

# Idaho's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

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Presentation by:

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and

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# CREP Background

- CREP is an enhancement of existing Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
  - Over 800,000 acres of dry farmland enrolled in CRP
  - Program participants in almost every Idaho county
- CREP combines CRP with a state match to bring program to irrigated ground

# CREP Background

- Joint Federal-State program for cropland set-aside
- Authorized by Federal Farm Bill
- Many states have enacted CREP programs, most for environmental reasons
- Idaho and Nebraska were the first states to explore using CREP as a solution to water supply conflicts
- Many other western states now looking at CREP for water supply reasons
- CREP Agreement enacted by Governor Risch and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Johanns in May of 2006

# CREP Basics

## ➤ Goals of CREP:

- Set aside up to 100,000 acres of irrigated crop land to reduce consumptive water use from the ESPA by up to 200,000 acre-feet annually, for a period of 15 years
- CREP Agreement also references environmental and energy conservation benefits

# Program Eligibility

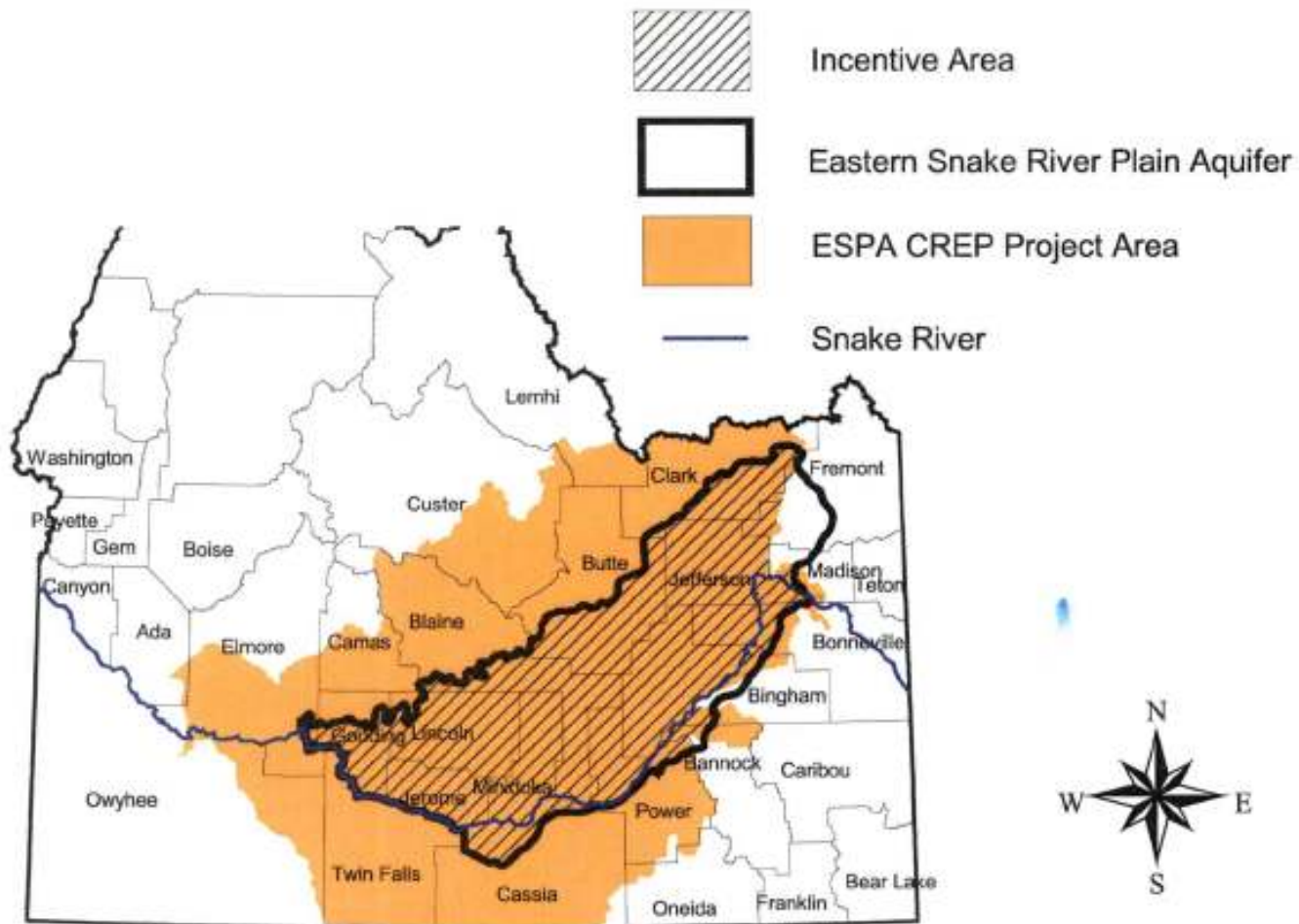
- Land Must be within the “ESPA CREP Area”
- Land must have been irrigated by ground water or surface streams with no direct surface connection to the Snake River for 4 out of the 6 years from 1996-2001
- Land must have been irrigated within 24 months prior to offer submission or have been included in an IDWR-approved mitigation plan
- Land must be physically and legally capable of being irrigated in a normal manner at the time an offer is submitted

# Program Eligibility

- Program participant must enter into an “Agreement not to Divert Water” with the State of Idaho
- Land must have Erodibility Index of 8 or greater or be located within a Conservation Priority Area
- No more than 25% of a county’s cropland may be in CRP/CREP programs

# CREP AREA

## ESPA CREP Incentive Area



# Financial Contributions

- The total cost over a 15-year period is estimated at:

Federal Costs	\$183 million (71%)
State Costs	<u>\$75 million (29%)</u>
TOTAL	\$258 million

- Of Idaho's contributions, \$59 million are in-kind contributions for program administration, contract enforcement, water right enforcement, and monitoring and reporting of program effects.




# Financial Contributions

Of Idaho's contributions, \$15.7 million is cash and includes:

- \$3 million for Idaho Incentive Payments of \$30/acre for eligible lands that use water from ESPA.
- \$5 million for permanent water right acquisitions within the CREP area.
- \$1.4 million for future IWRB water projects within CREP area that benefit the aquifer.
- \$4.6 million for future ISCC grants and loans for water conservation projects within CREP area.

# Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

## IDWR Responsibilities

- Review all CREP offers to:
    - Ensure CREP offer is covered by a valid water right
    - Determine if the CREP offer has been irrigated within the last 24 months or is part of an IDWR approved mitigation plan
    - Develop an Agreement Not to Divert for each approved contract
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# Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

## Agreement Not To Divert

- Provides information on curtailment of water right(s)
- List the amount of water available for diversion
- IDWR makes every attempt to curtail junior water rights if possible

As of August 10, 2007, the acres enrolled in CREP are as follows:

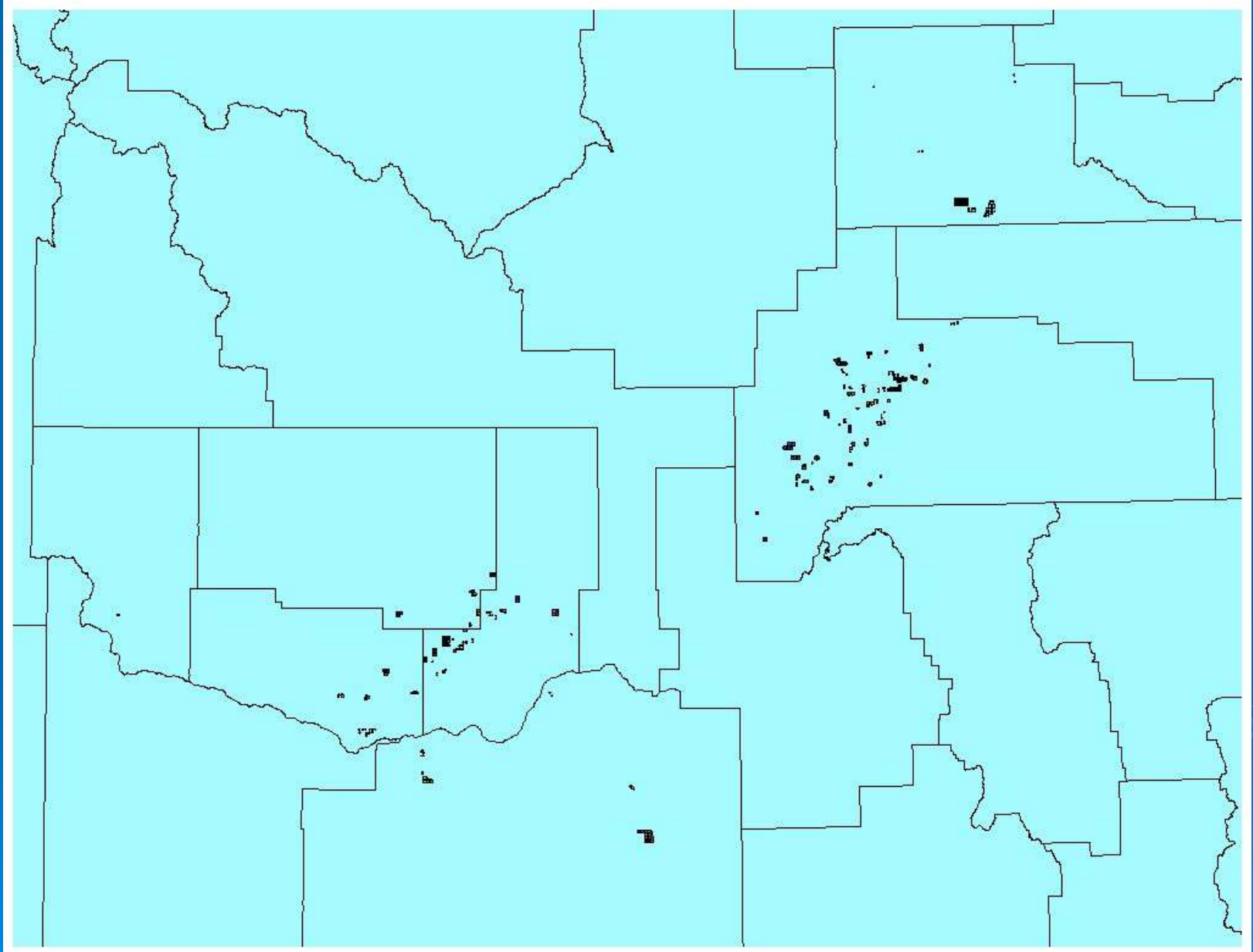
County	Acres Offered	IDWR-Approved Acres	FSA-Approved Acres
Bingham	15,733.2	12,043.2	9,029.2
Bonneville	274.8	153.8	153.8
Cassia	3,825.8	2,821.8	2,245.2
Elmore	213.1	213.1	213.1
Gooding	254.8	141.3	32.1
Jefferson/Clark	7,029.8	2,652.8	1,473.6
Jerome	3,264.8	2,677.1	730.7
Lincoln/Blaine	2,969.7	1,498.7	287.1
Minidoka	11,555.2	7,052.6	3,589.3
Twin Falls	3,624.8	96.7	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>48,746.0</b>	<b>29,351.1</b>	<b>17,754.1</b>

## Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

### Results of IDWR CREP Analysis

- Reviewed over 305 CREP offers for approximately 41,698 acres
- Approved 219 contracts for 29,351 acres
- Returned 62 offers for revisions totaling 9,716 acres
- Determined 24 contracts for 2,631 acres were ineligible

# Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program



# Potential Changes to Increase CREP Enrollment...

## ➤ State

- Water right transfers that are associated with CREP applications are now expedited – **completed**
- Increase State incentive payment – **would require Legislative action**

## ➤ Federal – these would require Congressional action

- Extend the CREP program enrollment beyond 2007 in the New Farm Bill
- Exempt Counties from the 25% cap on cropland that may be in CRP/CREP programs
- Exempt land from being required to have an Erodibility Index of 8 or greater.
- Allow permanent pasture land to enroll if it meets all other criteria

# Thank You

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