

Abbreviated Meeting Notes
Water District 01
Upper Snake River Advisory Meeting, February 10, 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:**

Mat Weaver (IDWR)	Lynn Tominaga (IGWA)
Neal Farmer (IDWR)	Lyle Swank (WD01)
Brian Patton (IDWR)	Tony Olenchiak (WD01)
Cynthia Clark (IDWR)	Rob Keller (WD01)
Wesley Hipke (IDWR)	Craig Chandler (WD01)
Roger Chase (IWRB)	Jerry Gregg (USBR)
Walt Poole (IDFG)	Mike Beus (USBR)
Jon Bowling (IPCO)	John Roache (USBR)
Peter Anderson (T.U.)	Roland Springer (USBR)
Brian Olmstead (TFCC)	John Hildreth (USBR)
Dale Swenson (FMID)	Travis Thompson (Barker Rosholt)
Dan Temple (A&B)	Ron Carlson
Alan Hansten (NSCC)	Steve Clark
Dan Davidson (MID)	Dave Patrick
Steve Howser (ASCC)	Hal Anderson
Darrel Ker (Co9, Enterprize)	

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

Mike reported that the Upper Snake Reservoir system was at 75% capacity. The Palisades Reservoir was filling quicker than last year. In part, this is due to discharging 900 cfs compared to 1200 cfs last year. A contributing factor is Jackson Lake discharges which are currently at 500 cfs compared to 300 cfs last year. Lastly, base flows are also higher than last year. Jackson Lake is currently 98% full. American Falls Reservoir is also on track with previous years and currently 74% full. According to Mike, the system is "filling fast and quite full". Mike discussed NRCS SNOTEL Basin Maps for February 9, noting that not much had changed from the January 15 map and this year is close to average. Mike shared weather forecast slides, indicating that forecasts were similar to conditions from a month ago and remained close to normal.

Mike also presented the February 1 Joint Forecast between the USBR and the Army Corps of Engineers (Corp). The February 1 forecast predicts a runoff volume from Feb-Jul at Heise of 3,625,000 AF, or approximately 101% of normal. In light of the forecast the Corp intends to increase flow to 2,500 cfs out of Palisades and the USBR intends to pass the increased flows past Milner. Barring a very drastic change in the weather, the release of 2,500 cfs will be maintained until the next forecast (i.e. 3/1). In discussion of the joint forecast, Mike indicated the Corp and USBR's individual forecasts were with 1-2% of each other.

Mike also mentioned that Raft River was running. The plan is to keep increased release constant until March 1 forecast or if there is increased precipitation.

Darrel Ker mentioned his concerns that there is a disconnect between the SNOTEL data and the actual amount of snow in the Upper Snake River basin, perhaps due to a lack of low-elevation snow. He expressed concern that this disconnect, along with the targeted releases from Palisades may prevent the reservoir from filling. It was noted that Palisades is still filling but at a lower rate and the SNOTEL sites have proven to be reliable in the past. Jerry Greg with USBR also invited everyone to attend the Bureau's SNOTEL tour in early spring.

Lynn Tominaga questioned what set of circumstances could occur in February that would lead the Bureau to decrease releases out of Palisades from the targeted 2,500 cfs. Mike Beus responded that he could not envision a realistic set of facts in which they would alter their operations before the release of the next forecast. Lynn also noted that due to the lack of low-elevation snow and warm temperatures there would be an "early, really early" demand for irrigation water.

Refer to attached slides presented by Mike during the meeting.

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

Discussed the current state of the reservoir system, noting that Lake Walcott was low due to repair work. Currently there are diversions for recharge at Southwest Irrigation (SWID) and Twin Falls Canal Company (TFCC). Other diversions might show up, however, the diversions are not designed for winter releases, therefore, accuracy is questionable at this time. Lyle discussed reservoir content, he noted that Palisades content is normally decreasing at this time, however this year it is currently rising. Concerning releases from Palisades, Lyle noted that entities wanting to recharge water would need to provide him with an official release from their respective winter water savings contracts.

Steve Howser and Darrel Ker voiced concerns about "risk" being on users concerning recharging storage water vs. flood control/flows. Jerry Gregg and Roland Springer stated that this is not the first time these conditions had occurred and it could be worked out but they had to make sure that no one was harmed. Jerry Gregg mentioned the challenge is coming up with a method/process for dealing with this situation when these conditions occur.

Brian Patton noted that the flow requirement at Lake Walcott was 2,700 cfs to satisfy the USBR's unsubordinated hydropower water rights. If the USBR intends to operate the system in such a way that 3,200 cfs spills past Milner Dam but for recharge, then 500 cfs would be available for recharge above American Falls Reservoir.

Lyle closed out his presentation with a summary concerning the priority of water rights. Priority for flow above Palisades goes to fill Palisades. Flow below Palisades goes to fill American Falls. Recharge water rights are junior to the USBR's unsubordinated hydropower water rights at Walcott. He posed several questions to the group for consideration: (1) when should the Board's recharge right be available above American Falls; and (2) should we consider recharge above American Falls storage water use?

Refer to attached slides presented by Lyle during the meeting.

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

Idaho Power's position has not changed from the last meeting. Construction is still occurring at their Shoshone Falls hydropower plant, therefore from their standpoint, the less water in the river at that location the better. As long as the flow is above 2,700 at Walcott, Idaho Power is fine. Idaho Power agreed with the opinion of the USBR that there is sufficient snow pack to fill the system.

5. **Neal Farmer, IDWR – Recharge Update:**

Neal provided an update on late season and wintertime recharge operations. He recapped current and cumulative recharge diversions with the Milner-Gooding Canal (AFRD2), SWID, and TFCC south side canal. Recharge in the AFRD2 system is offline for maintenance until Feb 15 or 16. However, after February 16, AFRD2 estimates they will divert 300 cfs between the canal, MP31 site, Gooding flood channel, and the Shoshone site. TFCC is currently diverting 34 cfs and plans to continue until the start of irrigation deliveries. Neal also reported that SWID started recharge diversion on February 6 at 30 cfs. Northside Canal Co. (NSCC) is planning to start diverting between February 11 to 16 depending on maintenance. Initially NSCC plans to divert 600 cfs, but will taper flows down as Wilson Lake fills until they are at a point of equilibrium where no water spills past the lake. Neal closed by discussing the Board's current goal to develop and implement an incentive payment structure for recharge in the Upper Valley (i.e. above American Falls Reservoir) and contracts would be developed after the payment structure was approved by the Board.

Steve Howser asked why NSCC did not need a waiver from the winter savings contract at Palisades since they also had a contract with the USBR. Jerry Gregg responded that the winter water savings (WWS) agreements were not universal, that each entity had different requirements and constraints, and therefore requests to deviate from the WWS agreements had to be approved on a case-by-case basis. Roger Chase asked Jerry Gregg if the contracts could be made available to the Board by Friday. Mat Weaver indicated that IDWR and the Board already had most of the WWS agreements and he would coordinate with the Bureau if additional documents were required.

Dale Swenson asked if the flow at Walcott is at 3,200 cfs by the weekend could Fremont Madison Irrigation District recharge without a contract. Brian Patton responded that they will need a contract and staff would work to finalize contracts by Friday morning so they would be in place before the weekend (i.e. 2/14).

Refer to attached slides presented by Neal during the meeting.

6. **New Business:**

The group discussed the timing for the next meeting. It was decided to set the next meeting on Wednesday February 25 (2/25) at 3:00 pm.