

# Executive Update



A special update for Idaho conservation leaders ♦ Fall 2005

## Special Feature

### Pressurizing System Cuts Irrigation Fuel Bills: EQIP Helps

*Excerpted from the Ag Weekly  
Written by Cindy Snyder*

CASTLEFORD--**Primo Farms'** decision to convert 10 pivots to gravity pressurization rather than diesel run pumps looks like a stroke of genius given the increases in fuel prices.

Last spring **Chris and John Pratt**, brothers who farm with their cousin **Marc Elliott** under the name of Primo Farms, penciled out the economics of installing nearly 2.5 miles of pipeline to take advantage of the natural fall of the land to supply 10 pivots with gravity pressurized water. Considering \$1.30 per gallon diesel fuel and that both pressurizing and operating the pivots was using 80,000 gallons of fuel each irrigation season, they calculated they could recoup their \$600,000 investment in 2-1/2 to 3 years. That calculation included receiving 50 percent cost-share through a special energy conservation provision in the 2005 federal Environmental Quality Incentives Program or EQIP.

With fuel prices soaring to \$3 per gallon for farm diesel, they now expect to pay off the system in 1-1/2 to 2 years.

"Yes it was a long ways and it was a pretty expensive investment, but it's going to pay for itself pretty quickly," said Rick Rodgers, who manages Primo Farms' 15 pivots in western Twin Falls County. (Primo Farms is based near Aberdeen, Idaho.)

Converting to gravity pressurization allowed Primo Farms to save about 70,000 gallons of diesel. Some

diesel is still needed to operate the pivots. They plan to dig another pipeline before the 2006 irrigation season to supply another three pivots with gravity pressurized water.

Rodgers, also chairman of the **Balanced Rock Soil Conservation District**, hopes other farmers will evaluate their operations to see if a gravity pressurized system could save them money but, more importantly, help conserve energy.

**Roger Stutzman**, who farms between Filer and Buhl, also took advantage of the energy conservation provision in EQIP to do a

gravity pressurized pipeline. Having watched his electricity costs double in the last few years, he sees plenty of long-term savings.

"The initial investment is large but this doesn't cost anything after the initial investment," Stutzman said.



## CSP Informational Meetings Scheduled

A series of public meetings for the 2006 Conservation Security Program (CSP) are now scheduled in the Clearwater and North Fork of the Clearwater watersheds. A sign-up for the watersheds, along with the Lower Bear-Malad Watershed, is expected to begin this fall or in early winter.

The meetings are as follows:

Nov. 22:

9 a.m., Weippe Community Center

9 a.m. & 5 p.m., Lewiston Community Center

7 p.m., Orofino Junior High & Ferdinand, Assumption Parish Hall

Nov. 29:

9 a.m., Orofino Community Center, below the Pizza Factory

9 a.m. & 5 p.m., Lapwai Sacred Heart Church—Parish Hall

7 p.m., Kamiah Welcome Center

Nov. 30:

8 a.m., Craigmont City Hall & 7 p.m., Moscow, Latah County Fairgrounds

Dec. 1:

8 a.m., Kendrick Fire Hall & 2 p.m., Deary Fire Hall

Dec. 5:

8 a.m., Moscow, Latah County Fairgrounds



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## Idaho Hosts Farm Bill Forum



Mark Rey

Idaho USDA agencies hosted a 2007 Farm Bill listening session earlier this fall in Blackfoot.

**Mark Rey**, USDA undersecretary for natural resources and the environment, led the session. **Pat Tagasaki**, executive director for the Idaho State Department of Agriculture, assisted and **Doug Andersen** with KPVI Channel 6, served as the moderator.

Over 160 people representing a wide variety of organizations attended. Their testimony ranged from rural development and housing assistance issues to farm commodity and conservation programs.

The session was part of a nationwide listening tour for gaining public input in preparation for the next Farm Bill.



**Kent Foster**, executive director for the Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts, provides comments.



The author “digging holes” with a pry bar.

## NRCS Mapping Soils in City of Rocks Reserve

by **Carla Rebernak**,  
Soil Survey Project Leader

The sun was rising over the granite monoliths of the City of Rocks National Reserve in south central Idaho as NRCS Soil Scientist **Bill Hiatt** and I started down the Skyline Trail. Better known these days for its rock climbing, the City of Rocks became a National

Reserve in 1988. Pioneers on the California Trail in 1849 described it as “a dismantled, rock city built of the Stone Age.” The name remains appropriate. The soils, however, are not as resistant. Intermittent streams are carving deep gullies. Climbers are suppressing native vegetation and further exposing the soil to erosive forces.

Park managers are looking for NRCS soils data to help better manage the area. The Cassia County Soil Survey covered 75 percent of the Reserve, but 3,000 acres remained unmapped. Bill and I received the opportunity.

We worked down the trail, stopping to dig holes, describe soils and document range sites. Granite formations mingled with rolling meadows of lupine and sagebrush.

Pinyon pines cracked boulders in half with their roots.

We completed the field work in two weeks and, in the coming months, NRCS will provide the National Park Service a complete soil survey.

Park managers will integrate the digital soil map into their GIS model, and the tables and reports of soil potentials and interpretations will assist in making informed decisions.

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## Conference Recognizes Conservationists



The Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts (IASCD) awarded **Dallan Nalder** (right) with the **Doyle L. Scott Award** for Idaho conservation leadership. The award was part of the IASCD's annual meeting. **Nalder** farms near **Holbrook** with his family (pictured).



**Richard Sims**, NRCS state conservationist, presents the **R.N. Irving Award** for NRCS District Conservationist of the Year to **Mike Combs** of **Burley**.



**Kyle Hawley**, IASCD president from **Moscow**, (right) presents the **2005 Agency Conservationist Award** to **Scott Koberg**, IASCD water quality resource conservationist in **Boise**.



“Downtown” in the City of Rocks.