

**Update on the Lewiston Plateau Ground Water Management Area
Idaho Department of Water Resources**

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December, 2015

- The geology of the Lewiston area consists primarily of Columbia River Basalt formations with sedimentary interbeds. The lowermost formation is the Grande Ronde, which contains the regional aquifer, and a couple shallower, non-regional (perched), water-bearing zones. Overlying the Grande Ronde, in successive order, are the Vantage interbed, Wanapum basalt, Sweetwater interbed, and Saddle Mountains basalt ([Figure 1](#)). Perched aquifers exist in the Wanapum and Saddle Mountain formations. A syncline, with its axis oriented west-east, runs through the middle of the Lewiston area, creating a subsurface basin. The Grande Ronde regional aquifer is recharged by the Snake River to the southwest. The shallower perched aquifers are recharged by precipitation and infiltration of water from land surface.
- IDWR created the Lindsay Creek Ground Water Management Area (GWMA) in 1992 because the water supply in the shallowest aquifer, the Saddle Mountain Formation, was declining. Lindsay Creek is east of downtown Lewiston.
- IDWR has collected ground water level monitoring data in the Lindsay Creek and Tammany Creek areas since 1992. Tammany Creek is south of downtown Lewiston.
- As of 2012, most of the 12 monitoring wells were showing moderate to steep declines in the Saddle Mountain and Wanapum aquifers.
- IDWR increased the number of monitoring wells from 12 to the current total of 29 between 2012 and 2015.
- A Citizen's Advisory Committee was formed in 2012. The committee developed a Ground Water Management Plan which was approved by IDWR's Director. The Committee meets annually in May to review monitoring results and to discuss future plans for the GWMA.
- IDWR rescinded the Lindsay Creek GWMA and established the Lewiston Plateau GWMA in 2015. The Lewiston Plateau GWMA is considerable larger than the Lindsay Creek GWMA. The Lewiston Plateau GWMA restricts drilling in the Wanapum and Saddle Mountain aquifers, and protects against co-mingling of the perched aquifers with each other, and with the regional aquifer.
- IDWR measures water levels in the monitoring wells semi-annually (Spring and Fall) using an electric tape. Electronic loggers have been installed in 12 of the monitoring wells, which collect data on a daily basis.

- Applications for new wells within the Lewiston Plateau GWMA can be approved by the Department provided they seek water from the Grande Ronde regional aquifer. The wells are required to be sealed through the Saddle Mountain and Wanapum Formations and into the Grande Ronde.
- The Grande Ronde regional aquifer has not shown any long-term water level declines.
- The existence of the regional aquifer in the southern and northeastern parts of the Lewiston Plateau GWMA has not been determined, because wells either don't exist, or they are not deep enough.
- The Lewiston Orchards Irrigation District (LOID) #5 well was drilled in 2015. This 1900-foot well is located a short distance north of Tammany Creek in the Lewiston Orchards. The well is to supply water to Mann Lake about five miles to the east. At least two more Grande Ronde regional wells are planned by LOID. The goal is to supply enough water to Mann Lake so that the current surface water supplies to the lake from Sweetwater and Lapwai creeks can be discontinued.
- A study to determine the nature and extent of the regional aquifer is to be proposed to the Idaho Water Resources Board in early 2016. If approved, this study would likely take two to three years to complete.
- IDWR will continue to expand and modify the monitoring network as necessary to protect the ground water resources in the Lewiston Plateau GWMA.

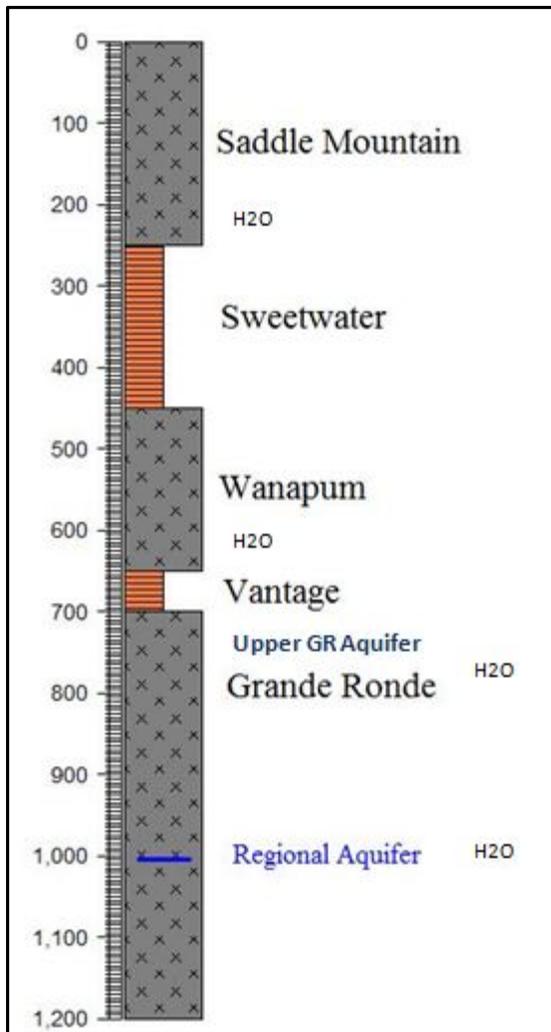


Figure 1. Typical stratigraphic section in the Lindsay Creek area of the Lewiston Plateau Ground Water Management Area.