



State of Idaho

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

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June 8, 2001

DIRK KEMPTHORNE
 Governor

KARL J. DREHER
 Director

Mr. Patrick T. Tyrrell
 Wyoming State Engineer
 Herschler Building 4-E
 Cheyenne, WY 82002

Re: Water Distribution in Bear River Central Division

Dear Pat:

During the Idaho state report at the Bear River Compact Commission meeting held on April 17, 2001, I described three actions that the Idaho Department of Water Resources ("IDWR") will take during 2001 to help ensure that discrepancies in reported diversions in the Central Division, such as occurred in 2000, do not reoccur. Those three actions are: (1) inspect and have repaired as necessary all control works and measuring devices at points of diversion in the Central Division in Idaho; (2) verify the adequacy of diversion data collected by the watermaster in Idaho; and (3) confirm the accuracy of weekly diversion amounts in Idaho reported to the Engineer-Manager of the Bear River Compact Commission. Unfortunately, you had to leave the April 17 Commission meeting before my report. I expected one or more members of your staff who were in attendance at the Commission meeting to have briefed you concerning my remarks. However, based on your letter to Jack Barnett dated May 25, 2001, you may not have been adequately briefed.

I am writing this letter as a courtesy to provide you a status report on the three actions described above. In addition, we have also scheduled a day with the U. S. Geological Survey ("USGS") to conduct a field evaluation of alternative sites for the USGS gaging station near the Idaho-Wyoming border.

Condition of Control Works and Measuring Devices

On May 9, 2001, Tim Luke (IDWR's Water Distribution Section Supervisor), Pete Peterson (Watermaster), and Jack Barnett, conducted a field inspection of the control works and measuring devices on diversions from the Bear River in the Central Division in Idaho. Attachment 1 to this letter is a table summarizing the condition of the facilities at each diversion. The facilities on the larger diversions (Black Otter Ditch, Preston-Montpelier Ditch, Ream-Crockett, West Fork Ditch, and Dingle Irrigation) are adequate. Measuring devices on several of the smaller diversions and pumps were found to need calibration or repair. Action is being taken

to require the owners to make the necessary improvements (see Attachment 2, letter and order requiring installation of new measuring devices). Until the repairs are made, the watermaster will deliberately overestimate the rate at which water is being diverted at these points to ensure that the "divertible flow" through the duration of the water emergency in the Central Division is conservatively determined so as to ensure that other users in Idaho as well as in Wyoming are not deprived of water to which they are lawfully entitled.

Recording and Reporting of Diversions

Tim Luke and Pete Peterson have also reviewed the procedures used to record and report diversion data. They have determined that diversion data is appropriately being recorded in field notebooks. Each week while the Central Division is in a water emergency, Pete Peterson will provide the diversion data to Bill Ondrechen at IDWR. Bill Ondrechen will review the data and confirm that there are no inconsistencies or obvious errors. Bill Ondrechen will then provide the necessary data to Jack Barnett, or Don Barnett, in the same format that is used to provide year-end data. Consequently, there should be no discrepancies between the weekly data and the year-end data used by the Commission, unless there are rating shifts or other similar adjustments.

Stream Flow and Return Flow Measurement Sites

Representatives of the USGS have scheduled a field evaluation on June 28, 2001, to determine whether a more suitable location can be found for the USGS gaging station located near the Idaho-Wyoming border. A person on my staff has contacted Jade Henderson with further details so that he or another representative from Wyoming can participate in this evaluation.

At the April 17 Commission meeting, I also discussed the need to relocate the gage on the Rainbow Canal and to measure the Black Otter Canal return flow into the Rainbow Canal. However, the information needed to determine "divertible flow" requires only data on the diversion into the Rainbow Canal near Stewart Dam. Because return flows and other gains to the Rainbow Canal or Mud Lake are not included in the water supply available to the Central Division, there is no need to measure these flows, except as needed to administer diversions in the Lower Division. Instead, the water diverted into the Rainbow Canal (just below Rainbow Dam) will be measured and reported. PacifiCorp is using current meters to periodically measure flow at this site. Each week, Pete Peterson will use the most recent measurements to report flows diverted into the Rainbow Canal as part of the data provided to Bill Ondrechen at IDWR.

Explanation and Quantification of Diversion Data for 2000

Our review of the discrepancies in diversion data for the year 2000 has not been completed. We are seeking more detailed field records from the watermaster and additional

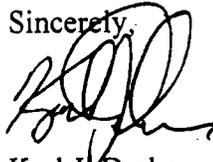
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gaging information from PacifiCorp to see if the differences between the weekly diversion data and the data in the year-end report can be reconciled. It is possible that the watermaster called in the diversion amounts he observed at the time he visited the diversion and then used integrated or averaged data from recorder charts for the final report. We are also reviewing whether the use of flow data from the gaging station in the Rainbow Canal, which inappropriately included gains to the canal downstream from the Central Division, resulted in an overstatement of the "divertible flow" in the annual report.

Our review will be completed as soon as the necessary data are obtained. In the meantime, the procedures described previously in this letter will assure that appropriate data are provided to the Engineer-Manager this year.

Like you, I want to be sure that water distribution in the Central Division of the Bear River Basin is accurate and timely to ensure that water users in both Idaho and Wyoming receive the water to which they are legally entitled.

Sincerely,



Karl J. Dreher
Director

Attachments (2)

copy w/attachments to: Jack Barnett – Bear River Compact Commission

attachments = minutes, order & letter from Pat Tyrrell