



# Lower Bear-Malad Watershed

## Conservation Security Program (CSP)

CSP identifies and rewards those farmers and ranchers who are meeting the highest standards of conservation and environmental management on their operations.

This process marks a new beginning in NRCS client relationships by giving control of the application process to the landowner.

### Gearing up for 2006 signups in the Lower Bear-Malad River Watershed

**T**he Conservation Security Program (CSP) is a voluntary conservation program that supports ongoing stewardship of private agricultural lands by providing payments of up to \$45,000 for maintaining and enhancing natural resources.

A CSP self-assessment workbook is available that helps producers identify whether their agricultural operation meets sign-up requirements and addresses minimum soil and water quality criteria. By going through the self-assessment, producers analyze their eligibility and learn what specific documentation to bring to their CSP interview at their local NRCS office. Based on the application, description of current conservation activities, and the interview, NRCS determines CSP eligibility and in which program tier and enrollment category the applicant may participate.

Total payments are determined by the tier of participation, conservation treatments completed, and the acres enrolled:

- **For Tier I**, contracts are for 5 years; maximum payment is \$20,000 annually.

- **For Tier II**, contracts are for 5 to 10 years; maximum payment is \$35,000 annually.

- **For Tier III**, contracts are for 5 to 10 years; maximum payment is \$45,000 annually.

Enhancement payments will be made for exceptional conservation effort and additional conservation practices or activities that provide increased resource benefits beyond the prescribed level. These payments make up the majority of the contract dollars.

Environmental enhancement activities include improving soil quality, water quality, wildlife habitat management, nutrient and pest management, air quality management and on-farm energy management.

#### NRCS CSP TIP # 1

*To qualify, be sure to have detailed records on your operation for 2 of the last 3 years on eligible lands.*

Sample record keeping documents are available at the NRCS office and on the internet.

#### NRCS CSP TIP # 2

*Be sure to have your soil test results for the lands you intend to enroll **before** you are scheduled to meet with NRCS for your CSP interview. Without these, NRCS cannot process your application.*

Having current soil tests on your fields answers "yes" to one of the 18 questions in the cropland eligibility section.



