Memorandum

To: Idaho Water Resource Board

From: Cynthia Bridge Clark

Date: September 9, 2013

Re: Henrys Fork Basin Study

- The US Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is in the process of completing technical analyses on the surface water storage and non-structural water management alternatives. Basin hydrologic modeling to evaluate the effects of each alternative including climate change scenarios is also near completion.
- Completion of the final report has been rescheduled for April 2014 to provide sufficient time for internal and public review. Reclamation and IDWR staff continues to coordinate with members of the Henry's Fork Watershed Council, though several meetings were postponed due to the shutdown of the Federal Government. Final results will be presented to the Council and a draft report will be put out for public comment.
- A proposal to draft a companion document to the final Basin Study report has been discussed with the Water Storage Projects Committee, the full IWRB, and a smaller group of stakeholders. The supplemental report will provide recommendations and prioritization of projects to pursue along with possible paths forward. The document will be developed by the IWRB and IDWR staff in collaboration with Reclamation and a small group of stakeholders. The information contained in the report may be used by the State of Idaho to inform decisions regarding projects to pursue and will not preclude other entities from pursuing any of the projects evaluated in the Basin Study. A description of the companion document was provided at the September IWRB meeting and is included in the IWRB workbooks for reference (*Framework for a Path Forward*). A copy of the potential project recommendations and prioritization is also included in the IWRB workbooks.
- Results of the technical analyses, a draft of the Basin Study report, and drafts of the supplemental report and corresponding recommendations will be presented to the IWRB during the next several IWRB meetings for review and comment.
- Idaho Department of Water Resources staff will discuss study progress and report available results at the IWRB November 19, 2013 work session.

REQUESTED ACTIONS: No action is required by the IWRB at this time.

Framework for a Path Forward
Following the Henrys Fork Basin Study

November 2013

The following describes a proposal to publish the findings of the Henrys Fork Basin Study in a comprehensive report and to provide a second supplemental report to document recommendations and prioritization of projects to move toward implementation or further study.

Background

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and the Idaho Water Resource Board (IWRB) entered into a partnership under the auspices of Reclamation's Basin Study program. The Basin Study program objectives seek to identify adaptation and mitigation strategies to resolve water supply imbalances and to preserve ecological resiliency. The Henrys Fork Basin Study (HFBS) focuses on identifying opportunities for developing water supplies, improving water management, and sustaining environmental quality.

The IWRB, through the HFBS, seeks to support and advance the development of additional water supply to be used to help achieve the goal of stabilizing the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA), as established by the State of Idaho through the ESPA Comprehensive Aquifer Management Plan (ESPA CAMP) and the State Water Plan.

Throughout the study process, multiple parties have expressed interest in identifying and implementing feasible water management strategies, including Friends of the Teton River, Henry's Fork Foundation, Fremont Madison Irrigation District, Trout Unlimited, IWRB, and Reclamation. This diverse group of stakeholders, which includes fisheries conservation groups, irrigators, other interested organizations, and Federal, State, and local agencies has regularly contributed to the HFBS, primarily through their participation in the Henry's Fork Watershed Council (HFWC), which provided the forum for HFBS input and feedback.

The stakeholder groups acknowledge their diverse goals, but seem willing to consider that all may benefit if a comprehensive set of alternatives is packaged together. There is a general understanding that a broadly supported package will receive greater Federal, State, and local support which may facilitate broader avenues for implementation.

At the inception of the HFBS, the stakeholder group facilitated by the Henrys Fork Basin Team (Reclamation and IDWR, and its staff members and consultants) evaluated an array of alternatives, including potential storage projects, to address current and future water needs within the Henrys Fork Basin and the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer. These alternatives represent a wide variety of water management and storage options that are not directly comparable to each other but in some cases could be complementary. The alternatives fall into several key areas: surface water storage; water markets; water conservation; and groundwater Recharge. The HFBS Report will document viable alternatives in each of the key areas that show potential to address future water supply needs. The HFBS will also report on the extent to which many of these non-structural alternative strategies are currently being or have previously been enacted by various parties to achieve water management goals.

Several viable alternatives are emerging from the study. They are each broad enough in scope to include a number of options that could be advanced. The Henrys Fork Basin Team proposes bringing some of these alternatives together in a smaller package that has broad stakeholder support for moving forward for near term implementation or further study. The collaboration necessary to develop a smaller supportable package under the umbrella of the HFBS Report poses challenges given the limited amount of time left to complete the HFBS. The concept of two reports emerged to address these challenges and is explained below.

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Henrys Fork Basin Study Report

The Henrys Fork Basin Study Report would meet the requirements of the Basin Study program including an assessment of the water supplies, demands, and climate change risks; an analysis of how existing infrastructure and operations will perform in response to changing water realities; identification and evaluation of viable adaptation strategies to improve operation and infrastructure to supply adequate water supply in the future; and a comparison analysis of all viable adaptation strategies identified (comparison of cost, environmental impacts, risks, contribution to meeting water needs, stakeholder response, or other attributes). In addition, the document would identify possible steps, approaches or programs that could move the solutions forward toward implementation.

Additional details:

- The HFBS Report would be developed by Reclamation in collaboration with its partner, the IWRB, and with stakeholder input.
- The HFBS Report would be submitted to Reclamation's Basin Study program for final approval.
- The HFBS Report would be reviewed by the HFWC (Council), with the intent of obtaining the Council's formal endorsement of the final document.
- The HFBS Report would meet the time frame for completion of the Basin Study.
- The HFBS Report would document the extent to which the various alternatives and water management strategies that were identified in the HFBS are being utilized to achieve water management goals.
- The HFBS Report document would NOT include recommendations.

Path Forward Report

The second report would meet the State's mandate to investigate storage in the Upper Snake River basin and provide recommendations. This document, potentially called the Path Forward Report, would summarize the HFBS Report, provide recommendations, prioritize options, and outline the sequence of steps to pursue the recommended options.

Additional details:

- The Path Forward Report would be developed by the State in collaboration with Reclamation and a small group of stakeholders (work group).
- The Path Forward Report would be issued by Idaho Water Resource Board as a companion document to the Basin Study Report and would reference the technical information in the Basin Study Report.
- Reclamation's role in the Path Forward Report would evolve from that of author of the Basin Study and initial facilitator of the work group to collaborator within the small group.
- An objective of the Path Forward Report would be to achieve broad stakeholder support, including that of the work group participants and the HFWC.
- A Path Forward document would provide flexibility for the IWRB to select some grouping of alternatives to be pursued for implementation.
- The Path Forward document would be submitted to the Governor and the Legislature to comply with House Joint Memorial 8, Senate Bill 1511, and the Idaho State Water Plan.
- The Path Forward document, and the recommendations and prioritization contained in the document, would be used by the State of Idaho to inform decisions regarding potential options to pursue, where to focus investments in water management infrastructure, and whether to seek federal support to assist with implementation of the identified options.
- A Path Forward document would not preclude any member of the workgroup from independently developing its own vision for a path forward. Any individual or group, private or public, may seek to advance an alternative(s).

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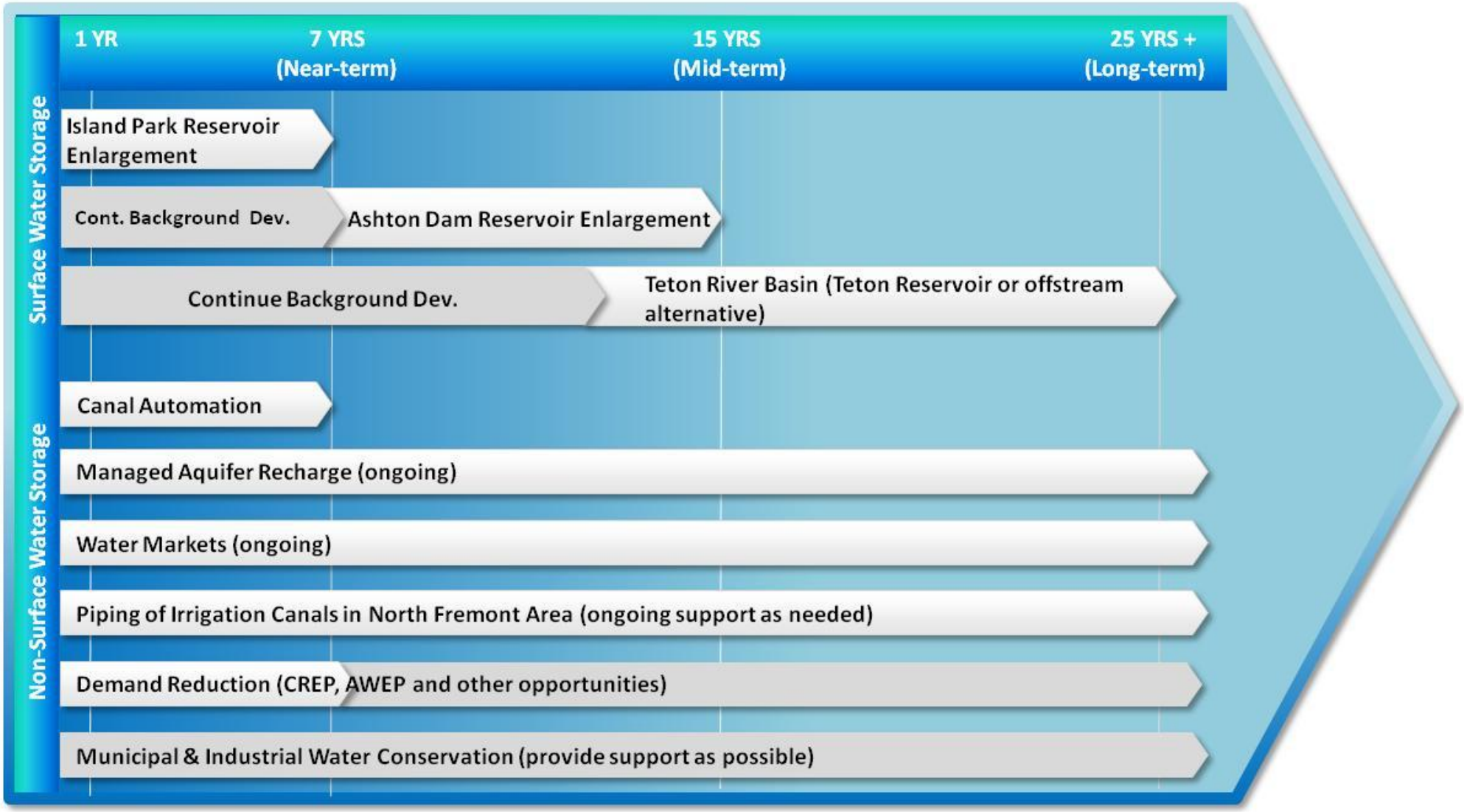
Idaho Water Resource Board
Henrys Fork Basin Study Path Forward
Draft Recommendations and Prioritization of Options

Surface Water Storage Options	Non-Surface Water Storage Options
Near-Term Completion – Years 1-7 • Island Park Reservoir Enlargement – pursue up to 29,000 AF expansion of storage in Island Park reservoir by converting maximum cost-effective amount of flood surcharge space into storage space. Mid-Term Completion - Years 8-25 • Ashton Reservoir Enlargement – pursue up to 20,000 AF enlargement of Ashton Reservoir *if* Power Company is willing to cooperate. Background work on this option would take place while pursuing the Island Park Reservoir Enlargement. Long-Term Completion – Beyond 25 years • Teton River Basin alternative – maintain Teton Reservoir or offstream alternative (Lane Lake or Upper Badger sites) as a long-range placeholder for future consideration on the Teton River. Background work may take place while pursuing near-term and mid-term options.	Near-Term Completion – Years 1-7 • Canal Automation – IWRB will support canal automation efforts to install automation systems by offering loan dollars to FMID or individual canal companies for automation projects, and support FMID or canal company applications for federal cost-share funds for automation. Currently Ongoing and Continuous • Managed Aquifer Recharge – IWRB will continue the managed aquifer recharge program consistent with the goals set in ESPA Comprehensive Aquifer Management Plan, the State Water Plan, and the Swan Falls Re-Affirmation Agreement. Continue to prioritize recharge locations based on achieving stabilization of ESPA, meeting state's obligations under Swan Falls Agreement, surface water availability for recharge within the water administration system, non-interference with optimal capture of water in surface water reservoirs, availability of willing partners with water delivery systems in priority areas, and avoidance of significant environmental impacts. Develop additional managed recharge infrastructure in priority locations. • Water Markets – State will continue the existing water market programs: the Upper Snake Rental Pool for storage water and the Water Supply Bank for natural flow and ground water. Modifications to these programs are continuously being considered through the appropriate venues. • Piping of Irrigation Canals in North Fremont Area - IWRB will continue to assist North Fremont Area water users with their continuing project to pipe their irrigation canals with financial and technical support from IWRB and NRCS. • Demand Reduction – IWRB will continue to promote existing demand reduction programs including the CREP program and the AWEP Endgun Removal Program, both developed in partnership with USDA. • Municipal & Industrial Water Conservation – State will continue to encourage municipal water conservation and improvement projects through loan funds available through the IWRB and the IDEQ.

Henrys Fork Basin Study Path Forward

Draft Recommendations and Prioritization of Options
Timeline for Completion