

**VALLEY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
JUNE MINUTES 209 N IDAHO ST, CASCADE**

THURSDAY JUNE 5, 2025, IN-PERSON/ZOOM HYBRID MEETING

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88091655753?pwd=XaHxrYwWfdTvnYrk1b2qYlMJjAu4j.1>

Meeting Called to Order at 9:02am by Art Troutner

Members Present: Art Troutner (Chairman), John Lillehaug (Treasurer), Judy Anderson, Lenard Long (Associate Supervisor), Pam Pace (Associate Supervisor).

Others Present: Durena Farr, VSWCD District Manager

Others Online: Janet Cherry, ERG/EPA; Ryan Hedrick, Bureau of Reclamation; Travis Jones, ISCD; Megan Brooksher, ISWCC; Bill Lillibridge, ISWCC; Kim Thompson, NFPRWC Admin; Britney Brand, Boise State Hazard and Climate Resilience Institute; Cynda Herrick, Valley Co. P&Z.

New Business:

1. **Bureau of Reclamation - Lake Cascade Water Operations Modeling Study:** Ryan Hedrick provided an update on behalf of the Bureau of Reclamation. The Lake Cascade Water Operations Modeling Study results will be ready in July, with presentation scheduled for the August 7th board meeting. Mike Koolh, who conducted the study, will be the appropriate presenter. Ryan reported that Lake Cascade is currently at full capacity with water being released for flow augmentation. The Bureau plans to maintain 50-60,000 acre-feet of space for flow augmentation, anticipating higher flows of 1,800-2,000 CFS from Cascade this year. The "day of allocation" for water use may come early this year (July 2nd or 3rd) due to low natural flows. The study confirmed there is no "silver bullet" operational solution to significantly help the lake given required irrigation and augmentation flows, and future warming trends will exacerbate conditions for Lake Cascade.
2. **Janet Cherry - Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap Grant Update:** Janet provided an update on the South Lake Recreational Water and Sewer District project. A community outreach meeting is scheduled for June 20th, 5:00-7:00 PM, as a hybrid event at the EOC facility. **The Valley Soil and Water Conservation District is sponsoring this meeting with Durena Farr assisting with logistics** after the South Lake Recreational Water and Sewer District board declined to host. Leonard Long will be the first speaker to outline the project purpose and water quality concerns in Lake Cascade, incorporating 2024 nutrient sample data from DEQ. Mayor Nula will present the city's current and past wastewater efforts. Commissioner Caldwell and John Harry from South Lake Recreational Water and Sewer District will also speak. DEQ representatives will not attend in person. The meeting will focus on the West Mountain subdivision (Phase 1) study under the EPA grant. **The study must be completed by December 31, 2026, with funding from EPA supporting the work at no cost to the district.** Key challenges include gaining property access for septic density assessments and understanding existing on-site systems including pit privies and porta-potties. A need exists for cost-sharing pharmaceutical and personal care product (PCP) sampling in West Mountain wells, Cascade's well, and the lake at **\$1,500 per sample for six samples totaling \$9,000**. County commissioners are willing to cost-share, and additional funding sources are being explored. **Lenard Long will attend the June 20th community meeting.**
3. **Travis Jones - ISCD Update on Commission Changes:** Travis explained the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission's change in affiliation from the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) to the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR). This strategic move, initiated by the Governor's office in February, aims to protect funding from legislative budget cuts and a "Doge" task force focused on government efficiencies. The Commission expects to maintain its autonomy similar to the Water Resource Board within IDWR. **All 50 Idaho districts have applied for WQPA funds this year for the first time.** A significant benefit is districts' eligibility for new state funding, including **\$30 million for water infrastructure projects over the next decade through IDWR**. WQPA funding decreased from \$5 million to \$1 million due to the cessation of federal ARPA funding. Over \$2 million in EQIP funding for new agreements was

approved in FY25 team-wide. The former administrator position remains unfilled, with IDWR Director Matt Weaver serving as acting administrator.

4. **Meghan Brooksher/Bill Lillibridge - Commission Update:** All 50 districts submitted WQPA applications this year. **Funding results will be announced at ISWCC June 16th board meeting.** Local support documentation for match funds is due by June 30th to be eligible. Financial and match reports are due August 16th. **District surveys are due to the commission by July 31st.** For State Ag BMP rankings, **the Valley SWCD's Cascade Hot Springs Fencing Project ranked #3 within the Southwest Bag** out of seven projects. Only the top-ranked project received partial funding. The aging infrastructure application for the Lake Irrigation District is in progress and due August 1st.
5. **Cynda Herrick - Valley Co. Planning and Zoning Updates:** Upcoming P&Z agenda items include a 10-lot subdivision "Buttercup" within Tamarack resort boundaries, an Idaho Power Clear Creek substation, withdrawal of Prestige Water Sports signage, new signage for Saddle Rock subdivision, and a mobile food service truck in Yellow Pine. Other items include a privy request in Gold Dust Ranch #2, ongoing real estate sign disputes, and Paradigm's request to split worker housing units. Cynda expressed disappointment regarding a March 6th letter from VSWCD to county commissioners suggesting Valley County lacks planner expertise for the McCall impact area. Lenard clarified the letter's intent was to highlight McCall City's experience with lake management. **Regarding the McCall Impact Area: if the county assumes administration, existing Valley County comprehensive plan and zoning will apply during transition** until new codes are adopted. County commissioners are seeking recommendations for code improvements to better protect water quality, particularly around Payette Lake. **A public meeting on the McCall impact area is scheduled for July 7th at 2:00 PM at the Valley County Courthouse.**
6. **Britney Brand - Boise State Hazard and Climate Resilience Institute Update:** The Philanthropy Northwest grant program (Thriving Communities) has been terminated, though litigation is ongoing with optimism for overturning the termination. The existing water availability study proposal can be retooled for future opportunities. **West Central Mountains Resilience Assessment and Strategy Process:** Four targeted surveys were distributed receiving 30-50 responses each. The team is reviewing and fact-checking extensive data, cross-referencing with existing plans. **A steering committee has been formed** with representatives from New Meadows, McCall, Donnelly, Cascade, plus Cynda Herrick, Durena Farr, and others. **Synthesis results are anticipated by June 9th** with workshops planned for late summer through early fall using "challenge and solution trees" for solution-oriented discussions. Final results will be presented at the Economic Summit in October with additional community meetings planned. Survey results highlighted concerns about aging, overburdened stormwater systems and invasive species/noxious weeds, including the ongoing Eurasian Milfoil infestation in Payette Lake.
7. **Kim Thompson - North Fork Payette River Coalition Update:** The restoration plan is approximately 60% complete with edits and gaps remaining before the October deadline. Leonard and Durena are actively involved. Recommendations for county comprehensive plan changes were submitted in March and are being incorporated by Cynda Herrick. The Bureau of Reclamation's water operations study concluded no operational changes can effectively mitigate lake blooms, emphasizing the importance of district project work including stream bank restorations and water savings efforts. Primary focus remains on phosphorus reduction, though funding mechanisms have been significantly decreased.
8. **Lenard Long - Water Supply Update (for Pam Pace):** Lake Cascade is currently at 97% capacity. No significant June algal bloom has been observed yet, likely due to substantial water releases and good flows. The first flush of snowmelt occurred early this year in late March and April, with little rainfall since early April. Irrigators are currently using flood water, not storage water, and started irrigating earlier than usual due to dry conditions.
9. **Fencing Work & Off-site Watering:** Idaho Fish and Game and BOR contributed funds for RB2 fence repairs, including spring repairs and installation of a drop-down fence for wildlife corridors to be used outside normal cattle grazing periods. **The Cascade Hot Springs Fencing Project**

ranked #3 in the Southwest Bag for State Ag Grant but did not secure funding for this years application. This is the second year applying for the same grant. The district has received only one WQPA grant in previous 9 years. The need to develop off-site water sites with producers was highlighted as a potentially less expensive and competitive grant option to keep cattle out of TMDL streams.

10. **UI Extension SEEP Erosion Control Class:** The class has been postponed until fall due to low participation (only two attendees). It was recommended to focus on direct contact and word-of-mouth outreach to target groups such as McCall contractors requiring re-certification. A suggestion was made to apply for grants (approximately \$3,000 per class) to cover educator costs and offer the class for free initially. Current Valley County practice allows excavation before building permits, contributing to erosion issues. The idea of requiring an excavation permit for dirt work was raised as a potential solution.
11. **Forestry Tour:** The forestry tour agenda is set for both indoor and outdoor sessions in Idaho City with hopes to visit active operations. Megan Brooksher will attend. Around 40-50 participants are expected, similar to last year. Next year's tour is planned for Adams County (New Meadows).
1. **Action Item:** Judy moved to approve minutes from May Board Meeting, Colt seconded and **motion carried with all in favor.**
2. **Action Item: Cancellation of July Board Meeting:** Judy Anderson moved to cancel the July 3 2025 board meeting due to it being the day before the Fourth of July holiday. Colt Brown seconded and **motion carried with all in favor.**
3. **Action Item:** John Lillehaug moved to approve April Treasurer's Report (previously deferred from May 1st meeting due to incomplete bank reconciliations due to unavailable bank statements). Judy seconded and **motion carried with all in favor.**
4. **Action Item: Approval of May Treasurer's Report** Motion made by John Lillehaug to approve the May Treasurer's Report after bank reconciliation completed. Colt seconded and **motion carried with all in favor.**
5. **Action Item: Approval of Durena Farr's Time Off Request** Judy moved to accept Durena's request for time off for the Idaho High School Rodeo Finals June 9th. Colt Seconded and **motion carried with all in favor.**

GOOD OF THE ORDER Discussion of upcoming events included June 20th community meeting for SLRWSD wastewater CAWAG project and July 7th McCall Impact Area public meeting.

Date Reminders

June 9th IHSRA Finals (Durena out of office)

June 16th Commission board meeting (WQPA funding results)

June 20th Community outreach meeting, 5:00-7:00 PM, EOC facility

June 30th Local support documentation due for match funds

July 7th Public meeting on McCall impact area, 2:00 PM, Valley County Courthouse

July 31st District surveys due to commission

August 1st Lake Irrigation District aging infrastructure application due

August 7th Next board meeting, 9:00 AM

August 16th Financial and match reports due

Meeting Adjourned by Art Troutner at 11:24 AM Thanks were extended to all attendees.

Chairman: _____ **Date Approved: August 21, 2025**

Minutes prepared by Kim Thompson and Durena Farr