



Idaho Soil Conservation Commission  
Strategic Plan  
Fiscal Years 2010 – 2014

Adopted by the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission  
January 28, 2009  
Boise, Idaho

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## History of the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission

The creation of the Soil Conservation Commission (commission) and Idaho soil conservation districts (conservation districts) is entrenched in the Dust Bowl Era of the 1930s. These times were marked by years of sustained drought, intensive farming without erosion reducing techniques, low commodity prices, and dust storms. The period was coincidental to the Great Depression, adding additional social and economic perils. The U.S. Department of Agriculture distributed a model law in May 1936 to serve as a guide for states to enact laws to facilitate the creation of conservation districts. Eighteen states had done so by late June of that year. President Franklin D. Roosevelt added his support to the conservation district effort and sent a letter to state governors in early 1937 urging each to adopt legislation similar to the model law to provide for the organization of local conservation districts.

Early in 1939 Governor Bottolfsen signed Idaho's Soil Conservation District Law. (Idaho Code Title 22, Chapter 27) This legislation also created the commission to assist local landowners form and coordinate conservation districts. The first Idaho conservation districts were formed in 1940 and included Latah, Bear Lake, Portneuf, Squaw Creek, and Mayfield (which later became Elmore); eventually an additional 46 conservation districts were organized. Conservation districts are among the few grassroots organizations established by President Roosevelt's New Deal that are still in operation.

The commission is an independent state agency organized under the executive branch of government and is administratively housed within the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA). Conservation districts are separate legal entities and subdivisions of state government led by locally elected representatives to each respective board of supervisors.

### Commission Members

The commission consists of five members who are appointed to staggered five-year terms by Idaho's Governor. Three non-voting advisors are authorized by statute to serve at the invitation of the commission by virtue of their positions with their respective organizations. These advisors are: President, Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts (IASCD); Dean, College of Agriculture, University of Idaho; and State Conservationist, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. (NRCS). Idaho Code §22-2718(1)

### Commission Staff

The commission has a 24-member staff responsible for technical and administrative program delivery. Most of the commission field staff is housed within NRCS field offices throughout the state to provide technical assistance at the local level. Most of the commission management staff is located at the ISDA facility in Boise, Idaho. Idaho Code §22-2718(2)

1                                    The Vision of the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission

2  
3                    The vision of the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission is for the commission and  
4 conservation districts to be recognized as the primary entities in the State of Idaho to  
5 provide landowners, land users, and public land managers with assistance and solutions  
6 for natural resource conservation issues and concerns.  
7

8                                    The Mission of the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission

9  
10                    The commission provides leadership and assistance for natural resource  
11 conservation programs through state statutes and agreements with other local, state and  
12 federal agencies. The commission provides support and service to Idaho conservation  
13 districts and via the conservation districts, to private landowners and land users to  
14 conserve, sustain, improve, and enhance Idaho’s natural resources through nonregulatory  
15 and science-based technical assistance, financial incentive programs, and educational  
16 programs at the district level.  
17

18                                    Commission Values and Philosophy

19                                    Idaho Code §§22-2716 & 22-2718

20  
21                    The commission seeks to strengthen and expand conservation district and locally  
22 led natural resource conservation while maintaining the flexibility to anticipate new  
23 challenges. The commission strives to provide the highest level of professional, reliable,  
24 and ethical assistance to partners and clients in a manner deserving of the public trust.  
25

- 26 • The commission and conservation districts are the primary public entities in the State  
27 of Idaho to provide private landowners and land users with assistance for natural  
28 resource conservation
- 29 • The commission believes that the most effective decision making occurs at the local  
30 level between conservation districts, landowners, and technical assistance providers
- 31 • The commission supports and assists conservation districts
- 32 • The commission is a non-regulatory agency
- 33 • The commission advocates ecosystem management
- 34 • The commission provides science-based technical assistance
- 35 • The commission provides incentive-based financial assistance
- 36 • The commission supports local and state-wide natural resource education programs
- 37 • The commission strives to anticipate the needs of partners and to assist in identifying  
38 issues of concern
- 39 • The commission has established and encourages the use of the Idaho OnePlan
- 40 • The commission is committed to the principle and practice of diligence in protecting  
41 the privacy of all private information entrusted to it
- 42 • The commission is committed to the principle and practices of public agency  
43 transparency  
44  
45

1                   Strategic Issues to Address in Fiscal Years 2010 through 2014

2  
3                   The following were identified in the analysis phase of the planning process as  
4 issues of strategic importance to address within the next five years. These issues are  
5 embodied in the core functions, objectives, and actions of this strategic plan.  
6

- 7                   1. Enhance the commission’s effectiveness by better defining the agency’s  
8 identity, develop potential through which leadership changes and appointments  
9 can be influenced, and develop and maintain a productive relationship with the  
10 Office of the Governor and legislature.  
11                   2. Assist conservation districts to enhance their capabilities and capacities to fully  
12 exercise their powers and responsibilities as established by Idaho Code Title 22  
13 Chapter 27.  
14                   3. Develop a communication system to promote the commission and conservation  
15 districts identities, presence, duties, responsibilities, and capabilities.  
16                   4. Review, update, and implement the Idaho Agricultural Pollution Abatement  
17 Plan.  
18                   5. Lead the effort to develop a forum for the conservation partnership to address  
19 issues and topics of mutual interest, concern, and need. This forum could be  
20 used to evaluate methods to increase efficiencies, develop agreements, create  
21 alternatives, and initiate mutually agreeable improvements within the core  
22 conservation partnership.<sup>1</sup>  
23                   6. Evaluate needs and optimal location for commission staff throughout the state.  
24                   7. Strive to increase commission and conservation district funding bases to match  
25 increasing workloads.  
26                   8. Increase technical assistance capabilities and diversity of expertise within the  
27 commission and conservation districts.  
28                   9. Develop and maintain leadership and institutional flexibility that can anticipate  
29 and, when needed, respond to changes in the state and federal political  
30 landscape.  
31

32                   Client and Stakeholder Participation in Planning Process

33  
34                   State statute requires agencies to consult with people and entities potentially  
35 affected by their strategic plan. Idaho Code §67-1903(4) To consult with the many  
36 partners the commission distributed approximately 418 surveys to conservation district  
37 board supervisors (280), conservation district staff (65), other agencies staff (28),  
38 commission staff (24), IASCD staff (16), and commission members (5). There were 104  
39 responses to the survey. Portions of the strategic plan were developed in response to  
40 survey comments. The draft strategic plan was made available to the public and interested  
41 stakeholders October 8, 2008 via email and throughout October at IASCD division  
42 meetings. The draft strategic plan was formally introduced for public comment by the  
43 commission at the November 16, 2008 meeting and a presentation was given at the

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<sup>1</sup> The core members of the conservation partnership include: Idaho Soil Conservation Commission, Idaho’s 51 conservation districts, Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

1 IASCD 2008 conference. The commission held a public hearing to consider adoption of  
2 the strategic plan on January 28, 2009. The Idaho Soil Conservation Commission  
3 Strategic Plan 2010-2014 was adopted on January 28, 2009.  
4

## 5 Core Functions, Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures

6

7 Core functions, goals, and objectives have specific definitions in Idaho law and  
8 are required components of state agency strategic plans. (State Planning and Coordination  
9 Idaho Code §67-1902) The commission’s strategic planning team identified these through  
10 analysis of the following: Portions of Idaho Code for which the commission has  
11 responsibilities, administrative rules, formal agreements, contracts, and legal opinions  
12 from the Office of the Attorney General. The planning team also conducted an analysis of  
13 the commission’s strengths, weaknesses, potential impediments to meeting needs, and  
14 opportunities for improving program delivery. Responses to a survey distributed to  
15 conservation district supervisors and staff, commission members and staff, and other  
16 agency partners were also used in the analysis.  
17

18 Performance measures compiled in the first year of strategic plan implementation  
19 will form the baseline for future reference.  
20

### 21 **Core Function 1: Soil Conservation Commission Responsibilities to** 22 **Conservation Districts**

23

24 **Goal** Provide conservation districts with policy, program, capacity  
25 development, and other assistance and support, as requested or directed by statute.  
26

27 **Objective 1.1** Commission staff shall provide assistance to conservation districts  
28 to support their administrative operations, conservation program delivery, and to enhance  
29 their potential for development. The commission staff will develop and regularly  
30 implement a strategy to link conservation districts with one another and to available  
31 administrative, technical, and financial assistance. Idaho Code §22-2718(4)(a-e)  
32

33 Action 1.1.1: Offer assistance as requested to soil conservation district  
34 supervisors and staff to carry out their powers and programs.  
35

36 Action 1.1.2: Coordinate the progress of conservation districts so far as  
37 this may be done by advice and consultation.  
38

39 Action 1.1.3: Inform conservation districts of the activities and  
40 experiences of other conservation districts and facilitate an interchange of communication  
41 and cooperation between conservation districts. Create and distribute a quarterly or  
42 annual newsletter highlighting district projects and accomplishments.  
43

44 Action 1.1.4: Secure cooperation and assistance of state and federal  
45 agencies in the work of conservation districts. Assist conservation districts to make

1 connections with state and federal agencies to develop funding and implementation  
2 associations.

3  
4 Action 1.1.5: Distribute information concerning activities and programs of  
5 conservation districts in areas where inter-district collaboration may be of interest,  
6 including consolidation of existing conservation districts.

7  
8 **Objective 1.2** The commission, through a public hearing process determines the  
9 amount of annual funding to be formally requested from the Idaho legislature for  
10 conservation districts. (Idaho Code §22-2727)

11  
12 Action: 1.2.1: Conduct an annual public hearing to receive relevant facts  
13 and testimony to render a decision as to the amount of money to request for appropriation  
14 by the legislature for conservation districts.

15  
16 Action 1.2.2: The commission is charged by district law with presenting  
17 budget requests on behalf of districts to the Idaho Legislature. The commission shall  
18 include the budget request for conservation districts, which was determined in the annual  
19 public hearing, with the commission's annual budget submitted to the Division of  
20 Financial Management (DFM) and Legislative Services Office (LSO).

21  
22 Action 1.2.3: In the event the commission's annual request to the Idaho  
23 Legislature for funding for conservation districts will be less than the amount determined  
24 in the annual public hearing, the commission will notify districts in writing in a timely  
25 fashion of that fact and the justification for it.

26  
27 Action 1.2.4: The commission will notify conservation districts in writing  
28 in a timely fashion of opportunities to testify before legislative committees in connection  
29 with the Idaho Legislature's annual appropriation to districts.

30  
31 Baseline performance measure for core function #1: Conduct an annual survey of  
32 the 51 Idaho conservation districts to determine level of satisfaction of services provided  
33 by the commission.

34  
35 **Core Function 2: Soil Conservation Commission's Technical Assistance**

36  
37 **Goal** Maintain and enhance the commission's technical assistance capabilities  
38 to serve Idaho's conservation districts, private landowners, land users, and public land  
39 managers to address local resource issues, and assist the state of Idaho in meeting  
40 statewide and national mandates.

41  
42 **Objective 2.1** The commission facilitates conservation improvements to improve  
43 and conserve natural resources in cooperation with federal and state agencies, and  
44 owners/operators of privately owned forestlands, rangelands, and agricultural lands.  
45 (Idaho Code §22-2718(5)(a)) Commission staff will conduct the following:

1 Action 2.1.1: Commission management staff will provide progress  
2 reviews with conservation district participants of commission-funded projects at least  
3 once per year.

4  
5 Action 2.1.2: Initiate and complete annual water quality monitoring  
6 coordination meeting with appropriate monitoring agencies and cooperating entities.

7  
8 Action 2.1.3: Meet quarterly with NRCS state office leadership team.

9  
10 Action 2.1.4: Initiate and lead annual interagency coordination meetings  
11 for water quality with each Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Regional  
12 Office (six meetings per year).

13  
14 Action 2.1.5: Participate in project reviews for the 319 Program as  
15 scheduled by DEQ.

16  
17 Action 2.1.6: Maintain commission program flexibility by evaluating  
18 additional funding programs available through other agencies, with a focus on leverage  
19 potential. The programs to be targeted, but not limited to are the following:

- 20
- 21 ➤ New and existing Farm Bill programs
- 22 ➤ EPA-DEQ 319 Program
- 23 ➤ State Revolving Fund (SRF)
- 24 ➤ Source water protection
- 25 ➤ Clean Lakes Programs
- 26 ➤ Healthy Lands (Range) Initiative
- 27 ➤ BLM Challenge Grants
- 28 ➤ New Sage Grouse Grants under development
- 29 ➤ Northwest Power and Conservation Council (with BPA)
- 30 ➤ Bonneville Power Administration (MOA – OSC)
- 31 ➤ Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund (OSC)
- 32 ➤ Snake River Basin Adjudication Fund (OSC)
- 33 ➤ Partners for Wildlife (USFWS)
- 34 ➤ Community-based Restoration Program (NOAA Fisheries)
- 35 ➤ Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- 36 ➤ American Rivers (NOAA Fisheries)
- 37 ➤ City and county governments

38  
39 Action 2.1.7: Lead annual agricultural and grazing Total Maximum Daily  
40 Load (TMDL) coordination meeting with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)  
41 and DEQ.

42  
43 **Objective 2.2** The commission assists and advises conservation districts and other  
44 eligible participants for commission programs to implement conservation projects, cost-  
45 share opportunities through the Water Quality Program for Agriculture (WQPA), and the

1 Resource Conservation and Rangeland Development Program (RCRDP) for loans and  
2 grants. (Idaho Code §22-2718(5)(b))

3  
4 Action 2.2.1: Meet with each of the 51 conservation districts to review  
5 their Five-Year Plans and identify the top two technical implementation priorities that  
6 they would like to accomplish over the next two years.

7  
8 Action 2.2.2: Identify potential funding sources for prioritized projects.

9  
10 Action 2.2.3: Maintain a WQPA priority list of 20 potentially fundable  
11 projects, based on input from conservation districts and program application process.

12  
13 Action 2.2.4: Provide commission program specific training to  
14 conservation districts on a priority basis determined by project application activity. A  
15 minimum of six training sessions per year will be implemented.

16  
17 **Objective 2.3** Facilitate the range-riparian training and assessment programs. (Idaho  
18 Code §22-2716, §39-3602(7) §39-3612, and §39-3621)

19  
20 Action 2.3.1: Complete the *Idaho Riparian Framework* document to guide  
21 the commission, active conservation districts, and partners with assessing agricultural and  
22 grazing impacts on Idaho's rivers and creeks and monitoring effectiveness of riparian  
23 restoration projects by fiscal year 2011.

24  
25 Action 2.3.2: Initiate and develop a riparian/stream training and  
26 certification program for State of Idaho employees and active conservation districts as  
27 resources allow.

28  
29 Action 2.3.4: Assist conservation districts and other conservation partners  
30 to assess agricultural and grazing impacts and to implement on-the-ground measures as  
31 outlined in the State of Idaho's *Conservation Plan for the Greater Sage Grouse and Sage*  
32 *Grouse Management Plans*.

33  
34 **Objective 2.4** Support a Clean Lakes Program in coordination with active  
35 conservation districts and lake groups. (Idaho Code §22-2716)

36  
37 Action 2.4.1: Coordinate Lake\*A\*Syst implementation efforts on Idaho's  
38 lakes in coordination with active conservation districts, lake groups, and partnering  
39 agencies.

40  
41 Action 2.4.2: Complete Lake\*A\*Syst project status reviews with engaged  
42 conservation districts, lake groups, and partnering agencies for the following: Priest Lake,  
43 Lake Pend Oreille, Hauser Lake, Cocallala Lake, Big Payette Lake, and Cascade Lake.

44  
45 Action 2.4.3: Coordinate an annual Clean Lakes for Idaho conference by  
46 fiscal year 2012 with active conservation districts, lake groups, and partnering agencies.

1 Action 2.4.4: Provide assistance to establish an Idaho affiliate of the North  
2 American Lake Management Society by fiscal year 2013.

3  
4 Action 2.4.5: Support and assist active conservation districts and lake  
5 groups to identify funding sources for efforts to protect/enhance lake water quality.

6  
7 Action 2.4.6: Develop and annually review Lake\*A\*Syst and associated  
8 education materials for distribution.

9  
10 **Objective 2.5** Design and implement a statewide urban conservation outreach  
11 program in coordination with the IASCD and/or active conservation districts to develop  
12 the capacity for urban natural resource planning and implementation into program  
13 delivery systems of interested conservation districts. (Idaho Code §22-2716)

14  
15 Action 2.5.1: Give outreach presentations on the Idaho urban conservation  
16 program at the following venues: the annual IASCD Conference, six IASCD division  
17 meetings, groups of conservation districts with shared resource issues of concern, and  
18 interested individual conservation districts.

19  
20 Action 2.5.2: Give outreach presentations on the Idaho urban conservation  
21 program at each of the six Idaho Association of Counties (IAC) division meetings.  
22 Thereafter give a presentation at each IAC division meeting on the update of the urban  
23 conservation program.

24  
25 Action 2.5.3: Give presentations regarding the Idaho urban conservation  
26 program at the Idaho State Senate's Resources and Environment Committee and Idaho  
27 House of Representative's Resources and Conservation Committee. Thereafter present  
28 updates of the program on an annual basis.

29  
30 **Objective 2.6** Strengthen the quality control for administration of the  
31 commission's conservation programs, project applications, and BMP implementation.

32  
33 Action 2.6.1: Complete annual program reviews and audits, as required by  
34 statute and administrative rules, for programs administered by the commission: IDAPA  
35 02.05.01.56.02(g) (RCRDP) and IDAPA 02.05.03.24 (WQPA). Evaluate the  
36 commission's rules and program procedures to identify efficiencies and possible  
37 improvements. Prepare an annual report with recommendations for the commission.

38  
39 Action 2.6.2: Complete three technical field reviews per year within each  
40 IASCD division for Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, Resource  
41 Conservation and Rangeland Development Program, and Water Quality Program for  
42 Agriculture projects. Prepare a summary report for involved conservation districts and  
43 commission members. (18 project field reviews per year)

44  
45 Action 2.6.3: Conduct BMP effectiveness evaluations as per the  
46 commission's *Idaho Agricultural Best Management Practices Field Guide for Evaluating*

1 *BMP Effectiveness* on a minimum of 10% of commission funded BMPs. Prioritize  
2 projects in 303(d) listed streams for accelerated evaluation.

3  
4 Action 2.6.4: All commission funded BMP evaluations will be entered  
5 into the commission's BMP Tracker Program. Prepare an annual statewide report.

6  
7 Action 2.6.5: Complete Phase 1 of the web-hosted BMP Tracker Program  
8 and the Phase 2 mapping function for the Tracker Program by the end of fiscal year 2010.

9  
10 Action 2.6.6: Complete the revision of the commission's *Idaho*  
11 *Agricultural Best Management Practices Field Guide for Evaluating BMP Effectiveness*  
12 by the end of fiscal year 2010 and present to the Agricultural Pollution Abatement Plan  
13 (Ag Plan) Technical Advisory Committee.

14  
15 **Objective 2.7** Increase commission technical staff expertise to deliver high-  
16 quality technical assistance to conservation districts and to meet statewide natural  
17 resource challenges.

18  
19 Action 2.7.1: Complete a statewide workload analysis of commission  
20 technical staff by IASCD division using, but not limited to the following tools:

- 21  
22 ➤ Rapid Watershed Assessments  
23 ➤ Agricultural Components of TMDL Implementation Plans  
24 ➤ Existing water quality program for agriculture activities  
25 ➤ Groundwater Nitrate Priority Areas  
26 ➤ Groundwater Management Plans  
27 ➤ Conservation Districts Five Year Plans  
28 ➤ IASCD Five Year Strategic Plan  
29 ➤ Farm Bill Local Work Groups  
30 ➤ ESA listed species and critical habitat designations  
31 ➤ ESA and mitigation funding responsibilities

32  
33 Action 2.7.2: Use the work products from this objective to develop a  
34 comprehensive statewide staffing plan for the commission and to identify the need for  
35 contractor services as outlined in Core Function Action 5.3.1.

36  
37 Action 2.7.3: Based on individual skill sets, training, and interest,  
38 commission management will build four regional technical teams to address regional,  
39 watershed, and multi-district natural resource issues.

40  
41 **Baseline performance measure for core function #2:** Determine the percentage of  
42 meeting participations, field reviews, BMP evaluations, and reports completed by  
43 objective. Prepare a comparative analysis of this information annually.

1 **Core Function 3: Soil Conservation Commission Duties and Responsibilities**  
2 **Defined by State Mandates and other Agreements Idaho Code § 22-2718(5)(a-b)**

3  
4 **Goal** Deliver commission programs as mandated by the following: state  
5 statutes; contracts; memoranda of understanding; mutual agreements between the USDA,  
6 State of Idaho, and each conservation district; and the cooperative working agreements.  
7

8 **Objective 3.1** Enhance Idaho OnePlan capabilities and expand usage throughout  
9 the state to 75 producers per year. (Idaho Code §22-2718(4)(f))

10  
11 Action 3.1.1: Complete web-based application for the Nutrient  
12 Management Planning component by fiscal year 2012.

13  
14 Action 3.1.2: Complete Pesticide Application Recordkeeping component  
15 by summer fiscal year 2010.

16  
17 Action 3.1.3: Complete Integrated Pest Management Decision Matrix for  
18 sugar beets, potatoes, onions, and grains by summer fiscal year 2010.

19  
20 Action 3.1.4: Implement proper quality control for establishing Ecological  
21 Site Descriptions (ESDs).

22  
23 Action 3.1.5: Complete rangeland ESDs by fiscal year 2010.

24  
25 Action 3.1.6: Assist OnePlan Manager with information and education  
26 outreach program.

27  
28 Action 3.1.7: Develop Idaho OnePlan planner applications for carbon  
29 sequestration and sage grouse by fiscal year 2012.

30  
31 **Objective 3.2** Provide leadership and technical assistance to address carbon  
32 sequestration issues for agriculture and forestry. (Idaho Code §22-5201)

33  
34 Action 3.2.1: Facilitate two meetings per year of the Idaho Carbon  
35 Sequestration Advisory Committee (ICSAC) as described in Idaho Code §22-5201 et. al.

36  
37 Action 3.2.2: Provide support and guidance for implementation of carbon  
38 sequestration trading pilot projects for agriculture and forestry.

39  
40 Action 3.2.3: Assist ICSAC with meeting their goals related to the  
41 following major areas of focus:

- 42  
43 ➤ Information Outreach  
44 ➤ Carbon-trading Pilot Projects  
45 ➤ Research  
46

- Carbon Sequestration Registry
- Geologic Carbon Sequestration

Action 3.2.4: The commission will chair the Carbon Issues Task Force for the Idaho Strategic Energy Alliance and coordinate with the Office of Energy Resources.

Action 3.2.5: Compile a carbon-trading portfolio for rangeland as the Idaho Pilot Project by fiscal year 2010.

Action 3.2.6: Determine the level of commission involvement needed for the carbon sequestration program and pursue funding for the currently not funded program. If additional funding is not found by fiscal year 2011, evaluate capacity to perform with available resources and adjust.

**Objective 3.3** Accelerate the development of agricultural and grazing components of TMDL watershed implementation plans and effectively transition into project and BMP implementation phase in coordination with active conservation districts. (Idaho Code §39-3601)

Action 3.3.1: Use technical team approach to support individual staff efforts to complete remaining TMDL implementation plans. (Appendix A)

Action 3.3.2: Complete riparian/stream assessments, in coordination with active conservation districts, on private agricultural and grazing lands as part of the inventory to develop TMDL implementation plans.

Action 3.3.3 Assist conservation districts and other appropriate conservation partners to assess agricultural and grazing impacts and to implement on-the-ground measures as outlined in TMDL implementation plans.

Action 3.3.4: Complete TMDL implementation workload analysis for the six IASCD divisions, evaluate in terms of available and projected commission technical staff and contract service needs by the end of fiscal year 2010, and reassess annually.

Action 3.3.5: Increase, decrease, and/or realign commission technical staff and contacted services with workload needs as indicated by work completed in Core Function Objective 2.7 and Core Function Action 5.3.1.

Action 3.3.6: Provide TMDL and BMP specific training to all commission field staff and active conservation district staff as resources permit.

Action 3.3.7: Coordinate the annual Agricultural TMDL Interagency Coordination meetings with DEQ and EPA.

Action 3.3.8: Coordinate the annual regional TMDL coordination meetings with conservation districts, DEQ, NRCS, and other agencies as appropriate.

1 Action 3.3.9 Support Watershed Advisory Groups (WAGs) through  
2 participation as technical advisors. Provide funding support to active conservation  
3 districts to provide administrative support to WAGs. Existing WAGs are listed in  
4 Appendix A. Inventory statewide WAG participation annually.

5  
6 Action 3.3.10: The commission will provide technical progress reports to  
7 Basin Advisory Groups (BAGs) when requested.

8  
9 Action 3.3.11: Participate in and provide BMP effectiveness and other  
10 technical support to DEQ for five-year reviews of their subbasin assessments and  
11 TMDLs. (Idaho Code §39-3611(7) ) First cycle of five-year reviews will be completed in  
12 2013 after which the reviews will begin again. See Appendix B for review schedule.

13  
14 Action 3.3.12: Initiate a technical outreach effort for conservation districts  
15 to increase their awareness and ability to use TMDL implementation plans as a tool to  
16 maximize their project funding and address local water quality issues identified in their  
17 five-year plans.

18  
19 Action 3.3.13: Coordinate and document participation with Idaho  
20 Department of Lands implementation efforts on grazing lands within TMDL watersheds.

21  
22 Action 3.3.14: Develop success story video based on the TMDL efforts of  
23 the conservation partnership and other participating agencies by fiscal year 2013.

24  
25 **Objective 3.4** Organize watershed improvement districts as provided by Idaho  
26 Code Title 42 Chapter 37.

27  
28 **Objective 3.5** The commission provides assistance as requested to the Idaho  
29 Office of Species Conservation (OSC) and Idaho Office of Energy Resources (OER)  
30 within the Office of the Governor.

31  
32 Action 3.5.1: Provide assistance to the Idaho OSC in the development of  
33 state policy and management plans for rare and declining, petitioned, candidate,  
34 threatened, and endangered species as requested by OSC. (Idaho Code §67-818)

35  
36 Action 3.5.2: Comply with the terms and conditions of the Soil  
37 Conservation Commission's Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Idaho Office  
38 of Species Conservation for the administration of the Upper Salmon Model Watershed  
39 Program (formed by Idaho Governor's Executive Order). The contract is valid until  
40 terminated by either party or in the case of default by either and unresolved within ten  
41 days. (Idaho Code §22-2718(5)(a) and MOA 1/25/2008)

42  
43 **Objective 3.6** Manage the Clearwater Focus Program to implement the  
44 Northwest Power and Conservation Council's Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife  
45 Program in the Clearwater subbasin. (Formed by Idaho Governor's Executive Order)

1 Action 3.6.1: Comply with the terms of the commission’s contract with  
2 the Bonneville Power Administration (Bonneville) project for coordination of the  
3 Clearwater Focus Program, Bonneville Project Number 1996-086-00. July 1 – June 30 is  
4 the annual contract term.

5  
6 **Objective 3.7** Coordinate and provide technical support for the implementation  
7 of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) (HB 392, HB 879, and Idaho  
8 Ground Water Protection Interagency Cooperative Agreement 1/2008)

9  
10 Action 3.7.1: Coordinate with Idaho Department of Water Resources  
11 (IDWR), the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), groundwater districts, and  
12 conservation districts to implement this program.

13  
14 Action 3.7.2: Lead and facilitate the CREP Steering Committee that meets  
15 a minimum of once a year. The committee is comprised of representatives from the  
16 following: commission, FSA, IDWR, Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG),  
17 agricultural and conservation groups, conservation districts and local government.

18  
19 Action 3.7.3: Compile initial water rights information and coordinate with  
20 FSA and IDWR to establish eligibility for program participation.

21  
22 Action 3.7.4: Prepare long-term conservation plans, operation plans,  
23 contracts, and agreements for CREP participants.

24  
25 Action 3.7.5: Regularly update geographical information system (GIS)  
26 coverages and report progress using the NRCS Progress Reporting System for tracking.

27  
28 Action 3.7.6: Complete CREP BMP effectiveness evaluations, soil quality  
29 tests, and enter the data into the commission’s Tracker Program.

30  
31 **Objective 3.8** Enhance technical support to conservation districts, agricultural  
32 landowners and land users to address groundwater issues and problems (Idaho  
33 Groundwater Protection Interagency Cooperative Agreement, *Agricultural Pollution*  
34 *Abatement Plan and the Idaho Groundwater Quality Plan*).

35  
36 Action 3.8.1: Commission staff will participate as a member of the  
37 Agricultural Groundwater Coordination Committee as directed by the *Idaho*  
38 *Groundwater Quality Plan*.

39  
40 Action 3.8.2: Develop and implement in coordination with active  
41 conservation districts agricultural and grazing components of groundwater management  
42 plans as per the *Idaho Agriculture Pollution Abatement Plan, Idaho Groundwater Quality*  
43 *Plan*, and the Idaho Groundwater Protection Interagency Cooperative Agreement.

44  
45 Action 3.8.3: Commission management staff, the groundwater  
46 coordinator, and other assigned staff will develop a nitrate priority area workload analysis

1 and staffing needs inventory in conjunction with Core Function Objective 2.7 and Core  
2 Function Action 5.3.1.

3  
4 Action 3.8.4: Complete a minimum of three initial groundwater  
5 assessments for potential planning and implementation projects per year in coordination  
6 with active conservation districts, using the commission's format.

7  
8 Action 3.8.5: Integrate groundwater planning and implementation and  
9 TMDL implementation efforts in coordination with active conservation districts.

10  
11 Action 3.8.6: Complete a minimum of two groundwater project reviews  
12 per year.

13  
14 Action 3.8.7: Incorporate groundwater BMP evaluation protocols into the  
15 commission's *Idaho Agricultural Best Management Practices Field Guide for Evaluating*  
16 *BMP Effectiveness*.

17  
18 **Objective 3.9** Facilitate the implementation of the Idaho Agriculture Pollution  
19 Abatement Program. (Section 208 of the Clean Water Act PL 92-500)

20  
21 Action 3.9.1: Reconvene the technical advisory committee beginning in  
22 fiscal year 2010 as per the *Idaho Agricultural Pollution Abatement Plan* (Ag Plan) for the  
23 following purposes:

- 24  
25 ➤ Provide a water-quality progress update for agriculture  
26 ➤ Review the current Ag Plan for possible revision and updating  
27 ➤ Evaluate agricultural and grazing needs for TMDL implementation  
28 ➤ Provide guidance, recommendations, and support for commission  
29 implementation efforts  
30 ➤ Strengthen communication and awareness between commission,  
31 IASCD, conservation districts, and other agricultural associations  
32 ➤ Meet a minimum of once per year  
33

34 Action 3.9.2: Reconvene the Ag Plan BMP Technical Committee in fiscal  
35 year 2010 and annually thereafter to provide technical guidance and recommendations for  
36 commission and conservation district water quality BMP implementation activities. The  
37 technical committee will review BMP development, modifications, and BMP  
38 effectiveness evaluation protocols.

39  
40 **Objective 3.10** Deliver conservation services and programs in the manner  
41 provided by the terms of conservation partnership agreements.

42  
43 Action 3.10.1: Support the continued implementation of the Mutual  
44 Agreement between the United States Department of Agriculture, the State of Idaho and  
45 each individual conservation district. These agreements establish an enduring basis for  
46 cooperation and assistance between the parties to achieve common natural resources

1 conservation goals and objectives. The U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, the Governor of  
2 Idaho, and the chairman from each of the 51 conservation districts sign these agreements.

3  
4 Action 3.10.2: Implement the Cooperative Working Agreements between  
5 each of the conservation districts, the commission, IASCD, and NRCS. These agreements  
6 address the operational relationships between these independent parties. These  
7 agreements shall be reviewed annually and updated as required.

8  
9 Action 3.10.3: Continue support of the vision and the guiding principles of  
10 the Idaho Conservation Partnership Statement of Cooperation signed November 2004.

11  
12 Baseline performance measure for core function #3: Inventory performance for  
13 the objectives of this core function noting successes and identify reasons for any non-  
14 performance. Compare baseline with each subsequent year and assess performance  
15 relative to resources.

16  
17 **Core Function 4: Develop Statewide Leadership Role Awareness**

18  
19 **Goal** Develop outreach programs to enhance the awareness of the conservation  
20 partnership leadership roles for non-regulatory incentive-based resource coordination on  
21 private forestlands, rangelands, and agricultural lands in cooperation with federal, state,  
22 and local agencies, and Indian tribes. Idaho Code §22-2716

23  
24 **Objective 4.1** Enhance the awareness of the commission, conservation districts,  
25 and the conservation partnership identities among Idaho’s citizens and partnerships.

26  
27 Action 4.1.1: Develop an outreach program in cooperation with the  
28 IASCD and active conservation districts, and implement the program on a regular basis.  
29 Initiate the program by the end of the fiscal year 2010. Assign commission staff to this  
30 work and report annually to the commission.

31  
32 **Objective 4.2** Develop a communication network, in cooperation with the  
33 IASCD and active conservation districts, with the Idaho Association of Counties and the  
34 Idaho Association of Cities.

35  
36 Action 4.2.1: Attend steering committee meetings to present an overview  
37 of the conservation partnership. Implement a regular exchange with each organization, by  
38 fiscal year 2010. Assign staff to this work and report annually to the commission.

39  
40 **Objective 4.3** Assist active conservation districts, with information and training,  
41 to develop political support with elected officials at the local and state levels.

42  
43 Baseline performance measure for core function #4: After design of the outreach  
44 program and the communication network prepare a qualitative report describing the  
45 contacts developed and information exchanged after one implementation year. In each  
46 subsequent report include a comparative analysis to performance in the first year.

1 **Core Function 5: Idaho Soil Conservation Commission Operations**

2  
3 **Goal** Define and improve commission efficacies and efficiencies

4  
5 **Objective 5.1** Standardize the commissioners' operating procedures by the end of  
6 fiscal year 2010 to increase efficiency and to clarify authorities. Idaho Code §22-2718(1-  
7 3), (5)(a)

8  
9 Action 5.1.1: Develop operating protocols, guidelines and procedures to  
10 include, but not be limited to, defining policies, decision-making processes, standards for  
11 meeting minutes, and the annual calendar to include location of meetings. Review  
12 annually and amend as needed. Idaho Code §22-2718(1)

13  
14 Action 5.1.2: Review and approve commission budget formally in open  
15 session by the commission before submittal to the Division of Financial Management and  
16 the Legislative Services Office in September. Idaho Code §22-2718(2)

17  
18 Action 5.1.3: Establish procedures to conduct reviews of loan and cost-  
19 share program applications to render decisions for the grant, loan and cost-share  
20 programs. Idaho Code §22-2726(5)(b), §§22-2732 through 22-2734, IDAPA 02.05.01,  
21 and IDAPA 02.05.03

22  
23 Action 5.1.4: Establish communication protocols with the Office of the  
24 Governor and appropriate legislative committees and implement these regularly. Idaho  
25 Code §22-2716(3)(d)

26  
27 Action 5.1.5: The commission will notify conservation districts, in  
28 writing, of opportunities to submit names to the Governor's Office for consideration for  
29 commissioner vacancies, and of any names to be submitted by the commission.

30  
31 Action 5.1.6: Enter into working agreements, as appropriate, with local,  
32 state, and federal agencies, and public and private groups to plan, develop, and  
33 implement conservation works on private agricultural lands, forest lands, and rangelands.  
34 Idaho Code §22-2716(3)(d through f)

35  
36 **Objective 5.2** Define the commission's administrative staff operations, duties,  
37 roles, and responsibilities. Idaho Code §22-2718(2)

38  
39 Action 5.2.1: Distribute funds appropriated by the legislature for  
40 conservation districts to implement their powers, functions, and duties in accordance with  
41 the standards defined in Idaho Code §22-2727 and Idaho Code §22-2718(5)(c)

42  
43 Action 5.2.2: Conduct an audit of the commission's accounts of receipts  
44 and disbursements. Idaho Code § 22-2718(3)

1 Action 5.2.3: Prepare budget and budget documents as instructed by the  
2 *Budget Development Manual* each year. Idaho Code Title 67, Chapter 35  
3

4 Action 5.2.4: Prepare a report of the annual commission performance  
5 evaluation and present it to the Joint Finance Appropriations Committee (JFAC). Idaho  
6 Code §67-1904(7) Develop a stakeholder group to evaluate commission performance as  
7 part of the performance evaluation and/or use annual customer satisfaction survey as part  
8 of the evaluation.  
9

10 Action 5.2.5: Prepare analysis and presentation materials of the Resource  
11 Conservation and Rangeland Development Program (loan & grant) for commission  
12 meetings. Idaho Code §§22-2732 through 22-2733, IDAPA 02.05.01  
13

14 Action 5.2.6: Prepare analysis and materials of applications submitted for  
15 the Agricultural Water Quality Cost-share Program to present at commission meetings.  
16 Idaho Code §22-2734, & IDAPA 02.05.03  
17

18 Action 5.2.7: Review and prepare an annual update of the strategic plan in  
19 coordination with the IASCD and active conservation districts, including distribution and  
20 analysis of an annual survey to partners. In fiscal year 2014, evaluate for next five-year  
21 strategic plan term. Idaho Code §67-1903(2)  
22

23 Action 5.2.8: Establish the commission’s technical staff leadership team  
24 and convene the team quarterly to review programs, projects, and issues.  
25

26 Action 5.2.9: Seek consensus to reactivate the partnership forum created to  
27 support the *Idaho Conservation Partnership Statement of Cooperation* signed in 2004. If  
28 consensus attained, meet with partnership representatives to review operating procedures  
29 and agree on a regular meeting schedule to address issues and topics of mutual interest.  
30

31 Action 5.2.10: Perform duties as required to maintain commission and the  
32 State of Idaho policies and procedures.  
33

34 **Objective 5.3** Assign commission staff to prioritize and develop protocols that  
35 will enhance the commission’s administrative infrastructure to support program delivery.  
36 Seek participation by conservation partners where appropriate, and as interests and  
37 resources permit.  
38

39 Action 5.3.1: Develop a statewide staffing plan for the commission.  
40

41 Task 5.3.1.1: Complete a workload analysis for positions not  
42 analyzed under Core Function 2.7.  
43

44 Task 5.3.1.2: Identify commission staffing needs and locations  
45 within all six IASCD divisions. Include the number of conservation districts served by

1 each field staff person. Provide direct support to conservation districts through four  
2 district regional coordinators.

3  
4 Task 5.3.1.3: Realign commission staffing structure based on the  
5 following criteria:

- 6
- 7 ➤ Workload analysis
- 8 ➤ Near-term retirement of key staff
- 9 ➤ Existing staff expertise
- 10 ➤ Local conservation district needs and priorities

11  
12 Task 5.3.1.4: A minimum of three statewide commission staffing  
13 scenarios will be developed for presentation to the commission in a public forum by the  
14 end of early FY 2010.

15  
16 Task 5.3.1.5: Develop funding proposal for commission staffing  
17 plan to present to the legislature and governor's office.

18  
19 Action 5.3.2 Develop a training program and strategies for all commission  
20 staff in conjunction with work completed under Core Function 2.7

21  
22 Task 5.3.2.1: Commission management staff will identify training  
23 needs for all commission staff annually in consultation with affected staff.

24  
25 Task 5.3.2.2: Commission management staff will prepare training  
26 and personal development plans for all commission staff annually in consultation with  
27 affected staff.

28  
29 Task 5.3.2.3: Commission management staff will develop an  
30 annual all agency training plan.

31  
32 Task 5.3.2.4: Identify all in-house and outside training and  
33 specialty consultation assets.

34  
35 Task 5.3.2.5: Develop and present a minimum of two in-house  
36 training sessions per year. As appropriate, these trainings will be open to conservation  
37 district and IASCD staff depending on available resources.

38  
39 Task 5.3.2.6: Commission management staff will conduct new  
40 employee orientation training.

41  
42 Task 5.3.2.7: Commission management staff will evaluate training  
43 via direct field supervision and employee work reviews.

44

1 Action 5.3.3: Assess and evaluate district laws to determine if individual  
2 laws should be modified to address the evolving needs of the commission and  
3 conservation districts. Engage conservation districts in the assessment and evaluation.  
4

5 Action 5.3.4: Negotiate memorandum of understanding with the ISDA to  
6 formalize operations. Idaho Code § 22-2718(1)  
7

8 Action 5.3.5: Develop standards for a commission communication  
9 program to facilitate exchange of information with and between conservation districts  
10 and other commission partners.  
11

12 Task 5.3.5.1 Implement a schedule to attend at least one board  
13 meeting per year of the 51 Idaho conservation districts and all of the 12 division meetings  
14 held each year by a member of the commission or management staff.  
15

16 Task 5.3.5.2 Each commission staff attends at least one district  
17 board meeting per quarter, unless more are required as part of project implementation.  
18

19 Action 5.3.6: Design and implement commission member orientation  
20 training protocols.  
21

22 Action 5.3.7: Design and implement conservation district supervisor and  
23 employee orientation training in cooperation with IASCD and conservation districts.  
24

25 Action 5.3.8: In coordination with IASCD and conservation districts,  
26 design and implement strategies to assist conservation districts interested in expanding  
27 their program delivery capacities.  
28

29 Action 5.3.9: Study the possible opportunities for district consolidation  
30 and initiate with interested conservation districts. Idaho Code §22-2720  
31

32 Baseline performance measure for core function #5: Assess the efficacy of each  
33 program or project developed after one-year implementation and link to survey  
34 conducted for Core Function #1 to identify stakeholder satisfaction.  
35

### 36 Factors External to Commission Control that may Affect Performance

37

38 The commission recognizes changing circumstances surrounding the State of  
39 Idaho budget and the potential for these to persist during a portion of this strategic plan.  
40

- 41 • Required budget cuts
  - 42 • Decreased program participation due to weakened economic conditions
  - 43 • Increased responsibilities without additional budget support
  - 44 • Derived effects from retirements and other vacancies not being filled
- 45  
46

Appendix A  
 TMDL Implementation Plans and Watershed Advisory Groups  
 (Source: Idaho Department of Environmental Quality web page)

Implementation Plans Needed

American Falls	Malad River
Big Willow Creek	Palouse River South Fork
Billingsly Creek	Palouse River tributaries
Clark Fork lower	Potlatch River
Goose Creek – Twin Falls	Priest River
Hangman Creek upper	Willow Creek
Little Wood River	
Lower Clearwater	

Existing Watershed Advisory Groups

Southwest:

South Fork Boise River	Lower Payette River	C.J.Strike/King Hill
Lower Boise River	Middle Snake/Succor Creek	Big Payette Lake
Cascade Reservoir	SW Native Fish	North Fork Payette
Weiser River	Wildhorse	Jordan Creek
Little Salmon River	Brownlee Reservoir	Mores Creek
Southwest Basin Native Fish		

Panhandle:

Kootenai and Moyie Rivers	St. Joe/St. Maries
Lower Clark Fork	NF Coeur d’Alene
Pend Orielle River/tributaries	Lake Pend Orielle
Upper Hangman Creek	Fish Creek
Lower West River	

Clearwater:

Cow Creek	Paradise Creek
NF Palouse River/tributaries	South Fork Clearwater River
Potlatch River	Tammany Creek
South Fork Palouse River	Winchester Lake
Cottonwood Creek (Idaho County)	Lindsay Creek
Jim Ford Creek	SF Palouse River
Lower North Fork	NF Coeur D’Alene River

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Upper Snake:

American Falls	Portneuf River and Tributaries
Blackfoot River	South Fork Snake River
Continental Divide	Lake Walcott
Henry's Fork	Willow Creek
Mid Snake	Wood River

Other Salmon:

Challis Experimental Stewardship Group  
Lemhi Tech Team

1  
2  
3  
4  
5

Appendix B  
Proposed Five-Year TMDL Review Schedule  
(Source: Idaho Department of Environmental Quality web page)

Watershed Name	HUC	Initial TMDL Done	Round #1 for 5-year Review (2010-2013)
<b>Boise Regional Office</b>			
Snake River/Payette	17050115	2004	2010
Payette/Black Canyon Reservoir	17050115	2005	2012
Bissel Creek		2003	
Brownlee Reservoir	17050201	2004	2010
Snake River Weiser Flat		2003	
Mid-Snake/Succor Creek	17050103	2004	2011
Weiser	17050124	2003	2011
King Hill/CJ Strike	17050101	2004	2012
Jordan Creek	17050108	2005	2011
Little Salmon	17060210	2005	2012
Mores Creek	17050112	2006	2013
Lake Lowell	17050114	2006	2013
Snake below Hells Canyon Dam	17060101	2004, 2007	2010
<b>Coeur d'Alene Regional Office</b>			
Lower Clark Fork	17010213	2006	2011
North Fork Coeur d'Alene	17010301	2002	2010
South Fork Coeur d'Alene	17010302	2003	2010
Priest Lake	17010215	2003	2010
St Joe River	17010304	2003	2010
Upper Kootenai	17010101	2006	2011
Lower Kootenai	17010104	2006	2011
Moyie	17010105	2006	2011
Hangman	17010306	2006	2011

Watershed Name	HUC	Initial TMDL Done	Round #1 for 5-year Review (2010-2013)
<b>Idaho Falls Regional Office</b>			
Medicine Lodge	17040215	2003	2011
Salmon River/Crooked River	17060207	2003	2011
Salmon River upper	17060201	2003	2011
Salmon River mid	17060205	2007	2012
Willow Creek	17040205	2004	2011
Teton River	17040204	2003	2011
Beaver-Camas	17040214	2004	2012
<b>Lewiston Regional Office</b>			
Paradise Creek, South Fork Palouse Palouse Tributaries	17060108	1998 2007 2005	2010
Cow Creek		2005	
Winchester Lake	17060306	1999	2011
Jim Ford Creek		1999	
Potlatch River		submitted	
Lindsay Creek		2007	
Lower Clearwater			
Lower Salmon	17060209	2007	2012
<b>Pocatello Regional Office</b>			
American Falls	17040206	2006	2011
Bear Lake/River Complex; Malad	16010201	2006	2012
	16010102		
	16010204		
	16010202		
Portneuf	17040208	2001, 2006	2010