



# Highlights



The newsletter for Idaho NRCS employees and conservation partners.

## Spring 2006 In this Issue

From the Producer's Prospective	... 2
Protecting an Archaeological Site	... 3
People Profile: A "Wealth" of Experience	... 4
Snapshots from the Field	... 4

## Quotable Quotes

"Nobody sees a flower--  
really--it is so small it takes  
time--we haven't time--and  
to see takes time, like to  
have a friend takes time."  
-Georgia O'Keefe

"At the height of laughter,  
the universe is flung into a  
kaleidoscope of new  
possibilities."  
-Jean Houston

"What lies behind us and  
what lies before us are tiny  
matters, compared to what  
lies within us."  
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

## Special Feature

### Lt. Governor Risch Joins RC&Ds for Tree Planting

**Idaho Lieutenant Governor Jim Risch** joined the Idaho RC&D Association (IRCDA) for a Champion Tree ceremonial planting April 4 at Ann Morrison Park in Boise.

Risch spoke about the importance of trees to Idaho communities. **Kent Rudeen**, IRCDA president, and **Jerry Stallsmith**, City of Boise forester, also spoke. The Idaho RC&Ds, members of the Boise media and others attended.

The planting featured offspring from a special White ash Champion Tree. A Champion Tree is the nation's largest tree of its species. The national Champion Tree Project works with private and public tree owners and nurseries to produce Champion Tree clones.

Idaho's RC&Ds are helping communities across Idaho plant over 90 Champion Trees this year in celebration of Arbor Day.



**Idaho Lieutenant Governor Jim Risch** (left) plants the Champion White ash tree with **Kent Rudeen**, IRCDA president; **Dave Stephenson**, Idaho Community Forestry coordinator; and **Jerry Stallsmith**, City of Boise urban forester.

### That's a Wrap (Kind of): CSP Sign-up Ends

The 2006 Conservation Security Program (CSP) sign-up drew to a close March 31 in the Malad, Lewiston, Moscow, Grangeville, Orofino and Nezperce offices.

Of course, if you ask the offices about "wrapping things up," they'll tell you they're "still knee deep in CSP." The contracts have to be completed and payments made by June 30.

Speaking of contracts: Idaho NRCS is leading the West with the number of CSP applications.

"Idaho is awesome," says **Lisa Cole**, Lewiston soil conservationist. "We're so happy we've had so many producers come through the door here."



**Nez Perce SWCD Board Supervisor Denny Dau** and his wife **Mary** locate their property on the Clearwater watershed map with **Lisa Cole**. Denny says he is very pleased to see superior conservation being rewarded.



# The Park Family Enrolls in CSP

## The Sign-up from the Producer's Perspective

by Kristen Clayton  
Public Affairs, Idaho Falls

In Malad, winter lingers. Planting is set to begin at the first sign of dry ground. In addition, a pay check may be coming if **Max and Noreen Park** and others are accepted into the Conservation Security Program (CSP).

The Parks say the application process kept them busy this winter and, at times, the record keeping



The Park Family visits with new Malad DC Kyle Tackett.

was tedious. What, with a public meeting, a workshop, a one-on-one interview and a final interview, the Parks are surely now regulars at the Malad NRCS Service Center?

"The process has gone well," says Noreen. "We started a bit skeptical. With the higher standards for readmission to CRP concerning many of us in Oneida County, it seemed we were all contemplating, 'Oh no, here we go again with another program.'"

She also remembers thinking the very name, "Security," was scary and wondered if they would have to relinquish private property rights.

Some concerns were put to rest at the first public meeting.

"The workbook was very helpful! We started on page one, and shortly after, we were able to tell if we were eligible for the program,"

Noreen says. "The questions guide you and help you find the correct answer for your operation."

Max considers himself a good record keeper. However, compiling his haying folder, his tractor notebook and the calendar at home took time.

"Then going over it a few times, just to be sure," Max says. "Maybe I did more than I needed to."

Noreen stopped at FSA and gathered maps with field numbers needed for the application. The office could also tell her in a moment whether their fields were HEL.

When USDA announced the sign-up, the Parks scheduled a workshop with the NRCS office.

"The workshop offered a lot of information," Noreen says. "There were a lot of details about the program that we learned and might have missed had we not gone."

Max was able to get answers to the specific questions he had about the application too.

"If I say I did it on my application, I'd better be able to show I did it. My calendar saved me," Max says.

His efforts should pay off says the Malad office. However, the Parks will have to wait to find out.

In the meantime, the Parks are working with Pheasants Forever to rehabilitate two and a half miles of stream bank for wildlife. The Parks must come up with the cost share for the large number of trees they'd like to plant. Max hasn't calculated just how much he'll make if accepted into CSP, he just knows that some kind of reward will help him keep doing what he's doing--and even more of it.

### Did You Know...



...the Idaho wildflower, Paintbrush, (*Castilleja*) comes in the colors red, yellow, green, purple and pink?

That's because there are 200 species of paintbrushes. The following factors can contribute to the flower's color:

- \*Varied positions on the landscape, elevation and aspect.
- \*Proximity to host plants such as low sage (*Artemisia arbuscula*) at high elevations or Basin and Mountain Big sage (*Artemisia tridentata*) at lower elevations.
- \*Soil parent material, mineral composition and geology of the soil substrate.

-from Don Edgerton, Idaho Falls Rangeland Mgmt. Specialist

### ...Butterflies can be found on every continent except Antarctica. Over 700 butterfly species occur in the U.S.

Butterflies feed on flower nectar and are important as pollinators. Their life span ranges from one week to eight months.

Land use changes and development have resulted in significant losses of native butterfly habitat.

Landowners can:

- \*Plant native trees and forbs
- \*Plant wildflower meadows and gardens to include nectar-producing flowers
- \*Reduce pesticide, insecticide and herbicide use
- \*Keep or create rock piles, log piles and thickets





# Rancher, NRCS Protect East Idaho Archaeological Site

Situated in rolling hills of privately owned range grass about 20 miles west of Idaho Falls are caves containing one of the most complete records of the people occupying the region over 10,000 years ago.

The Wasden Cave Complex is comprised of three large collapsed lava-tube caves. The largest of these caves, called Big Owl, has been studied by ISU archaeologists since the 1960s. Their excavations uncovered the remains of butchered animals such as pronghorn antelope and wolf.

However, at the lowest levels, where the oldest soils and artifacts are found, archeologists located the scattered bones of elephants (*Mammuthus sp.*), camel (*Camelops sp.*) and a larger extinct relative of the modern bison (*Bison antiquus*). Spear points, and other stone and bone tools, were found among these remains giving insight into how these massive animals were killed and how they were processed for food and other uses.

One theory proposed is that hunters drove their prey into these steep bowl-shaped caves where the fall either mortally injured or trapped the animals, allowing hunters from above to kill the animals by throwing spears, dropping rocks, or flinging darts from an atlatl (throwing-stick).

Although Paleo-Indian people found the caves' physical features useful, these same features present a problem for the modern rancher.

Landowner **Steve Croft** was concerned over the risk these caves posed to his cattle as well as the negative toll of trespassing and looting. Croft wanted to construct a fence around the caves. He also wanted to have better control over his grazing management by installing additional fencing on adjacent pasturelands.

In 2005, Croft came to the Idaho Falls NRCS office and signed up for an EQIP contract. DC **Dennis Hadley** helped Croft refine his grazing system. "Steve was already resting

pastures using rotational grazing. We decided additional cross fences would help further."

Croft's two pastures, used for spring calving and fall grazing, are now divided into five.

Hadley also contacted **Tom Burnham**, NRCS cultural resource coordinator (then), and **Darin Vrem**, NRCS archaeologist. "Any time that a conservation activity has the potential to effect a cultural resource, we are called in to do research, a field review and see that the design of the project will not interfere with the site," Burnham says.

What caught Burnham's attention was the fact that, despite past lootings and scientific excavations, these caves still contain intact deposits with the potential to yield more information on Idaho's past cultures and climates.

"Cultural resources are important because they are a window to our past," Burnham says. "We can learn a lot about managing our land today by looking at the past."

Croft's plan was approved for cost-share for the construction of a jack-fence around the caves and more barbwire fencing in his pastures.

"Think about your child, your home, something real important to you. That's how I feel about this piece of ground," Croft says.

To Croft, proper grazing of his land is just a matter-of-course. He also wants to continue his good stewardship of these important archaeological resources and the hopes that in the future scientific research will continue at the site.

Although Idaho has numerous archaeological sites, the Wasden site is unique in its age, size and diversity of animal remains. Looting, construction, and even erosion has destroyed much of Idaho's archaeological



Landowner **Steve Croft** overlooks one of the caves.

record. Many of the state's most important archeological sites are now on private lands. Through education and with some assistance, landowners like Croft can be the best stewards of Idaho's archeological heritage.

*Thanks to Kristen Clayton and Darin Vrem for this story.*

### Did you know USDA has Seven Special Emphasis Programs?

And did you know that six of these have a month designated each year for increasing awareness?

The Special Emphasis Programs recognized by USDA are Black, Women's, Asian and Pacific American, Hispanic, Disabled American, American Indian and American Veteran. These programs are meant to focus attention on underrepresented groups. The Idaho NRCS website includes contact information for our Special Emphasis Program managers under the Civil Rights page.

February: Black History  
March: Women's History  
May: Asian and Pacific American  
September: Hispanic Heritage  
October: National Disability  
November: American Indian

*-Terri Stevenson*



## People Profile: New Budget Officer Brings “Wealth” of Experience

Idaho NRCS’ new budget officer, **Mary Goode**, is no stranger to large budgets and government accounting systems.



Before coming to NRCS in Jan., Goode spent 26 years with the U.S. Forest Service in Boise as an accountant and then their

budget/finance officer.

“It was quite different,” Goode says. “We didn’t process payments for landowners.”

At the Forest Service, Goode often managed large national contracts, especially during fire season.

“We’d have payments of \$100 million per year,” she says. “We’re talking big payments and a lot of overtime for me.”

Goode says, even though she’s busy learning the NRCS budget process, she may actually have time to enjoy her

summer. She likes to run, read, garden and spend time with her husband and three kids, ages 23, 18 and 14.

Although Goode has lived in Boise for some time, she grew up as an Air Force brat. She lived in Calif., Japan, Miss., Mich., Wyo. and then Idaho Falls where she graduated from high school. She attended Boise State University in accounting.

Goode says she’s looking forward to working with Idaho NRCSers.

“Don’t be afraid to call and ask me questions,” she says.

## Snapshots from the Field



(Above:) Meridian Engineer **Jenifer Beddoes** speaks at the New NRCS Employee Orientation Session recently held in Boise.

(Right:) Meridian DC **Skip Vetten** describes an NRCS project during a rainy tour of the Orientation session.



## Personnel Actions: January - March 2006

### NEW HIRES

Kevin Traylor–Fish Bio., Lewiston, 03/05/2006

### PROMOTIONS

Sara Wernicke–Reclassification, Admin. Asst. – Moscow RC&D, 01/22/2006

Pamela Scheinost–Career Ladder, Soil Con. – Nezperce, 01/22/2006

Janet Jacobs–Career Ladder, Human Resources Asst.–SO, 01/08/2006

Sue Ellis–Career Ladder, Human Resources Spec., SO, 01/22/2006

Mark Bateman–Career Ladder, Range Mgmt. Spec. – Marsing, 03/05/2006

Lisa Cole–Career Ladder, Soil Con., Lewiston, 03/05/2006

William Hiett–Promotion, Soil Scientist, Idaho Falls, 02/05/2006

Lindsay Obray–from Soil Con., Coeur d’Alene to DC Driggs, 02/19/2006

Kyle Tackett–from Soil Con., St. Anthony to DC Malad, 03/05/2006

Patrick Evans–Promotion, from DC Rupert to DC Moscow, 03/05/2006

REASSIGNMENTS

Doug Higbee–Civil Eng., from Colfax WA to Emmett, 01/08/2006

Mary B Goode–Budget Officer, from USFS to SO, 01/08/2006

Warren Weihing–Ag. Eng., from Emmett to Caldwell, 02/19/2006

RETIREMENTS

Jim Cornwell–Range Con., SO, 01/03/2006

Roger Hirschman–State GIS Coord., SO, 03/03/2006

TRANSFERS

Richard Yetter–from Fish Bio., Lewiston to South Carolina, 01/22/2006

Barry Albert–from Soil Con., Salmon to Montana, 02/05/2006

Allen Hales–from Soil Con. Tech., Preston to Utah, 02/05/2006

Ben Letourneau–from Soil Con., Lewiston to Kansas, 02/19/2006

Tom Burnham–from DC Jerome to Oregon, 03/05/2006

Bradley Duncan–from Soil Scientist, Idaho Falls to Washington, 03/19/2006