

# People & Places

## 'A rancher fixing ranchers' problems'

Chris Banks helps other landowners with conservation issues in Idaho

By SEAN ELLIS  
Capital Press

CHESTERFIELD, Idaho — When it comes to dealing with government on water and soil conservation issues, southeast Idaho ranchers can turn to one of their own for help.

Chesterfield rancher Chris Banks worked for the Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts for eight years before starting his consulting business, Conservation Basics, in 2014.

During his time at the commission, he learned how to address federal Clean Water Act requirements and apply for conservation grants and he wrote total maximum daily load implementation plans and rapid water shed assessments for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

When it comes to dealing with water quality and soil erosion issues, Banks, 34, has seen both sides of the proverbial fence, as a rancher and government employee.

He still works part-time for the association and spends the rest of his time running his cattle operation and his consulting business.

Banks was raised on the family's ranch in Chesterfield, Idaho, east of Pocatello.

His first experience dealing with government on water quality issues started when his family was approached by Idaho State Department of Agriculture officials about a water quality issue dealing with a creek that ran across cattle trails.



Rancher Chris Banks flies a drone on his ranch in Chesterfield, Idaho, in September as his wife, Autumn, and sons, Cort and Ridge, watch. Besides running his ranch, Banks helps fellow ranchers and landowners deal with water and soil conservation issues.

### Western Innovator

#### Chris Banks

**Title:** Rancher and owner of Conservation Basics, a consulting business

**Focus:** Helping fellow landowners deal with water and soil conservation issues

**Family:** Wife, Autumn, and sons Cort, 3, and Ridge, 1

**Home:** Chesterfield, Idaho



ISDA officials worked with the ranch to get the trails moved away from the stream and install a gravity-fed trough system. The ranch also relocated its corrals.

"It was a good experience for me because they did it in a manner that was not heavy-handed at all," Banks

said. "Because of that experience, it kind of shaped what I wanted to do for a living."

In 2006 he went to work for the IASCD, which supports the state's 50 conservation districts.

He started his consulting business in 2014 and now helps fellow ranchers and oth-

er landowners with their conservation challenges.

Banks helped engineer a major project for Inkom, Idaho, rancher Jim Guthrie Sr. that involved protecting a stream bank on his property, including fencing off 1.5 miles of the Portneuf River and installing water troughs.

"He's a great person to have at that position and he's helped a lot of people clear through the valley," Guthrie said. "He's a really good advocate for farmers and ranchers because ... he runs cattle himself. Chris really understands because he's a rancher fixing ranchers' problems."

Banks wishes more ranchers would take a more cooperative approach with gov-

ernment agencies, especially local ones, when it comes to addressing conservation issues.

"There are government agencies like your soil and water conservation districts ... that are ag-minded, that are producer-driven and they want you to succeed," he said. "We have to get over the idea that it's 'Us versus Them.'"

Banks has turned to drones recently to help him in his conservation efforts, using them to take before, during and after photos of projects and to fly over stream channels to identify potential problem areas.

"I think the possibilities with drones are limitless," he said.

### Calendar

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To submit an event go to the Community Events calendar on the home page of our website at [www.capitalpress.com](http://www.capitalpress.com) and click on "Submit an Event." Calendar items can also be mailed to Capital Press, 1400 Broadway St. NE, Salem, OR 97301.

**Monday, Dec. 12**  
Internal Auditor Workshop. 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Idaho Water Center, 322 E. Front St., Boise. We will teach you how to conduct internal audits in your facility against one of the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) Audit Schemes, which are becoming a standard for the food industry as a tool for assuring food safety and regulatory compliance and has become a customer requirement for many processors. <http://bit.ly/2etdxP6>

Oregon Fine Fescue Commission meeting. 7-9 a.m. Salem Convention Center, 200 Commercial St. SE, Salem, Ore. [www.oregonfinefescue.org](http://www.oregonfinefescue.org)

**Tuesday, Dec. 13**  
Family Offices 101: An Introduction and Best Practices. 7:30 to 9 a.m. Hayden's Lakefront Grill, 8187 SW Tualatin-Sherwood Road, Tualatin, Ore. Family offices are a professionally managed financial organization formed by a single or multiple families. Presented by: Carol Wachter and Eric Johnson, Deloitte Tax LLP. Sponsored by the Austin Family Business Program, Oregon State University. \$40 per person. <http://bit.ly/2gQX6M4>

**Through Wednesday Dec. 14**  
Meridian FFA Holiday Produce Sale, Meridian Professional Technical Center, 1900 W. Pine St., Meridian, Idaho. The sale is 8 a.m.-noon Saturday, closed Sunday and 8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. through Wednesday. [www.meridianffa.theaet.com](http://www.meridianffa.theaet.com)

**Monday-Tuesday Dec. 12-13**  
Oregon Seed Growers League Annual Convention. Salem Conference Center, 200 Commercial St. SE, Salem, Ore. The agenda includes industry speakers, educational sessions, displays, trade show and an industry reception. [seedleague.org](http://www.seedleague.org)

**Monday-Wednesday Dec. 12-14**  
Far West Agribusiness Association 57th Annual meeting. Three Rivers Convention Center, 7016 Grand Ridge Blvd., Kennewick, Wash. Featured speakers are Chuck Conner, president and CEO

of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives and Chris Jahn, president of The Fertilizer Institute. [www.fwaa.org](http://www.fwaa.org)

**Wednesday-Friday Jan. 4-6**  
Potato Expo 2017. Moscone Center West, 800 Howard St. San Francisco, Calif. [potato-expo.com](http://potato-expo.com)

**Friday-Wednesday Jan. 6-11**  
2017 American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Convention & IDEAg Trade Show. Phoenix Convention Center, 100 N Third St., Phoenix, Ariz. <http://annualconvention.fb.org>

**Tuesday, Jan. 10**  
Idaho-Eastern Oregon Alfalfa and Clover Seed School. Caldwell Elks Lodge, Caldwell, Idaho. Contact: [benjamin@amgidaho.org](mailto:benjamin@amgidaho.org)

**Thursday, Jan. 12**  
Inside the Family, Outside the Business. 7:30 to 9 a.m., BridgePort BrewPub, 1313 NW Marshall St., Portland. This session will explore how family members involved in the business can best communicate and collaborate with non-active members. We will share first-hand insights from a panel of non-active family members on how they have faced the challenges of being inside the family, but outside the business. Presented by the Austin Family Business Program, Oregon State University. \$40 per person. 800-859-7609 <http://bit.ly/2gQX6M4>

**Thursday-Friday Jan. 12-13**  
Oregon Mint Growers Annual Meeting. Salishan Lodge & Golf Resort, 7760 Hwy 101 North, Gleneden Beach, Ore. [oregonmint.org](http://oregonmint.org)

**Monday, Jan. 16**  
Oregon Blueberry Conference. 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Salem Convention Center, 200 Commercial St. SE, Salem. Presented by the Oregon Blueberry Commission and the North Willamette Research and Extension Center. 503-589-1700 or [oregonblueberry.com](http://oregonblueberry.com).

**Tuesday-Thursday Jan. 17-19**  
38th Annual Eastern Idaho Ag Expo. Idaho State University Holt Arena, 921 South 8th Ave., Pocatello, Idaho. [www.spectraproductions.com](http://www.spectraproductions.com)

**Wednesday-Thursday Jan. 18-19**  
49th Annual Idaho Potato Conference. Idaho State University's Pond Student Union Building, 921 South 8th Ave., Pocatello, Idaho. Speakers include Idaho Potato Commission President and CEO Frank Muir, Potatoes USA President and CEO Blair Richardson and National Potato Council Executive Vice President John Keeling. <http://bit.ly/2fayqPE>

**Thursday, Jan. 19**  
Oregon Tall Fescue Commission meeting. 6-8 p.m. Cascade Grill restaurant, 110 Opal St. NE, Albany, Ore. [www.oregontallfescue.org/](http://www.oregontallfescue.org/)

**Thursday, Jan. 19**  
Idaho Noxious Weed Conference. Riverside Hotel, 2900 Chinden Blvd., Boise, Idaho. [www.idahonweedcontrol.org](http://www.idahonweedcontrol.org)

**Thursday, Jan. 19**  
Oregon Tall Fescue Commission meeting. 6-8 p.m. Cascade Grill restaurant, 110 Opal St. NE, Albany, Ore. [www.oregontallfescue.org/](http://www.oregontallfescue.org/)

**Tuesday-Thursday Jan. 24-26**  
Northwest Agricultural Show. Portland Expo Center, 2060 N Marine Drive, Portland, Ore. The hours are 9 a.m.-6 p.m. on Tuesday, 9 a.m.-8 p.m. on Wednesday and 9 a.m.-3 p.m. on Thursday. [www.nwagshow.com](http://www.nwagshow.com)

**Wednesday-Friday Jan. 25-27**  
FSPCA Preventive Controls for Human Food Course. Idaho Department of Labor, 600 N. Thornton St., Post Falls, Idaho. The new Food Safety Modernization Act regulation requires every processing facility to have a trained resource person or "Preventive Controls Qualified Individual" who has completed a specialized training course (such as this one) developed by the Food Safety Preventive Controls Alliance that is recognized by the FDA. This person will oversee the implementation of the facility's food safety plan and other key tasks. <http://bit.ly/2f6cogT>

**Wednesday-Saturday Jan. 25-28**  
American Sheep Industry Association Convention. Denver Marriott City Center, 1701 California St., Denver, Colo. [www.sheepusa.org/About\\_Events\\_Convention](http://www.sheepusa.org/About_Events_Convention)

**Wednesday, Feb. 1**  
California Prune Industry Summit. Orchard Creek Lodge, Lincoln, Calif. [www.californiadriedplums.org](http://www.californiadriedplums.org)

**Tuesday, Feb. 7**  
Pesticide Short Course-IPM. 8 a.m.-4:10 p.m. Lane Community

College, Center for Meeting and Learning, Bldg. 19, 4000 E. 30th Ave., Eugene, Ore. \$85 if registered by Jan. 23; \$95 after. <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/lanefarms>

**Tuesday-Thursday Feb. 7-9**  
Spokane Ag Expo and Pacific Northwest Farm Forum. Spokane Convention Center, 334 W Spokane Falls Blvd., Spokane, Wash. Spokane Ag Expo is the largest farm machinery show in the Inland Northwest. <https://greaterspokane.org/ag-expo/>

**Wednesday-Feb. 8**  
Oregon Clover Growers Annual Meeting. Noon-1 p.m. Holiday Inn, Wilsonville, Ore.

**Wednesday-Thursday Feb. 8-9**  
The 8th Annual Organic Farming Conference. Canyon Crest Event Center, 330 Canyon Crest Drive, Twin Falls, Idaho. The event is organized by the Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides. [www.pesticide.org/events](http://www.pesticide.org/events)

**Tuesday-Thursday Feb. 14-16**  
Practical Food Safety & HACCP. The Riverside Hotel, 2900 Chinden Blvd., Boise, Idaho. HACCP or Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points, is a preventive system for the control of health threatening food hazards during food processing. The comprehensive three-day workshop is designed for individuals responsible for implementing and managing a HACCP system in a food processing facility. Participants who pass a final test will receive a certificate of completion. <http://bit.ly/2f2iJ9Q>

**Thursday, Feb. 16**  
Keeping Your Family Business Communication on Track. 7:30 to 9 a.m. Hayden's Lakefront Grill, 8187 SW Tualatin-Sherwood Road, Tualatin, Ore. This session will provide tools and techniques that attendees can use right away to cultivate better communication among family members, employees, and shareholders. Presented by: Mark Wickman, Family Business Counsel. \$40 per person. 800-859-7609, <http://bit.ly/2fPK987>.

**Wednesday, March 8**  
Taxes and Succession Planning. Noon-1 p.m. Join us for a free online webinar and an introduction to how planning ahead for estate and gift taxes can help address family and busi-

ness needs and meet retirement goals for the current generation. Presented by: Carol Wachter and Heather Tomsick, Deloitte Tax LLP, and the Austin Family Business Program, Oregon State University. 800-859-7609, <http://bit.ly/2gW7Kjq>

**Thursday, March 16**  
Building Family Business Value from the Inside Out. 7:30 to 9 a.m. BridgePort BrewPub, 1313 NW Marshall St., Portland. Much can be done to build the value of the business from inside the enterprise, and the earlier the process begins, the more sustainable the results will be. In addition to building value, most businesses become more efficient and profitable along the way. Presented by Francis Brown, Key Private Bank and the Austin Family Business Program, Oregon State University. 800-859-7609, <http://bit.ly/2gR3KCO>

**Tuesday, April 11**  
Do Your Kids Want the Business? Planning for Yes or No. 7:30 to 9 a.m. Hayden's Lakefront Grill, 8187 SW Tualatin-Sherwood Road, Tualatin, Ore. This session will deliver practical advice for family business owners regarding next generation succession. Presented by Steve Bennett, Farleigh Wada Witt and the Austin Family Business Program, Oregon State University. 800-859-7609, <http://bit.ly/2h3k8Ck>

**Thursday, May 18**  
Family Business Charters. 7:30 to 9 a.m. BridgePort BrewPub, 1313 NW Marshall St., Portland. A family business charter sets forth the essential rules, obligations, and responsibilities relating to ownership and management of the business, as well as the family values that will help sustain the business for future generations. Presented by A. Jeffery Bird, Lane Powell PC and the Austin Family Business Program, Oregon State University. \$40 per person. 800-859-7609, <http://bit.ly/2gPuLYY>

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