

PORTNEUF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

December 2009



Measuring snow on Mink Creek Snow Course, 1960

Soil Conservation Commission Legislative Interim Committee will be meeting Tuesday, January 5, 2010, 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. State Capitol, Room WW53, 700 W. Jefferson Street, Boise. This meeting will further discuss legislation concerning the future of the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission (ISCC) and Conservation Districts in the State of Idaho. As conservation districts, we have been the "grass roots" deliverers of non-regulatory locally led conservation in Idaho for over 60 years. The technical support districts receive from the ISCC is critical to the implementation of many of our conservation efforts. The conservation partnership between the ISCC, Districts, the NRCS, and the Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts has been instrumental in getting projects done at the local level in the most cost effective and efficient manner possible. We hope that our legislators will take into account the impact conservation districts and the ISCC have on our agricultural communities as this discussion continues.

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

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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

January 13, 2010
Pocatello NRCS
Office 7 pm

February 10, 2010
Pocatello NRCS
Office 7 pm

Other Events

Bannock County
Farm Bureau
Speech Contest
Thursday, January
21, 2010 5:00 p.m.
Bannock County
Farm Bureau Office
200 West Alameda,
Pocatello, Idaho

Theme:
**THE INFLUENTIAL
VOICE OF IDAHO
AGRICULTURE**

Open to Bannock
County Students in
grades 9-12
Contact Sherril
Tillotson at 251-
8267 or Kim Madrid
at 233-9442 by
January 15th, 2010 to
participate

Programs currently available to assist land managers with their conservation practices

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (**EQIP**) through NRCS offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants install or implement structural or management practices on agricultural land.

The Conservation Stewardship Program (**CSP**), also through NRCS, encourages producers to maintain and initiate conservation practices with monetary incentives. The program offers two payment types: an annual payment for maintaining existing land conservation practices and adopting new ones and a supplemental payment for adopting resource conserving crop rotations.

The Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (**AWEP**) through NRCS will be accepting proposals during the first quarter of 2010, more information will be available soon.

Portneuf Soil and Water Conservation District Programs:

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) §319 water quality grants in the Marsh Creek watershed assist participants in implementing water quality improvement projects. An additional IDEQ §319 water quality grant is anticipated in 2010 and will include the Middle Portneuf Watershed as well as continuing work in the Marsh Creek Watershed.

RCRDP loan program

Resource Conservation and Rangeland Development Program (RCRDP), administered through the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission. These loans are in amounts up to \$125,000 with low interest rates, visit www.scc.idaho.gov or call 208-332-8650 for more information and for State Revolving Fund information.

Idaho Soil Conservation Commission

State Revolving Fund (SRF) for loans greater than \$500,000 for projects including Public health emergencies, Public health hazards, Watershed restoration, Watershed protection, and Protection of established beneficial uses.

Idaho OnePlan

Idaho OnePlan provides data and software to help growers develop a single conservation farm plan that can be pre-endorsed by the various agencies, streamlining and simplifying the regulatory process that farmers face. Assistance includes Nutrient, Pest and Waste Management Plans, Water Quality and Wetlands Plans, Air Quality Planning, Financial Assistance Information, and Petroleum Storage Tank Plans. See <http://www.oneplan.org/NMPlan.asp> particularly for nutrient management planning relating to CAFOs, and for a list of certified nutrient management planners for the State of Idaho.

Contact the office at 237-4628 x 111 for more information on any of these programs.

FARM SERVICE AGENCY NEWS

At FSA, we are and have been busy trying to complete payments for the 2009 crop year. This year has been, to say the least, interesting. As many of you know, FSA decided to change the way payments are made to producers throughout the nation. Up until this year, payments have always been handled at the county office level. However, starting this year, payments will now originate and be made at the national level, including the mailing of transaction statements. This has proven to be a very difficult task. The sheer volume of payments from the thousands of FSA offices nationwide has resulted in backlogs, incorrect payment amounts, and even some entity types not being paid at all. Those at the national level have been working through these challenges, but as of this writing, the Bannock County FSA office still has a handful of both CRP and DCP payments to complete. The only thing we can do at the county level is to guarantee that as soon as any payment is released, we have and will continue to electronically certify and sign each and every payment on the very day we receive them. Unfortunately though, many producers are still receiving payments later than they ever have before. For that, we apologize and certainly appreciate your patience. As those at the national level strive to complete this arduous process, everything they learn will make it that much better for years to come. If you have not received your CRP/DCP payment for this year, please call our office so we can begin the process to research the problem. Again, we thank you for your patience during this change. As your local office, it has been difficult for us to wait for others to do a job that we normally have completed by mid-October of each year. However, in the end, this change, like most others, will be worth the trials and challenges we've experienced along the way.

We are now taking applications for the 2010 crop year DCP program. The deadline for making application is June 1st. Advance payments are available, so call the office for an appointment.

We are continually asked about the future of the CRP program as well. To date, we have heard nothing as to the direction CRP may go. Whether or not extensions will be granted or another sign-up will be held is still anybody's guess. We will keep you apprised of any and all changes as they come to us. Until then, please continue to be vigilant with your responsibilities as contract holders, including grazing restrictions, and adherence to noxious weed requirements. CRP noncompliance can result in stiff penalties or even contract termination.

We at the Bannock County FSA Office wish each of you a very Merry Christmas and the happiest of New Year's! May 2010 be your best year so far. If you have questions or need an appointment to visit our office, our number is 237-3435 extension 2.

Steve Myler
County Executive Director
Bannock County FSA

Proposed Reissuance of the Wastewater (NPDES) General Permit for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations in Idaho

The EPA is proposing to reissue a general National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for **concentrated animal feeding operations** (CAFOs) in the State of Idaho. As proposed, all animal feeding operations (AFOs) that meet the regulatory definition of a CAFO, discharge or propose to discharge into waters of the U.S. located in the State of Idaho, including water bodies in Indian Country, and are subject to 40 CFR Part 412 are eligible for coverage under the permit.

Does your operation meet the definition of a CAFO? Here are some abbreviated key points from proposal:

Animal feeding operation (AFO) means a lot or facility (other than an aquatic animal production facility) where the following conditions are met: (i) animals (other than aquatic animals) have been, are, or will be stabled or confined and fed or maintained for a total of forty-five (45) days or more in any twelve (12) month period, and (ii) crops, vegetation, forage growth, or post-harvest residues **are not sustained in the normal growing season over any portion of the lot or facility.**

Large CAFO means an AFO that stables or confines as many as or more than the numbers of animals specified in any of the following categories: (i) 700 mature dairy cattle, whether milked or dry; (ii) 1,000 veal calves; (iii) 1,000 cattle other than mature dairy cows or veal calves. Cattle includes but is not limited to heifers, steers, bulls and cow/calf pairs.

Medium CAFO means any AFO that stables or confines as many or more than the numbers of animals specified in any of the following categories: (i) 200 to 699 mature dairy cattle, whether milked or dry cows; (ii) 300 to 999 veal calves; (iii) 300 to 999 cattle other than mature dairy cows or veal calves. Cattle includes but is not limited to heifers, steers, bulls and cow/calf pairs.

Small CAFO means an AFO that is designated as a CAFO and is not a Medium CAFO.

A key point to consider is that all operations applying under the general permit will be required to have and follow a nutrient management plan (NMP) prepared by a certified nutrient management planner, certified in the state of Idaho. A list can be found at the Idaho Oneplan site <http://www.oneplan.org/NMPlan.asp>, or you can contact your local NRCS office. This is a general permit; those that don't meet the criteria may have to apply for individual NPDES permits.

Feeding in pastures generally doesn't qualify as confined unless special circumstances cause EPA to designate area as CAFO. Operations that don't necessarily meet criteria can still be **designated** as CAFOs by the permitting authority. There is a lot of information in this proposal; for all the details, please look at the entire proposal on the epa website at http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/water.nsf/NPDES+Public+Notices/cafo_id_09, or click on link at PSWCD website, www.pswcd.org

Public Comments close January 19, 2010. Comments can be written and/or email at addresses on website.

EPA Technical Contact:
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(208) 378-5765
peak.nicholas@epa.gov

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FARM BILL PROGRAM HELPS CONSERVE FARM AND RANCH LANDS

The Farm and Ranchland Reserve Program helps farmers and ranchers preserve their agricultural land through permanent conservation easements. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers this Farm Bill program which provides matching funds to purchase the easements.

"The Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP) helps landowners keep their farms and ranches from being converted to non-agricultural uses," said State Conservationist Jeff Burwell. "The financial assistance **is provided to a cooperating entity which purchases the development rights from landowners to keep productive farm and ranch land in agriculture.**"

Landowners **must apply through a cooperating entity** that has an existing farm or ranch land protection program. Cooperating entities include state, local, or Tribal governments and non-governmental organizations. The program provides matching funds to these entities to purchase conservation easements which restrict the ability of current and future landowners to use the property for anything except agriculture.

Applications will be accepted on a continuous basis. For the first funding cycle, applications must be received by February 1, 2010. Eligible entities are encouraged to submit their applications as soon as possible.

To qualify, the landowner must be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions of the Farm Bill and must meet the terms of the Adjusted Gross Income provision.

For more information on FRPP eligibility, stop by your local USDA service center or visit NRCS online at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>

Hellos and Good-byes

Hello to **Ryan Woodland**, he will be the Soil Conservation Technician in the Pocatello NRCS Field Office beginning January 18th. He may be a familiar name to some, he comes from Idaho Department of Lands where he was a Lands Resource Specialist. Welcome Ryan!

Paula Jones, Three Rivers RC &D Coordinator is **retiring** January 3rd after 33 years with the NRCS, 17 of them in Pocatello. We will miss her enthusiasm for conservation and commitment to the communities in Southeast Idaho. Enjoy your retirement, Paula!