

**Idaho RC&D Association Fall Meeting
November 10-11, 2001**

Saturday, November 10, 2001

Kent Rudeen, IRCDA President opened the meeting at 10:00 am and welcomed the group.

Introductions were made.

Kent Rudeen, President, IRCDA, Three Rivers RC&D Council, American Falls

Gary Pfiefler, Assistant State Conservationist/RC&D Program Manager, NRCS, Boise

Kathy Morter, Three Rivers RC&D, Pocatello

Scott Ferguson, Bear River RC&D, Logan, Utah

Gerald Jeppesen, High Country RC&D, Rexburg

Joe Twitchell, Southwest Idaho RC&D, Mountain Home

Jack Shafer, West Central Highlands RC&D, Indian Valley

Paul Calverley, Southwest Idaho RC&D, Meridian

Bill Moore, RC&D Coordinator, Southwest RC&D, Meridian

Kim Golden, RC&D Coordinator, Panhandle Lakes RC&D, Coeur d'Alene

George Bloomsburg (and wife), Panhandle Lakes RC&D, Coeur d'Alene

Chuck Doty, Clearwater RC&D, Kamiah

Dan Pierce, RC&D Coordinator, Clearwater RC&D, Moscow

Ken Roberts, West Central Highlands RC&D, Payette

Steve Smart, RC&D Coordinator, High Country RC&D, Rexburg

Bob Bolte, Wood River RC&D, Gooding

Julie Thomas, RC&D Coordinator, Mid-Snake RC&D, Twin Falls

Russ Manwaring, RC&D Coordinator, West Central Highlands, Emmett

Buck Ward, Wood River RC&D, Richfield

R. E. Cope, County Commissioner from Lemhi County

Richard Sims, State Conservationist, NRCS, Boise

Sue Ellis, Staff Assistant, NRCS, Boise, (recorder)

Kent Rudeen welcomed Gary Pfiefler, Assistant State Conservationist (Field Operations). Gary is now the NRCS RC&D Program Manager. Bill Moore has been serving as Acting RC&D Program Manager. This change became effective October 1, 2001.

Gary addressed the group by saying he is glad to be part of the RC&D program and is looking forward to working with the councils and coordinators. He stated that he has a personal goal of getting out to each and every council to attend one of their council meetings. Gary stated that he has had a lot of experience with the RC&D program, and that he is here to listen and learn.

Gary stated that the annual plans should be completed and sent to him at the state office. Gary will review and approve the plans. Gary also mentioned that plans of work that are five years old should be updated.

Russ Manwaring inquired about the status of the budget. Gary stated that there is a small increase.

“IRCDA Where are we? Where are we going?”

Gerald Jeppesen led this discussion. The objective of which was to get feedback from Council members about their expectations and desires of the IRCDA organization and officers. Gerald gave an overview of the RC&D structure – national, regional and state. The following comments are from the brainstorming session on the above named discussion. Comments are grouped together by national, regional, state (IRCDA), local, NRCS, and Action.

National RC&D Association

- 1.) The national organization does a lot of things for us at the state level.
- 2.) They lobby for money, etc.
- 3.) Be involved in national and regional organizations
- 4.) Promote national and regional issues
- 5.) Communicate with Senators and Congressmen

IRCDA

Gerald ask what the RC&D Council Chairs wants from IRCDA?

- 1.) Share information
 - 2.) Organize meetings as an avenue to let RC&Ds know what is happening at national and local level
 - 3.) Inform RC&Ds what they can do to do make an impact, ways to become more visible.
 - 4.) RC&D needs to be a household word in the rural community–this is a public relations job for IRCDA
 - 5.) RC&D story being missed - we’re unknown
 - 6.) Help us with ways to influence the right people at the state and national level
 - 7.) IRCDA could work toward establishing a revolving loan fund
 - 8.) Become more active with state and local agencies (i.e., Dept of Commerce, Assn of Cities and Assn of Counties)
 - 9.) Recognize issues that affect the state as a whole and work together in a coordinated way (Fire education, urban interface).
 - 10.) Take on statewide projects
(NOTE: There was discussion on this.) Julie gave examples of conservation programs/projects. There are certain projects that IRCDA could take the lead on and then individual councils lead at the local level. Another example: The Farmland Preservation workshops. It is important for IRCDA endorsement of statewide projects and then involvement at the local level.
- 1.) IRCDA’s responsibility should be to disseminate information to other state level organizations.
 - 2.) Through IRCDA, assign local chairs to sit on different organizations (i.e., Chamber of Commerce, IRP, etc.). RC&D Coordinators should also participate to share resources and ideas - develop personal relationships with these types of organizations.
 - 3.) Endorsements are important from IRCDA.
 - 4.) IRCDA needs to be proactive
 - 5.) IRCDA needs to be involved in statewide activities and projects. Serve as a clearinghouse; help to decide on project/programs.
 - 6.) There is power in numbers-if IRCDA is a strong organization, and we have done our job, when Kent Rudeen (or IRCDA representation) contacts legislators (i.e., Senator Craig), the discussion/outcome on RC&D issues is productive.
 - 7.) Strong IRCDA Leadership is important and must be well informed on issues.

- 8.) Does IRCDA need to provide training to legislators to help them learn who we are?
- 9.) Contact with state local to inform RC&Ds of pending legislation.

IRCDA (continued)

- 10.) IRCDA needs to develop or strengthen the partnership with IASCD
- 11.) We need additional staff support to continue programs/projects
- 12.) People give money to people they know
- 13.) Strong leadership is recognized by partnership in Idaho
- 14.) Involve key people in RC&D councils

Local RC&D Councils

What do you (the Councils) want IRCDA to do for you? What do the individual councils need?

- a. All leadership should attend meetings
 - b. Help obtain funding
 - c. Leadership (be there, and be involved)
 - d. Information and introductions (list of people - contacts)
 - e. Coordinate with IASCD - capacity building training (include Councils)
 - f. Leadership to look for opportunities
 - g. Serve as mechanism to deliver programs
 - h. Disseminate information
 - i. Attend Council meetings - share information
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- 1.) Individual RC&D Councils need a strong relationship with congressman and staff. This can be accomplished by more “face time”.
 - 2.) IRCDA energy in 1- strengthens the association - President feels comfortable in doing this.
 - 3.) Local RC&DS need to support IRCDA
 - 4.) Key county commissioners and state representatives
 - 5.) Get involved with IAC, AIC, IASCD, IRP
 - 6.) People on Councils need to be strong and willing to get out and meet people, it is helpful for them to know the right people, they need to be salespeople, enthusiastic, known and well-informed. Councils need to recruit these types of people. Change is good - new folks with new ideas.

NRCS

(How can NRCS help us/What do we expect from NRCS?)

- 1.) It was suggested the Gary Pfielfe, as Program Manager contact The Advantage Club (Boise-based). Gary will look into this.
- 2.) The relationship between Gary Pfielfe (NRCS) and Kent Rudeen (IRCDA) is very important.
- 3.) An idea of an IRCDA Newsletter in cooperation with NRCS. It was suggested that such a newsletter be part of the Idaho NRCS Current Developments (a monthly informational publication sent to all NRCS employees and districts. An IRCDA newsletter would need to be sent to all council chairs and board members and electronically to the extent possible.
- 4.) Another idea was to post a one-page newsletter on the IRCDA website
- 5.) It is important for RC&D Councils to be informed of upcoming meetings that would be of importance.
- 6.) Jack Shaffer suggested including RC&D information in the Soil Conservation District newsletters.
- 7.) Gary Pfielfe stated NRCS can assist through better communication.

- 8.) Rich Sims stated that NRCS assists by allowing flexibility for councils (i.e., - how money is spent, organizational structures, etc.)
- 9.) Jack Shafer stated there is a need for full-time secretaries from NRCS.

What do or what can we do with all this information?

It was decided that IRCDA would develop a one-year plan and a five-year plan. Once developed, these plans will be distributed to coordinators.

IRCDA needs a mission statement and a vision statement.

Action: Gerald ask that each council come up with a **IRCDA mission statement** to be discussed at Sunday's portion of this meeting.

Hal Swenson, Idaho NRCS Assistant State Soil Scientist discussed the Farmland Protection Program (FPP). (2 fact sheets)

Hal described the FPP, purpose, eligibility, funding, etc. The purpose of this program is to keep land in agriculture and to allow producers to continue to farm or ranch on the land. This voluntary program offers financial incentives to producers who choose to keep their land in agriculture production rather than be developed for urban uses. This program helps protect farmland from residential and commercial development by offering matching funds to state, tribal, and local governments to purchase agricultural easements on productive farmland. Easements are for a minimum of 30 years or may be perpetual.

The question was asked, "What if the 3rd party defaults (i.e., the land trust, local sponsor). Hal is not sure of the answer. Hal will, however, provide the answer to Gerald Jeppesen.

NOTE: 11/26/2001 – Hal's response: A line of succession is established as part of the easement as to where the easement will be transferred in the event that the original holder is no longer capable of holding the easement. Possible successors may include the state, county, soil conservation district, RC&D council, etc. In the event that no successor is available to hold the easement, then the easement reverts to NRCS who would attempt to find a 3rd party to hold the easement.

It was stated that RC&D Councils are potential 3rd party sponsors.

The question was asked if the state of Idaho supports the FPP. Rich Sims, NRCS State Conservationist responded to this question. Rich stated that the Idaho Food Producers are in the process of developing a strategic plan for farmland protection. Idaho State Department of Agriculture is a member of food producers and the number 1 recommendation is to ask legislators for one additional staff (FTE) to present examples of FPP with local counties. Rich stated that this position is an unfunded position (it would need to be funded by grants). Rich stated the that the proposed House Farm Bill includes \$50 million per year for five years for the FPP and the proposed Senate Farm Bill includes \$65 million per year for five years for the FPP. It is important to have local involvement to develop a plan. Such a plan will then bring the federal funding into the State. Ada, Canyon and Blaine counties are potential counties for this program. Idaho has 9-14 months to get the plan written. It is extremely important to have the plan written so once the new Farm Bill is in place, the program can be fully implemented. Components of a good plan include evidence of

pressure of urban sprawl, high land prices, prime farmland, good water rights, infrastructure is available, and other properties sold in the area.

Farmland Protection Program (FPP) (continued)

Paul Calverley mentioned that there would be a presentation on farmland protection as part of the Urban/RC&D Committee meeting at the IASCD Conference. And, an IASCD resolution will be presented at the Conference this week regarding the FPP.

For other questions regarding the FPP program, Hal Swenson's telephone number is (208) 378-5728. Please feel free to contact Hal.

Jody Handly, Project Leader with the Student Conservation Association (SCA)/Fire

Education Corps described the SCA and the Fire Education Corps. Website: www.sca-inc.org

The SCA's Fire Education Corps is helping property owners in Idaho and Nevada create defensible space around their homes and properties and reduce their risk of being victimized by wildfires.

This program is made possible through a major grant from the Idaho Department of Lands, and co-sponsored by the USFS, BLM, RC&Ds and Home Depot. Funding for the Fire Education Corps came from Fire Plan funding. The SCA/Fire Education Corps worked with five councils this past year: Panhandle Lanes, West Central Highlands, Southwest Idaho, Three Rivers, and High Country. Staff and interns from the SCA/Fire Education Corps made a presentation on the demo project in Custer and Lemhi counties. The presentation showed the partner involvement in the project, which included High Country RC&D, homeowners, BLM, county officials, and rural fire departments.

Rick Covington, Director of Regional SCA Programs from California spoke briefly on the SCA/Fire Education Corps project. He was involved with the RC&Ds to negotiate agreements. He commended the RC&D coordinators for their efforts and assistance with SCA-Fire Education Corps.

IRCD A Partnership Award presentation

The IRCD A Partnership Award was given to Danny Ebert, partnership coordinator for region 4 of the US Forest Service. The award, voted by Idaho RC&D coordinators, recognized Danny's role in doing the initial groundwork and application for the SCA Fire Education Corps project. The award plaque inscription reads: "In appreciation for your leadership and assistance". The award was received by Russ Manwaring, who worked closely with Danny and will pass it on to him.

RC&D Computer Needs

David Hoover, NRCS State Soil Scientist and IT Program Manager discussed the current status of NRCS computers, the common computing environment, and the computer needs of the RC&Ds. Dave stated that computer equipment in the field offices is changing. The goal is to have a fully connected system with NRCS, Farm Service Agency, and Rural Development connected to a central computer. This will allow agency personnel to share information more efficiently. To accomplish this, however, there are security issues involved. All existing NRCS and RC&D computers will be either be replaced with new, fully compatible computers or will be upgraded to a new standard. Computers with modems will not be able to connect to this new system (most RC&D computers currently have modems). In addition, computers with non-approved software programs will not be able to connect to the new system. RC&D computers can continue to be used for non-USDA/NRCS approved software programs; they just can't be connected to the USDA network.

RC&D Computer Needs (continued)

In summary there are two issues on the subject:

- 1.) Computers with modems (which RC&D computers currently have) cannot be connected to the USDA network - due to security issues.
- 2.) Only approved software can be installed on USDA NRCS computers

Dave stated that there is a process to get software approved. The process sometimes takes six-eight months. NRCS needs to work with RC&D's to identify and prioritize software that can be approved for use on the USDA network.

RC&Ds, too, may want to maintain their own lines for Internet usage or use Internet service providers (ISP) that offer Web sites for sending and receiving e-mail. That way, a RC&D could access their mail through their ISP and through the USDA network and still maintain a non-USDA imprint on their email (this was the original intent of the RC&D).

Idaho RC&D Success Stories—Outstanding Project Award

The following success stories were shared by each RC&D council as competition for the IRCDA Outstanding Project Award.

RC&D	Success Story/Project
High Country	Team Salmon-SCA-Fire Education Corps and Demo Project-Gibbonsville
Three Rivers	Fort Hall Farm (Potato) Demonstration Project
W. Central Highlands	Gem Island Recreation Center Project
Southwest Idaho	Atlanta, Idaho - Community Water Facility-Trail Creek Fire
Panhandle Lakes	Rathdrum Mountain Project
Wood River	Funder's Fair
Bear River	Utah-Idaho Cooperative Weed Management Area Project
Clearwater-Mid-Snake-	NezPerce County Risk Assessment/Mitigation Plan
	Jerome Hybrid Poplars

Each RC&D Council was allowed one vote for their favorite project. The Outstanding Project Award went to the winner, High Country RC&D, for their Team Salmon-SCA Fire Education Corps and Gibbonsville Demo Project.

Action: It was agreed that the statewide SCA-Fire Education Corps program—in recognition of the 5 RC&D's which hosted the program last year--would be forwarded on as Idaho's candidate for the Western RC&D Association's Outstanding Project Award. Kent will work with Paula and Bill on this.

The meeting was adjourned for the day.

/s/ Sue Ellis
Staff Assistant, NRCS

Sunday, November 11, 2001 - Business Meeting

Attending:

Kathy Morter	Three Rivers RC&D Coordinator
Gerald Jeppeson	High Country RC&D Council
Dan Pierce	Clearwater RC&D Coordinator
Charles Doty	Clearwater RC&D Council
Gary Pfiefler	NRCS Boise
Steve Smart	High Country RC&D Coordinator
Kim Golden	Panhandle Lakes RC&D Coordinator
George Bloomsburg	Panhandle Lakes RC&D Council
Paul Calverley	Southwest Idaho RC&D Council
Steve Schuyler	NRCS, Rupert
Bob Rodman	Wood River RC&D Council
Don Dixon	Senator Mike Crapo staff
Bob Bolte	Wood River RC&D Council
Buck Ward	Wood River RC&D Council
Ken Roberts	West Central Highlands RC&D Council
Joe Twitchell	Southwest Idaho RC&D Council
Bill Moore	Southwest RC&D Coordinator
Jack Shaffer	West Central Highlands RC&D Council
Julie Thomas	Mid-Snake RC&D Coordinator
Kent Rudeen	Three Rivers RC&D Council
Russ Manwaring	West Central Highlands RC&D Coordinator

President's opening remarks: Kent Rudeen

Kent opened the meeting at 1:00 and welcomed everyone.

1. No significant correspondence has been received.
2. The Western RC&D Conference in Butte Montana is coming up; look for the announcement in your mail. Kent will ensure we get the SCA Fire Education Corps statewide project submitted to Western as Idaho's submittal.

Approval of Minutes of March IRCDA meeting

Jack Shaffer moved we approve the minutes as presented; Paul Calverley seconded.

Unanimous approval. A clarification to Action #5 was offered by Jack Shaffer; he suggested it mean that the financial review happen with members who are in attendance at that time. Nobody disagreed.

Treasurer's Report: Gerald Jeppeson

The bank statements have still been going to Ray. Gerry just had the address changed so they will now be mailed to him. He set up the account so that business can now be accomplished on-line.

To date, our checking account balance stands at \$6755.94 with a few minor checks to be deposited still. Sue Ellis reported that our motel expenses for this conference come to about \$1000, with registration totaling about \$950. Kent estimated less than \$200 for award plaques and miscellaneous expenses.

2002 Budget Decisions: What do we want to do with our balance?

The following suggestions were made:

- Travel expenses for IRCDA executive committee members
- Permanent IRCDA display board
- Return it to Councils
- Convert to CD until we decide what we want
- Allocate to approved Council projects
- Guest travel
- IRCDA logo

Buck Ward moved and Bob Rodman seconded that we authorize Kent to spend up to \$1000 for an IRCDA display board to be ready for the Western RC&D Conference in January. Unanimous approval.

Paul Calverley stated that he would be going to Washington DC for the NRCDA meeting and asked if there were any expenses the Council wanted to approve. **Buck Ward moved and Jack Shaffer seconded that Paul invite either Joe Cantu or Bobbie Jeancourt to our summer IRCDA meeting and that we would pay for travel expenses (which were estimated at \$500). Unanimous approval.**

Buck Ward moved and Jack Shaffer seconded that we authorize (in addition to the above decisions) the following expenditures and estimated amounts. Unanimous approval.

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| • Travel for IRCDA execs | \$2000 |
| • Guest travel | \$500 |
| • IRCDA logo | \$100 |
| • CD | \$3000 |

Summer IRCDA Meeting

Several location possibilities were discussed. Dan Pierce will check with Harry Lee on availability and costs for a U of I facility in McCall. Bob Rodman will check on availability in Stanley. Both will get back to Kent with information. Kent will follow-up with the appropriate coordinator to plan for agenda and logistics. Preferred dates are the weeks of July 15th or July 22nd; meeting will be 3 days.

Statewide Project Proposal—Russ Manwaring

Russ reviewed a grant proposal request forwarded onto him by Danny Ebert, Region 4 Partnership Coordinator for the Forest Service, from the National Network of Forest Practitioners. Danny and Russ are proposing that the IRCDA apply for \$15,000 to design and conduct Firewise workshops for community members in nine Idaho communities (one per RC&D area). Dick Gardner, recent executive director of Idaho Rural Partnership, has said he would be interested in being considered. **Buck Ward moved and Joe Twitchell seconded that we authorize Russ to work with Danny to complete the application. Unanimous approval.** Russ will email his draft to Kent for review and approval.

Update from Senator Mike Crapo—Don Dixon

The House has the Farm Bill now. The Senate may wait until 2002 to introduce it. The first hearing on the Senate Agriculture bill was in June; they are still hoping to have it out by Thanksgiving. It may move away from traditional commodity and loan programs to emphasize a risk management policy.

There being no further business at 2:30, Buck Ward moved and Jack Shaffer seconded that we adjourn. Unanimous.

/s/ Kathy Morter
Three Rivers RC&D Coordinator