



Release No. 2016-17

NEWS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contacts for this story: Chad Goodwin or Morgan Case, (208) 762-2800

State of Idaho files petition to launch Palouse River Basin Adjudication

MOSCOW - (Oct. 7, 2016) – On Monday, October 3, the State of Idaho filed a petition to commence the Palouse River Basin Adjudication, a legal process in which existing water rights in the basin will be reviewed by a court to determine the scope of each water right.

The Petition seeks an order from the District Court of the Fifth Judicial District in the State of Idaho to begin proceedings to adjudicate all water rights in the Palouse River Basin. There are approximately 350 water rights on record with the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) in the Palouse Basin. IDWR officials expect that about 1,300 water rights claims may be filed in the Palouse Adjudication.

The adjudication will review all water rights within the Palouse River Basin held by the United States, Native American Tribes, the State of Idaho, local governments and private property owners. The Petition included a request that allows water users in the Palouse River Basin the option of deferring the filing of small domestic and stockwater claims.

In the role as independent expert and technical assistant to the court, the director of the IDWR investigates and makes recommendations about the elements of each water right, including the extent of beneficial use and administration of each water right. Claims can be filed on a paper form or online.

Before IDWR can take claims and make its recommendations in the Palouse Adjudication, the court must make certain findings and issue a commencement order. The court has set a commencement hearing on Jan. 18 to determine whether it will proceed with the adjudication.

Once the commencement order is issued, IDWR will give notice and then begin to take claims, conduct water rights investigations, make preliminary reports, hold public meetings, and eventually file the director's report, which will specify IDWR's recommendations to the court regarding the elements of each water right.

Once IDWR files a director’s report with the court, interested parties can file objections and responses to the recommendations. The court will hold hearings and trials, as necessary, and then issue decrees determining the nature and extent of each water right.

The Palouse Adjudication follows the conclusion of the Snake River Basin Adjudication – the largest adjudication completed in the United States -- and the ongoing Coeur d’Alene-Spokane River Basin Adjudication.

The Palouse Adjudication is the second of three phases of the Northern Idaho water rights adjudications. The adjudications recognize water is a valuable resource in Idaho and that supplies are not always sufficient to meet demands, IDWR officials said.

For more information, go to: <https://idwr.idaho.gov/water-rights/adjudication/>

#####