grazing Expert Jim Gerrish, Soil Technician Ehsan Soltan, Cover Crop and Soil Health Specialist Marlon Winger, Water Operations Manager Brian Stephans, Producer in grazing cover crops Katie Dennis and Lacy Phelps shared information on the Food Safety Modernization Act.

East Cassia Soil and Water Conservation District

Operations

The district continues to run out of a temporary office in the Cassia County Courthouse. In February, board supervisors met with elected Cassia County Commissioners to review the proposed budget and activities as a basis for requesting county funding. The district requested \$1,000.00 increase for the upcoming fiscal year. This funding helps the district with employee payroll, scholarships and awards, and daily district operations. The district completed and reviewed their Annual Plan and their 5 Year Plan along with their proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2023.

Board/Business Meetings

East Cassia SWCD holds monthly board meetings with agendas posted at offices and on the website. Supervisors and district employees attended the Fall 2022 Division IV meeting hosted by Balanced Rock SCD and the Spring 2023 hosted by Minidoka SWCD. All district financial information and documents are available for public review. Division IV hosted the 78th Annual IASCD Conference in Burley Idaho. The theme was "Tomorrow's Agriculture - Today's Reality Check". The Educational Banquet and Conservation Speech Contest where high school students representing different areas from around Idaho competed for scholarship money prizes. The keynote speaker Dave Holtom (CEO for Valley Wide Co-Op & Valley Agronomics) was followed by a tour of the Valley Agronomics Fertilizer Co-Op. Other tours which spotlighted Southern Idaho included Ward Robotic Dairy, Amalgamated Sugar Factory and a Wet Lands & Striker House Tour. The Idaho District Employee Association (IDEA) held a training workshop with a luncheon, awards and prizes for employees. Districts held their Annual Business Meeting addressing recommended changes to the By-laws. The conference spotlighted speakers on conservation topics, including Lt. Gov. Scott Bedke, and ended with the Awards Banquet. The Idaho District Employee Association honored Doreen McMurray as their IDEA Employee of the Year 2022 for the state of Idaho.

Awards Banquet

In the summer of 2023 East Cassia Soil and Water Conservation District combined with West Cassia and Minidoka SWCD for their Awards Banquet honoring farmers who have exhibited exemplary conservation efforts. East Cassia presented Mark Webb with the Conservation Steward of the Year Award. Ken Woodworth received his 30-year service pin and Doreen McMurray was recognized for 30 years working as the Information & Education Specialist. The board also welcomed a new supervisor, Kurt Heward. Kurt joins the board with experience in the principles of soil health including water infiltration and holding capacity in the soil. He wants to share how these practices can reduce wind and water erosion and improve soil biology.

Education and Outreach

The following donations were given in FY2023:

- \$500 college scholarship to Treg Whitaker
- \$500 college scholarship to Victoria Gulate
- \$50 to Envirothon
- \$50 to Forestry Contest
- \$200 to Know Your Government
- \$150 to Idaho Ag in the Classroom

The district held their annual poster contest for all 5th & 6th grade students and distributed three Conservation Update Newsletters to approximately 1,000 landowners.

East Cassia SWCD supported the 2022 Idaho State FFA and 4-H Land & Soil Evaluation Event CDE where students from regional contest around the state come to Cassia County to compete in the state soil judging event. They celebrated 52 Years of land judging and received T-shirts. Rigby FFA placed 1st and Kuna FFA placed 2nd. NRCS workers, District employees, and SWCD Supervisors provided the equipment and labor. Over 25 volunteers assisted, including Cassia County Commissioners and soil Scientists.



Idaho State Land & Soil Evaluation Event October 2022

East Cassia SWCD Board of Supervisors

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