



# Highlights



The newsletter for Idaho NRCS employees and conservation partners.

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## Idaho Announces 2005 CSP Watersheds

Idaho NRCS held a press conference announcing the 2005 Conservation Security Program (CSP) watersheds on Nov. 3 in the Boise State Office.

**Sara Braasch**, NRCS regional assistant chief, made the announcement to several attendees from the media and conservation partner organizations.

“We hope this is the kind of incentive that rewards these producers for the great conservation work they have already done,” Braasch said.

**Kent Foster**, executive director for the Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts also shared comments.

“On behalf of Idaho’s Soil Conservation Districts (SCDs) and some 24,000 farmers, we see CSP as a cornerstone of Idaho’s conservation programs,” Foster said. “This program rewards producers who have already paid a big price for putting conservation on their land.”

Foster also said CSP could help address species of concern and he was pleased the watersheds were spread out across the state.

About 2,100 producers in 15 watersheds across Idaho will have the opportunity to apply for CSP this winter. CSP is a voluntary program rewarding those producers meeting the highest conservation standards on their land. NRCS plans to offer CSP in all of the state’s watersheds over the next eight years.

CSP will require an extensive informational campaign to get the word out to farmers and ranchers. With the

help of the SCDs, Idaho NRCS plans to share program information through direct mail postcards, media stories, radio PSAs and public meetings.



*Sara Braasch, NRCS regional assistant chief, announces Idaho’s 2005 CSP watersheds in a recent press conference.*

**highlight** \hi-lit\ n. 1: the lightest spot or area. v. 2: to throw a strong light on, to emphasize.

## Quotable Quotes

**“Always do right. This will gratify some people and astonish the rest.”**

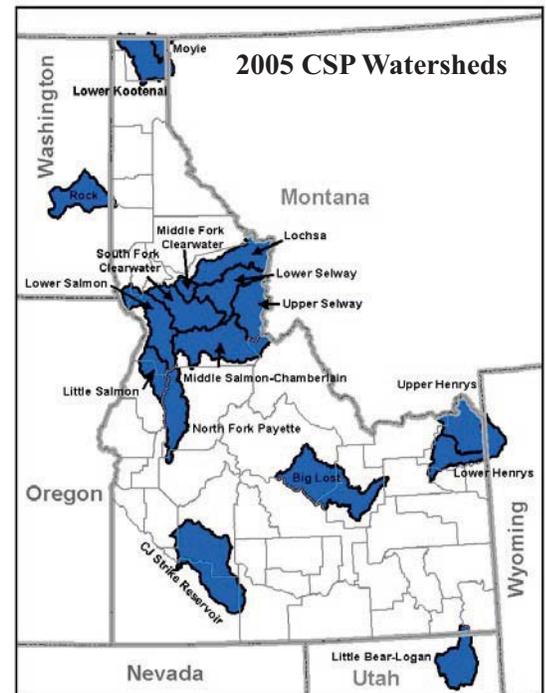
- Mark Twain

**“The cynic is his own worst enemy. It requires far less skill to run a wrecking company than it does to be an architect.”**

- U.S. Andersen

**“If at first you don’t succeed, skydiving is not for you.”**

- Francis Roberts



**Special Feature**

**KABOOM! Blast Creates Yellowstone Habitat**

by **Kristen Clayton**  
Public Affairs Specialist, Idaho Falls

When **Rusty Knapp** of Superior Blasting pushes the ignite button, four joules of electricity ignite 300 pounds of Ammonium Nitrate. Instantly, soil the equivalent to 88 dump truck loads, is punched into the air. The result, a 40x60 foot crater in the earth.



It's the making of a pond for wildlife habitat as part of the NRCS Wetland Reserve Program (WRP).

It takes moments for the soil to fall, raining down across the rangeland in large clods. The group has scattered, most on a hillside far enough away that no soil threatens the huddle of government and contractor pickups.

Hollywood theatrics are just one way to create a wetland. Of course, excavation by means of backhoe can also be used. However, landowner **John Taft** felt that, with seven large ponds to create in his land near Henry's Lake in Yellowstone country, blasting was the most efficient way.

NRCS' **Ken Beckmann** laid out the project. He says, "Blasting potholes is nothing new. The technique was used some 50 years ago to create extensive wetlands. This seemed to be a good fit for this landowner."

There is an art and science to the blasting of wetland ponds. "Timing is what makes the shape." says project contractor, **Larry Voss** of Rexburg. "A millisecond delay between

charges can create a pond that needs little or no excavation work."

There's calm after the blast and water begins to fill the pond instantly. Within weeks, all seven ponds are full. The land seems content with its new watering holes. Grass seed is planted to assist in quick recovery.

Some might ask why convert perfectly good rangeland long grazed by lessees into a wetland habitat?

"I don't get pleasure out of cows." Taft says. "I love wildlife and I'd much rather look out and see ducks, birds and others using this land."

There is a need for variety among wildlife habitat at Henry's Lake, Beckmann says. "The wetland should encourage those species that might not have another protected habitat or that can't survive on the shoreline to nest here."

Taft's project also equates to a good investment. He's left out a 16-acre section neighboring the 300 WRP acres. It's for his family, who, he says, someday, may want to build here or enjoy the investment of this beautiful lakeside property surrounded by wetlands and wildlife.

Taft believes in a balance of profit and enjoyment. Most importantly he says, "We have a responsibility to protect the things we love."

That may be a conservation ethic that will help all the species of concern found here: bald eagle, native Yellowstone cutthroat, Henry's Lake white spruce trees.



*The Taft wetland after the blast. Grass seeding will heal the soil over time.*

**Photo Essay:**

**IASCD Conference Nov. 7-9**



*Sharon Kinzer, representing IDEA, signs the partnership agreement during Tuesday evening's banquet.*



**Wayne Newbill** talks about the benefits of Idaho OnePlan.



**Kyle Hawley**, president of IASCD, presents **Darwin Josephson**, Teton SCD supervisor, with the *Doyle L. Scott Award*.



**Kent Foster**, IASCD executive director, awards **Pat McCoy**, Capital Press correspondent, with the *Conservation Writer of the Year* award.



**Terri Grubbs**, IASCD staff assistant, helps someone at the registration booth.

## Snapshots from the Field



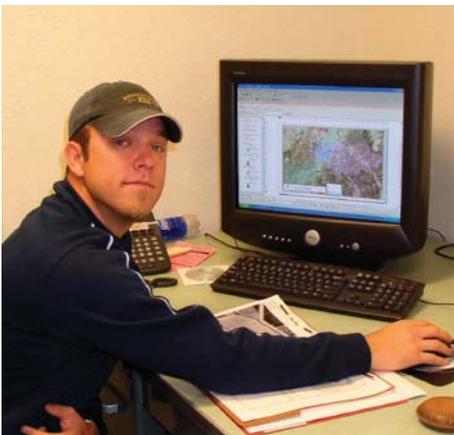
*Onion producer **Tracy Nakamura** visits with **Vicki Lukehart** of the Weiser River SCD. Nakamura and the District are cooperating on a 319 grant to improve the water quality in the area.*



*Future soil scientist? The Payette NRCS office hosted the Division III Soil Judging Contest this fall. Over 100 students competed and a dozen NRCS and SCD employees organized the event.*



*The last EQIP contract! State Office Program Assistant **Jan Mervin** and State Conservationist **Rich Sims** put a pen to the last of Idaho's 2004 contracts. We allocated over \$15 million in 430 contracts.*



*Computer geek? Idaho Falls NRCSer **Elliot Traher** wears two hats these days. He continues his soil conservationist duties now while also serving as the assistant Toolkit/PRS coordinator for the state.*



*Conservation partners stand before a new pond as part of a 319 grant to reduce sediment loading near Coeur d'Alene. Partners include the Kootenai-Shoshone SWCD, Soil Conservation Commission, NRCS and The Nature Conservancy.*



*"Congratulations to the Lundquist family for enrolling in the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program," says Idaho Falls DC **Dennis Hadley** during a recent Lundquist ranch BBQ in Swan Valley.*

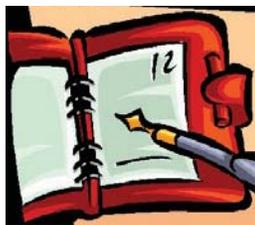
## Ray Receives R.N. Irving Award

**Steven Ray**, DC in Driggs, recently received the R.N. Irving Award for his conservation accomplishments in a one-person office. State Conservationist **Rich Sims** presented him the award during the Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts (IASCD) annual meeting in Moscow Nov. 7-9.

Ray has served as DC since 2003. In that time, he has handled everyone coming through the door, received a field office review and completed nine contracts in the Teton WQPA, assisted with the Teton River Sub-basin TMDL implementation plan, worked with conservation partners to solve an e.coli bacteria problem on Woods Creek and worked on waste improvements for dairies. In addition, he provided planning for 13 new CRP contracts, three new CCRP contracts, 12 new EQIP applications and 12 WHIP applications.

R.N. Irving was the first SCS State Conservationist in Idaho and was instrumental in organizing Idaho's soil conservation districts.





## Worried About Workload? NRCsers Offer Tips

by Jody Fagan  
Public Affairs

Grangeville DC  
Richard Spencer  
says his desk

looks like the “badlands strewn with boulders.”

Moscow AC Bob Tribelhorn says he doesn’t want field offices to feel they have to work extra hours to get their jobs done—even though he does.

Sound familiar?

From EQIP migration and PRS to WHIP, CSP and the new Toolkit—that list of “To-Do” items seems to grow and grow. While the 2002 Farm Bill offered up the largest private lands conservation investment in history, it also has placed exceptional expectations on employees.

As an agency, we and our conservation partners are implementing landmark legislation that is providing Idaho’s farmers and ranchers more options than ever to protect our natural resources.

Such new ground-breaking does come with a cost.

“We’re overwhelmed,” Spencer says. “But we have a very good team here in Grangeville. We don’t whine—

we just do the best we can.”

Burley DC Mike Combs says communication between staff members helps the most during stressful times.

“We have a staff meeting every Monday morning to set priorities and deadlines,” he says. “Part of my job is to serve as a gatekeeper. I try to keep other things from disrupting them so they can stick to their schedule.”

“We still get frazzled,” Combs says. “We just keep working at it.”

Tribelhorn says he lists out his highest priority actions on a daily and weekly basis, and then tries to feel satisfied when he completes those.

“I don’t have any answers,” he says. “Maybe we just need to take a deep breath once or twice a day and keep things in perspective.

We’re working because we have a conservation ethic and we care about our customers.”

During the Effective DC Training held in Boise earlier this month, the teaching cadre, made up of NRCsers from Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington, offered the 35 participants a factsheet called “Top Time Stealers.” The box on the right includes brief excerpts.

### Top Time Stealers

- The telephone—plan your telephone calls, avoid being on hold, leave clear messages on others’ voicemail, communicate your time constraints.
- Drop-in visitors—establish what they need immediately, suggest a later meeting, set time limits, delegate to someone else in the office (maybe the clerk?).
- Meetings—ensure meetings have a set purpose, agenda and outcome.
- Procrastination and worry—challenge the often faulty reasons behind your excuses, design clear goals, set priorities, get organized, don’t plan for failure (instead, focus on the present and what positive steps you can take to accomplish your goals). Most importantly, focus on where you can make a difference and let go of the rest.

## Personnel Actions for July - September 2004

### CAREER CONDITIONAL APPOINTMENT

- \* Rice, Alina (Arnold) - GS-09 Soil Scientist/ Moscow FO, 08/22/04.
- \* Tenold, Rebecca - GS-05 Soil Con. Tech./Emmett FO, 06/13/04.\*\*
- \* VanBebber, Bryan to GS-06 Soil Con. Tech./Malad FO, 06/27/04. \*\*

### EXCEPTED APPOINTMENT

- \* Bergmann, Chris - GS-06 Financial Technician/State Office, 08/08/04.
- \* Morris, Beth - GS-03 Forester Trainee/Lewiston FO, 07/11/04.

- \* Robles, Martha - GS-03 Engineering Aid/Meridian FO, 05/16/04. \*\*
- \* Tackett, Kyle - GS-09 Career Intern/Soil Con./St. Anthony FO, 09/26/04.
- \* Waite, Christine Fischer - GS-09 Career Intern/Soil Con./Pocatello FO, 08/08/04.

### PROMOTION

- \* Becker, Andy - GS-09 Civil Engineer/Emmett FO, 06/13/04. \*\*
- \* Suderman, Rhoda - GS-05 Office Auto. Assist/State Office, 07/11/04.

- \* Treccani, Carrie - GS-09 Soil Con./Moscow FO, 08/08/04.

### TRANSFER

- \* Oestreich, Philip – Transfer to Wyoming NRCS, 09/18/04.

### REASSIGNMENT

- \* Allen, Thomas - GS-11 Ag-Civil Engineer/Moscow FO (from Washington NRCS), 08/08/04.

Entries marked with \*\* were not included in the April-June listing due to the newsletter deadline.