

# PORTNEUF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

**MARCH 2010**

## **District Grant Updates**

The District is currently administering two DEQ §319 water quality grants to assist landowners in installing Best Management Practices (BMPs) in the Marsh Creek Watershed. This watershed project also involves an extensive monitoring component in partnership with the Portneuf Watershed Partnership and Idaho State University. There are 3 continuous and 10 discrete sites on Marsh Creek that are monitoring dissolved oxygen, temperature, specific conductivity, pH, turbidity, depth, and velocity. Phosphorus and nitrogen is monitored at several locations. An additional §319 Grant is anticipated in the spring of this year to address more of the Marsh Creek Watershed, and to include the middle Portneuf River. Current priorities

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anticipated in the spring of this year to address more of the Marsh Creek Watershed, and to include the middle Portneuf River. Current priorities include animal feeding areas, riparian vegetation/streambank stability, grazing management, and reducing cropland erosion.

Why the emphasis on this watershed? Marsh Creek is one of the largest contributors of sediment to the Portneuf River, a 303(d) listed waterbody. (Portneuf River TMDL Agricultural Implementation Plan, 2002). Marsh Creek is listed as the highest priority to reduce agricultural sediment. Monitoring indicates that this creek can transport anywhere from a low of 2 tons to a high of 88 tons/day of total suspended sediment (TSS) (draft DEQ Portneuf River TMDL revision, 2009). The District feels that assisting landowners in the Marsh Creek Watershed with installing BMPs to reduce sediment and agricultural runoff and to increase streambank stability and riparian health will have long term benefits for the Marsh Creek Watershed as well as the Portneuf River. If you would like additional information on this program, or if you are interested in participating, please contact Chris Banks at the district Office, 237-4628, ext. 111.

For more TMDL information see the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality website at [http://www.deq.state.id.us/water/data\\_reports.cfm](http://www.deq.state.id.us/water/data_reports.cfm), surface water, subbasin assessments for more information and for TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) reports.

**Natural Resources  
Camp**

**CSP**

**Good byes**

**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](http://www.pswcd.org)**

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### Portneuf SWCD Board Meetings

March 10, 2010  
7 pm, Pocatello  
NRCS Office

April 14, 2010  
7 pm, Pocatello  
NRCS Office

May 12, 2010  
7 pm, Pocatello  
NRCS Office

### Other Events

Ground Water

## GROUND WATER RESOURCES

National Ground Water Awareness Week is March 7-13. More than 90 percent of all public drinking water systems rely on ground water to supply the population with drinking water, and millions of Americans rely on ground water from aquifers to supply their private wells. Ground water flows slowly underground through pore spaces between sand, gravel, and cracks in rock, in underground formations called aquifers. These aquifers supply water that is used for agriculture, domestic water, and natural stream and lake recharge. Almost all of the drinking, commercial and industrial water needs in Pocatello and Chubbuck are derived from the lower Portneuf Aquifer. The City of Pocatello website, <http://www.pocatello.us/se/> has Aquifer Impact reports that are very informative. Very little is known about the aquifers in the south end of the county, but most people that live in these areas depend on ground water also.

If your family gets drinking water from a private well, do you know if your water is safe to drink? What health risks could you and your family face? Where can you go for help or advice? The following links can help you learn more about this vital resource:

<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/groundwaterawareness/>

<http://www.ngwa.org/public/awarenessweek/index.aspx>

Ground Water  
Awareness week,  
March 7-13

Division V Spring  
Meeting, March 17,  
2010 Booth Barn  
Pocatello

Pocatello Commu-  
nity Environmental  
Fair, April 24, 2010

<http://www.ngwa.org/public/awarenessweek/index.aspx>

American groundwater trust [www.agwt.org](http://www.agwt.org)

How do you get your well water tested? The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) in Pocatello can assist in testing for nitrates if you bring in a sample, and can provide information on collection techniques. They can also provide a list of labs in the area that can perform more detailed testing and analysis of your well water. DEQ will be providing nitrate testing for well water at the Pocatello Community Environmental Fair in April, and at health fairs throughout the county this spring. Contact the local DEQ office at 236-6160 for more information.

### Daily Snotel Site Information

Snow pack and precipitation in the Portneuf Basin is running 65-68% of normal as of March 8, according to the NRCS Snotel sites (see page 3 for more details). What does that mean for irrigators? Many reservoirs are in good shape due to carryover from last year, but there may be very little recharge or runoff in some areas.

Visit the Idaho Snotel site at <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/reports> and select "Idaho Southern", then scroll down to the Portneuf Basin. These sites are updated daily.

### Board of Supervisors

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Kevin Koester, Vice-Chair  
Dave Jackson, Treasurer  
John McNabb  
Kit Tillotson

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Brad Kent  
Kirk Irick  
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### District Staff

Office Administrator  
Janet Pacioretty

### NRCS Staff

BJ O'Doherty,  
District Conservationist

## Below Normal Snowpack

**BOISE, ID, March 5, 2010** – Snow survey data collected last week across Idaho by the Natural Resources Conservation Service show February continued this winter's trend of below normal precipitation. Near record low winter precipitation has resulted in meager snowpacks across the state that range from 55 to 75% of average. "The highest snowpacks are along the State's western and southern edges since they are affected by the major storms hitting the southwestern states," said Ron Abramovich, Water Supply specialist for NRCS. "That's the El Niño weather pattern - where the southwest gets above average snowfall and the Pacific Northwest is dry."

Idaho's water supply comes from mountain snowpacks. The majority of reservoir inflows come from snowpacks above 6,000 in southern Idaho and above 4,500 feet in northern Idaho. Given the low snowpacks, runoff will be below normal across the state and irrigation water shortages are predicted in many central, southern and eastern Idaho basins. Two long-term snow measuring stations in the Upper Snake Basin in Yellowstone National Park are the **3rd lowest** since records start in 1919. The snowpack in this area affects water supply in eastern Idaho.

"February's mountain precipitation ranged from 30-55% of average, adding to below average amounts for November, December and January," said Ron Abramovich. "Because of the low precipitation amounts, streamflow forecasts decreased from February predictions."

District Conservationist  
Ryan Clayton, Soil  
Conservationist  
Martha Nunez-Hagius,  
Engineer  
Ryan Woodland, Soil  
Conservation Technician

**ISCC/IASCD Staff**

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Resource Conservationist

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ary," said Ron Abrams from "Because of the low precipitation amounts, streamflow forecasts decreased from February predictions."

Most reservoirs across the state are storing above average amounts for March 1. However, with well below average streamflow predicted for this summer, irrigation demand will draw down reservoirs to their minimal storage levels by summer's end and greatly increase the need for good snow next winter."

"One last hope to salvage this year's water supply would be to receive a cool and wet spring," Abramovich added. "Above average precipitation and cool temperatures in April and May would delay snow melt, keeping the snowpack in the high country longer.

**Upper Snake River Basin** - The only thing above normal in the Upper Snake is the reservoir storage at 115% of average (82% of capacity). The entire Upper Snake Basin is in desperate need of more snow. February precipitation was 38% of average and the snowpack ranges from 47% in Hoback Basin to 68% in Portneuf Basin. Streamflow forecasts range from 31-66% of average.

*Please contact office at 237 4628, x 111 or at  
portneufswcd@pswcd.org if you do not want to  
receive this newsletter or if you would like to receive it  
electronically.... Thank You!*



Steve Dewey, Utah State University

## Dyer's Woad

*Isatis tinctoria*

Dyer's Woad, a state listed noxious weed, is a member of the Brassicaceae or mustard family. It was introduced into North America from Europe, probably late in the 17th century. It was cultivated as a source of blue dye and has since naturalized as weed present in dry areas of our region. Dyer's woad spreads primarily by seed.

Steve Dewey, Utah State University



Dyer's woad can be a winter annual, biennial, or short-lived perennial. Basal leaves arise from a thick taproot. Stem leaves appear to wrap around the stem, and are lance shaped. Leaves have a whitish midvein. Stems are up to 4 feet tall, flowers are yellow in flat-top clusters flowering during May and June. Fruits are teardrop shaped, 3/4 inches long, and purplish brown. Dyer's woad is a serious noxious weed in Bannock County on disturbed sites, rangelands, forest lands, pastures and even cultivated fields. Biological controls are currently being researched, but none are available at this time. Some herbicides are effective, and hand pulling can be beneficial in smaller sites. Contact the Bannock County Weed Control office at 234-4139 for

beneficial in smaller sites. Contact the Bannock County Weed Control office at 234-4139 for more control information.

## NATURAL RESOURCES CAMP FOR IDAHO TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

The Natural Resources Camp has been a summer program since 1960. Spend a week near beautiful Sun Valley exploring and studying Idaho's natural resources! Discover nature's secrets for yourself by conducting experiments and completing outdoor projects. This is a hands-on Camp! Also enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking, fishing, volleyball, firearm safety and target shooting, and fireside sing-alongs. Compete against your friends in the Tournament of the Outdoors.

**Students:** 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 workshop is for you!

**Teachers:** looking for new ideas to use in class, on field trips, or to give students hands-on experiences? If you enjoy outdoor learning or are concerned about our environmental future, this program is for you!

Applications for the 2010 NRC can be obtained at the PSWCD Office or by calling the Twin Falls R&E Center at 736-3605. Registration is due by May 21, 2010. Additional information on camp can be obtained by calling Mary Fenwick at 736-3605. Information and applications available also at <http://extension.ag.uidaho.edu/nrc>.

Natural Resources Camp is sponsored by University of Idaho Extension, and Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts, in cooperation with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Idaho Department of Lands, the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission, and the USDA Forest Service.

### **Conservation Stewardship Program**

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is a voluntary conservation program that encourages land stewards to improve their conservation performance by installing and adopting additional activities, and improving, maintaining, and managing existing activities on agricultural land and nonindustrial private forest land. NRCS will provide financial and technical assistance to eligible producers to conserve and enhance soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. Eligible lands include cropland, grassland, prairie land, improved pastureland, rangeland, nonindustrial private forest lands, agricultural land under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe, and other private agricultural land (including cropped woodland, marshes, and agricultural land used for the production of livestock) on which resource concerns related to agricultural production could be addressed. Participation in the program is voluntary. The second round of signups is currently underway; contact the NRCS office at 237-4628 for more information to see how this new program can benefit your operation.

### **Homeowner Guides from University of Idaho**

University of Idaho has produced some great homeowner guides as well as guides for



**Bank on the best!**



**Lava Hot Springs**  
776-5656

**Inkom**  
775-3354

**Downey**  
897-5226

**Pocatello, Yellowstone**  
233-0022

**Pocatello, Poleline**  
233-1816

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Thank you to Ireland Bank for their support of the Portneuf Soil and Water Conservation District!

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