

West Central Highlands Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc.

West Central Highlands RC&D was established in 1991. As one of nine Councils in Idaho, we consist of 6 counties (Adams, Boise, Gem, Payette, Valley and Washington) in West Central Idaho. Our sponsors include the six counties, six conservation districts, fourteen cities and several other special purpose districts and units of local government. With two at large positions our executive committee consists of eleven individuals.

West Central Highlands RC&D is richly endowed with natural resources ranging from mineral and wood fiber to water, rangelands and scenery. These varied resources present challenges for the area's 70,406 (2010 census) citizens as they seek to wisely develop natural resources to better their economy and quality of life.

The West Central Highlands area has a myriad of opportunities for projects. Following are highlights of some of our past, present and future projects.

In 2000, WCHRCD began its partnership with the Cooperative Weed Management Areas within the six counties. Noxious weed eradication began using various herbicides, many hours of on the ground spray days and a lot of cooperation between the various weed departments, landowners and other agencies. The methods of eradication and control have changed some to include the use of grazing goats in concentrated areas. The results are positive and using a more natural method reduces the chance of impacting surface and groundwater sources.



The WCH Council took on Mores Creek Restoration. This project started with the need to correct issues brought about by past mining practices on Mores Creek and became one of the most complicated projects undertaken by WCH. Working with landowners, Trout Unlimited, the Forest Service and as partners, we improved fish habitat, water quality, reduced runoff issues and enabled Idaho City water to be safely used in the spring time.



We are especially excited about opportunities created by Master Challenge Cost Share agreements with the Payette and Boise National Forests. Each forest has committed funding to assist Coalitions with a wide range of interests to provide the Forest Service with consensus-based recommendations for prospective projects that comply with the current Forest Plan, thus speeding up the NEPA process and reducing or possibly eliminating lawsuits. Positive results would include projects with multiple benefits, including ecological restoration, economic opportunity and recreational opportunity as well as continued collaboration.

We acquired our Circle of Diamonds Tier II status early this year. We are proud to be members of this elite group and are the first Council in Idaho to receive this achievement.

West Central Highlands is looking to the future with anticipation. New mission and vision statements, more involved leadership, a new business plan and the potential to assist our communities improve their quality of life is an exciting prospect.