



# RC&D MOVING TOWARD A BRIGHTER TOMORROW





Southwest Idaho  
Resource Conservation  
And Development

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# Southwest Idaho Resource Conservation And Development

Resource conservation and development, better known as RC&D, is a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) program, administered by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and supported by other USDA agencies. It is initiated and directed at the local level by representatives from communities, towns, units of government at all levels, and grassroots organizations.

The program provides a process for individuals, communities, and the many levels of government to cooperate in their efforts to seek out and solve problems for the benefit of everyone in the area. The key to success of RC&D is the combination of local leadership and a close working relationship with communities and government to cooperatively support and achieve local goals. The objective is to improve the natural resources and quality of life throughout rural America.

Traditionally, RC&D councils target natural resources issues to work on. In recent years, however, the need for communities to balance use of natural resources with jobs and quality of life has resulted in new area strategies that focus on overall community sustainability. The RC&D councils have broad authority to seek help from the best qualified sources to implement action measures. They obtain both financial and technical assistance from the private sector, corporations, foundations, and all levels of government.



**Background:** The RC&D was initiated in 1962 to help people care for and protect their natural resources to improve an area's economy, environment, and living standards. The program provides a way for local residents to work together and plan how they can actively solve environmental, economic, and social problems facing their communities. Today, the program continues to successfully deliver coordinated resource conservation and rural development assistance.



RC&D and YOU  
building a better  
Tomorrow.

# Actions of the RC&D

## RC&D activities fit into four different categories:

- *Land Conservation.* Protects the resource base and finds the best ways to use it.
- *Community Development.* Improves economic and community development in rural areas.
- *Water management.* Helps local people conserve, use and improve the quality and quantity of available water.
- *Environmental enhancement.* Improves the environment.



## Council:

The RC&D council is the governing body consisting of representatives of all RC&D sponsors which directs the program at the local level. They listen to and represent the views of citizens, set priorities, provide input for development of an area plan, and evaluate the effectiveness of results. Local County Boards of Commissioners, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Indian Tribal governments, local non-profit organizations and cities sponsor the Southwest Idaho RC&D Council in each county. Sponsors are

representatives to serve on the council to represent their interests. Sponsors provide input to the Council's actions through their representatives.

Interested community members are also invited to participate as at-large Council members. Potential sponsors include the shoshone/Paiute Tribes; all county commissions; incorporated cities and towns; Soil and Water Conservation Districts; and non-profit organizations. RC&D counsel representatives are volunteers who want a better life for themselves, their children, and future generations. Participating in the RC&D allows people to achieve common goals and make these desires a reality.

# Who is Involved With the Council?

- **Tribal Governments**

Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation

- **County Commissioners**

Ada County Commissioners  
Elmore County Commissioners  
Canyon County Commissioners  
Owyhee County Commissioners

- **Soil Conservation Districts**

Ada SCD  
Balanced Rock SCD  
Bruneau River SCD  
Canyon SCD  
Elmore SWCD  
Owyhee SCD

- **Others**

Ada county highway district  
Homedale American Legion  
Meridian Senior Citizens  
Pine Senior Citizens  
Star Senior Citizens

- **Incorporated Cities**

Boise	Grand View	Melba	Notus
Caldwell	GreenLeaf	Meridian	Parma
Eagle	Homedale	Middleton	Wilder
Garden City	Kuna	Mountain Home	
Glenns Ferry	Marsing	Nampa	

## The Councils Roles and Efficiencies Based on its 501 (c) (3) status

- Applying for and administering grants
- Raising funds for projects through tax-deductible charitable contributions from people and groups interested in seeing the project succeed
- Raising money to assist partners through tax-exempt income-producing ventures



## Roles of the RC&D

- Understanding the needs of partners and where to access the resources needed to meet these goals
- Coordinating technical assistance, Assisting with grant searches, writing and administration
- Acting as fiscal agent for grant funding
- Helping organize events
- Conducting informational campaigns, tours and educational events
- Conducting research
- Coordinating mailings, and facilitating meetings

# Importance of Wildfire Danger Rating Signs In Idaho

Wildland Urban Interface Fire Education Specialists assist in developing regionally specific wildfire education materials and assemble these materials in trunks that are used throughout southwest Idaho. The materials and supplies in these trunks help support the educational curriculum so that wildfire education can be taught in schools, libraries or any other venue in the area. These trunks are a part of the ongoing effort at the Park that includes sign development, and the hope of integrating wildland fire into their educational program. This will also provide assistance to rural fire districts in the area by providing wildfire hazard rating signs they can use to educate the public on the current conditions and support their efforts in conducting Red Zone surveys by supplying the software needed.



The Southwest Idaho RC&D has been involved in the fire prevention efforts in Southwest Idaho since 2000. The RC&D has been involved in wildfire education through Red Zone surveys, Student Conservation Association door to door inventories, providing information to libraries and in doing on the ground hazardous fuels reduction projects and demonstrations.



Wildfire danger rating signs are posted at the entrances of most national forests to indicate the level of fire danger possible that day due to the current conditions. These signs are a convenient way for visitors to acknowledge and understand the level of potential fire danger before entering the forest. Along with heightened awareness of the forests current susceptibility visitors also recognize the importance of practicing fire safety techniques.



# Duck Valley Arbor Day 2010

## The Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation

- Shoshone-Paiute Tribes Fish, Wildlife and Parks have put on the annual Arbor Day Celebration for over 10 years. The department conducts this event as part of their public outreach program to emphasize the importance of trees and to promote the planting of trees across the reservation.
- Tree seedlings were distributed to community members along with planting instructions to help enhance the landscape and provide shade and wind protection.
- The Southwest Idaho RC&D helped the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation by providing and evaluating financial and technical needs, as well as supplying seedlings for distribution and obtaining the services of the community forester to demonstrate how to properly plant and trim trees.



(Fish being supplied to the local water supply)

- The Southwest RC&D has played an active role in enabling community development and environmental awareness with the Duck Valley Arbor Day celebration.
  - Along with tree planting and maintenance education, the RC&D played an active role in helping ensure the health of the local water resources and fish population.
- The Duck Valley Indian Reservation is a beautiful environment displaying some of nature's most beautiful attributes.

# Who Are the Shoshone-Paiute

The Tribes once freely occupied the land of their forefathers and foremothers in the tri-state area of what are now Idaho, Nevada, and Oregon. Descendents of the Western Shoshone and the Northern Paiute occupy the Duck Valley Indian Reservation of Idaho and Nevada. Various bands of the two closely related tribes have jointly utilized the area from time immemorial. The Shoshone and Paiute united at Duck Valley under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 and formed a tribal government through a Constitution and Bylaws which was adopted in 1936.

[www.shopaitribes.org](http://www.shopaitribes.org)



Farming and Ranching Valley and is reflected in the lands. The Duck Valley Reservation is 289,819 acres held in trust by the United States Government for the use and occupancy of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes. Included in the total acreage of the Reservation is 22,231 acres of Wetlands.

Wildhorse Reservoir was constructed in 1936 for the Duck Valley Irrigation Project. Tribal membership is over 2000 with approximately 1700 living on the reservation. The Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of Duck Valley continue to exist within the original territories of their ancestors.

[www.shopaitribes.org](http://www.shopaitribes.org)

For more information please visit [www.shopaitribes.org](http://www.shopaitribes.org)

are still mainstays for Duck Valley. The 12,000 acres of subjugated reservation is composed of land owned by the United States Government for the occupancy of the Shoshone-Paiute



The Duck Valley location in Idaho has some of the most breath taking views in all of the Northwest. Home to the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes, Duck Valley has jaw dropping canyons with a majestic flowing river,



vivid green forest and mountainous rolling hills. Nature is at it's best in the Duck Valley location and is one of few areas where the true beauty of nature can be be appreciated to its fullest.

# RC&D Wood Duck & Canada Goose Habitat Creation In Idaho

A group of a dozen volunteers worked on creating wood duck boxes and goose nests on the South Fork of the Boise River, near Mountain Home, below the Anderson Dam. Gary Pendergraft who lives in the area saw the need for the nests and boxes on the South Fork after he saw the success that the nests and boxes on the Snake River had on the ducks and geese. The Southwest Idaho RC&D partnered with the Idaho Fish and Game auxiliary to install eleven goose nests and the south fork of the Boise helped to bring new habitat and geese community while promoting the growth of the local environment. Through this project enhanced and restored 5,000 acres of ecosystems while protecting individual land rights and unique, cultural and historical land uses.



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Along with successes of the project is the RC&D's commitment to help increase levels of protection to quality fish and wildlife habitats on 3,000 acres per year for the next five years. These natural habitats are an important part of Idaho's unique beauty and the Southwest Idaho RC&D is committed to insuring it's safety by working with respected sponsors. 90% of the nests created on the Snake River were in use through 2010. The nests can increase the survival rate of a brood by up to 70%. Because the nest is so high off the ground it makes it



harder for predators to steal the eggs increasing the likelihood that more of the ducklings and goslings will reach maturity. The ducklings and goslings play a vital role in the sustainability of the natural flow of the Idaho wild life environment and can continue to do so because of the hard work and dedication of the RC&D and it's resources. This project could not have been completed successfully without the help and support of the fifteen volunteers eager to help and create a more beautiful Idaho.



# The Wood Duck In Idaho

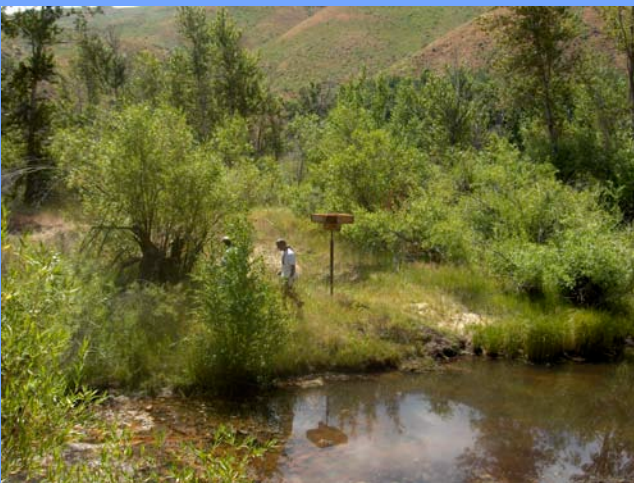
**Size:** 10-21" (43-52 cm). Male is unmistakable, brightly colored with a long, swept-back crest. Neatly striped faced pattern of green, white and dark purple. Throat and breast chestnut. Bold, white, vertical line separating chestnut breast from the buff to the flanks and bark brown wings and back. Females dark above and lighter brown below. Distinct white eye patch. In flight: stocky build, white belly, dusky wings and long, square tail.



**Behaviors-** Breeds from southern British Columbia and Alberta, south to central California and northern Idaho, and throughout most of eastern U.S. and adjacent southern Canada. Winters mostly on Pacific Coast and interior California, north to Kansas, southern Iowa, Ohio Valley, and New England.

**Habitat:** In Idaho, occupies wooded streams, flooded marshes, and lake margins. Winters on both freshwater and brackish marshes, ponds, streams, and estuaries.

**Ecology:** Builds nest in tree cavity, or may sometimes use cavity left by other species. Forages in shallow water. In **Idaho**, species has adapted well to **nest boxes** (which enhance local populations), is largely absent from southern Idaho (where suitable habitat is lacking), but occurs commonly in northern Idaho during nesting season and migration.

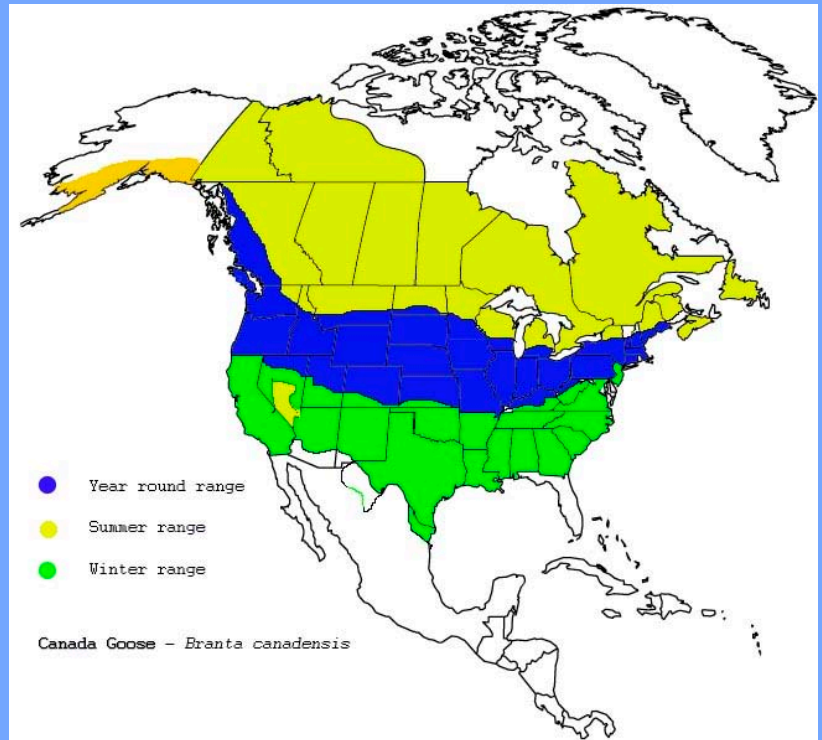


**RC&D Involvement:** The RC&D invested 160 man hours to build and install Wood Duck and Goose nests along the South Fork of the Boise River to increase the survival of Goose and Wood Duck population. Partnered with Idaho Fish and Game to help restore or protect 5,000 acres of ecosystem.

# Canadian Geese in Idaho

This species is native to North America. It breeds in Canada and the Northern United States in a variety of habitats. Its nest is usually located in an elevated area near water such as streams, lakes, ponds and sometimes on a beaver lodge. Its eggs are laid in a shallow depression lined with plant material and down. The Great Lakes Region maintains a very large population of Canada Geese.

By the early 20th century, over-hunting and loss of habitat in the late 19th century and early 20th century had resulted in a serious decline in the numbers of this bird in its native range. The Giant Canada Goose subspecies was believed to be extinct in the 1950s until, in 1962, a small flock was discovered



In recent years, Canada Geese populations in some areas have grown substantially, so much so that many consider them pests (for their droppings, the bacteria in their droppings, noise and confrontational behavior). This problem is partially due to the removal of natural predators and an abundance of safe, man-made bodies of water (such as on golf courses, public parks and beaches, and in planned communities).

They nest in central and southern British Columbia, northwestern Alberta, northern and southwestern Idaho, western Montana, northwestern Nevada, northern California, and throughout Washington and Oregon. A large portion of the population is nonmigratory, although some groups do make annual migrations between established breeding and wintering areas. Through numerous management programs, such as artificial nesting structures and transplant projects, Pacific population of western Canada geese have expanded their historic distribution significantly. In Idaho the Canadian Goose is widely known and identified as such, and plays an important role in the natural beauty and habitat of the land.



# Idaho-Oregon Snake River Water Trail

The Idaho Oregon Snake River Water Trail is a 206 mile water trail along the Snake River in Southwest Idaho and Eastern Oregon currently being developed by the Snake River Water Trail Coalition for environmental improvement and for the people to explore and appreciate. The 206 mile water trail offers citizens the experience to navigate by a relaxing float or by an exhilarating power boat. The encompassing water trail begins at Three Island Crossing State Park in Glenns Ferry, Idaho, and ends at Farewell Bend State Park in Huntington, Oregon.



The Idaho Oregon Snake River Water Trail offers sensational fishing, wildlife viewing, archaeological and geological interpretations and diverse evidence of the Euro-American settlement of Southern Idaho and Eastern Oregon. The water trail winds through the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area, The Guffey Butte-Black Butte Archaeological District, and past 101 islands maintained and managed for for wildlife by Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge.

## Recreation Lands/Public Access along the Snake River

- Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area
- Idaho Power recreation sites
- Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge
- Fort Boise Fish & Wildlife Management Area
- Celebration Park (Canyon County)
- Bruneau Dunes State Park (ID)
- Farewell Bend State Park (OR)
- As well as other enjoyable sites



# Who is Involved in The Development of The Idaho-Oregon Snake River Water Trail?

The Southwest Idaho RC&D and Canyon County Parks, Recreation and Waterways have helped develop and lead the project to its current state and will continue to until completion. The RC&D has worked hard to promote the water trail as a valuable , sensitive resource for recreation, water safety, education, and stewardship.

As well as:

- Identifying access and opportunities for boaters such as, portages, launches, campsites and available services.
- Promote respect for private property along the water trail to minimize disruption and disturbance.
- Encourage partnerships between government agencies, businesses, non-profit organizations and the public.
- Identify and pursue ways the water trail can be economically beneficial.

Promote the water trail as a way to pursue an active outdoor lifestyle.

## Counties Involved:

- Elmore
- Owyhee
- Ada, Canyon
- Payette
- Washington, ID;
- Malheur and Baker, (OR)



## Neighboring Towns/Cities:

- Glens Ferry
- Grand View
- Murphy
- Givens Hot Springs
- Marsing
- Homedale
- Parma
- Fruitland
- Payette
- Weiser (ID)
- Adrian, Nyssa, Ontario, Annex, Huntington (OR)



# Location of the Idaho-Oregon Snake River Water Trail



# RC&D Involvement In the Wet Lands

The Southwest Idaho Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) council coordinated the the wet land project with the Homedale school district and the Owyhee Soil Conservation District. 2,300 students within the ten mile site of Homedale, Melba and Wilder school districts now have access to this area for an outdoor educational classroom experience. The project was initiated because of a levy that had given way to flowing water, although the levy gave way the area which received the access water could be made into a pond. The pond created by the access water would be a valuable learning to and resource to the surrounding school districts.



Once the pond was created it served as an outdoor lab for students to further their learning experience. Students take water samples from the pond to test for specific content, introduce water purifying plants, and native fish, then return the water to the pond in a cleaner form.

## **Partners and Sponsors:**

The divisions of the Idaho state government involved were Agriculture, Soil Conservation Commission, Idaho Fish and Game, Department Environmental Quality (DEQ) and water resources.

## **Federal Sponsors:**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

## **Active Partners:**

South Board Irrigation District

University of Idaho

CH2M Hill



# Importance of Wet Lands in Idaho

Wetlands are much more than the muddy places we once thought of as a barrier to moving from one place to another, or taking up land that could otherwise be farmed. Wetlands were also thought to be a problem causing flooding in some areas. They were promptly drained of their water, and streams near them were straightened. Ironically, our harsh treatment of wetlands proved more costly than ever thought. Wetlands commonly provide important benefits throughout the nation, such as:



**Flood Control**-Some wetlands, particularly those on floodplains and in coastal areas, function in flood control by storing and decreasing the velocity of excess water during heavy rainfall. As water flows into wetlands, it naturally loses velocity as it collects and continues to spread out. Wetland vegetation pro-

vides another natural barrier to fast moving water and therefore aids in flood speed reduction. The result of wetland activity during floods is often decreased damage to surrounding areas. (environmental protection agency)

**Silt Catchers**-When flood waters are slowed by wetlands, they drop sediments among the roots and stems of the plants. This protects downstream waterbodies by preventing a dangerous build-up of gill clogging and egg damaging silt.

**Erosion Control**-Wetlands buffer shorelands against erosion because they are often located between water bodies and high ground. The roots of wetland vegetation bind the soil, putting a hold on it, while the plants themselves absorb the impact of waves.



**Vital Habitats**-There is more life in a one acre of a healthy wetland than there is in one acre of almost any other kind of habitat. Wetlands are virtual havens for the endangered species of the United States; about 35% of all plants and animals listed as threatened or endangered in the United States either live in wetlands or depend on them in some way. ([www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov))

# Free Fishing Day

Every year the Southwest Idaho RC&D Council hosts free Fishing Day for the citizens of Idaho. Free fishing day is held on the Saturday after the first full week of June. This is the one day a year families and friends can all come out together and fish, for free! That's right, this one spe-



cial day in Idaho, anyone and everyone can come fish without the need for a license. Come share in the great family fun!



The Southwest RC&D hosted the Fish'n Chips free fishing clinic for 800 to 1000 local residents targeting the youth. Helping provide positive educational resources and community involvement supports today's youth with a solid foundation for the future.

# What can the RC&D do for YOU?

