



Conservation News & Notes

Volume 118 Number 2 Summer 2018

Caldwell Service Center Garden

By: Lori Kent



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The Caldwell Field Office Staff has been getting ready for this years garden. In April the group started the plants from seed. Shauna Miller from Rural Development took the plants home and cared for them while under the grow light.

In May the staff cleaned up the garden. Afterwards they laid down the weed barrier and drip line. Rich Sims, Canyon SCD Associate Supervisor/NRCS Earth Team Volunteer donated garden supplies, his time & provided guidance on how to set up the drip system to Caldwell FO staff.

Last year we started a pollinator garden. We are able to show landowners/public the importance of having a pollinator habitat.

This project began in 2012 and provided 1,766 lbs. of fresh produce donated to the Metro Community Services, Inc. to date. Metro provides assistance to elderly, disabled, and financially limited individuals, through a variety of human service programs to promote self-sufficiency and to protect dignity, safety, and independence.



Quotation:

**"It's not the soil itself
it's the soil life that is
the most important ele-
ment."**

—Geoff Lawton

**Check out the new Canyon Soil Conservation District
website at <http://www.canyonsoilconservation.org>**

Your Canyon SCD

Supervisors:

Mike Swartz, Chairman
Mike Somerville, Vice Chair
Rex Runkle, Sec./Treas.
Robert McKellip, Supervisor
David Dixon, Supervisor

Associate Supervisors:

Tom Johnson
Rich Sims
Matt Livengood

District Staff:

Lori Kent,
Administrative Assistant
Outreach
Mary Rosen
Soil Conservation
Technician

NRCS Staff:

Amie Miller
District Conservationist
Erin Brooks
Soil Conservationist
Justin Ross
Soil Conservationist
Robert Hilton
Soil Conservation
Technician
Doug Higbee
Civil Engineer
Martin Pena
Civil Engineering
Technician
Linda Phillips
Earth Team Volunteer
Rich Sims
Earth Team Volunteer
Robin Hadelor
Earth Team Volunteer

District board meetings are held the first Thursday after the first Tuesday of each month. Meetings are open to the public. Call the office for exact times.

All programs and services of the Canyon Soil Conservation District are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, marital or familial status and political beliefs.

Farmers' Co-Operative Ditch Company's Regional Conservation Partnership Program project's keystone practice begins construction

By Mindi Rambo, NRCS SO Public Affairs

Farmers' Co-Operative Ditch Company (FCDC) of Parma received \$500,000 matching project funds from the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)'s Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) for a project impacting approximately 4,000 acres in the Parma area. RCPP promotes coordination and collaboration between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners.

With the assistance of the Canyon Soil Conservation District and its employees, the FCDC developed the RCPP proposal that ultimately draws on the talent and support of seven different organizations. The project seeks to address a major resource concern for the Treasure Valley – water quality. Producers using water from the FCDC's canal have to deal with large amounts of sediment in their systems as a result of the valley's extensive use of flood irrigation, which can sweep nutrient-rich soil into the canal with the tail water. As the irrigation season progresses, producers end up pumping sediment-laden water, which causes damage to pumps, clogs micro-irrigation systems and deposits sediment in concrete ditches used for surface irrigation.

Tom Johnston, FCDC board member said, "The board is very committed to improving the water quality in the Lower Boise River watershed. This project will help our shareholders improve water quality, quantity and reduce production costs."

The five-year timeline for the project seeks to address this using several conservation practices recommended by NRCS. One of the keystone practices for the project is an approximately 8-acre sediment basin that officially began construction with a ground-breaking ceremony on April. The basin will remove approximately 2,000 tons of sediment each year in an effort assist downstream water users who are interested in converting to more water efficient systems such as micro (drip) irrigation or sprinklers. A water quality monitoring plan will accompany the basin to help measure its efficiency and pinpoint areas downstream where the FCDC and its shareholders will want to consider the installation of additional sediment basins.

Jerry Raynor, acting NRCS State Conservationist for Idaho, said, "We are happy to be able to support the long term water quality, quantity and soil health goals of the Farmers' Co-Operative Ditch Company and the Canyon Soil Conservation District. This multi-pronged approach which promotes conservation practices that improve soil health, reduce erosion and increase efficiency in the use of Idaho's water will result in a number of positive impacts for the company, the FCDC shareholders, the residents of Canyon County and our downstream neighbors."

The sediment basin will take advantage of a long, oxbow-like feature of the canal to divert irrigation water from the canal into a serpentine path that runs approximately 2,000 feet in order to slow the water's speed down and allow the sediment to settle out. The water will then be directed back into the canal on the other end of the basin.

Each year the approximately 2,000 tons of sediment removed from the basin will be placed on some nearby acreage that is

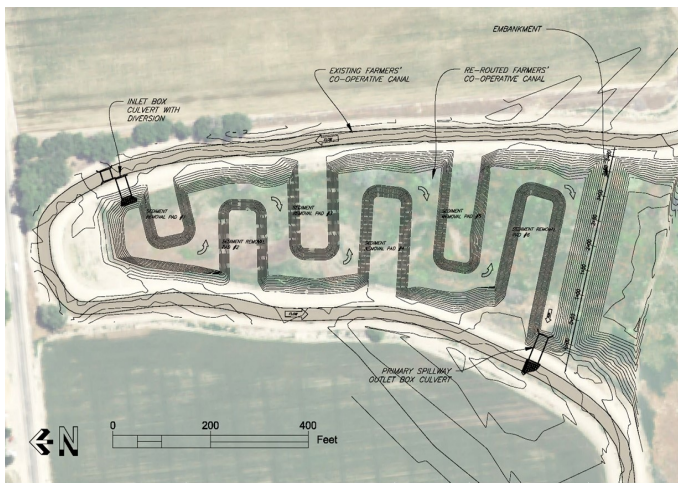
currently unsuitable for farming. After several years, the layers of nutrient-rich soil should render that land arable and productive.

Construction of the basin, which officially began on April 6, will take place through the remainder of 2018, so that it will be in place, tested and ready to go for the 2019 irrigation season. With the sediment basin under way, NRCS has turned its focus to working with FCDC shareholders and the Canyon SCD to implement other targeted conservation practices in the project area. NRCS will provide both technical assistance and financial assistance to qualified applicants during this process through the Farm Bill programs the agency administers. Examples of some of the conservation practices that would apply to this project include Irrigation Water Management Plans, pivot and wheel line sprinkler systems, filter strips, soil health and flow meters.

Partner participation in the project is critical to its success. In addition to staff support, the FCDC has secured the lease for the land the sediment basin will sit on, as well as having shareholder participation in implementing other conservation practices on privately-held lands. The Canyon Soil Conservation District is providing staff time and logistical support, not only for the project itself, but also the groundbreaking ceremony. The Canyon County Commissioners, City of Parma, Southwest Idaho Resources Conservation and Development Council, Black Canyon Irrigation District, and the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission all provided letters of support.

"It's wonderful to see the wide range of government and private organization support for this project," said Morgan Bennetts, Assistant State Conservationist for NRCS Idaho. "What is learned here can be replicated elsewhere by these partners and new ones. NRCS helps get the ball rolling, but our partners are the ones who create interest and buy-in by being leaders in their respective fields."

It's all about Partnerships!



NEW SITE PLAN with PADS AND EMBANKMENT



Grants Available through 319 Funds to Implement the Lower Boise River TMDL

By: Mary Rosen

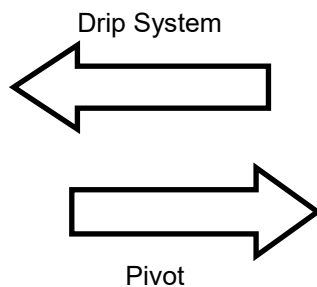
The Lower Boise Watershed Council and Canyon Soil Conservation District formed a partnership in 2009 to address sediment and nutrient runoff from agricultural fields draining into the Boise River watershed. This 319 funding provides up to 75% cost share to install Best Management Practices (BMPs). These practices have been successful in decreasing sediment and nutrients in the Boise River watershed but more work needs to be done! Our latest proposal for 319 grant funds was approved & will provide funding for Canyon County.

Also, the Idaho State Legislature allocated funding to be administered through Idaho Department of Environmental Quality for best management practices. We received word that our grant proposal which was submitted for this funding was also successful!

The program funding will focus on reducing sediment, nutrients and bacteria levels in the Boise River Watershed. We are also focusing on Mason Creek, Conway Gulch, Dixie Slough, Sand Hollow, Indian Creek, Wilson Creek and Willow Creek. If you live near one of these water bodies and have a project in mind-now is the time to give us a call to discuss your project.

Participation is voluntary and offers opportunities to improve agricultural practices that benefit both operators and water quality.







NRCS Soil Health Trailer

By: Lori Kent

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) received a Soil Health Trailer for training employees to educate landowners and public the importance of soil health. On February 9th, staff from the State Office came to the Caldwell Field Office to show Division III employees how to use the trailer.

The group held a classroom training on 3 the different types of soil which are clay, silt and loam. They also discussed how important it is to control soil, water and wind erosion. Soil health management systems include: conservation crop rotation, cover crop, no till, mulch tillage, mulching, nutrient management & pest management.

Then came the hands on training. The group went outside to learn about outreach contents in the soil health trailer. There is a rain simulator, wind simulator and outreach tools.

Managing for soil health is one of the easiest and most effective ways for farmers to increase crop productivity and profitability while improving the environment.



Classroom
training



Contents of
trailer



Monarch habitat program established by Canyon Soil Conservation District

By: Rich Sims

In 1992 the monarch was officially made the Idaho's state insect. Monarch habitat has been declining over the years as herbicide use has increased. Without the habitat the complex life cycle of the monarch is under threat.

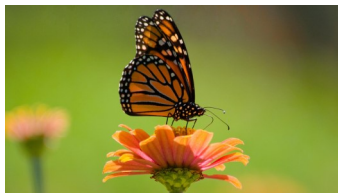
Each year adult butterflies fly east from their winter roosts along the coast to lay eggs here in Idaho. An adult monarch can lay up to 500 eggs, but they prefer to lay only one egg per plant. The eggs hatch in 3 to 12 days and the distinctive black, white and yellow banded caterpillar appears.

Monarchs will only lay eggs on milk weed plants. The monarch caterpillar accumulates toxins from the plant tissues which makes them unpalatable to bird and other predators. At one time, milkweed was classified as a noxious weed due to reported toxic effects on livestock and efforts were made to eradicate it. The milk weed is no longer on the noxious weed list in Idaho.

The Canyon Soil Conservation District has been working with local land owners to establish pollinator habitat and notices a shortfall of milkweed seed. The conservation district established a team of volunteers to collect, dry, scarify and stratify the seed for local landowners that want to establish pollinator habitat. The first year the volunteers collected five pounds of milk weed seed and has given the seed to landowners in 3-ounce containers. *

*Information source: United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Contact your local USDA-NRCS/Conservation District office for additional information. Canyon SCD, 2208 E. Chicago, Caldwell @ 208-779-3443 or 3448.



BREN Tree Planting

By: Liz Paul & Erin Brooks

Many hands made quick work of planting over 300 trees and shrubs at Jason Cagle's constructed wetland in Greenleaf on April 20. The work involved digging into hard-packed dirt, fording the high-flowing Pipe Gulch Creek, working on steep hillsides and remembering how and where to plant the many species of plants. The Boise River Enhancement Network (BREN) and NRCS recruited more than 20 volunteers to help, most of them from Xylem, Inc, BREN's 2018 Corporate Stewardship partner. Xylem employees will be participating in three river projects with BREN in 2018.

The Cagle project started in 2017 when Jason approached the NRCS with his idea to transform a weed-infested lot into a habitat-rich wetland. The site has excellent water availability, and a design was created by NRCS engineer Doug Higbee that included removing the large Russian olive trees from along the ditch and revegetating with native plants, excavating a small wetland and planting willows and shrubs around it, as well as establishing native plants along a second tailwater ditch that runs through the property and on the steep hillside. The project totals 2.3 acres.

Development in the lower Boise River watershed has resulted in a significant loss of wetlands, and cooperative projects like this can provide important habitat for native birds and animals. Wetlands also help to reduce nutrient in the water that passes through them. Water quality is a major concern in the Boise River watershed. The NRCS can assist landowners with similar projects through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program which helps to offset the costs for projects that have natural resource benefits.



Coming Events . . .

District Board Meeting

Caldwell Field Office
2208 E. Chicago Street
July 12 @ 7:00 PM
August 9 @ 7:00 PM
September 6 @ 7:00 PM

Lower Boise River Watershed Advisory Group

Caldwell Airport
4814 E. Linden Street
June 7 @ 1:00 — 3:00 PM
July 12 @ 1:00 — 3:00 PM

2018 Natural Resources Camp

Ketchum, ID
June 25—30

2018 Canyon County Fair

Caldwell Events Center
July 26 — 29

2018 CSCD Speech Contest

Caldwell F.O.
September 28 @ 4 PM

2018 CSCD Poster Contest

Caldwell F.O.
October 1



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Ingredients

3 cups chopped tomatoes
1/2 cup chopped green bell pepper
1 cup onion, diced
1/4 cup minced fresh cilantro
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
4 teaspoons chopped fresh jalapeno pepper (including seeds)
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper

Directions

1. Stir the tomatoes, green bell pepper, onion, cilantro, lime juice, jalapeno pepper, cumin, salt, and pepper in a bowl.

***Great with you favorite chips.

***Gets better as the flavors meld.

**Canyon Soil
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