



MID-SNAKE RC&D

Resource, Conservation and Development

CARING. GROWING. PROTECTING.

Minutes

June 21, 2024 Quarterly Council Meeting

Breckenridge Endowment Farm, North College Road Twin Falls, ID 83301

11:00 AM

Member Attendance:

Secretary: Doreen McMurray - West Cassia SWCD
Chairman: Heidi Tubbs - Snake River SWCD
Vice Chairman: Terry Kramer - Balanced Rock SWCD
Treasurer: Rachelle Osterhout - East Cassia SWCD
Sharon Hardy - Minidoka SWCD
Nikki Nelson - Administrator, MSRCD
Charlie Howell - Jerome County Commissioner
Roy Prescott - North Side SWCD

Guests:

Ryan Berlin - BLM
Garry Brown - ID Forest Service
Bradley Dawson-ID Fish and Game
Joshua Rose-DL Evans Investment Accounts
Art Watkins - Jerome County Commissioner

- I. **Mid-Snake RC&D Quarterly Meeting called to Order by:** Chairman Heidi Tubbs at 11:04 AM. Introductions were made.
- II. **Approval of the Agenda:** Rachelle Osterhout motioned to approve the agenda as listed. Roy Prescott seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- III. **Approval of the Minutes:** Roy Prescott motioned to approve the draft minutes from March's quarterly meeting. Terry Kramer seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- IV. **Approval of annual meeting date change:** Per a vote from council, the annual meeting has been changed from December 6, 2024 to December 13, 2024.
- V. **Treasurer's Report:** Rachelle Osterhout presented the balance sheet with beginning and ending balances and pending charges. Doreen McMurray motioned to approve the Treasurer's Report. Sharon Hardy seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- VI. **Investment Update:** Josh Rose presented the update for Mid-Snake RC&D's investment account. Account balance sits at \$132,007.43, which is up 1.78% this quarter. Josh explains that we could do exchanges on higher bonds and that we could possibly see a drop in rates in September/May. A brief meeting was held with the Investment committee and Josh regarding account allocations. Council voted to add Roy Prescott to the investment committee.

- VII. Administrator Update:** Nikki Nelson was introduced as the new administrator for the Mid-Snake RC&D. She is orienting herself with what Mid-Snake RC&D does and who is involved. Terry Kramer asked for her background and experience. Nikki has worked for the USDA in the past and has an Animal Science degree with a minor in Agribusiness. She is excited to work with the organization.
- VIII. Garry Brown, Idaho Forest Service:** Garry Brown presented on what's happening with the weed spraying contracts. At the moment, they are late, as he wanted them done by April. Garry is hopeful to get contracts in place as soon as possible. He has contacted Ryan Edwards for a bid. The primary concern is for cheatgrass and the terrain in Minidoka. Discussion included using mules or aerial equipment for treatment. Terry Kramer suggested drones and may have connections to drones used in Shoshone County. The concerns for drones is wind and exact mapping. Garry asks if he would need a separate contract for drone treatment. \$20,000 was supposed to be allocated to buy weed spraying supplies, but Garry found out he couldn't do it in the manner he wanted to so he is currently waiting approval to get supplies for spray days. He will get with Nikki Nelson and Ryan Berlin to learn how the funding works and how to submit for reimbursement.
- IX. Ryan Berlin, BLM:** Ryan Berlin presented an update from the BLM agreement regarding funding that was given to Gooding and Hagerman High Schools to grow the Firewise garden. Both schools grew FireWise garden plants and outreach continues to increase interest in other schools in the area. Blaine County and Sawtooth Community are working to add Firewise gardens with the help of Ryan. Ryan has received lots of positive feedback so far. He is looking at planting sagebrush and then transporting to the schools. There could possibly be coordination between Fish and Game and BLM to plant sagebrush and bitterroot. BLM upcoming projects include finishing up the project in Fairfield as the land was too steep for equipment and other solutions need to be implemented..
- X. Heidi Tubbs, Snake River SWCD:** Heidi Tubbs is working on an EPA Grant with the school district. If that grant is obtained, it would give the Mid-Snake RC&D approximately \$1,000,000. Heidi states that we need to find out what the needs in our community are so we can allocate those funds if they are obtained. Heidi also gave a brief update on the Firewise Garden. Steven Paulsen has done a great job with upkeep and fixing the irrigation issues. Along with the Firewise Garden, a pollinator garden may also be added to the Breckenridge Endowment Farm. The Breckenridge Farm is not currently listed on the BLM website and Heidi asked Ryan Berlin to check into that.
- XI. Bradley Dawson, Idaho Fish and Game:** Bradley Dawson states that Quagga mussels continue to be a concern for the area. He says that under the Idaho Dept of Agriculture, the closure between Pillar Falls and Twin Falls is still in place. We need five years of clean results to be considered quagga free. It is clear at this time, but it is a growing concern and in order to kayak or use other watercraft in the area, all watercraft must use

the hot wash before and after getting in the water. Bradley discusses that there is no legal fishing between Pillar and Twin Falls at this time. Art Watkins asked about surrounding bodies of water and what they are doing to prevent the quagga mussels in those areas, primarily at Murtaugh and Wilson Lake. Bradley states that RC&D may be able to help by helping put in hot washes as the Fish and Game wants to put in 2-3 more in the area. Bradley's working on community outreach and helping landowners know what resources are available to help make their property more wildlife friendly. He discusses EQIP funding and that the Fish and Game can help landowners apply for grants to qualify for funds.

XII. Discussion: Continuing the discussion from March's meeting, Heidi Tubbs asked members to write their general concerns under each county. The discussion, while not comprehensive of everything written on the list, included the following: The lists were as follows:

A. Jerome County

1. Weed abatement on the Snake River-BLM
 - a) Tri-City Weed Department needs funding for chemical
2. Gravel stockpile to do road improvements-BLM

B. Minidoka County

1. The Acequia well issues that were discussed in March have been resolved
 - a) The wells were shallow and were dug deeper to find a good water supply.
2. Classes for public education
 - a) A pollinator class was held in June and was highly successful
 - (1) Heidi Tubbs presented on bees and participants were given pollinator seeds to take home
 - (2) Jason Thomas Minidoka Extension Educator, his topic was "Meet the Beatles"-mentioned that some bugs are beneficial in helping to control other bugs.
 - (3) A class will be held on August 6th-"Plant Whisperer"
 - (4) This class will be about pruning-participants will get to take a pair of sheers home.
 - b) A class is planned for October 2024 and February 2025
 - c) Other class ideas include:
 - (1) Healthy pastures
 - (2) Grazing practices
 - (3) Bulbs and seedlings
 - (4) Weed control with bugs
 - (5) Insect entrapment
 - (6) Waterwise plants
 - d) Working to find more presenters
 - (1) County extension office is a great resource

C. Cassia County

1. Weed spraying in fire areas-Garry Brown

- a) Ventenata and cheatgrass are primary issues
 - b) Education about weeds and not spreading them
 - 2. Fire safety and wildfire prevention
- D. Twin Falls County
 - 1. Lining canals and piping to conserve water
 - a) Fish and Game is generally against lining canals as it does not recharge the aquifer.
 - 2. HVAC in schools is a need
 - a) Solar panels on the roofs of the schools are starting to be implemented
 - 3. Zoning for small acreage farms is a current issue
 - a) Urban Ag Initiative
 - (1) Many things that small acreage farms want to do are not legal
 - (a) Putting in hoop houses or green houses cannot currently be built on less than 30 acres
 - (2) How can we embrace Urban Ag and agritourism?
 - (a) Sustainability for others
 - (b) Trend for more locally grown food
 - 4. Aging population and median household income
 - 5. Quagga mussels
 - a) Prevent the spread
 - b) Pipes and irrigation system material upgrades to mitigate the issue

XIII. The council moved to vote on the contract to make Nikki Nelson the Administrator-Sharon Hardy motioned to approve the contract. Charlie Howell seconded. Motion carried.

XIV. Doreen McMurray motioned to adjourn the meeting at 1:09 pm. Terry Kramer seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Nikki Nelson, Administrator.