



# Portneuf Soil & Water Conservation District 2023 Newsletter

## Who Are We?

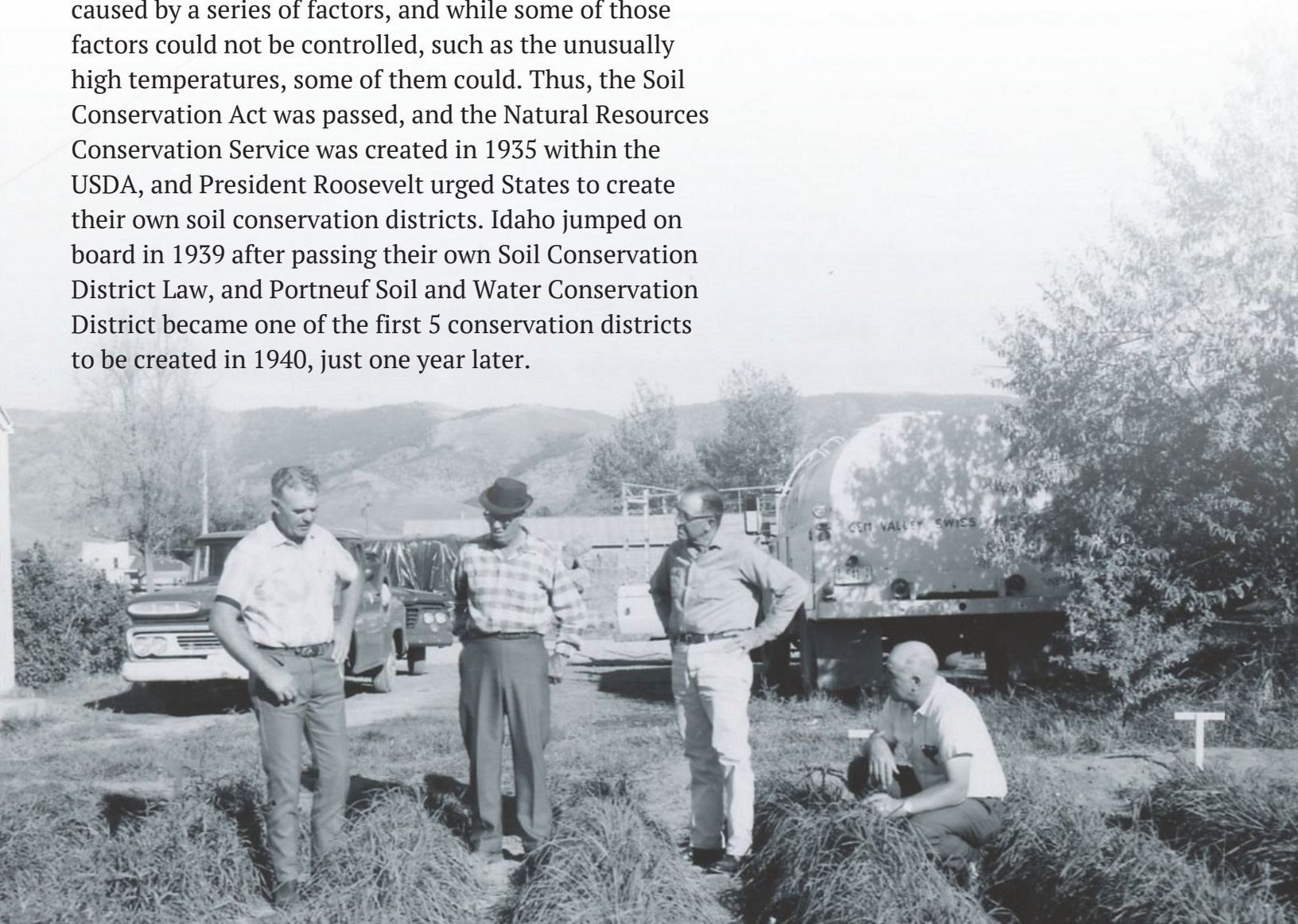
What is a Conservation District?

Where did they come from?

Conservation Districts are subgroups of state governments that were born out necessity after the Dust Bowl wreaked havoc throughout the nation in the early 1930s. The Dust Bowl or “Dirty Thirties” was a series of dust storms that lead to millions of acres of farmland being rendered useless. It was believed to be caused by a series of factors, and while some of those factors could not be controlled, such as the unusually high temperatures, some of them could. Thus, the Soil Conservation Act was passed, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service was created in 1935 within the USDA, and President Roosevelt urged States to create their own soil conservation districts. Idaho jumped on board in 1939 after passing their own Soil Conservation District Law, and Portneuf Soil and Water Conservation District became one of the first 5 conservation districts to be created in 1940, just one year later.

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# What do Conservation Districts do?

## What can Portneuf SWCD do for me?

Each conservation district is different, but generally they provide assistance to private landowners and land users to conserve, sustain, improve or enhance natural resources. Assistance comes in many forms, depending on the needs of the service area, and because these needs can change over time, conservation districts are ever changing. Portneuf Soil and Water Conservation District shares the same boundary as Bannock County where we lead local non regulatory efforts to conserve, sustain, improve, and enhance Idaho's natural resources. We do this by coordinating technical, financial, and educational assistance and through our many partnerships. In this newsletter you will find information about some of the projects we've been involved in as well as projects from some of our many partners.

## A Message From Our Chairman

The PSWCD is always looking for new soil and water saving projects. We need your help to locate these new projects. Try as we might we really have a difficult time identifying all the needs in Bannock County. When your wish is to save soil and conserve water, we are your one stop shop. Please keep in mind that these projects need not all be related to agriculture. We can help with rural as well as urban needs, from large watersheds to small acreages. Keep in mind this is not a fast fix. Sometimes it can take time to survey, fund and implement. We will do our very best to locate resources that fit your particular needs, but it may take some time. If you think this is something that can help or for more information, contact us.

## Supervisor & Staff

Kevin Koester,  
*Chairman PSWCD*

Scott Henderson,  
*Vice Chairman*

David Jackson,  
*Treasurer*

Brad Kent,  
*Supervisor*

Justin Casperson,  
*Supervisor*

Charity Staggs,  
*District Administrator*

### Ad Space Available

Contact us:

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# Looking Ahead

## Swan Lake Creek Forage Kochia Project

This project will be funded in part by the Water Quality for Agriculture program and aims to establish 5 acres of native range species and 5 acres of kochia in a bare area where Junipers were removed back in 2020. This will prevent erosion, improve water quality and forage quality. Seeding has already begun with the anticipation that the project will be completed this summer.

## Ninemile Fuels Reduction Project

The treatments of final acres are being completed on the Ninemile Fuels Reduction Project, with final closeout anticipated to be this summer. This project treated approximately 171 acres through mastication along Ninemile and Brush Creek Southeast of the City of Downey. These activities will reduce the spread of fire, restore rangelands, and increase water quantity throughout the area.

## National Association of Conservation Districts Stewardship Week

NACD's 68th Stewardship Week will be held **April 30-May 7, 2023**, with this year's theme being "One Water."



Submissions for our 2023 Poster and Speech Contests will begin February 20, 2023 and will be reviewed at the Spring and Fall Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts (IASCD) Division V meetings. Any student from kindergarten to 12th grade is eligible to participate, winners will receive a monetary prize. Please see our website or contact us for more information.

## Idaho Envirothon

The 2023 Idaho Envirothon will be held **April 24-25, 2023** in Challis this year, with the Current Issue being "Adapting to a Changing Climate." We would like to send good luck wishes to our two new local teams in Pocatello at this year's competition. The winning team will be sent to the National Competition in July. Any educators within Bannock County wishing to start their own Envirothon Team may contact us or visit the [Envirothon.org](http://Envirothon.org) website for additional information.



# Ongoing Programs



## Conservation Loan Program

Portneuf SWCD offers loans of up to \$10,000 at 2% interest for conservation projects. These loans can be used as match on larger projects with NRCS programs. Loan applicants must submit a request in writing to the Board of Supervisors, and upon approval will begin the process by completing an application.

## Waterjet Stinger Loan Program

Portneuf SWCD loans a Waterjet Stinger to Landowners and local organizations for willow planting projects.

## Sponsorships

Portneuf SWCD on occasion sponsors students and educators to attend the NACD Conservation Camp, to local FFA competitions, Envirothon teams, forestry competitions and many more conservation organizations.

## Owl Box Program

Portneuf SWCD's Owl Box Program offers barn owl boxes at a reasonable cost per box. Each box comes with mounting hardware and maintenance instructions. These boxes serve as an Eco-friendly pest control as they attract Barn Owls, which consume over 1,000 rodents within their 3-month nesting season.

### Barn Owl Box Order Form

Clip this section and mail to: PSWCD at 214 E. Center St, Suite 10, Pocatello, ID 83201

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Type: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*If please indicate if you prefer your invoice be sent by mail or email.**

**Owl Boxes are \$180 each.**

Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_ Total: \_\_\_\_\_

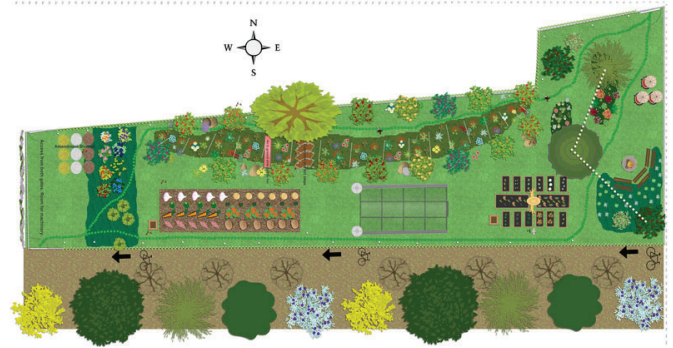
Each owl box is made by hand and may take approximately 2-6 weeks to complete. You will be notified when your box is ready.



# McCammmon's Small Space Growing Big Ideas

McCammmon's School Garden was envisioned by teachers years ago and fenced off to become an outdoor learning and garden space, but faced one giant problem, a lack of access to water. It remained mostly vacant until the McCammmon Action Council (MAC) 501c3 Nonprofit got involved and spread word to the community. Soon their voice reached a community member, who knew of a line that was being installed nearby, and suggested the company install another line to the garden. Just like that, in the spring of 2022, a water line was installed, and a beautiful new community garden was born.

Together, community volunteers got to work installing an irrigation system, planting fruit trees, berries and numerous crops. They built raised beds, tilled and amended a 70x20 garden space, and installed a donated shed for tool storage. All of this was accomplished using absolutely zero chemicals, herbicides, GMO's, or pesticides. This garden has quickly become a place where new friendships are created during its many community and educational events, and has already produced countless pounds of food.



“All of a sudden, we all had something in common we cared about. Seeing so many different people of all ages and walks of life coming together for the common good, laughing, sharing stories, listening to music, and doing a hard day's work as a team is something I don't think any of us will forget.” Says Kassadi Dunn. The goals of this garden include creating a beautiful outdoor learning space, new community traditions, clean nutrient dense food, and teaching children lifelong gardening skills strengthening their resiliency. Food that is produced will be made available to the community, and income generated by the garden will be used by the school to continue and grow their programs. The plan for next spring is to install more irrigation and plant more fruit trees, berries, and perennials.

The McCammmon Action Council leads the project with permission from the school district and is made up of people who just love McCammmon. Anyone can attend monthly meetings to share ideas and help decide where donations will be spent.

If you interested in donating or volunteering for this project, contact Kassadi Dunn [dunnkass@isu.edu](mailto:dunnkass@isu.edu) 208-600-7449 or Drew Dunn [drewdunn79@gmail.com](mailto:drewdunn79@gmail.com) 208-690-9936. MAC ensures that all donations get deposited into the nonprofit account.