

PORTNEUF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

July 2009

Rain, Rain, Rain..... rain is generally welcome here in this fairly dry area, but too much at one time, or in the form of hail, can wreak havoc on crops and hayland. Swan Lake and Pocatello have had flash flooding problems this year as well, leaving mud over roads and hayfields and in some cases in houses and businesses. The rainfall amounts for the month of June are impressive - Swan Lake's June average is 1.2 inches, they received 3.6 inches; Lava's average is .96, they received 4.9 inches; Pocatello's average for June is 1 inch, and they received 4 inches, although some areas received much more during the June 26 rain/hail event.



Local potato field after a June hail storm.

Photo Steve Myler, FSA

Haying schedules are off quite a bit in some areas due to the rainfall, hopefully a few dry sunny days will get everyone going again!

The Marsh Creek Watershed Project Phase 2 is off to a great start. The rain hasn't dampened enthusiasm for the seven projects that have been approved by the Board to begin. The participants are already implementing the designs and are well on their way to finishing the projects in the short two year time frame. The District has applied for another Idaho DEQ \$319 grant to continue the Marsh Creek Watershed Project, and to also include the middle Portneuf River.

If you would like more information on the Marsh Creek Projects or are interested in participating, please call Chris Banks, project coordinator, at 208-221-5681.

Bank on the best!



Lava Hot Springs
776-5656
Inkom
775-3354
Downey
897-5226
Pocatello, Yellowstone
233-0022
Pocatello, Poleline
233-1816

Ireland Bank
THERE IS A DIFFERENCE™
www.Ireland-Bank.com

Thank you to Ireland Bank for their support of the Portneuf Soil and Water Conservation District!

Portneuf Soil and Water Conservation District
1551 Baldy Ave., Ste. 2
Pocatello, ID 83201
208-237-4628

Are you interested in advertising in our bi-monthly newsletter? Our rates are \$25.00 per newsletter for a 2.250 x 2.5 ad or 6 newsletter ads for \$125.00. Call the PSWCD office for more information.

Inside This Issue

District Updates

Leafy Spurge

Black Bugs

Monitoring Program

Agency News

Workshops

All Portneuf SWCD and NRCS programs are offered on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or handicap.

Portneuf SWCD is an equal opportunity employer

www.pswcd.org

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Portneuf SWCD Board Meetings

July 15, 2009
Downey 7 pm

August 12 TBA
7 pm
Call office for location information

Other events:

August 3-8 South
Bannock Fair

August 10-15 North
Bannock Fair

LEAFY SPURGE

The Bannock County weed tour was held June 12. About 28 interested members of the County weed board, landowners, elected officials, and agency personnel attended. Although still very wet, we did get a good tour of some of the successful weed treatments going on in the county, and visited some areas of new weed infestations. Sites with leafy spurge, dyers woad, white top, henbane, and dalmation toadflax were visited.



Leafy Spurge, a perennial weed with an exceptionally long root system is still a problem in the southern and central portions of the county. It has a distinctive greenish yellow flower, and spreads by seed and creeping roots. It contains a milky latex that can produce blisters in people, cattle, and horses, and may cause blindness if rubbed into eyes. Don't handle leafy spurge without gloves. Biological controls are proving to be the most effective long term control; chemical controls can work with a lot of diligence. Goat and sheep grazing can also help control leafy spurge. See <http://idahoweedawareness.net> for more information, or call Bannock County Weed Supervisor Dave Hallinan at 234-4139.

Black Grass Bugs

Black grass bugs are causing some damage this year in many areas in the south end of the county, and in to Utah. Black grass bug is the common name for several different species of native insects that feed on introduced wheat grasses and native grass vegetation. Adults are about 1/4 inch long, blackish with bulging eyes. Damage to grasses is caused when the young black bug nymphs feed on the mesophyll cells of leaf blades, the tissue that contains the chloroplasts. Consequently, leaves appear mottled with white spots where the bugs have eaten the tissue, usually starting at the tip of the leaf, moving toward the base. Eventually the leaves may turn straw colored. Eggs hatch in spring, one generation per year. It takes about five

weeks for maturity, and adult bugs are active for about five weeks more. Eggs are laid in dry grass stems. Early haying, burning, or early spring/late summer rotational grazing can control egg hatch. Intermixing grass species can reduce damage. Well timed pesticide application targeting nymphs can be effective, but can be very expensive. If the land is enrolled in in CRP, be sure to contact FSA to discuss appropriate control measures. The University of Idaho, Utah State University, and Colorado State University Extension all have good Fact Sheets on black grass bug biology and control. See their web sites or call the District office if you would more information.



Bryce Griffiths

Using Farm Bill Programs to Conserve Riparian Areas

Riparian areas with well developed vegetation, zones near the edge of streams and draws with water, are extremely important to wildlife. Over 90% of the birds in Idaho use riparian areas at one time during the course of a year. Upland game birds need riparian areas for winter cover and food. Big game animals use riparian areas for cover and transportation routes between additional food sources and ranges.

Riparian vegetation also aids in preventing sediment from reaching streams. The reduction in sediment and shade decreases the water temperature which benefits fish populations. Riparian vegetation also helps by slowing the water flows therefore decreasing headcutting and other erosion issues.

With all of these benefits, it easy to see the importance of conserving and restoring riparian vegetation. Programs such as CP21 (Filterstrip) and CP29 (Wildlife Habitat Buffer) can be used to create a 20' to 120' buffer on each side of a stream. Annual payments on a 10-15 year contract and cost-shares for vegetation, fencing, crossings and water developments are available. Other options include using EQIP or WHIP to establish a grazing management program while still applying cost-shares for materials.

Reducing fuel costs and planting in marginal lands are a couple great advantages of using one of these programs to conserve riparian areas. By adding a riparian buffer and removing the meandering edges of fields results in straighter passes and less compaction due to turning.

If you have any questions about conserving riparian areas or any other wildlife projects please contact Brett Gullett, Southeast Region Farm Bill Coordinator at: 208-251-7138, brett.gullett@idfg.idaho.gov; or contact your local service center.

Upcoming University of Idaho Field Day

- ! University of Idaho Organic Cropping Systems Field Day
- ! Kimberly, Idaho
- ! **July 21**, 2009 9:30 am; \$10 including lunch
- ! For more information and carpooling information, call Paula at 237-4628 x 104

Rural Roots Food Safety on the Farm **Producer to Producer Workshop Series**

Lady Bird Farms, Pocatello **July 28**, 4 - 6 pm

Food Safety Basics, Harvest, Post-Harvest Handling, and Compost Management for the Small Acreage Grower. See www.ruralroots.org for registration information, or contact Paula at 237-4628 x 104.

These Producer to Producer workshops are sponsored by University of Idaho Extension, Washington State Extension, Three Rivers RC & D, and the USDA.

Agency News

SIGN-UP DEADLINE FOR 2009 CROP YEAR

The Bannock County FSA office continues to take applications for the 2009 crop year DCP Program. (Direct/Counter Cyclical Payment). The final date to complete your paper work is August 14th. Call our office for an appointment if you have not signed up yet.

The deadline to complete 2009 crop reports was June 30th; however, if you did not make it into the office by that date, you can still file a late-filed crop report. There is a fee for late filed crop reports and this fee is specific to each farm depending on the acres planted.

We continue to receive many complaints about noxious weeds on CRP contract acres. Remember, it is each contract holder's obligation to control weeds. Failure to do so can result in fines on your contract. Dave Hallinan is the Bannock County Weed Supervisor and he is always happy to help out with any questions you may have. Give him a call at 234-4139. Unauthorized grazing of CRP is another item that can bring about stiff penalties or even contract termination. Please make sure your fences are in good shape to avoid any adverse action on your contract.

As usual, if there are any changes in your farming operation, i.e., change in ownership, change of operator, sale of land, etc, please notify our office as soon as possible so we can keep your farm records up to date. Feel free to call our office anytime with any questions you may have. Our telephone number is 237-3435 and our office hours are Monday-Friday, 8am-4:30pm.

This has been the wettest spring we've had in a long, long time. Rainfall amounts will come in at over 400% of normal for Bannock County for the month of June. Hopefully, the yields for crops in the county will be above normal as well. Here's wishing each of you a very successful and productive harvest for 2009!

Steve Myler
County Executive Director
Bannock County Farm Service Agency

Bernard James (BJ) O'Doherty, Rangeland Management Specialist, NRCS, Springfield, Colorado has been selected as the **District Conservationist** in Pocatello. He will begin his new duties on July 20, 2009. BJ has NRCS experience in Montana, West Virginia and for the last five years in Colorado. We look forward to welcoming BJ to Idaho!

Board of Supervisors

Scott Henderson Chair
Kit Tillotson Vice-Chair
Dave Jackson Treasurer
John McNabb
Kevin Koester

Associates

Morgan Evans
Brad Kent
Kirk Irick
Paul Danielson
John Sigler

District Staff

Office Administrator
Janet Pacioretty

NRCS Staff

BJ O'Doherty,
District Conservationist
Ryan Clayton, Soil
Conservation Tech
Martha Nuñez-Hagius,
Engineer
Chad Swank, ACES Employee

ISCC/IASCD Staff

Justin Krajewski, Range and
Riparian Specialist
Chris Banks, Water Quality
Resource Conservationist
Flint Raben, Water Quality
Analyst

PSWCD Office:

1551 Baldy Ave., Ste. 2
Pocatello, ID 83201
208-237-4628 x111
portneufswcd@pswcd.org

Marsh Creek Monitoring Program

A key aspect of the Marsh Creek Watershed Project Phase 2 is the monitoring program that the District is initiating in cooperation with IASCD, Portneuf Watershed Partnership, Idaho State University, and Idaho State Department of Agriculture.

The purpose of Phase 2 monitoring program is threefold:

- to quantify improvements as a result of BMP implementation in the watershed; to track long-term trends at the watershed scale; and to further bracket sources and sinks in the watershed.

Best Management Practice (BMP) effectiveness monitoring will be conducted at two levels: site specific or field scale, and watershed scale.

Site specific assessments will occur above and below individual BMPs or clusters of BMPs as applicable. Sampling is conducted for Nitrate/nitrite (TN), total kjeldahl nitrogen (TKN), ammonia, ortho-phosphorous (O-Phos), total phosphorous (TP), suspended sediment concentration (SSC), and *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*). Flow data and field parameters including temperature, specific conductance, dissolved oxygen (DO), pH, and optical turbidity are collected at each monitoring event. In cooperation with ISU, data sondes (self-contained, battery-operated water quality monitoring devices) have been deployed in several locations in the Marsh Creek project area to record continuous data.

A watershed-scale assessment allows for an integrated or cumulative measure of BMP effectiveness. IASCD is incorporating data collected by the Portneuf Watershed Partnership's (PWP) continuous monitoring station located on Lower Marsh Creek to evaluate the cumulative effects of BMPs implemented in the watershed. The PWP collects temperature, specific conductance, DO, pH, and optical turbidity at a ten minute interval during ice free periods throughout the year. The Lower Marsh Creek Continuous Monitoring Station has been in operation since July 2003 and is an ongoing effort.

Collection of turbidity data will complement BMP effectiveness monitoring, and will assist in evaluation of sediment sources and sinks in the upper watershed.

This cooperative monitoring effort will allow for evaluation of the impact BMPs have on water quality in the watershed. For more information on the monitoring program, call Flint Raben at 237-4628 or contact the District office.