



**Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts
Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, March 4, 2021 - 5:30 PM
Conference Call**

- CALL TO ORDER** President Steve Becker called the meeting of the Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts Board of Directors conference call to order at 5:30 PM on Thursday, March 4, 2021.
- PRESENT** Those present included Steve Becker, Matt Woodard, Mike Somerville, Tom Daniel, Kit Tillotson and Benjamin Kelly.
- MINUTES APPROVED** The minutes of the board of directors meeting held on November 11, 2021 were distributed for review (see attached). Kit Tillotson moved the minutes be approved as printed. Seconded. Passed. The minutes of the board of directors meeting held on November 30, 2020 were distributed for review (see attached). Richard Kunau moved the minutes be approved as printed. Seconded. Passed. The minutes of the board of directors meeting held on January 28, 2021 were distributed for review (see attached). Richard Kunau moved the minutes be approved as printed. Seconded. Passed..
- ISWCC LEGISLATION** Steve Becker discussed that he had been contacted by Representative Troy and that legislation was introduced and will be given a bill number dealing with the submission of names to the Office of the Governor for positions on the Soil & Water Commission. This is the legislation that Benjamin Kelly contacted you about and we had been asked to make suggestions on to make sure that there would be no other legislation run to get rid of the commission.
- Currently three names can be sent by IASCD and our board chooses those names from those willing to serve, and also with respect to regions of the state to try and have equal representation by location. Through the process, there is no requirement in statute that the Office of the Governor choose from those 3 names like there is for some other commissions. The bill would set up a system of submitting names much like the Idaho Grain Producers do for the Idaho Wheat Commission, where 3 names are submitted by different regions to the Office of the Governor in which to choose from. How this would work for districts is that one commission seat would be chosen from division 1 or 2, one from division 3, one from division 4, one from division 5 and one from division 6 to equal out to the 5 commission seats. The 5 commission seats would be reset at the beginning of July 1, 2021 and terms staggered so that there would be an appointment process with one appointment per year.

It would also allow for districts to continue to increase the number of supervisors for a district board to 7, but also lower the number back down to 5 supervisors if so desired. Previously there was no path in code to lower the number back down to 5. Lastly, it will remove the section of code dealing with the creation of new districts. The board directed Benjamin Kelly to be sure and send out a copy to districts as soon as one was provided.

ISWCC BUDGET

The board reviewed the discussions they had with members of the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee (JFAC). The committee approved the request from IASCD to increase funding in the amount of \$200,000 to be distributed equally between all 50 districts. Representative Caroline Troy made the motion and has continued to work hard to push for more District funding. There is a long way to go but board offered their appreciation for her work in going to bat for districts.

Also include was the re-instatement of 1 Full Time Position with ISWCC for the support of CREP. The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) in Idaho is designed to address water shortages in the Eastern Snake River Plain, an area that extends from King Hill to Ashton. The ISWCC budget still must be voted on by the full House & Senate and approved by the Governor.

NRCS COVID GUIDANCE

Benjamin Kelly reported on the update from State Conservationist Curtis Elke concerning what the NRCS national office was mandating. The email was forwarded to districts and Elke will have some more calls with the secretary to provide additional information for everyone. Immediately, he is requesting employees to follow the guidance provided. Each field office service center will have no more than 2 staff at one time in their rotation. The same 2-person rule will apply to the area offices since there is a wall between the field office and area office and can therefore be considered separate. The state office will also adhere to the 25% rule and have no more than 8 employees in the office at one time in the rotation. At this time, they are not allowing visitors into the office including co-located partners per the guidance given. Elke said he hopes to receive additional guidance in regard to partners being a part of their rotation.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Steve Becker reviewed other legislation that IASCD is watching. Some of the updates that were provided to districts included: S1145 is waiting to be heard and voted on by the full Senate. This bill is the ISWCC Budget appropriation for FY 2022. S1122 passed the Senate and will now go to the House Ag Affairs Committee. The bill would amend existing Idaho Code referencing Soil Conservation Districts and the state Soil and Water Conservation Commission as "conservation district" and "conservation commission" and would also to remove the Idaho OnePlan which is no longer active. S1079 passed the Senate and will now go to the House Environment Committee. The legislation is being brought by DEQ and would establish a specific fund for the annual appropriation of state general

fund dollars to support and fund nonpoint source agricultural best management practices projects around Idaho. H73 passed the Senate and will now go to the House Local Government & Taxation Committee. The legislation deals with many different issues and comes by way of the 2020 Interim Property Tax & Revenue Expenditures Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

Steve Becker adjourned the meeting at 6:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Benjamin Kelly, Executive Director