



FALL 2025 NEWSLETTER



1857 Hwy. 16, Suite B ●

Emmett, Idaho ●

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(208) 963-4693

FALL TOUR



On September 12th, 2025, Gem Soil and Water Conservation District hosted their Fall Tour to District sponsored projects on the Emmett Bench.

The first stop was off Sunset Drive to see a future filter strip project on the bluff. The filter strip will include a planted perennial grass blend at the end of a field, in hopes that the root structure of the filter strip will help with sediment, nutrient, and pesticide loss from entering agricultural drains that ultimately run into the Payette River, a 303 (d) listed stream. This is a district sponsored demonstration project and the district will continue to monitor the project and hope to include the finished project at a future tour.

The second stop on the tour was to the Mesa Drain Pivot Project with Corner-Arm. The pivot showcased new technology with the Valley 8000 Corner-Arm Pivot on a 40-acre corn field (14 acres watered by the corner-arm of the pivot). The new technology uses GPS mapping and precision performance sprinklers to customize and accurately water the field with no waste. Field production is up by 20% and uses 30% less water. The Corner-Arm Pivot also decreases sediment loss by 52.8 tons per year, phosphorus by 85 lbs per year, and nitrogen by 169 lbs per year.

At the third stop, participants visited the Kipper Farm for an agricultural drone demonstration. Drone operator, Thomas McPheeters, demonstrated with water how the drone can be used for precise herbicide application over a field. Following the tour, McPheeters flew a grazing cover crop blend of wheat, peas, turnips, and radish over a standing corn field.



Fall Tour Continued-

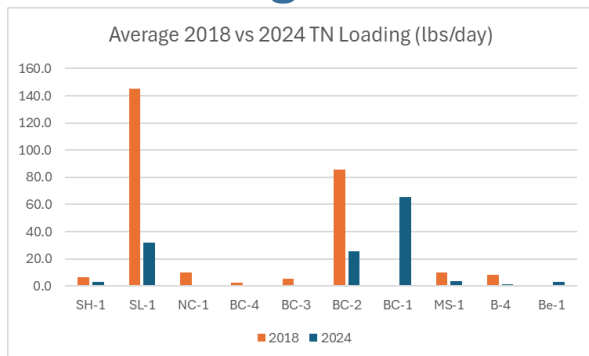


The last stop on the tour included lunch and a presentation from Meghan Cline, a Water Quality Analyst with the Department of Water Quality. Meghan participated in collecting water samples on nine irrigation drains on the Emmett Bench, the summer of 2024 and shared the results with the tour participants and where the district should prioritize future projects to see the most water quality benefits. The testing is part of the district's

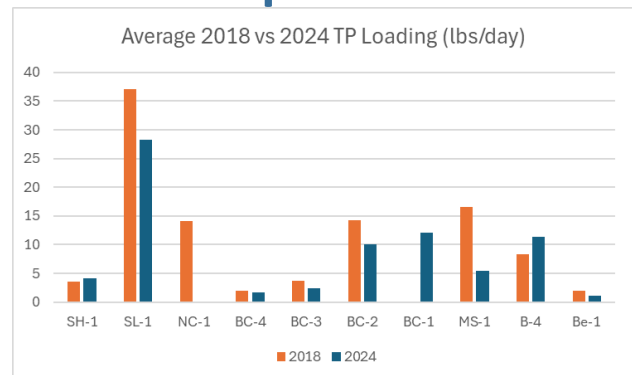
initiative and commitment to water quality. The District sponsors testing every five to six years for continued monitoring on the nine previously TMDL listed drains on the Emmett Bench. The district prioritizes grant funding to benefit water quality and affected listed drains and feels it is important to continue regular testing and monitor any changes in hopes of improvement from conservation focused project installations. Please see the testing results below that compare 2018 water testing results to 2024.



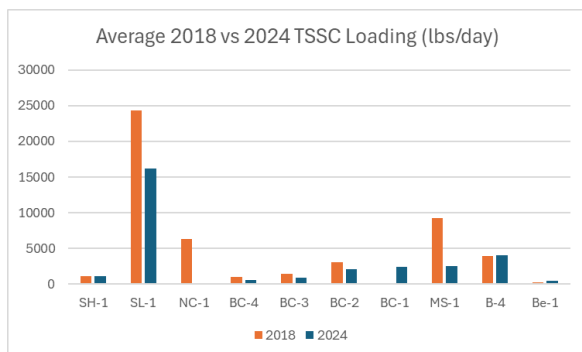
Total Nitrogen



Total Phosphorus



Total Suspended Sediment Concentration



Escherichia Coli (E. coli)

	SH-1	SL-1	NC-1	BC-4	BC-3	BC-2	BC-1	MS-1	B-4	Be-1
12-Jun	>2420	1733		272		248			2420	
11-Jul	>2420	1203	25	461	649	272	249	1203	1414	1733
25-Jul	>2420	1203	20	117	194	228	261	770	1203	190
22-Aug	517	579	19	179	435	649	517	921	313	816
5-Sep	206		4	27	67	196	152	261	816	308
19-Sep	201	127	9	43	172	387	248	166	549	96
10-Oct	365	101	2	16	187	105	166	387	194	>2420
23-Oct	41	248	8	16	119	88	225	69	365	62
Percent Exceedances	50%	70%	0%	12%	28%	12%	14%	42%	62%	42%

Payette River Irrigation Improvement Project

Gem SWCD recently sponsored an irrigation improvement center pivot project on 76 acres of flood irrigated pasture located within the Emmett North Bench Nitrate Priority Area through the Water Quality Program for Agriculture (WQPA) grant program. The irrigation improvement center pivot project will increase irrigation efficiency up to 85%, eliminating run-off from the field.

The project also reduces sediment by 83.6 tons per year, nitrogen by 267 lbs per year, and phosphorus by 133.8 lbs per year.



Outreach and Education

Gem SWCD is active in the community at our local elementary schools with outreach and education. The district has sponsored four garden projects, Shadow Butte Elementary, Carberry Elementary, Early Words Speech Therapy Clinic and Gem Prep and co-sponsors outdoor school for local 5th grade students each year along with pollinator outreach and education at Smart Start Academy Preschool and at the Gem/Boise County Fair.



Speech Contest

This year's district sponsored speech contest was held on October 6th at Elements Restaurant. Riley Richardson competed with a speech on the theme, "Home is Where the Habitat Is.", and won First Place. Riley qualified for the Division Level.



No-Till Drill



The Gem SWCD educates and promotes the use of reduce-till farming practices to conserve and protect organic matter in the soil, reduce erosion, promote biodiversity in and around the soil, and increase water absorption. This year our No-Till Drill was rented out and used by 15 producers on over 300 acres in the Gem Soil & Water Conservation District.

CALL: (208) 963-4693
FOR RENTAL INFORMATION

Gem Soil & Water Conservation District

1857 Highway 16, Suite B
Emmett, Idaho 83617

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All Gem Soil & Water Conservation District and USDA- Natural Resources Conservation Service programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, marital or familial status, and political beliefs.

GEM SWCD BOARD MEMBERS

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Maggie Sisler, Vice Chairman
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Clayton Ayers, Supervisor
Zeke Ortiz, Associate
Leanne Buck, District Manager

NRCS STAFF

Ron Brooks, District Conservationist
Erin Morra, Soil Conservationist
Aida Ortiz, Admin Support Specialist

ISWCC

Bill Lillibridge, State Engineer
Meghan Brooksher, Natural Resource Conservationist

District Board meetings are open to the public and are held the first Monday of every month, 12:00pm at 1857 Highway 16, Suite B, Emmett, Idaho or virtual. Call (208) 963-4693 for upcoming meeting details.



Jamie McCann (Treasurer), Maggie Sisler (Vice-Chairman), Leanne Buck (District Manager), Cliff Fivecoat (Secretary), and Kirk Vickery (Chairman) Not Pictured, Clayton Ayers (Supervisor) and Zeke Ortiz (Associate)