CUSTER SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

P. O. BOX 305
1340 PLEASANT AVENUE, SUITE C &D
CHALLIS, IDAHO 83226
http://www.custerdistrict.org/

To take available technical, financial and educational resources and focus them wisely to meet the needs of the local landowners for the conservation of soil, water and related resources.

FIVE-YEAR RESOURCE CONSERVATION BUSINESS PLAN

JULY 1, 2026 – JUNE 30, 2030

Annual Plan July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027

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Cover Photo: Pole Creek Phase II & III Construction

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Forward

Conservation Districts are subdivisions of state government charged with the conservation of soil, water and related natural resources. The Custer Soil and Water Conservation District is one of 50 Districts in Idaho, which together encompass 99 percent of our state.

Conservation Districts are the primary entities to provide assistance to private landowners and land users in the conservation, sustainability, improvement and enhancement of Idaho's natural resources. They are catalysts for coordinating and implementing conservation programs, channeling expertise from all levels of government into action at the local level. Programs are non-regulatory; science-based technical assistance, incentive–based financial programs and informational and educational programs at the local level.

Both by legislation and by agreement the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service provides technical assistance to landowners and land users through Conservation Districts. Each Conservation District in Idaho has a signed Mutual Agreement with the Secretary of Agricultural and the Governor of Idaho that establishes a framework for cooperation.

It is the goal of the Custer Soil and Water Conservation District's elected officials to set high standards for conservation of natural resources within the district. The district developed an action plan for meeting these needs. The Custer SWCD acknowledges that among their role as an elected board is the need to provide a service to the community, to assist in the economic stability of the area, to enhance the traditional way of life that is important to those we serve and to encourage the wise use of natural resources. The district further acknowledges the very important role our conservation partners play in the success of the Custer Soil and Water Conservation District Programs.

This Plan was developed not only to guide the Conservation District, but also to encourage cooperation among landowners, government agencies, private organizations, and elected officials. Through knowledge and cooperation, all concerned can ensure a sustainable natural resource base for present and future generations in the Custer Soil and Water Conservation District. This document identifies the resource needs in the Conservation District and presents a resource conservation action plan for meeting these needs.

Certificate of Adoption

The Board of elected supervisors of the Custer Soil and Water Conservation District this 13th Day of January, 2026 do hereby approve the following document known as the Resource Conservation Business Plan. This Plan will be in effect for a five-year period ending June 30, 2030 during which time it will be updated annually and/or amended, as necessary.

As evidence of our adoption and final approval, we do hereby affix our signatures to this document.

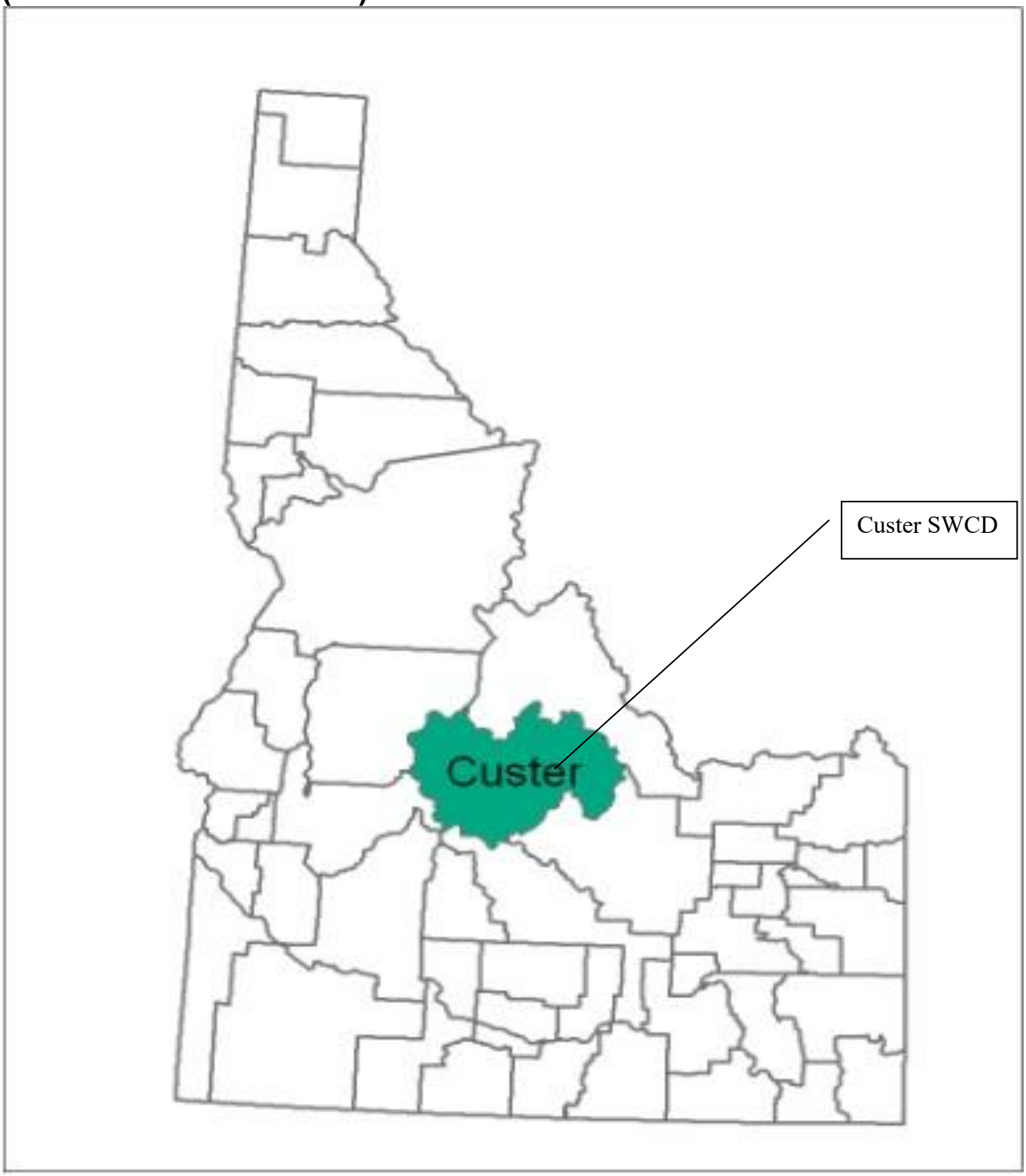
Wayne Baker	Chairman
Julia Piva	Vice Chairman
Dale Olson	Secretary
Tori O'Neal	Treasurer and Contract Officer
Ryan Hughes	Member

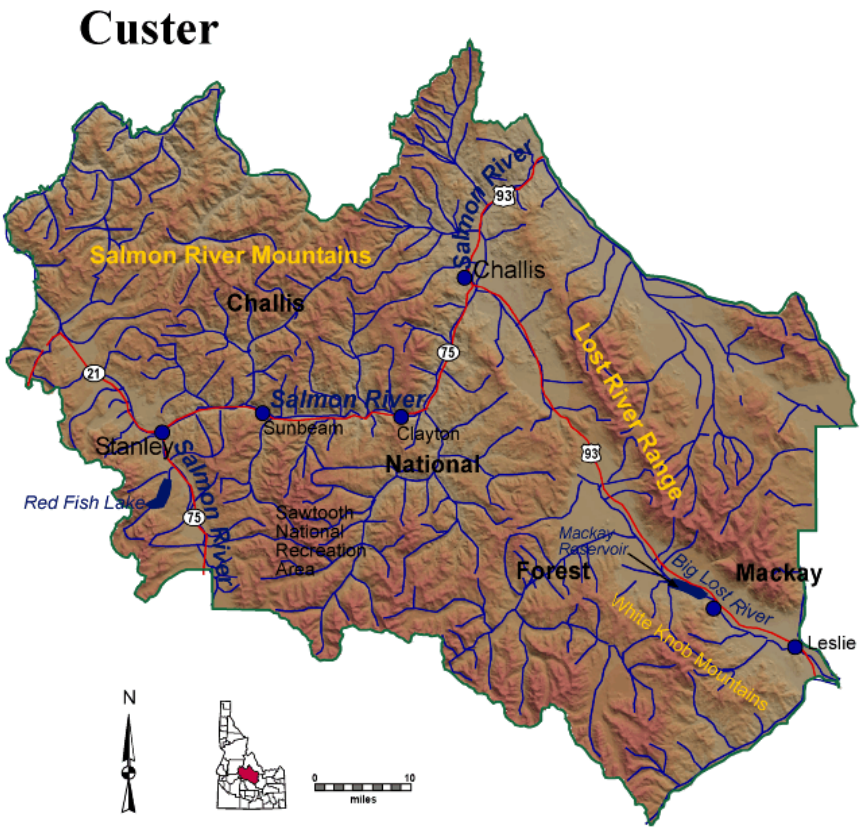
Supporting Idaho Conservation Partners

Natural Resources Conservation Service – Josh Chapman, District Conservationist
Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission - Danilyn Roseman, Resource Conservationist

(Note: the official signature page is housed in the Custer SWCD with the official plan)

Section 1: Physical Characteristics of Custer SWCD (IDAPA 60.05.02.025.01)




Custer
Salmon River Mountains
Challis
Salmon River
93
Challis
75
21
Salmon River
Sunbeam
Clayton
Stanley
National
Lost River Range
93
Red Fish Lake
75
Salmon River
Sawtooth
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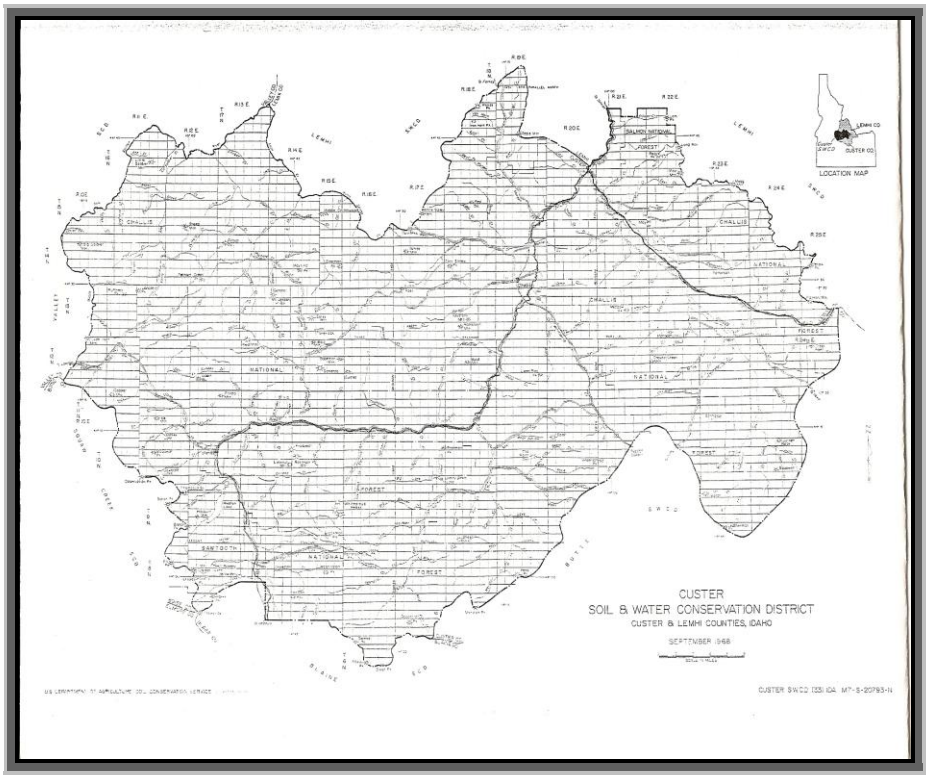
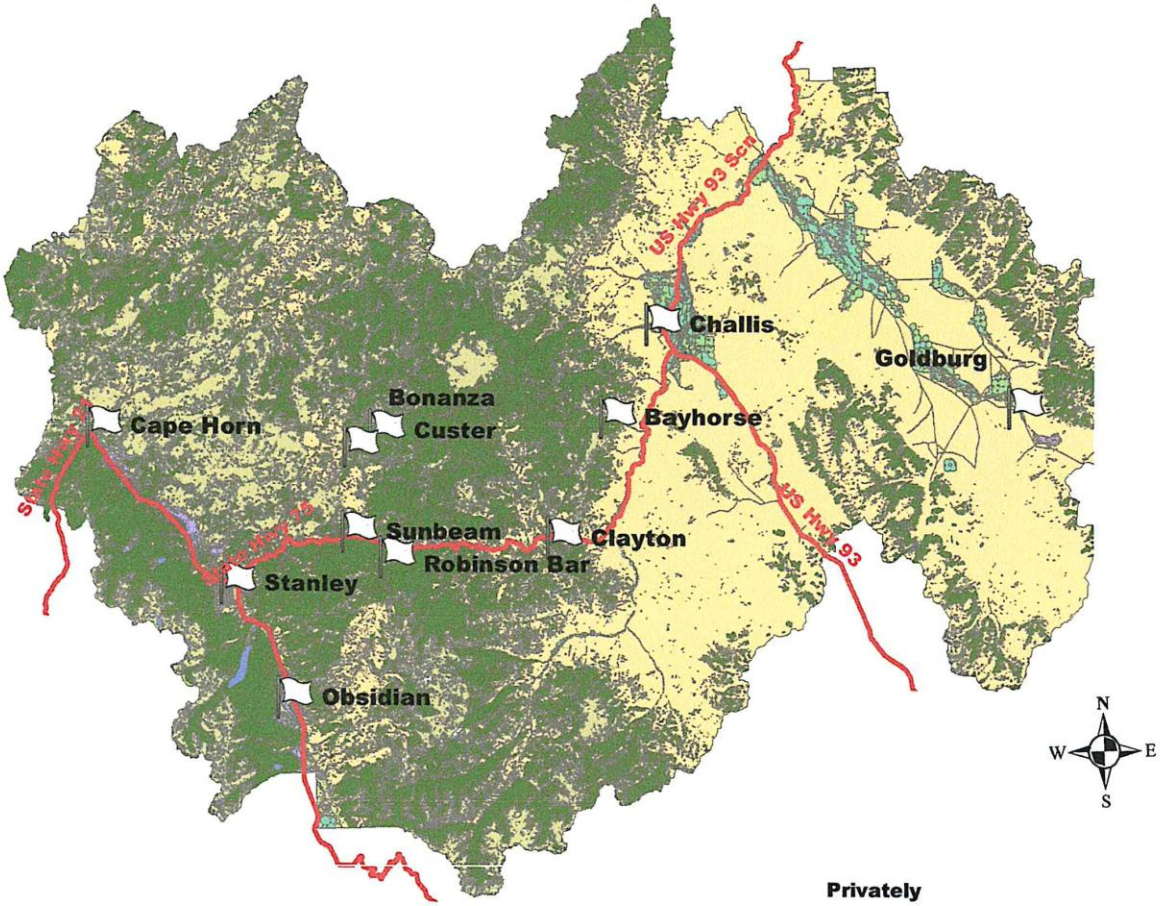

LOCATION MAP
CUSTER
SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
CUSTER & LEMHI COUNTIES, IDAHO
SEPTEMBER 1968

Custer Soil and Water Conservation District Land Cover Map

Derived from the National Land Cover Database Land Classes 2016 Dataset



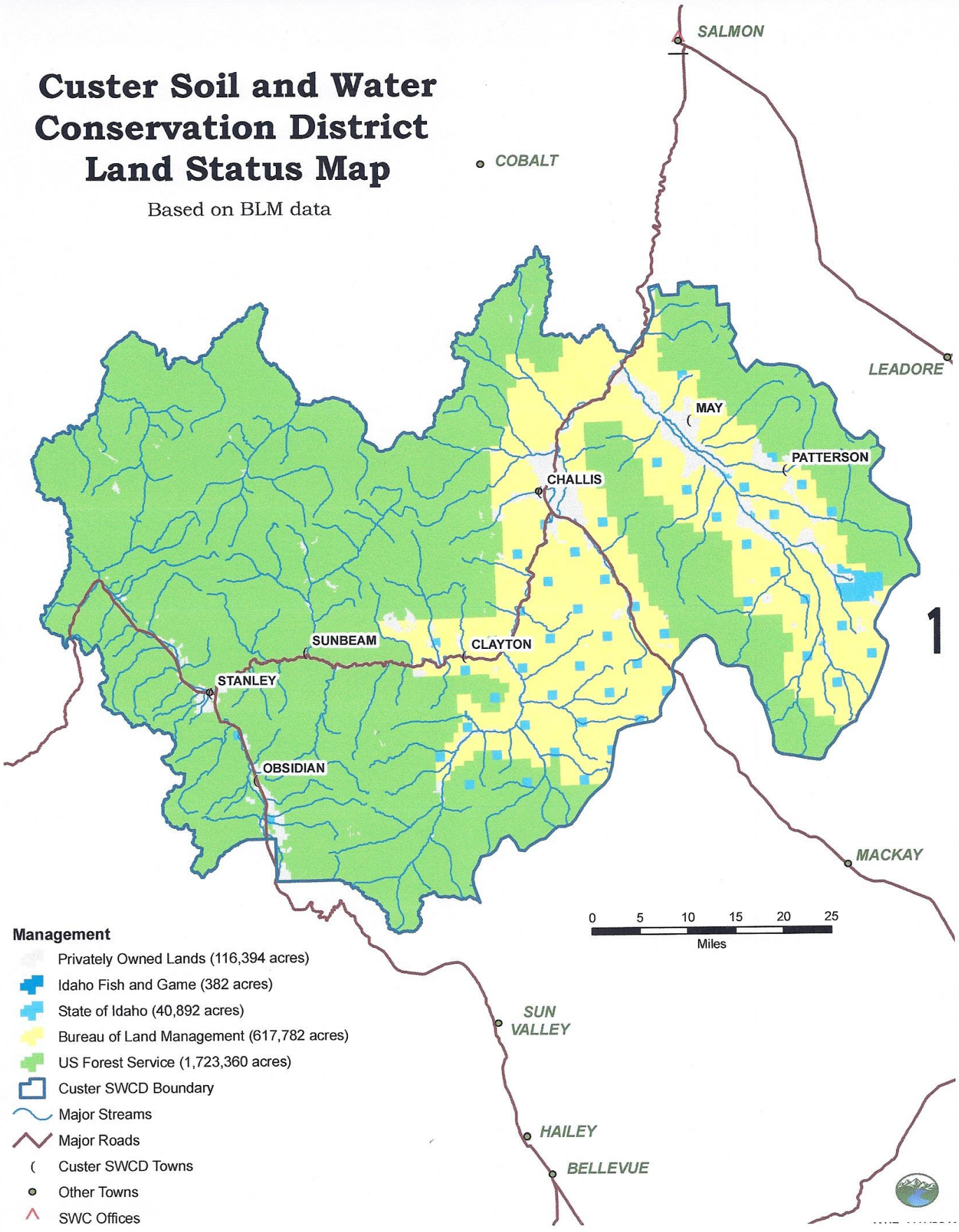
Land Classification	Total District Acres	Privately Owned Area in District
Barren Land	11,870	575
Cultivated Crops	17,878	17,719
Deciduous Forest	20	3
Developed, High Intensity	67	32
Developed, Low Intensity	3,125	1,466
Developed, Medium Intensity	1,572	667
Developed, Open Space	4,095	1,344
Emergent Herbaceuous Wetlands	16,077	8,279
Evergreen Forest	817,672	5,612
Hay/Pasture	25,469	24,736
Herbaceuous	358,662	10,225
Mixed Forest	3	2
Open Water	5,570	762
Perennial Snow/Ice	3,055	5
Shrub/Scrub	1,203,662	40,370
Woody Wetlands	6,490	3,783

0 3.75 7.5 15 22.5 30 Miles

Created by SWCC Jan 2020

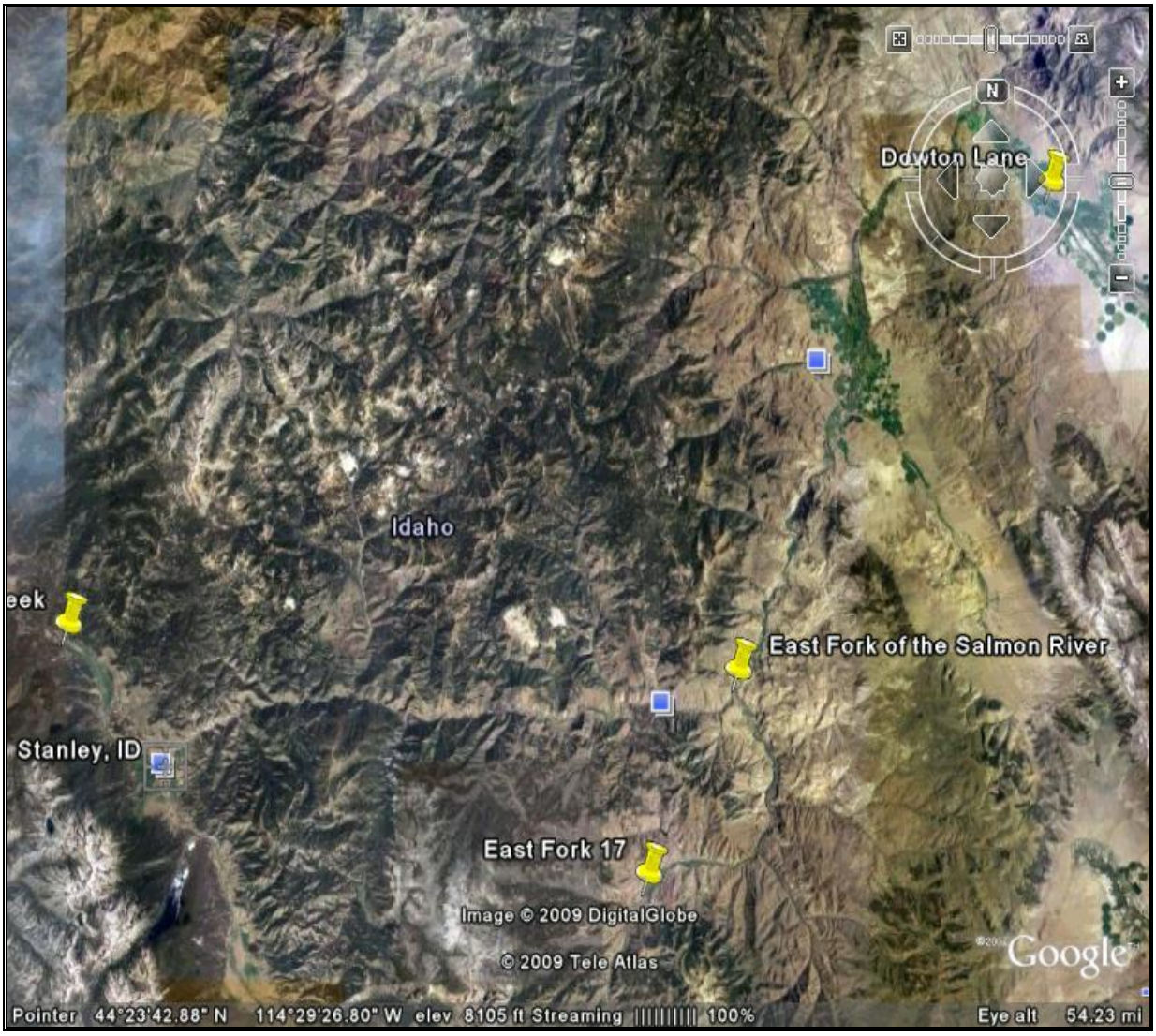
Custer Soil and Water Conservation District Land Status Map

Based on BLM data



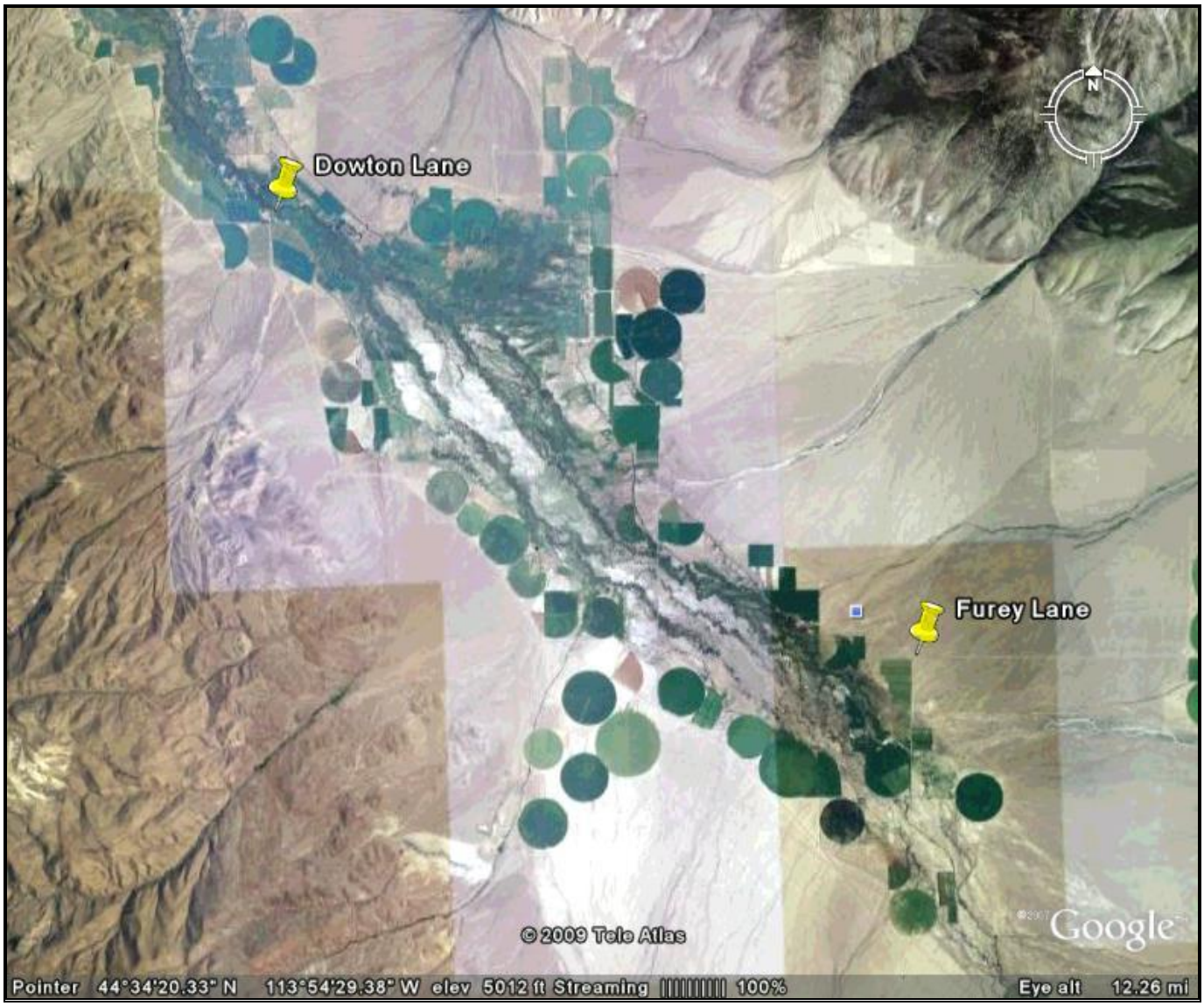
Management

- Privately Owned Lands (116,394 acres)
- Idaho Fish and Game (382 acres)
- State of Idaho (40,892 acres)
- Bureau of Land Management (617,782 acres)
- US Forest Service (1,723,360 acres)
- Custer SWCD Boundary
- Major Streams
- Major Roads
- (Custer SWCD Towns
- Other Towns
- SWC Offices



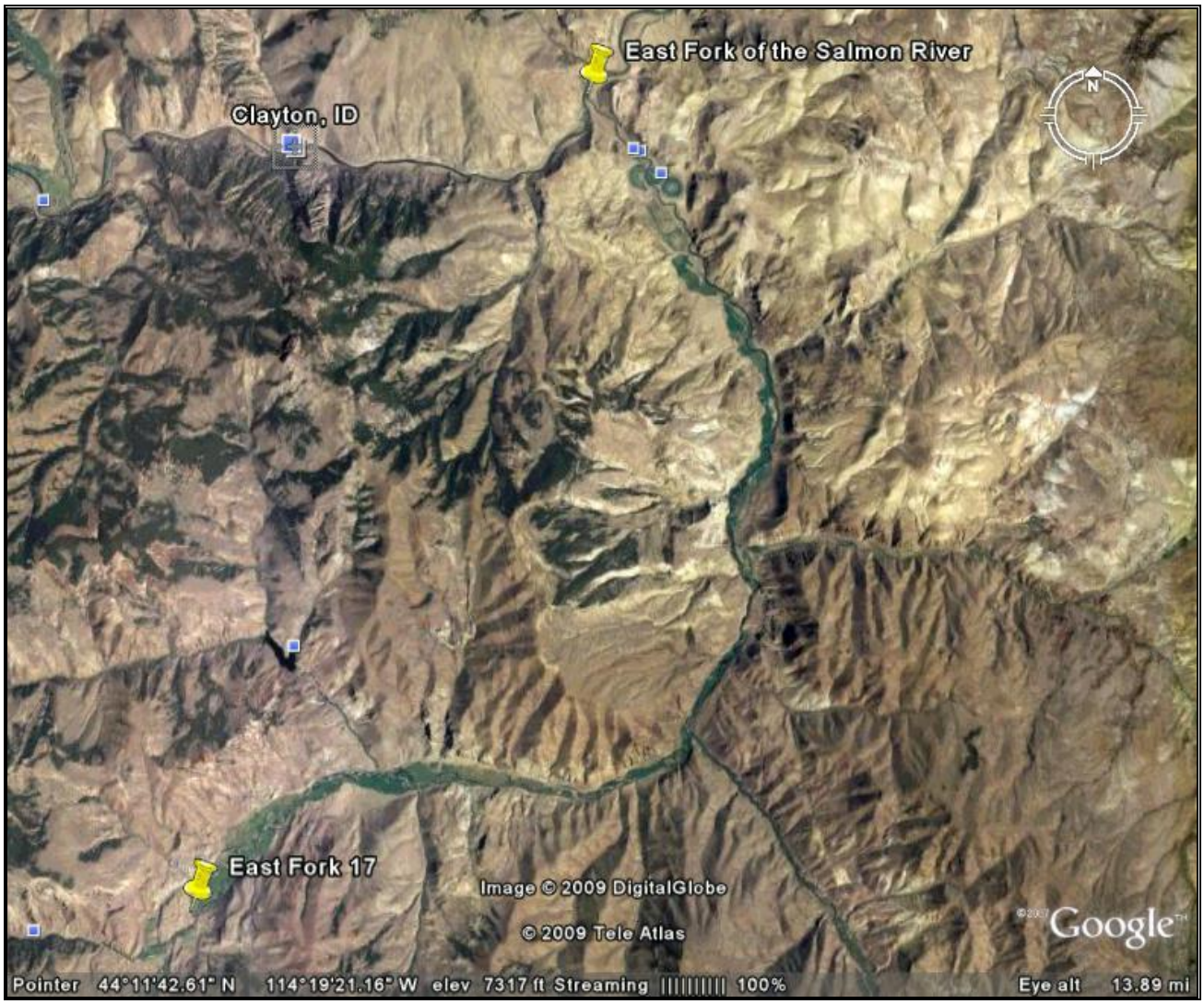
Anadromous Recovery Area of the Upper Salmon Basin from Stanley Basin to the Pahsimeroi

Historical and scenic Custer County, founded in 1881 and located in Central Idaho, has a population of 4,240 and an area of 4,938 sq. miles. Its landscape consists of arid desert, flat green valleys, and rugged rocky peaks and contains the highest mountain in Idaho, Mount Borah at 12,662 ft. The County Seat is Challis, with a population of just over 900. Other small towns included in the District is May, Stanley, and Clayton. Custer County relies on ranching, mining, and tourism as its main resources. Custer County contains much of the Frank Church River of No Return and the famous Salmon River as well as the Sawtooth National Recreation Area. The Lemhi County side of the Pahsimeroi Valley is included within the District Boundaries. The Pahsimeroi drainage is about 842 square miles and consists of a valley surrounded by a rim of mountains. This area has been a focus for anadromous fisheries since the early 1990's. The area is made up of agriculture, predominantly cattle and hay that provide the main source of income and economic base for its residents.



Anadromous Recovery Area – Pahsimeroi River from Dowton Lane to Furey Lane

The Pahsimeroi and its tributary Patterson/Big Springs Creek (PBSC) has a unique population of anadromous Snake River Chinook salmon as well as steelhead, rainbow, bull, and cutthroat trout. The Salmon population in Pahsimeroi River is a larger migrating summer-run Chinook salmon rather than spring run. Much of the Lower Pahsimeroi has been enhanced with diversion improvements, removals and riparian fencing. Patterson/Big Springs Creek and numerous spring fed systems that feed this system could benefit from additional enhancements. Funding has been identified via the Governor's Office of Species Conservation and Bonneville Power Administration to assist with these enhancements. 98% of the Pahsimeroi area that is within the focus area of recovery is agricultural lands. Custer SWCD supports locally lead conservation and will provide planning, project development and administer funds where feasible and based on willing landowner cooperation and participation.



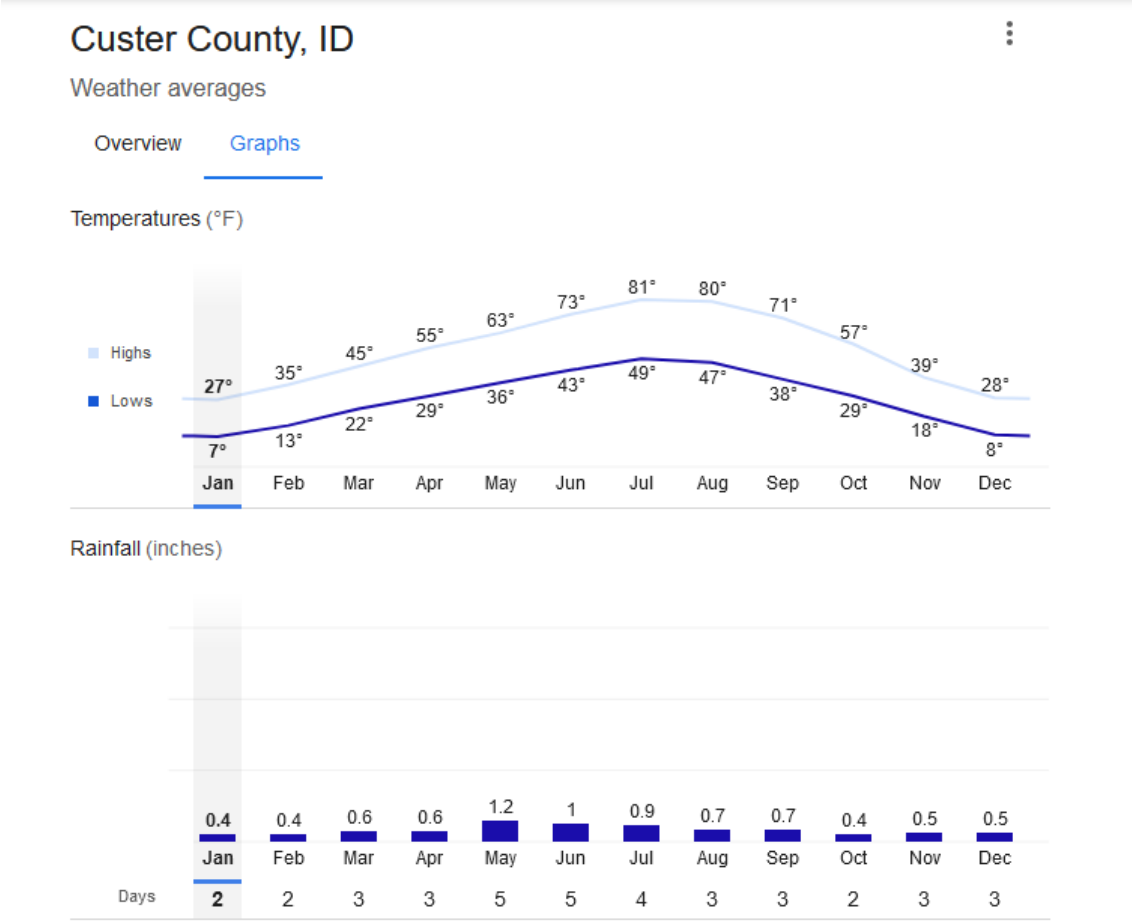
Anadromous Recovery Area East Fork of the Salmon River to East Fork 17 Diversion

The East Fork of the Salmon River watershed (HUC 1706020109) is a major tributary of the Salmon River and covers about 560 square miles in Custer County, Idaho. The East Fork, in the anadromous recovery area is a meandering channel type and flows through a narrow valley. The streambed is composed of river cobbles topped with a layer of silt deposited by flooding. No special geologic conditions exist at the site. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Challis Field Office of the Idaho Falls District manages about 80% of the public land in the basin. However, much of the land adjacent to the East Fork River and the proposed recovery area is under private, agricultural ownership. Anadromous Fish recovery goals are to "provide safe and timely passage of migrating fish through critical reaches of the watershed". The highest priority goals for the East Fork include reducing the number of physical barriers, such as removing existing pushup diversion structures and replacing inadequate fish screens, in the system. Funding for this area has been limited. Custer SWCD supports locally lead conservation and will provide planning, project development and administer funds where feasible and based on willing landowner cooperation and participation.

Anadromous Recovery – Sawtooth National Recreation Area

The 756,000-acre Sawtooth National Recreation Area (Sawtooth NRA) includes more than 20,000 acres of privately owned land, primarily in the Sawtooth Valley and Stanley Basin, and along the Salmon River for approximately 25 miles downstream from Stanley, Idaho. When the U.S. Congress established the Sawtooth NRA in 1972, it sought to preserve and protect the Area's "natural, scenic, historic, pastoral, and fish and wildlife values and to provide for the enhancement of the recreation values associated therewith." The Statute that created the Sawtooth NRA is Public Law 92-400. Congress' effort to protect the Sawtooth NRA was in part aimed at preventing the development of high-density subdivisions that were beginning to spread throughout the area and mar its scenic beauty. Pole Creek, Meadow/Goat Creek and 4th of July Creek in the upper most portion of Custer County and within the SNRA is a priority area for anadromous recovery area.

Average climate in Challis, Idaho



Custer County, Idaho has a semi-arid climate, with warm summers and cold winters. In the summer months, temperatures can reach up to 90 degrees Fahrenheit during the day and drop to the mid-40s at night. Winters see temperatures of about 20 degrees Fahrenheit during the day and dropping below zero at night. Precipitation is fairly low in Custer County averaging about 10 inches per year, with most of that falling as snow in the winter months. Despite this lack of precipitation, the county's rolling hills are often covered in lush grasses and wildflowers due to its ample water from underground aquifers.

Climate History

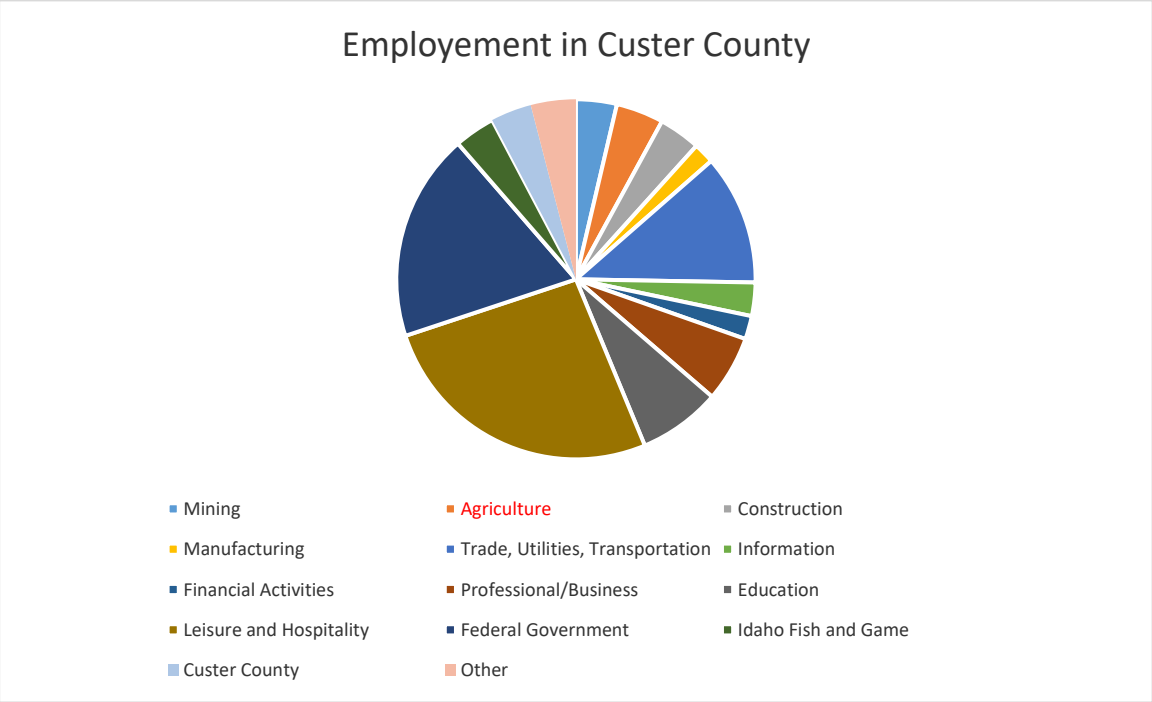
In winter, the average temperature is 23.1 degrees F at Challis, 15.6 degrees at Grouse and the average daily minimum temperature is12.9 degrees at Challis, 0.7 degrees at Grouse. The lowest temperature on record is -34 degrees at Challis on December 22, 1990; -42 degrees at Grouse on December 23, 1983. In summer, the average temperature is 65.6 degrees at Challis, 57.6 degrees at Grouse, and the average daily maximum temperature is 82.1 degrees at Challis, 76.3 degrees at Grouse. The highest recorded temperature is 103 degrees at Challis on July 26, 1964; 94 degrees at Grouse on August 18, 1986. During the month, growing degree days accumulate by the amount that the average temperature each day

exceeds a base temperature (40 degrees F). The normal monthly accumulation is used to schedule single or successive plantings of a crop between the last freeze in spring and the first freeze in fall.

The total annual precipitation is 7.70 inches at Challis, 13.89 inches at Grouse. The foothill areas receive more precipitation, as much as 25 inches is received at the higher elevations, in the northern and western parts. The growing season is quite short in most of the survey areas, ranging from as little as 7 to 14 days late in July in the Stanley Basin. During the growing season, about 30 to 40 percent of the total annual precipitation typically falls at the lower, warmer elevations. The heaviest 1-day rainfall during the period of record was 1.85 inches at Challis on July 10, 1983, and 1.90 inches at Grouse on December 23, 1955. Thunderstorms occur on about 24 days each year, and most occur in May through August. The average seasonal snowfall varies across the survey area, ranging from less than 20 inches in the driest valleys to more than 100 inches in the mountains in the northern and western parts. The average seasonal snowfall is 15.4 inches at Challis, 69.5 inches at Grouse. The greatest snow depth at any one time during the period of record was 12 inches at Challis on December 26, 1971; 42 inches at Grouse on February 11, 1978; On the average, 13 days of the year at Challis, 68 days at Grouse. The number of such days varies greatly from year to year. The heaviest 1-day snowfall on record was 11 inches at Challis on November 8, 1985; 20 inches at Grouse on January 10, 1968. The average relative humidity in mid-afternoon is about 45 percent. Humidity is higher at night, and the average at dawn is about 75 percent. The sun shines 78 percent of the time possible in summer and 40 percent in winter. The prevailing wind is dependent on the location in the survey area. Generally, the wind flows parallel to the orientation of the valleys, except on ridges where it is similar to the upper airflow. Average wind speed is highest, 8 miles per hour, in the valleys in spring and early in summer.

Record high water experienced in the spring of 2017 caused a great deal of damage to pastures and agricultural operations including irrigation infrastructure. 2021 was a record drought for irrigators. Although funding may not be possible to address this the board can be engaged and helpful in providing information technical support and permitting requirements. Extreme high water in 2022 impacted many diversions and caused some flooding.

Section 2: Economic Conditions and Outlook (IDAPA.60.05.02.025.02)



Custer County was established on January 8, 1881, and named for the General Custer Mine, where gold was discovered five years earlier, which was named in honor of General George Custer who died at the Battle of Little Bighorn. The history of Custer County begins with fur traders and pathfinders as early as 1824; later in the 1860s and 1870s prospectors and miners came to strike it rich in various "stampedes". Bonanza City was Yankee Fork's first mining camp and was founded in 1877. Bonanza had over 600 residents, a rectangular grid of streets, and provided city services such as community wells. An underground water system piped water for drinking and fire protection throughout the town. The Lost River Range, the state's highest mountains, is located in eastern Custer County. Borah Peak is the highest natural point in Idaho at 12,662 feet. On the western border of the county is Idaho's famous Sawtooth Range; the tallest is Thompson Peak in Custer County, above picturesque Redfish Lake. Twenty miles east are the White Cloud Mountains, the tallest of which is Castle Peak at 11,815 feet. Custer County relies on ranching, mining, and tourism as its main resources.

Custer County's estimated population in 2025 was about 4663, up from the 2024 population of 4,523. This is a growth rate of 1.44% over the past year according to the most recent US census data. Custer County ranks as the 40th largest county in Idaho. With a 2010 population of 4357 it has seen a growth of 7.02% since that time. Its largest city, Challis Idaho, ranks 81^{s}in the state for population (955 people). For each person the county offers more than a square mile. The Government, followed by the mining industry, are the top two employers followed by recreational support. Population decreased in the early 2000s, reaching a low in

2005 after losing over 300 residents as Hecla Mining closed. The population began growing again in 2006 but declined until 2017 when 69 people were added. The growth continued until 2018 when the county added 138 people, even small population's gains mean good things for the county. Thompson Creek scaled back operations over the last five years but has been promoting an increase in staff and a need for housing. The county has been concentrating on diversifying beyond mining. Economic developers are working hand-in-hand with government officials to attract new business and help existing ones expand in order to reverse, or at least slow, future decline. Custer County's annual budget in 2024 was approximately $25,666,124, significantly up from 2024. Custer County's average per capita income is $23,782. Household income levels show a median of $56,957. The poverty rate stands at 11.55%.

The Custer SWCD also takes in a section of the Pahsimeroi that is predominately agriculture in addition to two fish hatcheries and two private airfields. The largest employers in Custer County are School District 181. Custer County and the US Government, Lambs, Thompson Creek and the Mountain Village Resort. One third of the county's jobs are in government and natural resources (BLM, F&G, USFS). Only 5 percent of the land is private ownership. One gas station, one large grocery store and the local bowling alley have all closed in the last two years, which has had impact on goods and services as well as recreational opportunities for youth in the area. The area is heavily impacted by a seasonal workforce and the need for housing.

Trends Impacting Conservation in the Custer Soil & Water Conservation District

- State fund increased for the first time in many years improving our ability to seek grants.
- The loss of the Pahsimeroi Bonneville Power Administration Contract will impact staff time for the Custer SWCD.
- Unfunded mandates as it affects agricultural, natural resource and forest management.
- Endangers Species Act mandates and enforcement. Sage Grouse management has been an impact on grazing.
- Urban development and absentee landowners have become more prevalent and well as an increased number of small acreage farms. 2021-22 brought record home sales for homes with a current home shortage that will continue with Thompson Creek ramping up.
- Recreational use and its impact to agricultural management

Strategies to Address Trends (IDAPA 60.05.02.025.03)

- Develop legislative outreach program to address funding shortfalls and State funds.
- Secure funding to address agricultural mandates and landowner private property rights.
- Implementation of water quality and water quantity projects to improve fish passage and habitat within the District to help address ESA issues.
- Attend Custer County Economic Development Coordination meetings annually to increase awareness of actions and activities within the county from numerous agencies.
- Work with partners to include, but not limited to, Custer County Road and Bridge, Custer County Extension Agent, Custer County Department of Noxious Weeds.
- Work with Custer County Weed Department to address weed control within the county.
- Continue an active information and education program for landowners to address urban development and options for long term agricultural sustainability.

- Work with public land users to EDUCATE and encourage cooperation among private recreational entities and public land users/permitees and landowner private property rights.

Status of the Agricultural Economy and Outlook (IDAPA 60.05.02.025.02)
As stated by the Custer County Commissioners, in their land use plan, "the preservation of historic and customary agricultural, range, and forestry land use is important to the citizens of Custer County". With much of the economy derived from agriculture and related activities, maintaining viable tracts of agricultural and rangeland is a county goal. The right of agriculture to exist and continue to operate is protected by Idaho law. Given the rural nature of the county, local ordinances and resolutions must not conflict with the right to farm protections for agricultural operations in *Idaho Code, Title 22, Agriculture and Horticulture, Chapter 45, Right to Farm*.

High-density residential development defined as more than one home per acre, or conflicting development should be directed away from irrigated agricultural land, taking into consideration the following factors:

1) Potential crop productivity
2) Availability of water and how development impacts delivery systems
3) Grazing potential
4) Environmental factors
5) Availability of public services
6) Availability of adequate transportation systems
7) Historical land use practices

Lands designated for agricultural use are suitable for all types of agricultural and range operations, as well as single family homes, including manufactured homes, and accessory buildings necessary for agricultural operations.

Existing commercial, industrial, and residential land uses, home-based businesses and occupations and livelihoods are historical uses and will be allowed and will be managed to minimize the impacts on agriculture. Non-agricultural uses that could have adverse impacts on agricultural land use areas must be carefully reviewed.

District Staffing Requirements **(IDAPA 60.05.02.025.03)**

- Full Time District Manager with Benefits and New project manager to train for position.
- Full Time Technician via NRCS or Technical Staff under District Employment that is currently not provided

Note: Custer SWCD needs continuation of an NRCS Technician placed in the Custer Soil and Water Conservation District Office to assist with the planning, design and implementation of the high priority water quality and water quantity projects funding via special project funds within the district.

Annual Budget Needs - All Funding

	Jul '25- Jun 26
Income	
WQPA Grant	33,250.00
Transfer from EQIP for No Til	18,000.00
Donations and Credits	2,358.00
Administrative Reimbursement	16,000.00
County Appropriations	7,000.00
Equipment Rental	880.00
Interest Income	12.00
State Appropriation Match	10,000.00
Base Funding	14,500.00
Special Project Funds	743,000.00
Total Income	845,000.00
Gross Profit	845,000.00
Expense	
Workman's Comp	1,100.00
Contract Labor	600.00
Audit	4,200.00
District Employee Travel	2,252.00
Dues	3,425.00
Equipment Purchase Expense	51,250.00
Equipment repair	1,700.00
Insurance	2,700.00
Office Supplies	2,000.00
Payroll Expenses	20,000.00
Public Outreach	2,250.00
Rental Equipment Repair	1,100.00
Rent Expense	5,825.00
Supervisors Travel	2,498.00
Utilities	1,100.00
Special Project BMP Installed	743,000.00
Total Expense	845,000.00
Net Income	**0.00**

Section 3: Assessment (IDAPA.60.05.02.025.03)

Soil Resources:

Soil Survey for CUSTER-LEMHI AREA is in north-central Idaho. It consists of areas in Custer and Lemhi Counties and a small area in the northern part of Blaine County. It includes parts of the Salmon, Challis, and Targhee National Forests. The total area is 1,959,720 acres, or about 3,062 square miles. The lowest point in the survey area, which is at an elevation of about 3,700 feet, is north of Salmon, along the Salmon River. The highest point, which is at an elevation of about 10,390 feet, is just south of Monument Peak, along the Idaho-Montana border. The general soil map in this area shows broad areas that have a distinctive pattern of soils, relief, and drainage. Each map unit on the general soil map is a unique natural landscape

Natural Resources

The natural resources in the survey area include soil, water, timber, and minerals.
Most of the jobs in the area are dependent on these resources. The farmland along the major rivers and their tributaries is used for pasture and for alfalfa and some grain crops. Because of the extremely mountainous topography, gravelly soils, and low precipitation, most of the land in the area is used as rangeland. Surface water is used primarily for irrigation, livestock, and recreation. The Salmon and Pahsimeroi Rivers provide water for the area. Ranchers use the water for cattle and crops. The Salmon River is used heavily for recreational use, including fishing and river floating. Wells are used only in areas where crop returns are high enough for their use to be feasible. Lodge-pole pine supports two or three small pole and post operations. The area has rich gold, silver, copper, and lead mines. Cobalt and molybdenum have also been mined.

Farming and Ranching

Small grain and hay, including native grasses and alfalfa, are the main crops grown in the survey area. Ranchers reseed the native pastureland and hay-land to more productive varieties for cattle. Most of the land in the area is used as rangeland. The area has been used for ranching since the early 1870's.

Today, the average size farm/ranch in Custer County is approximately 460 acres. The value of livestock and their products as a percentage of total market value of agricultural products sold is 76.30%. Approximately 98% of farmland is irrigated cropland. Over 82% of the farms and ranches in operation in Custer County are family or individually owned properties. The average age of the ranch and/or farm owners is about 54 years old. The average number of cattle and calves per 100 acres of land is 19.4. Many of the ranches in the area grow hay and pasture that is utilized in the ranching operation. Several farms produce hay for re-sale out of the area. Most of the ranches in the area depend on the use of federal land grazing in addition to the production on private ground to maintain their ranching operations. However, due to regulatory mandates public land grazing has greatly reduced and in some areas eliminated over the past

ten or more years. One large seed potato farm operates within Custer SWCD located in both Custer and Lemhi Counties. At least one operation in the round valley operates a hay/pellet production operation. Although once quite common, few sheep ranches remain in the area. Several organic operations also operate in the district. According to the Census for Agriculture, approximately 316 jobs are created by the cattle industry and support services tied to this industry.

Forestry Resources:

Approximately 97% of Custer County is federal land. Both the Sawtooth National Recreation Area and much of the Frank Church Wilderness are within the Custer SWCD. The Frank Church – River of No Return Wilderness Area is located in central Idaho on the Boise, Bitterroot, Nez Perce, Payette, and Salmon-Challis National Forests. Portions of Custer, Idaho, Lemhi, and Valley Counties are contained within the wilderness.

The origins of the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness began in 1930 with the administrative establishment of the 1,090,000-acre Idaho Primitive Area. A later addition brought this total to 1,224,350 acres. Creation of the primitive area was promoted by concerns in the Forest Service that large expanses of America's remaining wildlands be preserved in their natural state before they were developed. To the north, the Selway-Bitterroot Primitive Area was established in 1936, including most of the area between the Salmon and Lochsa Rivers. In 1963, a portion of this primitive area was re-designated as an administrative wilderness, while another portion bordering the Salmon River and the Idaho Primitive Area was designated as the Salmon River Breaks Primitive Area. The land between these two areas, known as the Magruder Corridor, was left unclassified, but has remained essentially undeveloped.

The 756,000-acre Sawtooth National Recreation Area (Sawtooth NRA) includes more than 20,000 acres of privately owned land, primarily in the Sawtooth Valley and Stanley Basin, and along the Salmon River for approximately 25 miles downstream from Stanley, Idaho. When the U.S. Congress established the Sawtooth NRA in 1972, it sought to preserve and protect the Area's "natural, scenic, historic, pastoral, and fish and wildlife values and to provide for the enhancement of the recreation values associated therewith." The Statute that created the Sawtooth NRA is Public Law 92-400. Congress' effort to protect the Sawtooth NRA was in part aimed at preventing the development of high-density subdivisions that were beginning to spread throughout the area and mar their scenic beauty. Several subdivisions, in particular, were cause for concern and an indicator of things to come if preventative measures were not taken. These subdivisions were located on the west side of Highway 75, midway between the communities of Stanley and Sawtooth City, and contained more than 1,000 lots, an airstrip and a tangle of roads and overhead power lines.

Congress authorized the Forest Service to acquire land and development rights for the purpose of preserving and protecting the values for which the Sawtooth NRA was created. Since 1974, about 5900 acres have been purchased by the United States. Most structures and other improvements have been removed from those properties. In addition, conservation easements (sometimes called scenic easements) have been purchased to restrict development on private land, while allowing these lands to remain in private ownership. To acquire scenic/conservation easements, the Forest Service negotiates with the landowner to purchase the right to permanently restrict certain uses of a property. To acquire scenic/conservation easements, the Forest Service negotiates with the landowner to purchase the right to permanently restrict certain uses of a property. From 1974 to 2005, the Forest Service acquired 91 scenic/conservation easements on approximately 17,000 acres comprising more than 85% of the total private land base in the Sawtooth NRA. This acquisition program continues. Significantly, Public Law 92-400 also directed the Secretary of Agriculture (the cabinet official with overall responsibility for the U.S. Forest Service) to publish regulations setting standards for the use, subdivision, and development of all privately owned property within the boundaries of the Sawtooth NRA. These regulations were codified in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). In summary, very little forest ground is privately managed within the Custer SWCD. Some livestock grazing is “permitted” on BLM and Forest Service but is greatly hampered by regulatory mandates related to Endangered Species.

ESA Listed Species

The Upper Salmon River Basin (USRB) in central Idaho contains unique public lands, fish, wildlife, plants, scenic and cultural resources that are important to the nation. Threatened and endangered species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) are of particular importance to the American people because they indicate a fragile ecosystem, and conservation needs of ESA-listed fish species are receiving increasing attention.

Native anadromous and resident fish species, including those listed under the ESA, may be affected by irrigation water diversions, livestock grazing, and associated agricultural and human activities. Fish species may be affected in several ways, including disconnection of tributaries from larger streams and rivers, insufficient flows at key periods to allow passage, increased water temperatures, smothering of eggs due to excessive sedimentation, and loss of vegetation along stream-banks. Water users and landowners in the Upper Salmon River Basin (USRB) have been proactive and are interested in ensuring their land and water management actions may continue in a manner that is consistent with the purposes of the ESA for protection and recovery of listed fish species. The Pahsimeroi, East Fork and Upper Salmon (Stanley) areas have been a focus of Salmon recovery since the early 1990s.

The Custer SWCD, as a locally lead conservation agency in the East Fork, Pahsimeroi and Upper Salmon continues to work with willing landowners to complete fisheries restoration projects. Funding has become available from the Bureau of Reclamation, Bonneville Power Administration and the Office of Species Conservation – Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery to assist with the fish recovery effort.

Although efforts and funding remain available for the key areas within the area include anadromous habitat, the Pahsimeroi area has been the main focus in the past three years. The Pahsimeroi River has a unique population of Snake River Chinook salmon, and in contrast with the Lemhi River and East Fork of the Salmon River watersheds, the salmon population in the Pahsimeroi River is a later migrating summer-run Chinook salmon rather than spring-run. Historically, spawning and rearing habitat was probably supported within the watershed for at least two federally – listed anadromous fish species, spring/summer Chinook salmon, and steelhead. (P. Murphy, 2008)

Note: See Appendix C for full list.

Water Resources:

The main stem Salmon River and several major tributaries, namely the East Fork of the Salmon and the Pahsimeroi are located in the Custer SWCD. The administration of water within the district has been a growing issue within the Custer SWCD. This is further challenged by the high number of water rights within the basin and often low flows brought on by many years of drought and a heightened awareness of ESA listed species found in the Upper Salmon Basin. The Custer SWCD works closely with the Idaho Department of Water Resources to ensure irrigation projects administered by the district meet Idaho Water Law.

Water District No. 170 (WD170), also referred to as the "Upper Salmon Water District", was created by IDWR order in 2006. The district was created to administer both surface water and groundwater rights tributary to the Salmon River above the confluence with the Pashimeroi River. However, IDWR plans to expand it to include five administrative basins to administer all water rights and tributaries to the Salmon River above the confluence with the Middle Fork of the Salmon River.

The water district will be subdivided into a number of smaller, largely independent, sub-districts that will operate within Water District No. 170. The WD170 Water Master will coordinate with the sub-districts to administer the water rights, perform reporting, and other district functions. Basins 71 and 72 are presently within Water District No. 170 and four sub-districts are currently active.

A large water district has been determined necessary by IDWR in the Upper Salmon area to effectively administer water rights that have been licensed by IDWR or have been partially decreed by the Snake River Basin Adjudication Court. A multi-basin district is necessary to ensure administration of complex, large-scale water rights and associated agreements (e.g. Nez Perce, Wild and Scenic Rivers). Although IDWR typically creates water districts following the adjudication, the timing and structure of the Upper Salmon Water District follows largely from an agreement regarding settlement of objections to federal reserved water rights related to the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. (IDWR, 2011)

District Operations (IDAPA 60.05.02.051.03)

Custer Soil Conservation District - A Brief History:

On January 27, 1953, the Custer Soil and Water Conservation District was formed with its headquarters at Mackay. The main goal of the district was to control water erosion in the area. In 1966 discussions began about splitting the district because of mileage involved. A series of films were made available to the schools. Other educational activities were frequent conservation articles in the local newspaper and sponsorship of a “speaking contest”. The first poster contest was held in 1957. By May of 1967 all acreage south of Willow Creek Summit would be included in the Butte SWCD. By January 1968 another boundary change came about with the Pahsimeroi Valley portion of Lemhi County becoming a part of the Custer SWCD.

In the 1970’s high water and flooding on Garden Creek, Challis Creek and Morgan Creek took a great deal of technical time for stream-bank protection projects which became a major part of the program emphases. In March 1979 the Custer Soil Conservation District joined with area ranchers, other economic and environmental groups and the local government agencies in the formation of an experimental Range Stewardship Program. By combining the on the ground knowledge of the ranchers with the technical skills of agency personnel, the best management will be obtained. This program is working today and is now used as the local basin advisory group.

In the spring of 1980, Custer Soil and Water Conservation District leased a one-acre plot from Idaho Department of lands in the Bradbury Flat Area. The purpose was to establish a test seeding plat of 17 species of range plants. Seeds were furnished to the District by the Aberdeen Plant Materials Center and seeded by SCS. Six other similar seeding took place during the 1980s.

Early in the 1990’s the Custer Soil and Water Conservation District began their first efforts into administering and implementing Bonneville Power Administration fish recovery projects. The district had continued and increased this program which includes administering Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Funds from OSC, funding from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and many other sources.

Key Decision Makers (in no particular priority order)

- Citizens within the Custer Soil and Water Conservation District
- Custer Soil and Water Conservation District Board
- City of Challis
    - City of Challis Mayor, Chris Sugden
    - Challis City Council
- Custer and Lemhi County Commissioners
    - Randy Corgatelli, Custer County Chairman
    - Lynn Bowerman, Chairman

- State legislators representing Conservation District:
    - Senator Christy Zito
    - Representative Robert Beiswenger
    - Representative Faye Thompson
- U.S. Senators, Representatives and Staffers
- Conservation District Supervisors
- Idaho Governors Office of Species Conservation
- Idaho Department of Fish and Game
- Idaho Department of Water Resources
- School District 181 – Staff and Administrators
- District Project/Office Manager
- Custer County Economic Development Association, Jolie Turek, Coordinator
- Custer County Cooperative Extension Educator, Sarah Baker
- Custer County Weed Supervisor -Brett Plummer
- Surrounding Communities, May, Clayton, and Stanley
- Bonneville Power Administration related to Project Funding Approvals
- Northwest Power Planning Council

Energy Conservation: Salmon River Electric Cooperative has requested continued support from the district to implement this program on a local basis with agricultural energy incentives.

Firewise: Although the District has not been actively involved in the urban interface in the wild land fire prevention program, recent wildfires may bring this program a renewed interest.

Education: The district's educational programs have continued to grow in leaps and bounds and this continues to be a focus for the Custer Soil and Water Conservation District. The district acknowledges that this education is necessary in an effort to educate the general public, youth and cooperators about our natural resources and the importance of the ranching economy in the Custer SWCD.

Section 4: Identify and Prioritize Objectives (IDAPA 60-.05.02.025.04)

Priority 1: District Natural Resource Education Program related to District Priorities of Water Quality, Water Quantity, Range, Pasture and Hay-land and Recreation:
The district maintains an active presence in all area schools within the district. The Envirothon program at Challis High School has been elevated to an extracurricular school club called the Natural Resource Club and is recognized as a school activity. CSWCD maintains their accounting system on QuickBooks and completed a single audit of this year's financial activity providing accountability for funds administered through the district.

- By January 30, contact will be made at the High School to work with Envirothon/FFA
- By June 30, all Conservation District cooperator addresses and files will be updated.
- By June 30, the District will review and if needed update their policy and procedures manual and accountability policy.
- By September 30, Custer SWCD will participate in new supervisors training if necessary
- By October 15, the District will have completed their annual audit and provided the audit to the Division of Financial Management and others requiring this information.
- By October 30, all 5th and 6th grade students will have had the opportunity to participate in the conservation poster contest and 5th Grade Tour and all 9th through 11th grade students will have had the opportunity to participate in the conservation speech contest.
- By October 30, the district will participate in at least two partnership events.

Priority 2: District Water Quality and Quantity Priorities and Goals:

- District projects related to Water Quality and Water Quantity include continued efforts to provide irrigation improvements, riparian protection and management. These efforts are focused on the enhancement of anadromous and native fisheries within the district as well as long term sustainability of the agricultural community.
- Promote activities that support the recommendations of the Local Working Group water quality priorities in set for the fiscal year on the following land uses: Irrigated Cropland and Pasture, Rangeland and Forestry and Wildlife.
- By June 30, the district will assist with the development of plans to include but not limited to installing riparian fencing, pasture management where applicable and addresses weed control. Where feasible, full ranch planning will be accomplished.
- By June 30 CSWD will assist in the development of plans to improve irrigation diversions or where feasible consolidate and remove irrigation diversions and development of off stream stock-water systems where appropriate.
- Remove fish passage barriers as determined necessary and financially feasible.

Priority 3: Range Land

- Maintain an economic stability of the ranching industry and multiple uses by assisting cooperators to improve forage quality and quantity of rangeland within the district.
- Promote the development of coordinated resource management plans under EQIP/CsTP as well as resource concern priorities set by the Local Working Group.
- Develop relationships with BLM, USFS, USFWS, NMFS, NRCS and IDFG to assist with public land grazing issues and enhancements.

- Assist Ranchers to address Sage Grouse and Wolf Management on public and private grazing lands.
- Promote and provide information to improve control of noxious weeds on both public and private lands in cooperation with the County weed supervisor.

Priority 4: Pasture, Hay-land and Pasture:

- Provide administrative assistance to NRCS on USDA/Farm Bill programs
- Promote and provide information to improve control of noxious weeds on both public and private lands in cooperation with county weed supervisor.
- Evaluate water conservation opportunities of sprinkler irrigation versus flood irrigation.
- Promote the development of coordinated resource management plans under EQIP/CStP as well as resource concern priorities set by the Local Working Group.

Priority 5: Recreation

- Provide assistance to help reduce conflict between ranching and recreation.
- Assist local recreational industries remain sustainable in our local economy.

Priority Actions – 6 Months

Summary of the priority actions needed to start the 5-year plan of the Custer Soil & Water Conservation District

Action	Begin Date	End Date
▪ Seek public comments from the Local Working Group established by the Custer and Lemhi SWCD to assist NRCS in the priority ranking.	1/1	5/1
▪ Seek public comments from partners on Annual Plan/Five-Year Resource Conservation Business Plan	2/15	3/1
▪ Board of Supervisor review of Annual Plan/Five-Year Resource Conservation Business Plan priorities, actions, and public comment	2/4	3/1
▪ Complete written update of Annual Plan/Five-Year Resource Conservation Plan	1/1	3/31
▪ Adopt and submit Annual Plan/Five-Year Resource Conservation Business Plan	3/4	3/11
▪ Identify budget and staff needs	4/1	5/6
▪ Develop and adopt annual budget	4/1	5/6
▪ Implement Annual Plan and Five-Year Resource Conservation Business Plan	7/1	6/30
▪ Meet requirements of State of Idaho Controller's Office – Transparency Report	11/1	12/1

Section 5: Water Quality (IDAPA 60-.05.02.025.05)

The federal Clean Water Act requires that states and tribes restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters. States and tribes must adopt water quality standards necessary to protect fish, shellfish, and wildlife while providing for recreation in and on the waters whenever possible.

Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act establishes requirements for states and tribes to identify and prioritize water bodies that are water quality limited (i.e., water bodies that do not meet water quality standards). States and tribes must periodically publish a priority list of impaired waters, currently every two years. For waters identified on this list, states and tribes must develop water quality improvement plans known as total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) that establish allowable pollutant loads set at levels to achieve water quality standards.

Much of the current workload being completed by the Custer Soil and Water Conservation District has been to assist private landowners, predominately the agricultural base, address the requirements of the clean water act. At present there are approximately 3265 square miles of stream that is listed under the stream segments of concern.

Pahsimeroi River: The Pahsimeroi River, the East Fork of the Pahsimeroi River, North Fork Lawson Creek, and Short Creek are listed for nutrients, sediment, bacteria, and Temperature. Over the past 15 years the Custer SWCD and their partners have addressed concerns in the watershed greatly with fencing and irrigation improvements on the Pahsimeroi and Patterson Creek. Big Creek and Morse Creek seldom reach the Pahsimeroi partially due to irrigation withdrawl but also the nature of the natural channel. In addition, numerous animal feedlot operations have been removed or addressed to meet water quality standards.

Upper Salmon River: The Salmon River and its tributaries Challis Creek, Garden Creek, Warm Springs Creek, Thompson Creek, Yankee Fork, Lost Creek, Kinnikinic Creek, Road Creek and Squaw Creek were initially §303d listed for sediment, temperature, nutrients, flow alterations and habitat alteration. After assessment only one TMDL was developed for sediment on Challis Creek.

Flow alterations have been addressed extensively on the Salmon River, Challis Creek and currently Garden Creek by improving irrigation practices and decreasing in-stream barriers were feasible. Fencing has been installed in voluntary cooperation with landowners and numerous animal feedlot operations have been removed or addressed to meet water quality standards. The Yankee Fork is under a full assessment by the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation and the Shoshone/Bannock Tribes. A plan is forthcoming to address limitations in this reach.

Most of the work that has been accomplished in these two areas are related to the Endangered Species Act and fish recovery effort. The voluntary cooperation of private landowners has been key to addressing the elements referenced in the clean water act and ESA. A complete list of the stream segments of concern can be found in Exhibit B starting on page 36 of this document as developed by Idaho Department of Environmental Quality.

Section 6: Identify, Prioritize and Implement Projects: (IDAPA 60-.05.02.025.06&07)

By April Custer SWCD has identified projects for State and County Funding as follows:

- Staff Hours to secure grants and or funds for projects and to retain the office
- Workshops or Tours and Publications on Water Quality Improvement/Management
- Idaho Envirothon Teams
- Natural Resource Awareness Day
- Annual 5th Grade Tour
- Agricultural Awareness Week – Community and K-12 Grades (all schools)
- Support the local to Future Farmers of America
- Poster Contest – 5th and 6th Grade
- Speech Contest –High School
- Bread in a Bag – 4th Grade
- District Equipment Program
- Support of the State Lands Judging Contest
- Support of the Idaho Forestry Contest
- Community Support
- Dues support if feasible of RC&D ($150), IDEA ($50)

The above projects and activities are ranked in priority order however Custer SWCD believes they have secured adequate funding to provide both staff and sponsorship of these activities for the next fiscal year.

By April Custer SWCD will have identified funding under Bonneville Power Administration Funding, Pacific Coast Funding, Bureau of Reclamation and Energy Conservation Funding.

- 3 - Fish Passage Improvements by planning and installation practices (Water Quality)
- 1 – Flow Enhancement Project (Water Quantity)
- 1- Stream Habitat Enhancement - (Water Quality and Water Quantity)
- Identify landowners or Projects for Ag Energy Conservation (Water Quantity)

The above listed projects will be ranked, if necessary, on technical merit on BPA and PSCRF projects. The ranking will be done by an independent ranking committee made up of numerous natural resource specialists from various agencies with a focus on anadromous fish recovery. The above projects were reviewed in a publically advertised meeting along with the Custer SWCD Annual Resource Plan in March. Implementations of these projects are scheduled to take place through the fiscal year starting July and have secured project funding. Custer SWCD Board of Supervisors, Project Manager and Administrative Staff will oversee the implementation of this work with the assistance of the NRCS, USBoR and IDFG as project support. Other multiple agencies and groups (noted on page 16) will provide assistance on some level. The fish recovery projects listed above address the stream segments of concern and will be implemented under the best management practices of the NRCS and adopted by the Custer SWCD.

AGENCIES AND GROUPS COOPERATING WITH THE CUSTER SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

District Landowners/Cooperators

Bonneville Power Administration
Butte Soil & Water Conservation District
Bureau of Land Management
Bureau of Reclamation
City of Challis
Challis Area Chamber of Commerce
Challis School District #181
Challis Experimental Stewardship Committee
Custer County Commissioners
Custer County Economic Development Asso.
Custer County Road and Bridge
Custer County Noxious Weed Department
Custer County Farm Bureau
Department of Environmental Quality
High Country Resource Conservation and Development
Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts
Idaho Department of Agriculture
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Idaho Department of Lands
Idaho Department of Water Resources
Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation
Idaho District Employees Association
Idaho Office of Species Conservation
Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission
Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts Auxiliary
Idaho Rangeland Resources Commission
Idaho Mining Association
Lemhi County Commissioners
Natural Resources Conservation Service
National Association of Soil Conservation Districts
NOAA Fisheries
Salmon River Electric Co-Op
Shoshone-Bannock Tribes
State of Idaho
The Challis Messenger
Thompson Creek Minerals
University of Idaho Cooperative Extension Service
U. S. Farm Service Agency
U.S. Forest Service
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

CUSTER SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS

January 2026	1	New Year's Day – Office Closed
	13	CSWCD Board meeting – 3:00 P.M.
	7/8	PCSRF Board Meeting and project review
	15	Legislative Displays – State Capitol
February 2026		
	12	CSWCD Board Meeting – 3:00 P.M.
	*	Spring Division IV meeting
	16	President's Day – Office Closed
	*	Bread in a Bag – Challis Elementary 4th Graders
March 2026		
	12	CSWCD Board Meeting – 3:00 P.M.
	16/19	Ag Week Activities co-sponsored with Custer Co Extension
	31	ISWCC – Annual and 5 Year Plan due
April 2026		
	6/7	Natural Resource Awareness Day
	10	CSWCD Board Meeting – 3:00 P.M.
	*	Start of Stewardship Week
	27-28	State Envirothon
May 2026		
	14	CSWCD Board Meeting – 3:00 p.m. Review Final Budget/Plan
	25	Memorial Day office closed
June 2025		
	11	CSWCD Board Meeting – 3:00 p.m.
	30	FY2021 Fiscal Year ends
July 2025		
	4	Fourth of July - office closed
	9	CSWCD Board Meeting – 3:00 p.m.
	**	Custer County Fair – Display at Fair

August 2025

13	CSWCD Board Meeting – 3:00 p.m.
15	ISWCC Match Report Due
**	CSWCD Summer Tour
**	Local Work Group Meeting – Salmon

September 2025

7	Labor Day – Office Closed
10	CSWCD Board Meeting 3:00 p.m.
24	5th Grade Annual Outdoor Field Day – Pahsimeroi Valley

October 2025

23	Columbus Day office closed
8	CSWCD Board Meeting – 3:00 p.m. Poster Judging/Speech Contest Judging
**	Fall Division VI meeting Division VI Poster Contest and Speech Contest Judging Request County Funds for current FY

November 2025

3	Election Day
11	Veterans Day - office closed
12	CSWCD Board Meeting – 3:00 p.m.
****	IASCD Conference – Lewiston, Idaho
26	Thanksgiving - Office closed

December 2025

1	Audit Report Posted to State Secretary of State site
10	CSWCD Board Meeting – 3:00 p.m.
20	ISWCC Performance Report Due
24	Office closed for Christmas
25	Christmas Day
31	New Year's Eve – Office Closed

** Indicates do not know date or dates have not been set.

APPENDIX A: Soils General Soils Map Units:

Cool Soils on Flood Plains, Stream Terraces, Fan Terraces, and Outwash Fans

Percentage of survey area: About 26 percent

1. Mooretown-Tohobit-Bursteadt
Very deep, nearly level, somewhat poorly drained and moderately well drained soils that formed in mixed alluvium.

- Percentage of survey area: 2 percent
- Position on landscape: Flood plains and stream terraces
- Elevation: 3,700 to 6,300 feet
- Average annual precipitation: 8 to 14 inches
- Frost-free period: 50 to 90 days
- Minor components: Aquents and Blackfoot, Cowbone, Smout, and Wimpy soils
- Major uses: Irrigated cropland, hayland, and pastureland, and rangeland

2. Simeroi-Whitecloud-Ringle
Very deep, undulating to hilly, somewhat excessively drained and well drained soils that formed in alluvium derived from limestone.

- Percentage of survey area: 10 percent
- Position on landscape: Fan terraces and outwash fans
- Elevation: 4,500 to 7,000 feet Average annual precipitation: 6 to 11 inches
- Frost-free period: 50 to 100 days
- Minor components: Paint, Sanfelipe, and Snowslide soils
- Major uses: Irrigated cropland, hayland, and pastureland, and rangeland
-

3. Pahsimeroi-Whiteknob-Leadore
Very deep, undulating to hilly, somewhat excessively drained and well drained soils that formed in alluvium derived from quartzite

- Percentage of survey area: 14 percent
- Position on landscape: Fan terraces and outwash fans
- Elevation: 4,500 to 6,700 feet
- Average annual precipitation: 7 to 11 inches
- Frost-free period: 50 to 90 days
- Minor components: Bartonflat, Bock, Bunting, Dawtonia, Derwell, Dickeypeak, Firebox,Kadletz, Packmo, Pedoli, Sparmo, Sprabat, and Zer soils
- Major uses: Irrigated cropland, hayland, and pastureland, and rangeland

Cool Soils Dominantly on Hills and Mountains

Percentage of survey area: About 31 percent

4. Millhi-Badland-Perreau
Very deep, undulating to steep, moderately well drained and well drained soils that formed in lacustrine sediment, and Badland

- Percentage of survey area: 4 percent
- Position on landscape: Hills, lacustrine terraces, and stream terraces
- Elevation: 3,900 to 6,000 feet
- Average annual precipitation: 7 to 11 inches
- Frost-free period: 75 to 100 days
- Minor components: Lacrol, Morphey, and Oxhead soils
- Major uses: Irrigated cropland, hayland, and pastureland, and rangeland

5. Dacont-Gaciba-Farvant
Shallow and very deep, rolling to very steep, well drained soils that formed in colluviums and residuum derived from extrusive igneous rock and tuff

- Percentage of survey area: 12 percent
- Position on landscape: Hills and mountains
- Elevation: 5,000 to 7,300 feet
- Average annual precipitation: 6 to 14 inches
- Frost-free period: 50 to 90 days
- Minor components: Bayhorse, Frailton, Gradco, Howcan, Mitring, Mogg, and Ureal soils
- Major uses: Rangeland and wildlife habitat

6. Calcids-Dawtonia-Venum
Moderately deep to very deep, rolling to very steep, well drained soils that formed in colluvium and alluvium derived from quartzite and Position on landscape: Hills and mountains

- Percentage of survey area: 15 percent
- Elevation: 3,900 to 7,000 feet
- Average annual precipitation: 7 to 14 inches
- Frost-free period: 60 to 100 days
- Minor components: Challis, Cronks, Snowslide, and Zer soils
- Major uses: Rangeland and wildlife habitat

Cold Soils on Flood Plains, Stream Terraces, Fan Terraces, and Outwash Fans

Percentage of survey area: About 12 percent

7. Biglost-Copperbasin-Thosand
Very deep, nearly level, poorly drained to moderately well drained soils that formed in mixed alluvium.

- Percentage of survey area: 4 percent
- Position on landscape: Flood plains and stream terraces
- Elevation: 4,500 to 7,400 feet
- Average annual precipitation: 8 to 18 inches
- Frost-free period: 5 to 60 days
- Minor components: Bigrant, Fezip, Leecreek, Lemroi, Lilylake, Redfish, and

- Wiskisprings soils
- Major uses: Irrigated pastureland, rangeland, and wildlife habitat

8. Arbus-Fandow-Mountainboy
Shallow to a hardpan and very deep, undulating to hilly, somewhat excessively drained and well drained soils that formed in alluvium derived from limestone

- Percentage of survey area: 5 percent
- Position on landscape: Fan terraces and outwash fans
- Elevation: 6,000 to 7,500 feet
- Average annual precipitation: 8 to 16 inches
- Frost-free period: 30 to 80 days
- Minor components: Bluedome, Goosebury, Surrett, and Windcoat soils
- Major uses: Rangeland

9. Chamberlain-Wiggleton-Busterback
Very deep, nearly level to undulating, well drained and somewhat excessively drained soils that formed in glacial outwash and alluvium derived from granite, quartzite, and limestone and mixed rock sources.

- Percentage of survey area: 3 percent
- Position on landscape: Fan terraces, stream terraces, and outwash fans
- Elevation: 6,200 to 7,500 feet
- Average annual precipitation: 12 to 20 inches
- Frost-free period: 5 to 60 days
- Minor components: Castlepeak, Geemore, and Yankeefork soils
- Major uses: Irrigated pastureland and rangeland mixed rock sources

Cold Soils Dominantly on Hills and Mountains

Percentage of survey area: About 31 percent

10. Heathcoat-Escarlo-Brabas
Very deep, rolling to steep, well drained soils that formed in uplifted lacustrine sediment and alluvial deposits

- Percentage of survey area: 2 percent
- Position on landscape: Hills
- Elevation: 6,500 to 8,400 feet
- Average annual precipitation: 11 to 16 inches
- Frost-free period: 30 to 60 days
- Minor components: Goldhill and Soen soils
- Major uses: Rangeland and wildlife habitat

11. Klug-Povey-Threedot
Very deep, hilly to very steep, well drained and moderately well drained soils that formed in colluvium and glacial till derived from quartzite and granite

- Percentage of survey area: 6 percent

- Position on landscape: Mountains and moraines
- Elevation: 6,000 to 9,000 feet
- Average annual precipitation: 12 to 22 inches
- Frost-free period: 10 to 70 days
- Minor components: Goldhill, Hagenbarth, Langer, and Reck soils
- Major uses: Rangeland and wildlife habitat

12. Zeebar-Donkehill-Parkay
Shallow and very deep, hilly to very steep, well drained soils that formed in colluviums and residuum derived from extrusive igneous rock

- Percentage of survey area: 9 percent
- Position on landscape: Mountains and hills
- Elevation: 6,500 to 9,000 feet
- Average annual precipitation: 12 to 22 inches
- Frost-free period: 30 to 60 days
- Minor components: Friedman, Gaciba, Nielsen, Nurkey, and Resoot soils
- Major uses: Rangeland and wildlife habitat

13. Cryolls-Zeale-Zeelnot
Moderately deep to very deep, hilly to very steep, well drained soils that formed in colluvium and alluvium derived from limestone and mixed rock sources

- Percentage of survey area: 8 percent
- Position on landscape: Mountains and hills
- Elevation: 6,500 to 10,390 feet
- Average annual precipitation: 12 to 30 inches
- Frost-free period: 5 to 60 days
- Minor components: Adek, Jimbee, Meegernot, Meegero, and Nitchly soils, Rock
- outcrop, and Skibo soils
- Major uses: Rangeland and wildlife habitat

14. Cryepts-Lag-Ketchum
Moderately deep to very deep, hilly to very steep, well drained soils that formed in colluvium derived from quartzite, phyllite, and sandstone and mixed rock sources

- Percentage of survey area: 6 percent
- Position on landscape: Mountains
- Elevation: 6,000 to 10,000 feet
- Average annual precipitation: 18 to 30 inches
- Frost-free period: 5 to 60 days
- Minor components: Coalkiln, Ezbin, Gany, and Lemco soils, Rock outcrop, and
- Struggle and Zeebar soils
- Major uses: Woodland and wildlife habitat

APPENDIX B: Custer County Road and Bridge Priorities

Custer County Road and Bridge respectfully submit the following road priorities that they Could result in a partnership opportunity with the District within the next five years.

Kinnikinic Road Culverts- Two culverts replaced with bridges. The two culverts on Kinnikinic are starting to collapse and the road surface is starting to fall in. The highway culvert for Kinnikinic is also problematic and was listed as a high priority with IDFG in the early 2000's. Some basic information exists to address this issue. Some fisheries work has been accomplished above the highway and could fall into water a water quality type project for funding. The district could provide some administrative help including looking for financial resources. Funds have been requested for both county culverts and work is ongoing as of 2025. Funds have been idenfied for completion in of Culvert 1 in 2026 and culvert #2 in 2027.

Bayhorse Bridge Replacement – Administrative support from Custer SWCD in conjunction with the Custer County Commissioners and Custer County Road and Bridge. This bridge is at risk of being condemned and is a critical component to a neighboring landowners whose irrigation pipeline crosses on the existing bridge.

Squaw Creek Bridges- Replacement of Three old concrete bridges with new bridges. The three concrete bridges are breaking apart due to heavy truck traffic. The district could provide some administrative help including looking for financial resources. Ongoing with other funding.

Mouth of Mill Creek Road- Replacement of wood bridge with concrete bridge. The wood bridge deck and railing is startimg to rot and fall apart. The district could provide some administrative help including looking for financial resources. This area would fall under recreation in our 5-year plan.

Hot Springs Road Culverts- Replacement of the three side by side culverts with a bridge where Warm Springs Creek goes under Hot Springs Road. Culverts are not sufficient to carry CFM do to replacement of structures up stream. The district could provide some administrative help including looking for financial resources. Additional culverts on private driveways have similar issues. Several landowners have requested assistance for these culverts. Based on the background of these culverts FEMA did the installation of the culverts as a part of the Warm Springs Flooding after the earthquake.

Appendix C: Currently ESA Listed Species 2025 – Office of Species Conservation https://species.idaho.gov/listed-species-in-idaho/

Species	Scientific Name	Type	Status	Critical Habitat
Banbury Springs Limpet	Idaholanx fresti	Invertebrate	Endangered	None
Bliss Rapids Snail	Taylorconcha serpenticola	Invertebrate	Threatened	None
Bruneau Hot Springsnail	Pyrgulopsis bruneauensis	Invertebrate	Endangered	None
Bull Trout	Salvelinus confluentus	Fish	Threatened	Designated
Canada Lynx	Lynx canadensis	Mammal	Threatened	Designated
Grizzly Bear	Ursus arctos horribilis	Mammal	Threatened	Proposed
Kootenai River White Sturgeon	Acipenser transmontanus	Fish	Endangered	Designated
MacFarlane's four-o'clock	Mirabilis macfarlanei	Plant	Threatened	None
Northern Idaho Ground Squirrel	Urocitellus brunneus	Mammal	Threatened	None
Slickspot Peppergrass	Lepidium papilliferum	Plant	Threatened	Proposed
Snake River Basin Steelhead Trout	Oncorhynchus mykiss	Fish	Threatened	Designated
Snake River Fall-Run Chinook Salmon	Oncorhynchus tshawytscha	Fish	Threatened	Designated
Snake River Physa Snail	Haitia (Physa) natricina	Invertebrate	Endangered	None
Snake River Sockeye Salmon	Oncorhynchus tshawytscha	Fish	Endangered	Designated
Snake River Spring/Summer-Run Chinook Salmon	Oncorhynchus tshawytscha	Fish	Threatened	Designated
Spalding's Catchfly	Silene spaldingii	Plant	Threatened	Proposed
Ute ladies' -tresses	Spiranthes diluvialis	Plant	Threatened	None
Woodland Caribou - Southern Selkirk DPS	Rangifer tarandus ssp. caribou	Mammal	Endangered	Designated
Whitebark Pine	Pinus albicaulis	Plant	Threatened	None
Yellow Billed Cuckoo - Western DPS	Coccyzus americanus occidentalis	Bird	Threatened	Designated

APPENDIX D. Stream Segments of Concern in Custer SWCD (IDAPA 60.05.02.025.05)

Surface Water: Pahsimeroi River
Sub-basin Assessment and Total Maximum Daily Loads

Hydrologic Unit Code	17060202
Size	839 square miles
Streams and Pollutants for Which TMDLs Were Developed	Pahsimeroi River, North Fork of Lawson Creek, East Fork of Pahsimeroi River, Short Creek*
Beneficial Uses	Aquatic life support cold water, seasonal cold water, warm water, salmonid spawning, and modified Contact recreation primary (swimming) or secondary (boating) Water supply domestic, agricultural, and industrial Wildlife habitats Aesthetics
Pollutants of Concern	Sediment and Temperature
Major Land Uses	Irrigated agriculture, dryland agriculture, rangeland, forest
Date Approved by U.S. EPA	TMDL: Approved December 2001 Implementation Plan : Approved 2005 Addendum and 5 Year Review: Approved 2013.Implementatin plan updated 2020.

Overview

Assessments by DEQ have identified that water quality has been limited by sediment deposition the stream channel due to streambank erosion and riparian vegetation reduction. Previous assessments by other agencies identified similar problems and sources of pollutants associated with water quality in the Pahsimeroi River Sub-basin.

DEQ has developed recommendations for reduction of streambank erosion and water temperature within the Pahsimeroi that would ultimately result in beneficial use support through improving streambank stability and subsequently increase vegetation. This TMDL recommends no changes in the waste load allocation for the Pahsmeroi River Fish Hatchery.

Patterson and Morse Creeks are listed for flow alteration. The US Environmental Protection Agency do Not believe alteration is a pollutant as defined by the Clean Water Act. Since TMDLs are not required for bodies impaired by pollution but not pollutants, TMDLs were no developed for flow alteration. The 2020update can be found at:
https://www2.deq.idaho.gov/admin/LEIA/api/document/download/11930

Surface Water: Upper Salmon River
Sub-basin Assessment and Total Maximum Daily Loads

Hydrologic Unit Code	17060201
Size	2425 square miles
Streams and Pollutants for Which TMDLs Were Developed	Challis Creek
Beneficial Uses	Domestic water supply, cold water aquatic life, salmonid spawning, cold water biota, primary and secondary contact recreation
Pollutants of Concern	Sediment
Major Land Uses	Forest, Irrigated Cropland, Range, Urban
Date Approved by U.S. EPA	TMDL: Approved March 2003 Implementation Plan: Approved 2007 Reviewed: September 2016

Upper Salmon River Subbasin Assessment and TMDL January 2003 "The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has identified that Challis Creek is not fully supporting the beneficial uses of salmonid spawning and coldwater biota as defined in state Water Quality Standards and the federal Clean Water Act. A Total Maximum Daily Load for sediment has been prepared for this water to restore full support of these beneficial uses."

"There are (were) 11 §303(d) listed stream/river segments on 9 waters in the Upper Salmon River Subbasin. There is one TMDL for Challis Creek prepared in this document. The disposition of the remaining §303(d) listed streams that will not have a TMDL prepared for pollutant loads is based on guidance provided by the Environmental Protection Agency in a memorandum from November 2001 titled 2002 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report Guidance."

"Streams that have flow less than 1 cfs are not used to represent segments with higher flow, and are not held to narrative water quality standards. Numeric water quality standards do apply during periods of optimal flow, however."

"Streams that are frequently dewatered for significant periods of the year, or throughout the year do not have a reasonable potential to support beneficial uses of cold-water biota or salmonid spawning. Flow, in and of itself, is not considered a pollutant, however a listing category of flow alteration exists for these streams. The same is true for habitat alteration. Anthropogenic causes of flow alteration in the Upper Salmon River Subbasin are diversion for irrigation and stock watering, aquaculture and hydroelectric power generation. Road Creek, from the lower private/BLM boundary downstream, and Warm Spring Creek from the hatchery diversion downstream falls into the category of flow alteration. Garden Creek from the upstream Challis City Limit to the confluence with the Salmon River will be listed for flow and habitat alteration. The Yankee Fork of the Salmon River will be listed for habitat alteration from 4th of July Creek to the Salmon River. A TMDL will not be developed for them."

FY2026 (7/1/2026 – 6/30/2027) Annual Plan of Work
Custer Soil and Water Conservation District

Conservation District Priority Number 1: Natural Resource Education Program related to Water Quality & Quantity, Range, Pasture and Hay-land and Recreation. (IDAPA 60.05.051.02.03)

Objective: The Custer Soil and Water Conservation District will provide leadership and management of the highest quality standards to meet goals and objectives established by the district.

Goal(s): Maintain district operations and information and education programs effectively and efficiently with an emphasis on agriculture and the local economy.

Actions	Target Date	Individual(s) Responsible
Maintain administrative policies and procedures for district operations: Update District Policy and Procedures Manual, open meeting law; conduct annual elections; complete annual plan of work, provide administrative assistance to NRCS.	6/30	Board of Supervisors, District Employee
Assist landowners with USDA/Farm Bill programs and applications including LWG meetings to help set priorities.	6/30	Supervisors, District Employee & NRCS
Schedule and hold 10 Board Meetings and/or two conference calls to conduct district business.	Monthly	Chairman Karma Bragg, Office Mgr.
Develop and submit Conservation District Budget; request of funds from Lemhi and Custer Counties.	11/1	Board of Supervisors District Employee
Develop and submit Conservation District Annual Plan of Work	1/1	District Employee
Maintain financial management system using QuickBooks software including annual audit. Submittal of financial match reports and performance reports to the ISWCC.	Annually	Tori O'Neal, Treasurer Karma Bragg, Office Mgr.
Identify, secure and administer alternative funding to assist in meeting Conservation District goals and actions.	9/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee
Develop and maintain employee and staff development program to include attendance at IASCD Division Meetings, IASCD Annual Conference, IDEA Workshops and other local, state and regional meetings.	6/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee
Work with NRCS to develop and participate in local working group meetings	9/30	Board of Supervisors/NRCS
Work closely with Custer County Extension office to maintain joint offices	7/1	Board of Supervisors/Staff

Actions: Priority 1: Natural Resource Education Program related to Water Quality& Quantity, Range, Pasture and Hayland and Recreation. (Continued)	**Target Date**	**Individual(s) Responsible**
Use comprehensive and effective youth information and education program to promote and enhance District programs and increase public awareness of conservation and agricultural issues and opportunities. ➢ Sponsor Annual Bread in a Bag program for fourth grade (Feb) ➢ Sponsor 5th Grade Tour (fall) ➢ Sponsor Annual 5th and 6th Grade Poster Contest (Fall) ➢ Sponsor Natural Resource Awareness Day for Elementary School (Fall) ➢ Sponsor Annual Speech Contest (Fall) ➢ Sponsor at least two scholarships for graduating seniors of Challis H.S. ➢ Provide financial assistance to the State Forestry and Idaho Land judging contests. ➢ Provide educational and financial assistance to local FFA ➢ Develop Power Point and District Display for youth education opportunities. ➢ Assist Custer County Extension office with observance of Agricultural Week ➢ Sponsor Annual Natural Resource Awareness Day in the Elementary School (10/14)	Annually 7/1 to 6/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee Lead Person: I&E Specialist, Custer County Weed Supervisor, Custer County Agent, NRCS
Use comprehensive and effective community information and education program to promote and enhance District programs and increase public awareness of conservation issues and opportunities. ➢ Sponsor District tour to target 25-30% of landowners to offer assistance ➢ Develop outreach plan to encourage Energy Conservation Program ➢ Maintain District website ➢ Appoint SWCD representative to Custer County CWMA ➢ Develop Power Point and District Display for County Fairs and Legislative outreach ➢ Appoint District Supervisors to local civic and community groups to promote District Awareness ➢ Develop District Brochures for District outreach and district policy information ➢ Recruit school teacher as alternate member to advise education programs ➢ Develop education program in cooperation with Custer County Weed Dept. ➢ Develop quarterly news articles for the local media about district activities ➢ Develop an Annual Report to be inserted in the local paper for the District ➢ Request attendance and an overview of the programs from RC&D ➢ Sponsor Open House in one outlying area during the year.	Annually 7/1 to 6/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee Custer County Weed Supervisor FSA NRCS ISWC RC&D EC Project Lead County R&B
Work with partners to secure legislative support for Districts within the State of Idaho ➢ Work with IASCD and ISWCC to secure legislative support district's under ISWCC ➢ Work with IDWR to ensure district's are maintained as non-regulatory entities in the State of Idaho	1/1 to 12/1	Board of Supervisors District Employee

Conservation District Priority Number 2: Water Quality and Water Quantity

Objective: Address conditions of water quantity and water quality as it affects fisheries and wildlife resources within the district while maintaining multiple use and meet regulations of the Clean Water Act, Anti-degradation and Endangered Species Act.

Goal(s): Maintain and improve resource conditions on wetlands and riparian pastures and implement programs to enhance anadromous fish, resident fish and bull trout within the District.

Actions	**Target Date**	**Individual(s) Responsible**
Coordinate conservation programs and projects within the boundaries of the Custer SWCD between interested landowners and agencies (NRCS, IDWR, IDFG, US BoR). ➢ Assist in identification of priority areas and generate local support for stream enhancements within the watershed of the Upper Salmon Basin. ➢ Seek funding and assistance to implement projects that are identified to enhance fisheries in priority areas within the District including but not limited to BPA and PCSRF, WQPA. ➢ Work with local agencies willing to assist landowners to be in compliance with ESA by providing information and potential funding opportunities related to in-stream diversions, fish screens and riparian fencing opportunities. ➢ Administer project funding according to policies and procedures established by the District and in compliance with state and federal laws and funding source requirements. ➢ Meet reporting requirements as identified by funding entities. ➢ Develop and/or maintain riparian management areas within the District to protect waterways from noxious weeds ➢ Assist SREC while pursuing projects for implementation under the Energy Conservation Program. ➢ Work with Custer County and R&B to develop joint projects. ➢ Work with the Challis Cemetery District to seek funding for irrigation system.	7/30 Through 6/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee NRCS, IDWR, TNC, Custer County Weed Supervisor, RC&D, ISWC – WQ staff Custer County R&B

Actions: (Priority #2 Water Quality and Water Quantity Continued)	Target Date	Individual(s) Responsible
Assist landowners to comply with Idaho Department of Water Resources and Corps of Engineers permit process for irrigation and projects on wetlands and stream-banks.	6/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee NRCS
Evaluate water conservation opportunities of sprinkler irrigation versus flood irrigation and address irrigation diversions where appropriate (address 2 this FY).	6/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee NRCS
Work with ISWC/FSA/NRCS to promote water quality and water quantity opportunities through EQIP and CStP programs within District Priority areas to assist cooperators to develop BMP's and multiple uses on riparian areas and wetlands.	6/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee NRCS ISWC
Coordinate with interested landowners and groups to establish willows plantings on streams and utilize youth groups such as FFA or Envirothon whenever possible.	6/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee NRCS, IDFG.
Seek non-traditional funding to assist cooperators with implementation of BMP's identified by NRCS technical staff and BOR staff.	1/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee NRCS
Assist cooperators with technical assistance and funding on irrigation measuring devices and head-gates.	6/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee NRCS, BOR, IDWR
Consider land use effect on water quality (i.e.; urban interface and recreation)	6/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee
Assist the Custer County Weed Supervisor with public awareness of aquatic and terrestrial invasive species	6/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee Custer County Weed Supervisor
Work with Custer County and Custer County Road and Bridge to address needs of the county related to water Quality and culvert replacements.	6/30	District Employee, R&B Supervisor, Board of Supervisors.
Review and assist with 303D list and TMDL listed streams including opportunities to utilize 319 funding to address water quality.	6/30	District Employee/ Supervisors/ISWCC

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Custer Soil and Water Conservation District

Conservation District Priority Number 3: Range Land
Objective: Maintain an economic stability of the ranching industry and multiple uses by assisting cooperators to improve forage quality and quantity of rangeland within the district.
Goal(s): Improve rangeland within the Custer SWCD

Actions	Target Date	Individual(s) Responsible
Identify local ranchers willing to develop comprehensive grazing and resource management systems.	6/30	Board of Supervisors Dist. Employee, NRCS
Maintain an active role in the Challis Experimental Stewardship program	6/30	Board of Supervisors
Promote the development of coordinated resource management plans under EQIP.	6/30	Board of Supervisors NRCS
Develop relationships with BLM, USFS, USFWS, NMFS, NRCS and IDFG to assist with public land grazing issues and enhancements.	6/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee NRCS
Promote and provide information to improve control of noxious weeds on both public and private lands in cooperation with county weed supervisor.	6/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee NRCS, Extension Agent, County Weed Supervisor
Provide public comment on grazing management, wilderness and fire management issues that impact grazing management on Public Land.	6/30	Board of Supervisors
Assist NRCS and encourage local grazing associations to work in cooperation with BLM/USFS and environmental interests to develop sound economic use of public grazing lands with emphasis on multiple use.	6/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee, NRCS
Assist and encourage cooperators to address Wolf Depredation issues in the District	6/30	Board of Supervisors
Assist and encourage cooperators to address Sage Grouse issues in the District	6/30	Board of Supervisors

Conservation District Priority Number 4: Pasture/Hay/Cropland

Objective: Maintain economic stability of the ranching industry and multiple uses by assisting cooperators to improve forage quality and quantity of their pasture, hay and rangeland within the district.

Goal(s): Improve pasture, hay and rangeland within the Custer SWCD

Actions	Target Date	Individual(s) Responsible
Identify local ranchers willing to develop comprehensive resource management systems.	6/30	Board of Supervisors Dist. Employee, NRCS
Promote the development of coordinated resource management plans under EQIP.	6/30	Board of Supervisors NRCS
Provide administrative assistance to NRCS on USDA/Farm Bill programs.	6/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee, NRCS
Promote water conservation and energy conservation including but not limited to improved irrigation management, conversion from flood to sprinkler where appropriate or evaluate viability of flood versus sprinkler	6/30	Board of Supervisors NRCS
Promote and provide information to improve control of noxious weeds on both public and private lands in cooperation with county weed supervisor.	6/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee NRCS, Extension Agent, County Weed Supervisor
Evaluate water conservation opportunities of sprinkler irrigation versus flood irrigation.	6/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee, NRCS
Promote use of new No-Till Drill equipment within the Custer SWCD	6/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee, NRCS

Conservation District Priority Number 5: Recreation

Objective: Seek partnerships with recreational entities to enhance the resources and economics of Custer Soil and Water Conservation District.

Goal(s): Enhance the aesthetics of the recreational resources within the district by encouraging a partnership between recreational entities, grazing associations and ranchers.

Actions	**Target Date**	**Individual(s) Responsible**
Assist local grazing associations and coordinate with local recreational entities to enhance the resource and aesthetics in areas with high recreational impact. This includes request for funding when appropriate.	6/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee NRCS
Provide a forum for recreational entities to express input into resource planning associated with the District.	6/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee NRCS
Seek cooperation from landowners interested in assisting the district to address recreational interests to include recreational properties.	6/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee
Develop cooperative working relationships with public land management agencies to assist with the enhancement of recreational opportunities.	6/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee
Work with SNRA to develop riparian projects in the Stanley area that complement the scenic value of the basin and still maintain agricultural stability in the area.	6/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee SNRA
Assist the Custer County Weed Supervisor with public awareness about certified weed free hay	6/30	Board of Supervisors District Employee County Weed Supervisor
Provide public comment on wilderness and wildfire management on public land.	6/30	Board of Supervisors

Acronym	Defined
AFO	Animal Feedlot Operation
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
USBoR	U. S. Bureau of Reclamation
BPA	Bonneville Power Administration
CStP	Conservation Stewardship Program
Custer County CWMA	Custer County Cooperative Weed Management Area
EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentives Program
FSA	Farm Service Agency
IDA	Idaho Department of Agriculture
IDFG	Idaho Department of Fish and Game
IDWR	Idaho Department of Water Resources
IAMP	Innovative Agriculture & Marketing Partnership (IAMP)
ISWCC	Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission
LWG	Local Working Group
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
PCSRF	Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund (run by OSC)
OSC	Idaho Governors Office of Species Conservation
RC&D	Resource Conservation and Development
SNRA	Sawtooth National Recreation Area
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
WHIP	Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program
WQPA	Water Quality Program for Agriculture

Comments:

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