

PORTNEUF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

April/May 2009

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Portneuf Soil and Water Conservation District
1551 Baldy Ave., Ste. 2
Pocatello, ID 83201
208-237-4628

Additional Funding for Marsh Creek Watershed

The District is pleased to announce we received a DEQ grant for the second phase of the Marsh Creek Watershed project. This \$540,000 grant will enable us to work with additional landowners in addressing animal facilities, improving riparian conditions, and reducing erosion on critical crop, range and pasture lands in the watershed. The Phase 1 and Phase 2 grants have given us a great start in improving the water quality in the Marsh Creek Watershed. "This grant is unique due to the large amount of money that has been committed to the effort, short implementation timetable, and many partners involved," noted Dave Pisarski, who heads up DEQ's program to prevent NPS pollution. "We expect to accomplish a lot with this cooperative venture in a very short time." This particular grant will need to be fully completed by March of 2011.

The support we received from the cities, including Pocatello, Arimo, Downey, Inkom, and from the Bannock County Commissioners was key to receiving this grant. We also have had great support from our partner agencies, including NRCS, IASCD, ISCC, DEQ, IDA, FSA, Portneuf Watershed Partnership, and the Downey-Swan Lake Highway District. We would not be able to do any of these projects without the outstanding landowners and producers in Bannock County!!

The District has been encouraged to submit a grant application for Phase 3 of the Marsh Creek Watershed Project to the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) §319 program for \$250,000. This third phase of the project will address additional areas on Marsh Creek and adjacent tributaries.

We have also expanded the monitoring process for Marsh Creek with the assistance of a number of agencies; this plan will be available on our website when finalized.

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All Portneuf SWCD and NRCS programs are offered on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or handicap.

Portneuf SWCD is an equal opportunity employer

www.pswcd.org

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Portneuf SWCD Board Meetings:

May 13, 2009

June 10, 2009

7:00 pm, NRCS Office Pocatello

Other events:

Soil Stewardship Week April 26 - May 2
www.nacdnet.net

County Noxious Weed Tour, June 12 meet at 9 am Road and Bridge lot in Pocatello. Contact county weed office at 234-4139 for more information.

EQIP NEWS

Under the new 2008 Farm Bill, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) was reauthorized for five years. This program provides cost-sharing dollars for conservation on private farms and ranches in Idaho. The sign-up is continuous, but funding year deadlines are set by the Idaho NRCS State Conservationist. The deadline for 2009 was February 13, 2009. The new Farm Bill has presented some changes in how EQIP applications will be ranked and funded. For 2009, money has been allocated on a geographic region rather than the usual county basis. The region includes Bannock, Bingham, Caribou, Franklin, and Oneida counties. Local Working Groups from each county have provided information to the county field office in regards to their conservation resource concerns. The District Conservationists from each county met to collectively prioritize these concerns and create an application ranking process that reflects the conservation priorities. The ranking priorities are AFO/CAFO 1st, Range/Dry Pasture 2nd, Dry Cropland 3rd, and Irrigated Cropland/Pasture 4th.

Starting the week of April 20th, the Pocatello Field Office will be contacting and scheduling appointments with eligible applicants. Final plans and a project cost estimate will be developed at that time. After applications from each county are ranked, contracts will be written and funded. As of this writing, there are \$1.3 million allotted to be used in the five counties. The field office will provide more information to eligible applicants as it becomes available. Contact the NRCS Office at 237-4628 for more information.

The District participated in the Pocatello Community Environmental Fair Saturday April 25. Along with the NRCS, we distributed soils information, water-saving information for families, and a variety of conservation tips. We also helped children (and several adults!) learn how to paint with soil. With several different soils from around the area, and a little bit of glue and water, great masterpieces were created! If you would like more information on painting with soil, see the NACD website at www.nacdnet.org.



Web Soil Survey (WSS)

The NRCS now has soil survey information available on the internet. This is a powerful tool for understanding the soils in your area. The WSS provides full soil survey reports that can help in land-use and management decisions. Visit this site at <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov>

Lava Ranch Demonstration Project

Three Rivers RC&D and the Wildland Fire Education and Prevention (WFEP) Program are partnering with Lava Ranch Mountain Properties to sponsor a fuels reduction demonstration project on the Big Bear Road this summer. This project will show first hand what a wildland fuel reduction project actually looks like. Different levels of fuel reduction will be demonstrated at this site, so a landowner can see first hand which level would best meet individual property needs to reduce the possibility of a wildland fire roaring through your lands. Gordon Gillman, an independent contractor working with Three Rivers RC&D, is the liaison for the Firewise Program in Lava Ranch. His job is to provide educational materials and assistance to property owners for the prevention of wildland fires and the reductions of fuels in the Lava Ranch Development area. He can be contacted at 208-776-5623.

Dalmatian Toadflax (*Linaria Dalmatica ssp dalmatica*)

Dalmatian Toadflax is an Idaho State listed noxious weed. It is a perennial that can grow up to 3 feet tall, reproducing by seed and underground seed stalks. Waxy green to bluish green leaves are egg shaped, 1 to 3 inches long, and clasp the stem. Flowers are 1 inch long (excluding the 1/2-inch spur), **yellow**, often tinged with orange or red. These weeds look like garden snapdragons, and were originally brought to the United States from Europe as a garden ornamental. Plants flower from midsummer to fall. Seeds are produced in a pod with a 2-celled capsule containing many irregularly angled seeds. Large plants can produce almost a 1/2 million seeds. It is aggressive and may be found along roadsides and on rangeland where it may become a serious problem by crowding out desirable forage. An extensive and deep root system along with a waxy leaf make this an extremely difficult plant to manage.

For additional information on Dalmatian toadflax, see the University of Idaho Weed site at www.uiweb.uidaho.edu/weeds/ or visit the Idaho One Plan website at www.oneplan.org. The Idaho Weed Awareness Campaign has lots of information on this and other Idaho noxious weeds, see <http://idahoweedawareness.net>.

For information on identification and control, contact the **Bannock County Weed Control Department at 234-4139**.

Dalmatian Toadflax



Dalmatian Toadflax Flowers



George Beck & James Sebastian,
Colorado State University, United States

BANNOCK COUNTY FSA NEWS

Sign-up for the 2009 DCP (Direct/Counter-Cyclical Payment) program is underway at the FSA office in Pocatello. We are asking that all producers please contact our office as soon as possible and make an appointment. As you are well aware, a new Farm Bill always means new (and more) paperwork. Deadlines are fast approaching, so call today and we can assist you in this important sign-up. For those of you in the CRP program, we can complete your crop report for the 2009 crop year as well. Speaking of CRP now is an excellent time to check out your contract acres to see if you are in compliance with noxious weed requirements. Remember too, that unauthorized grazing of CRP brings with it fines, penalties, and even possible termination of your CRP contract. We continue to be asked many questions concerning the future of this program. At this time, we still don't know if additional extensions will be offered to those contracts set to expire within the next few years. We do know that for those of you with contracts expiring within the next year or two, there are some very definite steps that must be taken prior to breaking out any land. Failure to receive proper permission without completing the necessary paperwork with FSA and or NRCS will result in some pretty substantial fines and or penalties. In other words, if you have questions, please contact the office before doing anything on CRP land. We will be glad to assist you and answer any questions you have. Our phone number is 237-3435 ext 2. We are located at 1551 Baldy Ave Suite #1 in Pocatello. Here's wishing you all a good, productive spring. (So far the rainfall is encouraging) We hope to see you soon. It's a pleasure to serve the farmers and ranchers of Bannock County.

Steve Myler
County Executive Director
Bannock County Farm Service Agency

Natural Resources Camp

This year the Natural Resources Camp (NRC) is celebrating it's 50th year of educating Idaho youth about the valuable natural resources that our state has to offer. The NRC Camp encourages youth ages 12 to 14 to spend a week near beautiful Sun Valley to explore and study Idaho's forests, streams, rangelands, soils, and wildlife. All of the instructors are specialists in their fields, and have designed presentations and hands-on projects that have intrigued and challenged campers for many years. There are also many recreational opportunities including orienteering, archery, target shooting, fishing, crafts, and fire-side festivities. Camp participants will have many opportunities to discuss and debate natural resource issues and to discover their responsibilities as citizens. If you are 12-14 years old and want to learn about your natural environment and how to protect it and use it wisely, this camp is for you!

Cost: \$185, due by May 22; Late registration is \$205. Applications for the 2009 NRC can be obtained at your local Soil Conservation District or County Extension Office, or by calling the Twin Falls R&E Center at 736-3605. Additional information on camp can be obtained by calling Bob Josaitis at 208-934-8481 ext. 111, or Steve Hines at 208-734-9590 ext. 19, or by logging on to <http://extension.ag.uidaho.edu/nrc/index.htm>. There are also opportunities for teachers to attend and obtain graduate credit; contact Amber Moore at 208-736-3629 for more information, or log on to website.

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United States Department of Agriculture • Natural Resources Conservation Service

IDAHO'S WATER SUPPLY RECEIVES BAILOUT IN MARCH

Greater than normal precipitation in March boosted Idaho's water supply outlook. The US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) today released the State's Water Supply Outlook Report for April which explains how March precipitation is raising hopes for an adequate water supply for hydropower production and agriculture.

"The 'stimulus' precipitation was exactly what was needed to ease the ongoing downward spiral of water volumes caused by the mid-winter dry spell," said Ron Abramovich, NRCS water supply specialist. "More water will make decisions more straightforward for water managers and users trying to stretch their water budget to the end of the season."

March storms brought abundant moisture to Idaho's mountains – some high elevation snow telemetry sites registered near record March precipitation amounts. Most of Idaho received at least 110% of average precipitation with the highest amounts at 200% of average. The least amount fell in the Owyhee Basin at 87% of average.

A month ago Idaho had a mediocre snowpack ranging from 70-90% of average, now the percentages increased to 85-105 of average. However, the snowpack across Idaho remains varied with Mann Creek Basin having the lowest snowpack at 62% of average to Rathdrum Basin with 126% of average.

The March precipitation dramatically improved the streamflow forecasts. Overall, the forecasts increased 12% from the March water supply report but vary widely across the state. The Middle Fork of the Salmon River increased from 80% of average to 110% in just one month. Forecasts for the Wood and Lost Basins are still only 65-90% of average and water supplies may be marginally adequate in these basins. In the Owyhee Basin, the snowmelt streamflow peak occurred in mid-March, additional peaks are possible with more rain.

"Just how efficient the spring runoff will be depends on the future weather and the lingering long-term drought effects," Abramovich said. "Dry soils can soak up runoff and decrease runoff efficiency. Also, the streamflow forecasts assume normal spring and summer precipitation; without more precipitation in the coming months, volumes may be lower than stated."

Currently, the National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center predicts a greater than normal chance of normal to below-normal summer precipitation in central and southern Idaho and western Wyoming. Air temperature forecasts call for a better chance for above normal temperatures for the same region.

The water supply outlook varies by region; for specific information, access the complete Idaho Water Supply Outlook Report for April 2009 online at www.id.nrcs.usda.gov/snow and click on the 'Water Supply' link.

American Falls Reservoir was 97% full as of April 22, 2009 - visit <http://www.usbr.gov/pn/hydromet/burtea.cfm> for current reservoir capacity information.