

Abbreviated Meeting Notes 5-15

Water District 01

Upper Snake River Advisory Meeting, June 4th, 2015

Notes: This meeting was held jointly in the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) Eastern Regional Office and State Office, with participants free to join either location to participate in person. There was also an option to connect into the meeting remotely via conference call and GoToMeeting.

1. **Introductions were made and an attendance list was circulated. The following people were in attendance:**

Brian Patton (IDWR)	Dale Swenson (FMID)
Wesley Hipke (IDWR)	Steve Howser (ASCC)
Mat Weaver (IDWR)	Lyle Swank (WD01)
Roger Chase (IWRB)	Tony Olenchiak (WD01)
Walt Poole (IDFG)	Mike Beus (USBR)
Jon Bowling (IPCO)	Lynn Tominaga (IGWA)
Sarah Higan (IPCO)	John Simpson (Barker Rosholt)
Alan Hansten (NSCC)	Dan Shewmaker
Dan Davidson (MID)	Mike Webster

2. **Mike Beus, with the United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR or Bureau):**

Mike reported that since April 6th the Upper Snake Reservoir system has stored more water (87% - April 6th vs. 90% - June 3rd). Jackson Lake is at 100% and most of the smaller reservoirs show an increase in water stored. Palisades decreased slightly from 89% to 88% and American Falls went from 91% to 85% of fill capacity. For January and February forecast were above 100% (109% and 101%), however, actual precipitation was less than average precipitation (78% and 77%, respectively). March and April precipitation were significantly less, 41% and 58%, respectively, of the historic average. The decrease in precipitation was combined with earlier than normal draws from American Falls Reservoir that lasted approximately 6 weeks. These conditions resulted in very little water being stored in the system during this time.

Even though up through April had a decrease in precipitation, early snow melt, and increased demand the increase in precipitation and decrease in demand for May resulted in the system being at approximately the same level as last year. The increase in rain was over the region as shown by almost 3.5 inches at Jackson Lake Dam starting in early May to just under 2.5 inches of precipitation at Twin Falls (Kimberly) starting in mid-May. The rainy weather held snow at higher elevations until recently as shown by flows at the Heise gage compared to the Lewis Lake and Togwater Pass SNOTEL sites. The flow at the Heise gage shows increases in mid-April corresponding to snowmelt at the Lewis Lake SNOTEL site (which was at 60% of average). The Lewis Lake site melted out by early-mid May. However, the flow at the Heise gage continued to increase through the rest of May as a result of snow melt at higher elevations as shown by the Togwater Pass SNOTEL site (which was at 100% of average). Currently, snowmelt is rapid at the higher elevations with approximately a one day travel time from Jackson Lake to the Heise gage. The future is now based more on rain fall than snow melt. With current conditions, there would not be a major flood, even with passing flow through Jackson Lake considering it is at full capacity.

Currently American Falls Reservoir has started to draft again and the South Fork freshet for trout was captured in Palisades. Flows were ramped down in the system after the holiday weekend, flows were cut back to 10,000 cfs at Blackfoot, and this is still higher than what they need to be. With the recent precipitation and Jackson Lake being full Palisades Reservoir is still filling. The base flow below Milner has been relatively constant since mid-May (approximately 2,000 cfs), assuming Palisades Reservoir is 100% full the base flow will be decreased to 1,500 cfs by June 13th. This is assuming that his schedule works for everyone (John Bowling confirmed that it would for Idaho Power).

Mike also showed the latest NOAA forecast for the next 7 to 14 days predicated normal to a slight increase in precipitation in the area, indicating that it is unlikely to dry up in the near future.

3. **Lyle Swank, Water District 01 Water Master:**

Lyle went over the information in the Water Report for June 2, 2015. Peak run-off was on June 2nd or June 3rd depending on where at in the system. There was an additional 330,000 acre-feet of storage since May 1st. The projected data shows that the storage rights in the reservoirs should fill, currently the Palisades 1939 storage rights are full and Island Park 1935 storage rights should fill this week. Current projections are that 72,918 acre-feet of the Palisades Powerhead 2002 rights will not be filled. The Heise gage peaked in the last couple of days, therefore, increased demand will cause drafting on the system. The increase in storage is almost all due to the decrease in demand through much of May. Currently the diversions are coming back to normal. The total supply and demand for this year shows that everything shifted earlier.

Dan Davidson asked if there was unallocated space at Ririe and could the water in Ririe go to American Falls Reservoir? Lyle responded that water is held high in the system, which then allows them to move water accordingly, showing the maximum water available. The water stored higher in the system could then go to American Falls or some other reservoir. At this time, the size of fill is not known because they are still filling Palisades Reservoir.

Roger Chase asked concerning the remaining unfilled Palisades Powerhead storage (approximately 94,000 acre-feet) would we be making a dent in the filling of that right? Lyle responded that it depends on numerous factors since the lower elevation streams have melted out and it depends on the amount of remaining snowmelt or rain runoff that would occur. Palisades will not be filling at the same rate but additional runoff would help. Additional rains would also affect the diversion rates, which would affect the fill rate.

Mike Webster asked of the 161,000 acre-feet that is unfilled water right space (as of 6/1/2015) could additional rains in June give us a chance of paper fill? Lyle responded that yes there is a chance this year. The surplus looks like more at the high part of the system, however, there is less by the time it reaches the end. Lyle also stated that they are fairly certain that the Heise gage has peaked. Tony Olenchiak also added that is likely that the system would be storing through the end of the weekend maybe longer with rain. However, it is unlikely that they would be storing by the week after.

4. **Jon Bowling, Idaho Power:**

Jon Bowling related that it looks like Brownlee Reservoir will fill. Flow augmentation out of Brownlee will release 1,500 cfs for 14 days (44,274 acre-feet) starting on June 15th, release will be done by June 28th. Time of augmentation could be adjusted but not the rate.

Idaho Power will be watching flows at Swan Falls closely especially after the augmentation run is over and will be working with the Department.

Mat Weaver asked if the rains have helped the Snake River baseflows? Jon responded that there was a slight increase likely due to a decrease in pumping, however, if pumping increase flows would decrease.

Mat Weaver asked about information concerning flows at Spring Creek. Jon did not have any information on those flows, Lyle Swank mentioned that they were in the 25th percentile.

Jon mentioned that at the next meeting it would be good to have a presentation concerning Swan Fall flows.

5. **Wesley Hipke, IDWR – Recharge Update:**

Wesley Hipke provided a brief summary that recharge was complete for the 2014-2015 season. The focus was on developing increase recharge capacity in the upper and lower portions of the ESPA.

6. **New Business:**

The group discussed the timing for the next meeting. It was decided to set the next meeting on Thursday June 25th (6/25) at 1:30 pm.