**Blaine Soil Conservation District**

**Board of Supervisors Meeting**

**May 18th 2022 @ 7:00pm**

**BSCD Office, Carey, ID**

Present were: Chris Johnson; Chairman, Bob Simpson; Vice Chair, Wade Prescott ; supervisor, Chris Watson; Chairman, Jesse Fulmer; NRCS, Kelsey Barg, Administrative Assistant, Carolyn Firth; Commission

Chairman called the meeting to order @ 7: 03 p.m.

**Minutes**

* The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed. Bob motioned to approve the minutes as presented, Wade seconded the motion, all were in favor, motioned was carried.

**Administrative Assistant Report**

* Kelsey gave the financial report. Wade moved to approve the financial and task reports as presented, Bob seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion was carried.

**Office Business (action items)**

* Kelsey gave to total income from the tree sale $1750.00
* Kelsey discussed if there should be a change in the cost of the drill. It was discussed to leave the drill lease as is.
* BSCD has discussed to do a work shop. Board members that were present decided a small workshop at the local high tunnel farms looking for a July work shop. Kelsey will contact look out farm and Squash blossom to see when is a better time to tour their farms.

**Commission:**

* attached the commission report on below page.

**NRCS:**

* Jesse discussed the LWG meeting is in the works look for dates of the meeting in the coming weeks. Jesse discussed the fish project at Aubrey springs farm rebuilding .

 **Adjourn**

* Wade made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:32 p.m., Kathy seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion was carried. **Next meeting June 15th 2022 at 7pm**

MAY 2022 COMMISSION INFO FOR FIELD STAFF & DISTRICTS

1. WQPA—THE WATER QUALITY & QUANTITY PROGRAM FOR AGRICULTURE

Thanks to a lot of extra effort on the part of our field staff, and to excellent cooperation between Districts, IASCD, NRCS and our staff, WQPA came roaring back to life in April. During their monthly meeting, Commissioners approved almost $1.7 million worth of WQPA obligations. These WQPA funds will provide cost-share assistance for $4.7 million worth of voluntary conservation projects across the state.

If you have projects that you think could qualify for WQPA assistance, please work with your local SWCC field staff person to put together a proposal. Commissioners will review and act on proposals during their monthly meetings and we will accept project proposals until the $5 million available has all been obligated. As you can see, the money is going at a fast clip and given that **projects must be completed by June 1st, 2023**, you don’t have the luxury of developing project ideas at a leisurely pace!

This table shows the range of projects approved by Commissioners in April. As soon as the AG’s Office completes its review of the WQPA grant and cost-share contracts, we will be executing those contracts and work may begin.



1. DISTRICT BUDGET HEARING

The annual District Budget Hearing will be held during the June 9th Commission meeting. Loretta is sending out the relevant information. Districts will be able to participate either in person, or via Zoom. This is a chance for Districts to share info regarding their financial needs but, unfortunately, there is no “pot of money” available with which to fulfill those needs. If you have questions, contact your local SWCC field staff person or Loretta Strickland (Loretta.Strickland@swc.idaho.gov, 208.810.0769)

1. BECOMING BETTER PARTNERS! [This is primarily for commission staff but there’s nothing secret about it and if you think a District staff member, supervisor, or Board can benefit from any of it, feel free to share.

The April Commission meeting included a brainstorming session to explore things we can do to become more effective partners with conservation districts. We all know that to accomplish voluntary conservation requires partnerships. We rely on good working relationships with numerous partners around the state, but none are more important to achieving the goals and objectives of our agency than the 50 Idaho conservation districts.

The original idea was to come up with one thing we could all do, starting immediately, to become better partners with districts. However, because none of us are clones of each other (thank God!), none of the districts we serve are exactly the same, and the relationships you have with each of your assigned districts are all unique, it became apparent that the thought that we’d be able to identify ONE single thing that would be THE SILVER BULLET for our relationships with all 50 districts was ridiculous! So, what let’s each do is look over the list and pick one thing you as an SWCC staff person can do to become a more effective partner with each of the districts you serve. You might settle on one thing you want to do with all of your districts, or a different thing you will try with each different district. ***But please, commit to being intentional about trying to put into practice something that may result in you being a better partner with each district you serve.*** I’m asking your supervisor to check with you regarding how you plan to implement these actions, and hope they will check with you from time to time to see how its going.

During the meeting I shared a bunch of really great suggestions that field staff had submitted, and commissioners also came up with some good ideas. Following is the list of the suggestions batted around during the meeting. It’s a long list because we have a bunch of brilliant thinkers with great relationship skills! Thank-you all!

Below the list I’ve identified 3 things I’m going to work on that I hope will make me a better partner. One is something I can implement beginning immediately and a couple are longer-range projects. Feel free to keep me accountable for walking the talk. Seriously!

SWCC STAFF AND COMMISSIONER’S SUGGESTIONS FOR WHAT WE CAN DO TO BECOME MORE EFFECTIVE PARTNERS WITH CONSERVATION DISTRICT SUPERVISORS

* Spread the WQPA funds around to as many of the 50 Districts as possible get at least a little piece of it. Maybe this will help with the idea we are all in this together!
* Have our people spend a half day with a supervisor in the field, even if just sitting in a tractor and riding around.
* Field staff should attend their Districts’ board meetings in-person as often as possible, spending time before or after the meeting to talk with and develop relationships with District supervisors and staff.
* Allowing time for and encouraging staff to attend and participate in District activities such as workshops, tree sales and fair booths will go a long way toward showing the District Board that we are a part of their team.
* Shake things up and encourage thinking outside the box. For example, remind supervisors there are a host of potential projects that may be outside of what they’re accustomed to focusing on, and a potpourri of potential partners they can reach out to and collaborate with.
* Work with Districts to Identify and prioritize training needs, find a platform to deliver the training effectively and interestingly, keep them engaged
* Hold zoom trainings and/or, Q and A sessions prior to reporting deadlines. For example, have an interactive session to answer match eligibility questions in July prior to August deadline
* Simplify or preferably delete the TA process, one less report for them to worry about. Would alleviate the DAWG meeting too!
* When attending monthly board meetings, try to bring something other than just Commission updates… bring something specifically related to or valued by them, their conservation goals, or why they are on the board. Basically, view them as customers and partners. (Same goes for their employee(s) who they use as their representatives)
* Engage supervisors in their meetings rather than just being present. Have something to offer or add to the meeting/projects… brief discussion about something learned or discovered… a new resource you found or a concern in the District you saw and options to address, workshop opportunity, project idea, funding opportunity (even reoccurring ones). Be concise… time is money or time away from their operation.
* Organizing a project tour of one of the project site visits with the supervisor and the landowner is definitely worthwhile…. They may be on the board, talked about it at meetings, and never actually seen the results of their own projects.
* Discretionary time—less time allocated to specific deliverables so more discretionary time is available, enabling staff to be able to offer to help when asked or when you see it might be needed, especially if it’s something they haven’t done before. Involve them directly. Whether it’s writing a grant, helping with a project budget, talking with other partners to get info. or whatever… even (especially) if you haven’t done it either. If you put yourself in the same boat as them, they will be more willing to trust you, try new things, and see the effort you (and the District) put in. I have said something to the effect of: “I haven’t done \_\_\_\_ before either, but I’ll work with you and try to figure it out”, many times.
* Host a dinner event, perhaps during the annual conference, invite partners and district supervisors & staff. No big agenda, just an expression of our appreciation for them. Award an annual Supervisor of the Year award, maybe also a District Staff of the Year.
* Invite a District to present during SWCC Board meetings
* Practice active listening
* Think about ways to raise the visibility of districts on a statewide level
* Offer meaningful trainings for district supervisors and staff, make them available on-line

Delwyne’s commitment:

1. Practice active listening
2. Spread the WQPA funds around to as many of the 50 Districts as possible get at least a little piece of it. Maybe this will help with the idea we are all in this together!
3. Host a dinner event, perhaps during the annual conference, invite partners and district supervisors & staff. No big agenda, just an expression of our appreciation for them. Award an annual Supervisor of the Year award, maybe also a District Staff of the Year.