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New Funding Opportunity; New Laws

Read on, share, and please send us your feedback.

Do you have suggestions for future e-news items? Please let us know: board@iascd.org.

From the Director's Perspective

As we approach the first week of May, I want to highlight IASCD's participation in Idaho Gives.

This annual statewide giving event takes place May 4th–7th and brings Idahoans together to support the work of nonprofits across the Gem State. It's more than a fundraiser, though; it's a chance to raise awareness about the impact of conservation districts and the important work happening every day in communities across our state.

Though Districts often labor behind the scenes, the meaningful work you do supports agriculture, protects natural resources, and strengthens local communities. Idaho Gives provides us a platform to share that story more broadly and reach beyond our usual constituency.

There are daily prize opportunities and competitions throughout the campaign that can increase the total funds raised for IASCD, adding even more impact to each donation. The more visibility and participation we generate, the stronger that impact becomes.



**IASCD Executive
Director Mary Huff**

I encourage you to spread the word by sharing the campaign with your local leaders, boards, partners, and other networks. Consider posting on your district's website and social media channels. Even a simple message can inform new audiences about the mission of conservation districts.

Here's the link to the IASCD page where donations can be made through Idaho Gives: <https://www.idahogives.org/organizations/idaho-association-of-soil-convervation-districts-inc>

Government Relations Update

Patxi Larrocea-Phillips

The legislature adjourned *sine die* on Thursday, April 2nd. By Friday, April 10th, Governor Little had either signed into law or vetoed all the bills that had been delivered to his office.

The session had several interesting twists, as most of the oxygen in the room was used in dealing with budget reductions. Overall, the legislature cut most agency budgets for the coming fiscal year by 5% to prepare for an anticipated revenue shortfall due to effects of the One Big Beautiful Bill.

The bigger hit to the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission was loss of funding for the Water Quality Program for Agriculture. In recent years, WQPA has been funded through a supplemental request, not as part of the maintenance budget. Supplementals did not receive a warm welcome this year, and WQPA was a casualty of that frugality. As we prepare for next session, it will be imperative to make the case to legislators to restore funding for this demonstrably effective conservation program.

Another theme we saw during the last session was agency mergers. H503 merging ISWCC into Idaho Department of Water Resources passed

Tools & Training

Spread the word by showing your work

If you want more people to know about the good work your district does, invite them out to kick the dirt. Field tours are a great way to demonstrate the many tools conservation districts use to assist landowners in addressing resource challenges.

Gem Soil & Water Conservation District hosted a fall tour last September to showcase both innovation and tried-and-true best management practices.

“We were able to procure a WQPA grant that helped a producer install a Valley 8000 Corner-Arm Pivot to irrigate 14 acres of a 40-acre cornfield,” said Leanne Buck, Gem District Manager. “The GPS mapping and precision sprinkler technology that will improve irrigation efficiency and reduce waste and runoff really captured people’s attention.”

Tour attendees also got to see a demonstration of a drone spraying herbicide to control weeds in standing corn. The same operator later used the drone to seed a cover-crop mix in that same field of corn.

Filter strips are a more low-tech conservation practice. The Gem tour visited a site where runoff was causing erosion that carried sediment and nutrients to the Payette River, a 303(d) listed stream. Participants discussed the problem and possible solutions, and the District provided funds to seed the strip in perennial grasses. The next Gem field day will include a follow-up visit to the site to observe the results.

Conservation is only half the job. Districts also have to become ace marketers, promoters, and storytellers. What better way than showing people what you do?



What’s Coming Up?

April 27-28: Idaho Envirothon, Living Waters Ranch, Challis

May 4-7: Idaho Gives. Donations are accepted now through May 10, but only those made during the May 4-7 period qualify for bonuses and prizes.

May 14: Idaho State Forestry Competition at Farragut State Park, sponsored by Bonner SWCD, Idaho Dept. of Lands, Idaho Dept. of Parks & Recreation, & NRCS
<https://www.bonnarswcd.org/forestry-contest>

June 22: IASCD Board Meeting, Home2Suites in Boise & on Zoom

Nov. 17-19: IASCD Annual Conference at University Inn, Moscow, hosted by Division II



Legislature, continued from p.1

with flying colors. It will be up to IASCD to remain engaged in shaping the legislation needed to implement the move. We will continue to advocate for an independent Soil & Water Commission and voluntary, nonregulatory conservation.

S1269 calling for more transparency in cloud seeding did become law, while several bills that would prohibit cloud seeding barely saw the light of day. Finally, pursuant to H873, an election cleanup bill, supervisor elections will now be held in odd years.

Reach out to IASCD

Contact your IASCD director at board@iascd.org.
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