
Agency Strategic Plan

Fiscal Years 2027 - 2030



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF
WATER RESOURCES



SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION
COMMISSION



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About this Strategic Plan

Statutory Requirement

Idaho law requires state agencies to develop a strategic plan that defines performance commitments and assesses progress toward agency goals (Idaho Code § 67-1903). Strategic plans are based on the state fiscal year (July 1 - June 30), cover a four-year period that includes the year of development, and are updated annually. This plan serves as the statutorily required strategic plan for the Idaho Department of Water Resources (“IDWR” or “Department”) and the Soil and Water Conservation Commission (“SWCC” or “Commission”).

Goals, Objectives, & Performance Measures

This plan contains six goals addressing the core functions of the IDWR, the Idaho Water Resource Board (“IWRB” or “Board”), and the SWCC. The goals address water resource management, water rights administration, water project development and financing, natural resource conservation, and agency operations. Objectives and associated tasks guide achievement of each goal, while performance measures and benchmarks track progress.

Historically, for each year, the IDWR and SWCC generate fiscal year end performance reports that document progress on many of the performance measures included in this plan.¹

Performance measures reported in Part II of each agency’s Performance Report are shown in **bold font** and numbered to correspond with that report. The group responsible for each objective is identified in parentheses (**Responsible Group**), and, where applicable, Performance Report categories listed under “Cases Managed & Key Services Provided” appear beneath the related objective in this Strategic Plan.

External Factors

Several external factors could affect this plan and the pursuit and achievement of its stated goals. Those factors include:

- Availability of funding
- Federal and State regulatory actions and mandates
- Weather patterns, droughts, natural disasters, and other environmental factors
- Litigation and court decisions
- Staff recruitment and retention in a challenging job market
- State and national economic and governance trends

Plan Development and Approval

This Strategic Plan, developed by the IDWR and SWCC Executive Team, establishes near and long-term priorities and tangible objectives. By evaluating productivity with performance measures, the agencies and the public can assess progress and success in implementing and

¹ The Department’s Performance Reports, Strategic Plans, and Annual Reports are available to view and download on IDWR’s website, here: <https://idwr.idaho.gov/about-idwr/>

achieving agency goals. The agencies welcome input from staff and publish the plan for the public to reference.

The Executive Team consists of the following: Mathew Weaver, IDWR Director and SWCC Administrator; Brian Patton, Deputy Director; Shelley Keen, Deputy Director; George Hitz, Deputy Administrator (SWCC); Megan Jenkins, Executive Assistant; Craig Saxton, Water Allocation Bureau Chief; Nick Miller, Water Administration Bureau Chief; Erik Boe, Resource Protection Bureau Chief; Cynthia Bridge Clark, Planning & Projects Bureau Chief; Ethan Geisler, Technical Services Bureau Chief; Sascha Marston, Fiscal Officer; and Jacci Ellis-Gibbons, HR Business Partner.

About the Agencies

History

In the late 1800s, disputes about water use created the need for recording and administering water rights. In response, the 1895 Idaho Legislature created the Office of the State Engineer. Water users could file applications to appropriate water with the agency, obtain written authorization to develop a water use, and perfect a recorded water right. The agency was renamed the Department of Reclamation in 1919 and then the Department of Water Administration in 1970. In 1965, the Legislature created the Idaho Water Resource Board. The Board provides strategic leadership for the conservation, development, financing, and long-term stewardship of Idaho's water resources through statewide planning, investment in water infrastructure, and protection of the public interest.

In 1974, the Department of Water Administration and the IWRB were partnered to effectively and efficiently manage and develop Idaho's water resources. The Department of Water Administration was then renamed the Idaho Department of Water Resources.

In 1939, in response to severe soil erosion due to common agricultural practices of the time, highlighted during America's Dust Bowl era, the Legislature created the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission. It was renamed the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC or Commission) in 2010 in recognition of its important water conservation efforts. The Commission provides strategic leadership for the conservation and stewardship of Idaho's soil, water, and related natural resources through support for local conservation districts, investment in voluntary conservation programs, and collaboration with public and private partners.

Today

Consistent with its original legislative purpose, IDWR approves or denies proposals to appropriate water or change existing water rights, maintains water right records, recommends and records adjudicated water rights, and oversees the delivery of water in times of shortage. The Department also collects and analyzes hydrologic data, inspects dams and impoundment structures, protects ground water by permitting the construction of wells and licensing well drillers, protects natural stream channels by permitting construction alterations, and supports local communities in implementing the National Flood Insurance Program.

The Department and the IWRB interact in a level working relationship. The Board establishes long-term vision and policy through Idaho's State Water Plan for the use, protection, and development of water resources. The Board also administers several state monetary funds in trust for the development and funding of water projects and improvements within the state. The Department administers water rights, performs regulatory functions, and implements the Board's water projects through IDWR's Planning and Projects Bureau.

Recently, there have been four bureaus within IDWR: the Water Allocation Bureau, the Water Compliance Bureau, the Planning and Projects Bureau, and the Technical Services Bureau. In FY26, the Department, following approval by the Governor and the Legislature, formed the Water Administration Bureau to oversee priority water administration, water measurement standards, and water district and watermaster training. The former Water Compliance Bureau was also renamed the Resource Protection Bureau to better align with the focus of its disparate programs including ground water protection, stream channel protection, flood plain protection, and ensuring the public safety of dams.

Beginning in FY27, and upon approval by the Governor and the Legislature, the SWCC will merge with the Department. The merger will streamline Idaho government and align the state's water management and voluntary conservation programs within a single agency while preserving the Commission's statutory responsibilities and its longstanding partnerships with Idaho's local soil and water conservation districts.

The Department operates four regional offices in Boise, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho Falls, and Twin Falls, along with field offices in Salmon and Preston, to deliver programs and services statewide. The Legal, Purchasing, and Financial groups support internal administrative services. The Department receives human resources support from the Division of Human Resources and information technology support from the Office of Information Technology Services. (See IDWR organizational chart on page 5).

Looking Forward

As Idaho's water and conservation needs continue to evolve, IDWR and the SWCC are preparing for both increasing demands on the state's water resources and a new chapter in the Department's organization. To protect senior priority water rights, the Department has limited new water appropriations in many areas of the state and continues to increase the areas in which it administers surface and ground water use by priority in times of water shortage. The Board remains focused on enhancing Idaho's water supplies to address current and future needs. These efforts will intensify as the demand for water from prospective and existing water users increases. The challenge for IDWR and the Board is to fulfill the sometimes-conflicting directives of promoting sustainable development of Idaho's water resources for the benefit of its citizens while, at the same time, protecting senior water rights.

Looking ahead, the Department and the Commission will continue their merger of staff and resources with the SWCC, creating a more coordinated approach to water management and voluntary conservation while preserving the Commission's and Department's unique statutory responsibilities and areas of expertise. By bringing together complementary programs and

technical resources, the Department will strengthen its ability to serve Idaho's communities, agricultural producers, conservation districts, and water users through collaborative, efficient, and locally informed stewardship of the state's water and natural resources.

IDWR & SWCC Missions, Visions, & Shared Commitment

IDWR Mission:

To serve Idahoans by ensuring their water is conserved and available to sustain Idaho's economy, ecosystems, and resulting quality of life.

IDWR Vision:

To achieve excellence in water management through innovation, efficiency, planning, and communication.

SWCC Mission:

To assist Conservation District supervisors in the carrying out of their non-regulatory and voluntarily initiated natural resources conservation programs and to coordinate with local, state, and federal partners the implementation of conservation systems to sustain, improve, and enhance Idaho's soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources.

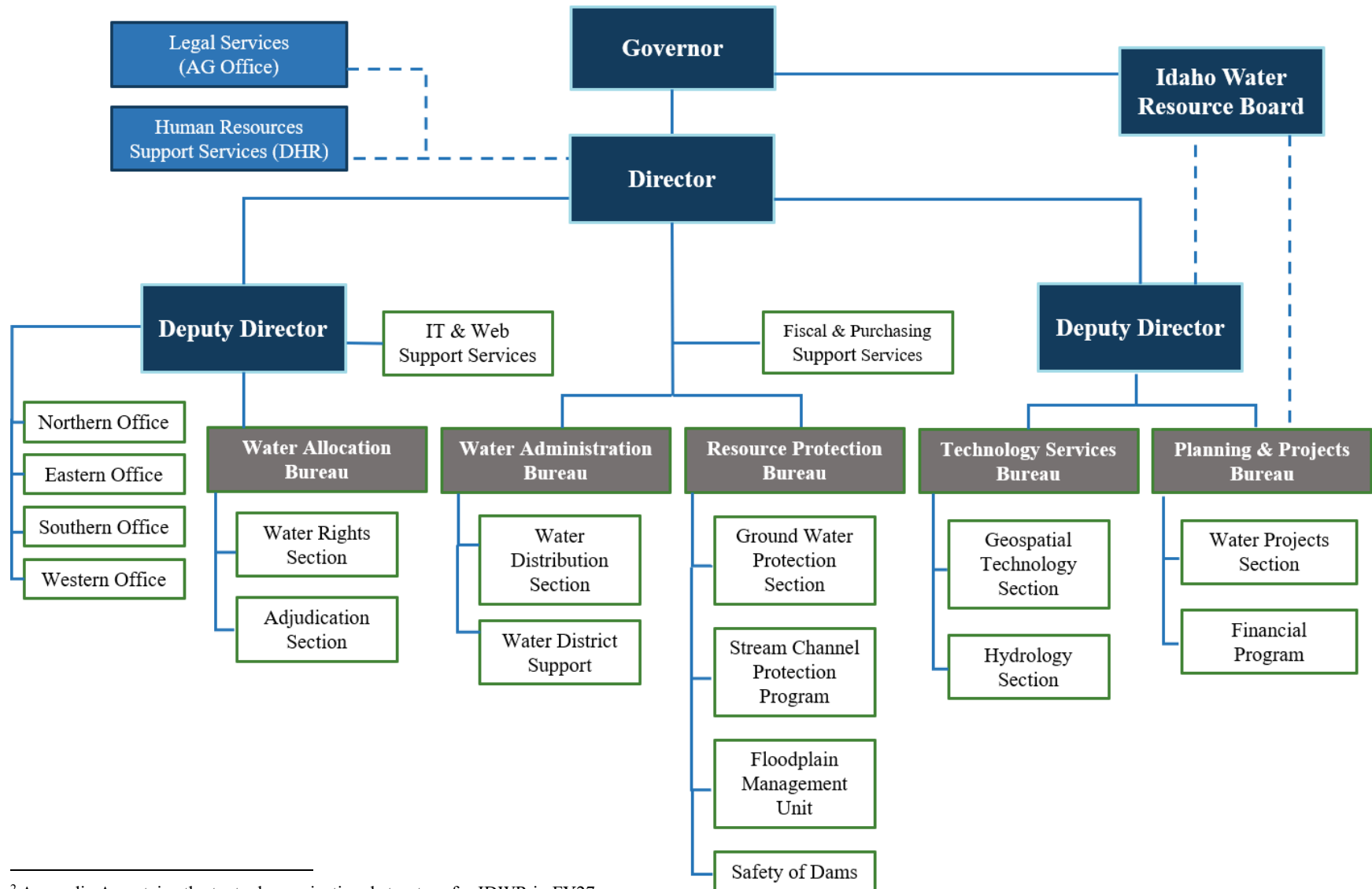
SWCC Vision:

Natural resources conservation in Idaho is driven by local leadership and priorities, is voluntary and incentive-based, non-regulatory, and demonstrates scientifically sound stewardship. The Conservation Commission and local Conservation Districts are the primary entities assisting private landowners and land users in the conservation, sustainment, improvement and enhancement of Idaho's natural resources.

Our Shared Commitment:

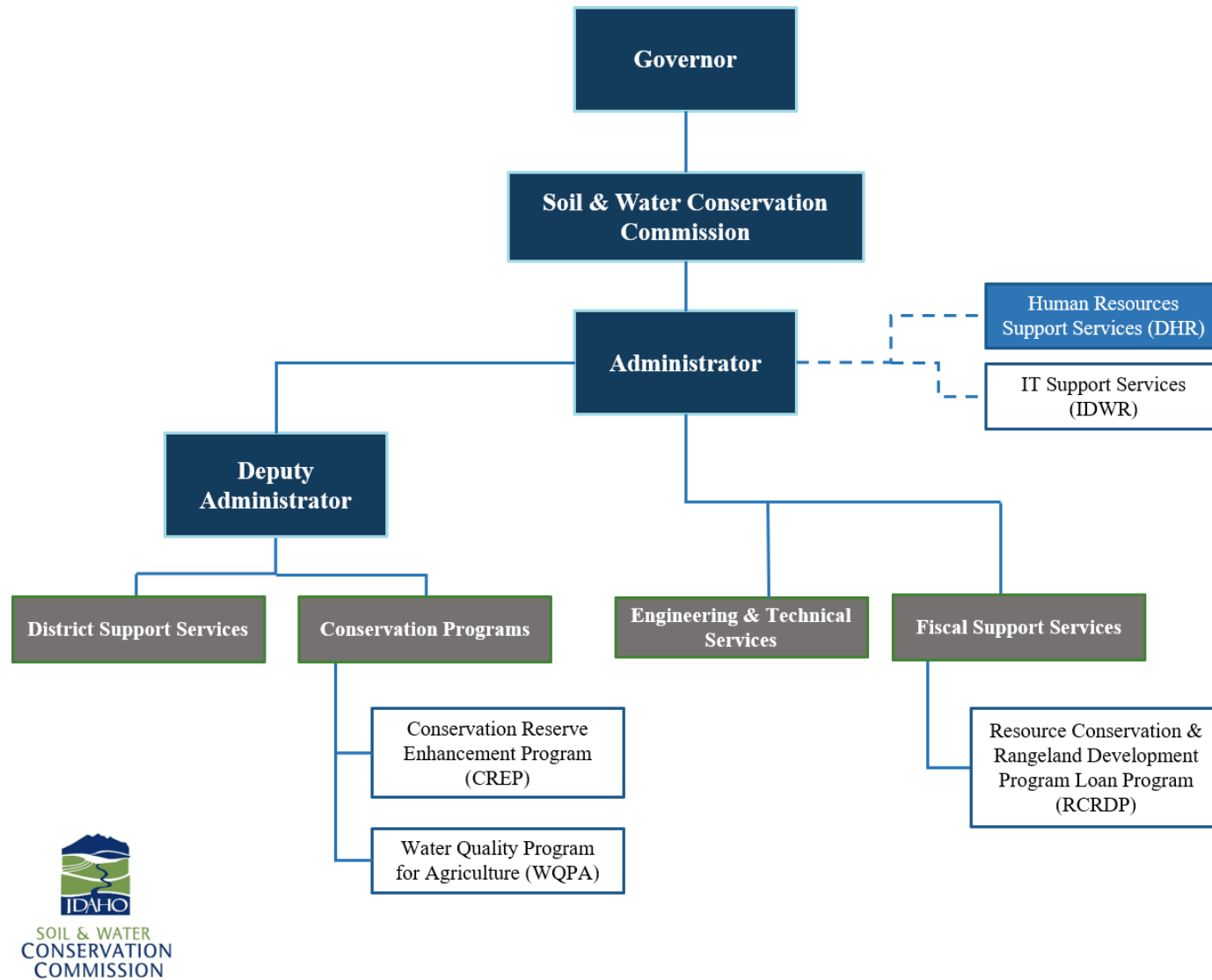
- Sustain Idaho's water and natural resources for the public good.
- Serve our customers responsively and timely.
- Balance competing interests consistent with Idaho law.
- Be forward-looking, evidence-based, and innovative.
- Build strong partnerships across local, state, tribal, and federal organizations.
- Deliver uncompromising ethical behavior.
- Communicate early, honestly, and completely.
- Return to the taxpayer an honest day's time and effort.

IDWR FY27 Organizational Structure²



² Appendix A contains the textual organizational structure for IDWR in FY27.

SWCC FY27 Organizational Structure³



³ Appendix A contains the textual organizational structure for SWCC in FY27.

Goal 1: Manage and Allocate the State's Water Resources to Optimize Economic Activity, and Protect Public Safety and Idaho's Ecosystems

The Department manages and allocates the state's water resources. Orderly administration of finite water resources begins with an accurate determination of existing water rights through court adjudications. To sustain economic activity and growth, IDWR implements efficient processes for appropriating water for new uses and for changing existing water rights. The Department protects public safety and Idaho's ecosystems by enforcing minimum design criteria and construction standards for wells, stream channel alterations, and impoundment structures associated with dams and mine tailings.

Goal 1, Objective 1: Timely process water use applications, notices, and related filings. (Water Allocation Bureau)

Benchmarks for the water right processes below reflect the Department's targeted maximum fiscal year-end pending workload. For Water Supply Bank (WSB) leases and rentals, a benchmark of 30 days reflects IDWR's estimate of routine processing times. Knowing the pending year-end workload of licenses, applications for permits, applications for transfer, and ownership change notices, and WSB processing times, is necessary for the Department to develop and assign the resources needed to timely and efficiently complete water allocation processes.

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark	FY30 Benchmark
1. Number of pending, unprotested Applications for Permit, not subject to a moratorium	Water Rights Section	325	300	300	300
2. Number of pending Water Right Transfer applications	Water Rights Section	100	100	100	100
Number of permits needing Water Right Licensing ⁴	Water Rights Section	650	900	850	800
Number of pending, protested Applications for Permit, not subject to a moratorium	Water Rights Section	120	120	120	120
Number of pending Water Right Ownership Change applications	Water Rights Section	250	250	250	250
3. Median number of days to receive, process, and recommend WSB Leases and Rentals	Water Rights Section	30	30	30	30

⁴ Over the next two fiscal years, approximately 1,500 permits will require proof of beneficial use. Even accounting for permits that lapse or receive extensions under Idaho Code § 42-204, the resulting licensing workload is expected to exceed recent processing capacity. Accordingly, the "Number of Permits Needing Water Right Licensing" benchmarks have been adjusted to reflect this anticipated increase, which is largely driven by permit applications filed in response to the Clark Fork-Pend Oreille River Basin Adjudication.

Goal 1, Objective 2: Determine the validity (or elements) of each claim to a water right filed in Idaho’s general adjudications and submit Director’s Reports for recommendation of claims to the Idaho Water Adjudications Court. (Water Allocation Bureau)

Adjudications – Claims & Recommendations

- Submit a Director’s Report for Basin 11 Part 1 in the Bear River Basin Adjudication, **by December 31, 2026.**
- Send first round commencement notices to property owners within Basin 98 of the Kootenai River Basin Adjudication, **by December 31, 2026.**

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark	FY30 Benchmark
4. Total number of statewide adjudication claims taken, and recommendations completed.⁵	Adjudication Section	4000⁶	2400	2900	2200
Total number of Northern Idaho Adjudication claims taken, and recommendations completed.	Adjudication Section	700	1100	1600	1200
Total number of Bear River Basin Adjudication claims taken, and recommendations completed.	Adjudication Section	1000	1100	1200	900
Total number of Kootenai River Basin Adjudication claims taken, and recommendations completed.	Adjudication Section	2300	200	100	100

⁵ In FY25, IDWR updated Performance Measure #4 from Total number of statewide adjudication claims taken, and recommendations submitted to the Idaho Water Adjudications Court to Total number of statewide adjudication claims taken, and recommendations completed. The change better reflects IDWR staff’s productivity throughout an extended period. A “Director’s Report” includes multiple recommendations prepared over multiple fiscal years and is held until IDWR can submit a large group of recommendations to the court in a single report. The Director’s Report can contain thousands of recommendations. Reporting only the submittal of Director’s Reports does not accurately reflect IDWR’s productivity in a single fiscal year.

⁶ The fiscal year benchmarks for Performance Measure #4 are benchmark sums of the total number of claims taken and recommendations completed in the Northern Idaho, Bear River, and Kootenai River Basin Adjudications.

Goal 1, Objective 3: Timely issue Stream Channel Alteration (SCA) permits and inspect stream channel alterations to protect private property, public safety, and stream channels. (Resource Protection Bureau)

Stream Channel Protection Unit

Idaho Code § 42-3802 states that SCA permit applications shall be submitted to IDWR not less than 60 days prior to commencing project construction. The Department aims to process at least 80% of IDAPA minimum standard SCA permit applications within 60 days of receipt to assist with the timely commencement of SCA projects.

Pre and post SCA permit inspections assist landowners with the proper planning and implementation of projects and ensure compliance with permitted activities. The benchmark for the percentage of permitted SCA activities receiving inspections gradually increases to 45% by FY28 and will be evaluated then to determine if the benchmark should be adjusted.

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark	FY30 Benchmark
Percentage of SCA applications processed within 60 days of receipt (minimum standard projects only)	Stream Channel Protection Unit	80%	80%	80%	80%
Percent of permitted SCA activities receiving pre- or post-inspection (all SCA projects)	Stream Channel Protection Unit	44%	45%	45%	45%

Goal 1, Objective 4: Operate and manage the Safety of Dams program through timely inspections and sufficient emergency planning to ensure public safety and prevent damage or loss of property. (Director)

Idaho Code § 42-1710 requires IDWR to regulate dams, reservoirs, and mine tailings impoundment structures for the protection of life and property. The Department currently regulates approximately 400 water storage dams and more than 20 mine tailings impoundment structures in Idaho. Dam Safety personnel prioritize inspection of regulated dams according to their size and the potential consequences that a dam failure and sudden release of water would present to downstream life and property. The frequency of individual project inspections depends on the project's hazard rating and other factors including the project's age, physical condition, size, and storage capacity. The Department must inspect all regulated dams no less than every five years.

Safety of Dams Program

- Coordinate with dam owners to ensure all non-federal high-hazard dams have an up-to-date Operation/Emergency Plan, prepared by the dam owner, and reviewed by IDWR's Dam Safety Program, **ongoing**.
- Inspect high and significant hazard dams as scheduled annually per hazard classification and comply with the statutory requirement to inspect every dam at least once every five years, **ongoing**.

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark	FY30 Benchmark
Percent of non-federal high-hazard dams with an up-to-date Operation/Emergency Plan.	Safety of Dams Program	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of dams inspected each year that are necessary to comply with the annual inspection schedule.	Safety of Dams Program	100%	100%	100%	100%

Goal 1, Objective 5: Inspect wells during construction and modification to ensure well construction activities do not harm the public, or waste or contaminate water resources. (Resource Protection Bureau)

Ground Water Protection Section

The Department has statutory authority for the state-wide administration of the rules governing well construction and licensing of well drillers in Idaho. Prior to drilling a well, the well owner or well driller must first obtain a drilling permit from IDWR. All wells must be constructed by a licensed well driller.

Well construction activities include well seal placement and well decommissioning. The Department targets 5-10% of inspections to occur during well-seal placement. Remaining inspections occur during other phases of well construction or modification. The number of well construction applications changes from year-to-year and correlates with state economic conditions and population growth trends. Inspecting 28% of wells is consistent with IDWR's capacity, which is impacted by current staffing resources, recent annual inspection progress, the number of new wells drilled annually, and increasing public demand on staff resources to manage groundwater resources.

(The Ground Water Protection Section's Performance Measure is on the following page).

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark	FY30 Benchmark
5. Percentage of wells inspected during construction or modification	Ground Water Protection Section	28%	28%	28%	28%

Goal 1, Objective 6: Educate and engage with regulated industries, landowners, and communities regarding resource protection laws, rules, and policies. (Resource Protection Bureau)

Ground Water Protection Section

The Department has statutory responsibility for the licensing of well drillers and operators in Idaho. To protect public safety and water resources, IDWR works with the Idaho Ground Water Association (IGWA) to facilitate well driller and operator training workshops.

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark	FY30 Benchmark
Number of IGWA well driller workshops or online course presentations supported by IDWR	Ground Water Protection Section	3	3	3	3

Floodplain Management Program

IDWR's Floodplain Coordinator administers the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) in Idaho by assisting communities with adopting compliant ordinances, reviewing floodplain development to prevent increased flood risk, supporting flood planning efforts, and delivering training on NFIP requirements. These efforts ensure communities remain eligible for FEMA flood insurance.

Over the past four years, IDWR has reduced its backlog of Community Assistance Visits (CAVs) from about 25 to two. Capping new CAVs at two per year aligns with FEMA's planned transition to a streamlined audit process in FY28 and enables the Floodplain Coordinator to prioritize daily technical assistance. The Department has also modestly increased Community Assistance Contacts (CACs) from four to five annually to better identify local needs and guide support under the future audit framework. To support ongoing government reform and efficiency improvement, FEMA plans to combine its FEMA's CAV and CAC process will be combined into a single Performance Measure by FY28 under a New Audit Process (NAP).

(The Floodplain Management Unit's Performance Measures are on the following page).

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark	FY30 Benchmark
Number of NFIP Community Assistance Visits (CAV) initiated	Floodplain Management Unit	2	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of NFIP Community Assistance Contacts (CAC) initiated	Floodplain Management Unit	5	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of NFIP audits under NAP ⁷	Floodplain Management Unit	N/A	N/A	6	6
Number of NFIP Training, Outreach, & Presentations facilitated by IDWR	Floodplain Management Unit	6	6	6	6

⁷ This performance measure is new for FY26 and will replace the previous CAV and CAC performance measures by FY28.

Goal 2: Accurately Administer Water Rights and Distribute Water to Protect Senior Water Rights and Conserve Idaho's Water

Idaho law tasks the Director of IDWR to “direct and control” the distribution of natural water sources within the state. To orderly distribute water, the Department creates water districts. Watermasters, elected by water users, measure, distribute, and curtail authorized and unauthorized diversions of water within water districts. Administration of water rights includes the development and enforcement of water measurement standards to support accuracy and fairness. To ensure the accurate and fair administration of water rights, the Department must collect data, develop water use accounting tools, assess the hydrologic impact of water diversions, and predict future water supplies.

Goal 2, Objective 1: Create or modify water districts for the administration of water rights and establish technical and professional resources for water district staff. (Water Administration Bureau)

Water Distribution Section

Idaho Code § 42-604 requires the Director to divide the state into water districts. Priorities include adding basins tributary to the Eastern Snake Plain and the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA) that are not currently administering groundwater, and administering Trust Water Rights from the Swan Falls Settlement Agreement⁸. A benchmark of three or more districts created or modified per year starting in FY27, and increasing the goal year-over-year as the new bureau becomes more experienced, is realistic based on the Department's current staff resources and workloads.

- Modify Water District 120 to administer groundwater in the Rock, Palisades, Willow, and Blackfoot River basins, which are all tributaries to the ESPA, **by June 30, 2027**.
- Modify Water District 100 to administer groundwater in the lower portion of the Teton River basin, a tributary to the ESPA, **by December 31, 2027**.
- Modify Water District 110 to administer groundwater in the Medicine Lodge, Birch, and Beaver-Camas basins, which are all tributaries to the ESPA, **by December 31, 2027**.
- Create a water district to administer groundwater in the Henry's Fork River basin, a tributary to the ESPA, **by December 31, 2027**.
- Create or modify existing water districts as needed to bring 50 or more administrable Trust Water Rights into a water district each year until all TWRs have been incorporated⁹, **ongoing**.

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark	FY30 Benchmark
6. Number of water districts created or modified	Water Distribution Section	≥3	≥4	≥5	≥6

⁸ Visit IDWR's [Swan Falls Settlement](#) webpage to learn more and view the Swan Falls Settlement Agreement.

⁹ Excluding non-administrable water rights, the Department estimates that between 200-300 trust water rights are outside current water district boundaries and not subject to priority administration. Non-administrable water rights include de minimis domestic and stockwater uses.

Goal 2, Objective 2: Develop and implement tools, resources, and educational opportunities for watermasters to improve the administration of water rights and regulation of water use in water districts throughout the state. (Water Administration Bureau)

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark	FY30 Benchmark
Number of water district or watermaster trainings and workshops facilitated by IDWR	Water Distribution Section	3	3	3	3
Number of additional water districts integrating a GIS based, mobile data collection and automation tool	Water Distribution Section	2	2	2	2

Goal 2, Objective 3: Maintain and enhance a timely, fair, transparent, and consistent enforcement program. (Resource Protection Bureau)

Surface & Groundwater Investigations

The Department maintains this objective through education, water use investigations, and implementation of both formal and informal enforcement actions. The Department receives many allegations of illegal water use from the public. In addition to investigating these allegations when they have merit, IDWR audits select geographical areas to evaluate if irrigators are complying with the legal elements of their water rights. These audits help ensure fair and consistent water use enforcement and are often conducted in areas of water use conflict or in areas with pending changes in water administration practices.

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark	FY30 Benchmark
Number of area-wide irrigation audits completed with GIS based tools and methods	RPB's Enforcement Coordinator	≥2	≥2	≥2	≥2

Goal 2, Objective 4: Recruit, develop, and maintain a trained and experienced group of core Hearing Officers to promptly resolve contested case applications. (Director)

- Send at least one Hearing Officer per year to the National Judicial College or training, **ongoing**.
- Each trained Hearing Officer shall preside over and resolve three to five contested case disputes per fiscal year, **ongoing**.

- Hearing Officers render written decisions within at least 90 days from the date of hearing, **ongoing**.
- Maintain sufficient Hearing Officer appointments to timely preside over and render decisions for all active contested case proceedings, **ongoing**.

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark	FY30 Benchmark
Total number of appointed Hearing Officers ¹⁰	Director	8-10	8-10	8-10	8-10

Goal 2, Objective 5: Develop, implement, or revise tools to administer and manage surface and groundwater resources. (Technical Services Bureau)

The Department's Hydrology Section is responsible for completing the following tasks:

Surface & Groundwater Management Tools

- Update or replace the existing USGS/ Kjelstrom regression-based method for estimating aquifer discharge to estimate aquifer discharge more accurately along the Milner Dam to King Hill reach of the Snake River. Publish the final project report, **by June 30, 2027**.
- Prepare an ESPA aquifer management budget, fall forecast tool, and groundwater level index for supporting the development and future implementation of an ESPA Ground Water Management Area Ground Water Management Plan **by June 30, 2027**.
- Partner with the Idaho Water Resources Research Institute (IWRRI) to develop an updated Star Bridge moratorium administrative boundary using contemporary hydrogeologic data and methods **by June 30, 2027**.

Groundwater & Surface Water Model Efforts

- Construct and calibrate a transient groundwater flow model for the Big Lost River basin and publish the final project report, **by December 31, 2026**.
- Revise and recalibrate the ESPAM v2.3 and publish the final project report, **by June 30, 2027**.
- Revise and recalibrate the Wood River groundwater model and publish the final project report, **by June 30, 2027**.
- Construct and calibrate a transient groundwater flow model for the Western Snake River Plain including the Mountain Home Plateau, **by June 30, 2028**.

¹⁰ In FY25, the previous performance measure, *Number of Hearing Officer training workshops conducted by IDWR* was changed to the *Total number of appointed Hearing Officers*. Currently, seven qualified IDWR staff serve as hearing officers on contested case matters. Due to the increase in the number of contested cases before the Department, it is necessary for IDWR to recruit at least one to three more hearing officers and maintain a total of 8-10 hearing officers each fiscal year to timely preside over and resolve three to five contested cases in the fiscal year.

- Construct and calibrate a transient groundwater flow model for the Raft River basin, **by December 31, 2029.**
- Construct a Riverware model for the Big Wood River basin, **by December 31, 2029.**

Water Rights Accounting Program Modernization Efforts

- Develop a Water Right Accounting SQL database to replace the existing Microsoft Access databases, **by December 31, 2026.**
- Develop a Big Wood River Basin Water Right Accounting program, **by March 1, 2027.**

Goal 2, Objective 6: Analyze water level monitoring data and prepare technical reports summarizing aquifer conditions for priority water resources. (Technical Services Bureau)

The Department's Hydrology Section is responsible for completing the following tasks:

- Prepare a peer-reviewed technical report summarizing groundwater conditions in the West Central¹¹ monitoring network, **by December 31, 2026.**
- Prepare a peer-reviewed technical report characterizing and summarizing the surface and groundwater hydrology of the Camas Prairie sub-basin within the Wood River basin, **by June 30, 2027.**
- Prepare a peer-reviewed technical report summarizing groundwater conditions in the North Ada County monitoring network, **by June 30, 2027.**
- Prepare a peer-reviewed technical report characterizing and summarizing the surface and groundwater hydrology of the Portneuf River basin, **by June 30, 2027.**
- Prepare peer-reviewed technical summary reports of water level data, water level trends, and aquifer conditions for each of the designated Groundwater Management Areas (GWMAs) and each of the Critical Groundwater Areas (CGWAs) on a five-year frequency, **ongoing.** To meet the five-year reporting frequency, the Department established the annual benchmarks below.
- Evaluate the current technical basis for the Rathdrum Prairie GWMA, including the aquifer boundary, **by December 31, 2027.**

(The Goal 2, Objective 6 Performance Measures are on the following page).

¹¹ The West Central location refers to the Payette and Weiser River drainages.

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark	FY30 Benchmark
Number of published, peer-reviewed technical summary reports of GWMA	Hydrology Section	≥2	≥2	≥2	≥2
Number of published, peer-reviewed technical summary reports of CGWA	Hydrology Section	≥1	≥1	≥1	≥1

Goal 2, Objective 7: Streamline hydrologic data collection and processing. (Technical Services Bureau)

Water Measurement Sites & Equipment Deployment

Idaho Code, § 42-231 requires the Director to conduct “investigations, surveys, and studies relative to the extent, nature and location of ground water resources of [Idaho].” Idaho Code, §§ 42-1805 (2) and (3) describe additional duties of the Director, which include preparing “a present and continuing inventory of Idaho’s water resources. . . .” Idaho Code, § 39-120 recognizes that IDWR has the responsibility to collect baseline water resource data and charges IDWR with the shared responsibility to develop and administer a “comprehensive ground water quality monitoring network. . . .”

To fulfill these statutory mandates, IDWR maintains statewide monitoring networks that measure groundwater levels, spring flows, return flows, and groundwater quality. Priority administration of water resources often results in a public desire to expand these monitoring networks to gather more data across the state. To support expanding monitoring networks while maintaining a static workforce, IDWR has modernized and automated resource intensive manual monitoring processes. Efforts have included deploying and maintaining automated measurement equipment, establishing telemetered communication networks, and automating data collection, processing, and publication.

The Department’s Hydrology Section is responsible for completing the following tasks:

- Integrate the use of a GIS-based, mobile data collection and automation tool in hydrologic data collection programs as opportunities present themselves, **ongoing**.
- To facilitate the gathering of real-time, high-frequency data for model calibration and trend analysis, install 10 new surface water or groundwater monitoring sites or upgrade equipment annually in existing sites, **ongoing**.
- Expand groundwater data collection efforts in southern Canyon County to support administrative decision-making and Western Snake River Plain groundwater modeling. Add new monitoring sites by instrumenting existing unmonitored wells or drilling new monitoring wells **by December 31, 2027**.

- Conduct groundwater-level synoptic measurements in the Treasure Valley to support groundwater modeling efforts and development of water level change maps. Measure approximately 550 wells during three synoptic events (fall 2026, spring 2027, and spring 2028) to support administrative decision-making and groundwater modeling, **by December 31, 2027.**

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark	FY30 Benchmark
7. Install or upgrade surface water or groundwater monitoring sites.	Hydrology Section	10	10	10	10

Goal 2, Objective 8: Review and administer Trust Water Rights (TWRs) issued consistent with, and in conformance with, the 1984 Swan Falls Settlement and the 2009 Framework Reaffirming the Swan Falls Settlement. (Water Administration and Water Allocation Bureaus)

The Water Rights Section within the Water Allocation Bureau is responsible for the following tasks:

- Coordinate with IDWR’s legal team to review the Attorney General’s Office’s summary regarding responses to questions about IDWR’s authorities and limitations in administering TWRs and evaluating TWR term limits, **by June 30, 2027.**
- Develop and propose a plan for reviewing term limited TWRs, that includes review criteria and the resources needed to accomplish the review, **by December 31, 2027.**
- Initiate a review of term limited TWRs, **by June 30, 2028.**

The Water Administration Bureau is responsible for the following tasks:

- Plan for and develop a management policy addressing conjunctive water rights management in the Milner to Murphy reach of the Snake River and tributary basins, **by March 1, 2027.**
- Support the creation of administrative entities and infrastructure (water districts, ground water districts, measurement and control orders, etc.) necessary to carry out mitigation plans anticipated to be developed and available to holders of Trust Water Rights, **Ongoing.**

Goal 3¹²: Advance Voluntary, Locally Led Conservation to Sustain Idaho's Working Lands and Natural Resources.

Idaho's privately owned forests, rangelands, croplands, and wetlands are essential to the state's economic, environmental, and community well-being, including agricultural production, clean water, healthy soils, wildlife habitat, and resilient landscapes. Sustaining these resources depends on voluntary, locally led conservation efforts that balance responsible stewardship with private property rights and productive land use. The Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission supports Idaho's Conservation Districts through technical assistance, financial resources, education, and partnerships with local, state, and federal organizations to implement conservation systems that improve soil health, water quality, watershed function, habitat, and overall natural resource resilience. By strengthening local conservation capacity and fostering collaborative stewardship, the Commission helps ensure Idaho's working lands and natural resources remain healthy, productive, and sustainable for future generations.

¹² Beginning in FY27 and in support of the IDWR and SWCC merger, the Department is combining IDWR's and SWCC's Strategic Plans. Goal 3 has been updated to reflect the Commission's strategic goals and objectives. Former Goal 3, "Sustain, Maintain, and Enhance the State's Water Resources for the Benefit of Idaho's Economy, Ecosystems, and Resulting Quality of Life," was reassigned as Goal 4, with subsequent Goals also relabeled in sequence.

The Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission

The Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) supports Idaho's Conservation Districts in advancing voluntary, locally led conservation efforts that sustain and enhance the state's soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources. Through partnerships with landowners, Conservation Districts, and local, state, and federal organizations, SWCC helps implement conservation practices that improve natural resource conditions while supporting Idaho's working lands, agricultural economy, and communities.



In 2025, Governor Brad Little directed the Commission and the Department to evaluate opportunities to improve government efficiency and leverage partnerships through potential integration. Following this evaluation, stakeholder engagement, legislation enacted during the 2026 Session, and upon approval of the Governor and Legislature, the SWCC and Department will formally merge staff and resources during FY27. In anticipation of this merger, the SWCC's goals and objectives are included in this combined agency strategic plan.

Goal 3, Objective 1: Support Districts' Voluntary Conservation Efforts. (SWCC)

The SWCC supports Idaho's Conservation Districts by strengthening state and local partnerships, expanding technical guidance and organizational capacity, and fostering collaboration that advances voluntary, locally led conservation efforts. Through coordinated assistance and strong partnerships, Conservation Districts can successfully develop and implement conservation projects that address local natural resource priorities across Idaho.

The SWCC conducts an optional annual Conservation District Survey, due July 31, to assess district performance and satisfaction with the SWCC during the preceding fiscal year. Each year, SWCC staff review district requests, overall workload, and the Commission's capacity to assist Conservation Districts.

(The Goal 3, Objective 1 Performance Measures are on the following page).

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark	FY30 Benchmark
Percentage of Conservation Districts satisfied with services & programs provided ¹³	SWCC	90%	90%	90%	90%
Percentage of Conservation Districts satisfied with the effectiveness of the communications received from the Commission ¹⁴	SWCC	90%	90%	90%	90%
Percentage of requests submitted by Conservation Districts that receive the requested assistance ¹⁵	SWCC	90%	90%	90%	90%

Goal 3 Objective 2: Deliver Conservation Programs and Services to improve natural resource conditions. (SWCC)

The SWCC coordinates with federal, state, and local partners to implement voluntary conservation programs that support Idaho landowners, Conservation Districts, and partners in addressing priority natural resource concerns. Through the conservation programs listed below, the SWCC offers technical assistance, financial resources, and conservation planning. These programs support the implementation of best management practices that improve water quality, conserve water supplies, enhance watershed health, and sustain productive agricultural lands.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) offers technical leadership and guidance to private landowners in coordination with federal, state, and other partners to reduce groundwater consumption on cropland within the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer.

(The Goal 3, Objective 2 Performance Measures are on the following page).

¹³ Targeted to determine achievement of IC 22-2718(4)(a).

¹⁴ Targeted to determine achievement of IC 22-2718(4)(b).

¹⁵ Established by the SWCC to track delivery of Technical Assistance hours provided to Districts.

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark	FY30 Benchmark
Number of total CREP-enrolled acres over which technical leadership and guidance is delivered ¹⁶	SWCC	15,000 acres	15,000 acres	15,000 acres	15,000 acres

Resource Conservation & Rangeland Development Program

The Resource Conservation & Rangeland Development Program (RCRDP) conserves natural resources by offering low- interest conservation loans. The RCRDP supports Idaho landowners in implementing projects that enhance long-term stewardship of agricultural, rangeland, and forest resources. The program’s goals include improving soil health, promoting efficient and beneficial water use, restoring and protecting riparian areas, and conserving or enhancing fish and wildlife habitat across the state.

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark	FY30 Benchmark
Number of acres implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) facilitated by RCRDP funding ¹⁷	SWCC	600 acres	600 acres	600 acres	600 acres

Ground Water Quality and Nitrate Priority Areas

The SWCC, in partnership with local conservation districts, partner agencies, and landowners, offers technical assistance for developing Ground Water Quality Improvement Plans within Nitrate Priority Areas. The program promotes and supports the improvement and maintenance of groundwater quality through the adoption of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce nitrate leaching from agricultural operations into groundwater sources.

(The Goal 3, Objective 2 Performance Measures are on the following page).

¹⁶ Developed to determine progress toward meeting state goals per the Revised Agreement Between the United States Department of Agriculture Commodity Credit Corporation and the State of Idaho concerning the implementation of the 2021 ESPA Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.

¹⁷ As described in Idaho Agricultural Pollution Abatement Plan (rev. February 2025).

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark	FY30 Benchmark
Number of acres implementing BMPs to maintain and improve ground water quality ¹⁸	SWCC	54,000 acres	54,000 acres	54,000 acres	54,000 acres

Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Planning Program

The SWCC develops and publishes TMDL plans that are a framework and tool for Conservation Districts, landowners, and other partners to meet Idaho's non-point source water quality goals.

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark	FY30 Benchmark
Percentage of TMDL implementation plans completed within 18 months of EPA ¹⁹ approval and DEQ assignment to the Commission. ²⁰	SWCC	100%	100%	100%	100%

Goal 3, Objective 3: Increase Awareness and Engagement Through Outreach and Communication. (SWCC)

The SWCC promotes understanding of Idaho's voluntary, locally led conservation efforts by sharing information, success stories, and resources with Conservation Districts, landowners, partners, decision makers, and the public. The SWCC seeks to strengthen awareness of conservation programs and their benefits through timely, effective communication that fosters collaboration, encourages participation, and highlights the value of conservation across Idaho.

(Goal 3, Objective 3 Performance Measures are on the following page).

¹⁸ As described in Idaho Agricultural Pollution Abatement Plan (rev. February 2025).

¹⁹ Environmental Protection Agency.

²⁰ Established in Idaho Nonpoint Source Management Plan (rev. December 2020) pursuant to IDAPA 58.01.02.010.24, Idaho Water Quality Standards.

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark	FY30 Benchmark
Increase the number of newsletter subscribers ²¹	SWCC	20 new subscriptions	20 new subscriptions	20 new subscriptions	20 new subscriptions
Increase annual percentage of social media reach, likes, and follows ²²	SWCC	10% increase	10% increase	10% increase	10% increase

Goal 3, Objective 4: Support the successful integration of IDWR and SWCC by aligning the two where missions and goals overlap, while preserving clear separation between regulatory and non-regulatory functions throughout the transition.

- Develop recommended amendments to Idaho Code necessary to complete the integration of the SWCC into IDWR, consistent with changes initiated in 2026 by House Bill 503 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 115, and submit the recommendations through the Governor’s Executive Agency Legislation process, **by December 31, 2026.**
- Conduct stakeholder outreach, gather feedback, and prepare a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between SWCC and the IDWR Director to present at the Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts Fall Conference (Nov. 17–19, 2026), and sign and implement the MOU upon enactment of all supporting legislation, **by June 30, 2027.**
- Coordinate with the Office of Information Technology Services to implement ITS services and hardware, **by June 30, 2027.**
- Identify other opportunities to improve efficiency, coordination, and service delivery while maintaining SWCC’s statutory mission, authorities, and role, **ongoing.**

²¹ Established by SWCC.

²² Established by SWCC.

Goal 4²³: Sustain, Maintain, and Enhance the State’s Water Resources for the Benefit of Idaho’s Economy, Ecosystems, and Resulting Quality of Life

Groundwater levels in much of Idaho are declining, and in some areas, aquifers cannot sustain all existing surface and groundwater uses. Inadequate or diminishing water supplies often cause contentious, costly, and time-consuming litigation, as well as negatively affecting local and regional economies. The 2016 Legislature passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 137 (SCR137), instructing the Idaho Water Resource Board to identify and implement water projects to stabilize aquifers and enhance ground water supplies throughout Idaho. In 2017, the addition of Policy ‘8A: Sustainability’ to the State Water Plan strengthened SCR137. Policy 8A reads: “Sustainability is the active stewardship of Idaho’s water resources to satisfy current uses and assure future uses of this renewable resource in accordance with State law and policy.” To prevent the negative economic impacts associated with limited water supplies, the Board, with support from the Legislature and Governor, proactively implements water projects and programs to manage and enhance surface water supplies and stabilize or recover aquifers across the state.

²³ Formerly labeled Goal 3. Relabeled to Goal 4 in FY27 for inclusion of the SWCC’s strategic objectives to Goal 3.

Goal 4, Objective 1: Support and grow an ongoing managed recharge program for the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA) to stabilize and recover the aquifer. (Planning & Projects Bureau).

ESPA Aquifer Management

In accordance with Senate Concurrent Resolution 110 (2025), the State Water Plan and the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer Comprehensive Aquifer Management Plan were revised and approved by the Legislature in 2026. To implement those revisions, the IWRB will develop sufficient managed recharge capacity through the construction of recharge sites, water diversion facility enhancements, delivery agreements, and refinement of operational protocols to achieve an annual 15-year average managed recharge volume of 350,000 acre-feet.

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark	FY30 Benchmark
8. Average annual volume of water recharged into the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer ²⁴	Water Projects Section	350,000 acre-feet	350,000 acre-feet	350,000 acre-feet	350,000 acre-feet

Goal 4, Objective 2: Complete the Mountain Home Air Force Base (MHAFB) Water Resilience Project to deliver reliable surface water supply to the MHAFB and relieve demand on the over-drafted Mountain Home Aquifer. (Planning & Projects Bureau).

The Board completed construction of the pipeline and transmission system in June 2025, while the United States Air Force continues construction of the water treatment plant, with project completion scheduled for December 2026.

- Complete the ownership transfer of the pipeline from the State to the United States Airforce, **by December 2026.**

Goal 4, Objective 3: Partner with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) to complete the Anderson Ranch Dam Raise for additional water storage. (Planning & Projects Bureau).

The USBR is scheduled to complete the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and issue a Record of Decision (ROD) by or around December 31, 2026, and is initiating the construction contracting process.

- Coordinate with USBR to support the EIS completion schedule, issuance of a Record of Decision (ROD), and initiation of the construction contracting process following issuance of the ROD, **by or around December 31, 2026.**

²⁴ Beginning in FY26, the Board's ESPA recharge Performance Measure #8, is updated to report the 15-year average annual recharge volume for consistency with the State Water Plan. Previously, the Performance Measure captured the actual annual amount of water recharged into the ESPA. The Department's Fiscal Year 2027 Performance Report will capture the updated Performance Measure and report the average annual recharge volume. The actual annual volume of water recharged under the Board's natural flow rights will continue to be reported in the Performance Report under the Planning & Projects Bureau Section. The ability to meet the average annual 350,000 acre-feet recharge goal is dependent on annual water supply.

- Coordinate with USBR and Boise River basin stakeholders to obtain an approved water right permit, prior to issuance of construction contracts.
- Coordinate with USBR and Boise River basin water users to identify and execute agreements for the use of additional water storage, **by December 31, 2027.**
- Complete the Anderson Ranch Dam Raise project, **by December 31, 2031.**

Goal 4, Objective 4: Complete the Lemhi Basin Framework Program, to support anadromous fish passage while maintaining the agricultural economy of the Lemhi basin. (Planning & Projects Bureau)

- Complete the remaining 3 of 10 required source switches (i.e. relocation of a water right's point of diversion from a tributary stream to the main stem river), or equivalent re-diversion projects, above the L-6 diversion location on the Lemhi River, **ongoing.**
- Secure additional short-term agreements with water users to meet the required minimum stream flows of 35 cfs for 80% of the days between March 15 and July 1, **ongoing.**
- Implement actions assigned to the Water Board as part of the Lemhi Basin Comprehensive Settlement Agreement including:
 - Complete a feasibility assessment of an operational cloud seeding program for the Lemhi Basin that identifies suitable cloud seeding methods and estimates program costs and anticipated benefits to inform a decision on whether to pursue implementation of a cloud seeding program in the basin, **by December 31, 2026.**
 - Complete Managed Recharge and Surface Storage Feasibility Studies, **by December 31, 2027.**
- Secure additional short-term agreements with water right holders to meet the required minimum stream flows of 25 cfs at the L-6 diversion for the period between March 15 and November 15, **by December 31, 2030.**

Goal 4, Objective 5: Work with interested stakeholders to evaluate opportunities for cloud seeding in Idaho basins to augment and sustain water resources and continue to coordinate and partner in the collaborative cloud seeding program. (Planning & Projects Bureau).

- Complete annual or multi-year operation and funding agreements with partners in the Collaborative Cloud Seeding program, **by December 31, 2026.**
- In accordance with commitments under the Lemhi Basin Comprehensive Settlement, complete a feasibility assessment of an operational cloud seeding program for the Lemhi River Basin (see Goal 4, Objective 4), **by December 31, 2026.**
- Complete a target and control analysis for the Collaborative Cloud Seeding Program to refine estimates of program effectiveness and water supply benefits and improve future program evaluation, **by December 31, 2027.**
- Complete a feasibility assessment of an operational cloud seeding program for the Clearwater Basin to identify suitable cloud seeding methods, estimate program costs and anticipated benefits, and inform a decision on whether to pursue implementation of a cloud seeding program in the basin, **by December 31, 2027.**

- Complete an evaluation of cloud seeding methods in the Bear River Basin to determine the effectiveness of alternative cloud seeding technologies and inform future program implementation, **by December 31, 2027.**

Goal 4, Objective 6: Promote and support the development and implementation of stakeholder driven water management initiatives to promote the sustainable use of the state’s water resources and reduce water user conflict. (Planning & Projects Bureau)

- Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer - Support IDWR and stakeholders in the development of a Ground Water Management Plan for the ESPA Ground Water Management Area, **by December 31, 2027.**
- Wood River Basin – Support the adoption of a revised Big Wood River Ground Water Management Area Management Plan: (1) support for the Collaborative Cloud Seeding Program; (2) support for the Conservation, Infrastructure, and Efficiency Fund (2026-2028) under which the IWRB approved up to \$200,000 in matching funds for projects that support the goals of the Management Plan, **ongoing.**
- Bear River Basin – Support actions to improve Bear River and Bear Lake Operations through participation in stakeholder negotiations, policy development, technical analyses and data collection, and acquisition of easements or other infrastructure to optimize operations, **ongoing.**
- Swan Falls Agreement and Minimum Stream Flows at the Murphy Gage – In accordance with direction from the Governor, the IWRB will facilitate development and implementation of a long-term mitigation strategy through the Swan Falls Implementation Group to provide participating Trust Water Right holders with greater water supply certainty while ensuring the State continues to meet its minimum stream flow obligations under the Swan Falls Agreement, **by March 1, 2028 and ongoing.**

Goal 4, Objective 7: Acquire, build, or operate water infrastructure that support water sustainability initiatives. (Planning & Projects Bureau)

- Manage operations of the IWRB’s Dworshak Small Hydropower Plant to optimize revenue generation, **ongoing.**
 - Oversee Operations and Maintenance Contractor to maintain facility and comply with existing stakeholder agreements, **ongoing.**
- Operate and maintain Priest Lake Outlet Dam, **ongoing.**
 - Update operations and emergency action plan, **by December 31, 2026.**
 - Develop Asset Management Plan for future maintenance, operations, and upgrades, **by December 31, 2027.**

Goal 5²⁵: Promote and Finance Water Infrastructure Projects to Sustain Idaho’s Water Resources for the Benefit of the Citizens of the State and for Future Generations

In 2023, the Idaho Legislature passed House Concurrent Resolution 7 (HCR7) encouraging the Governor of the State of Idaho, the Idaho Water Resource Board, and the Idaho Department of Water Resources to continue pursuing, in conjunction with the Legislature, ongoing investments in the state's water infrastructure and to establish a long-term plan that identifies future projects intended to protect, improve, and secure the state's water resources for the benefit of the citizens of the state and for future generations.

²⁵ Formerly labeled Goal 4. Relabeled to Goal 5 in FY27 for inclusion of the SWCC’s strategic objectives to Goal 3.

Goal 5, Objective 1: Through the IWRB’s Financial Loan and Grant Programs promote, support, and finance water projects to assist entities to develop the state’s water resources, address water sustainability, and rehabilitate or improve aging water infrastructure. (Planning & Projects Bureau)

- Develop publicly available tools and resources, such as workshops, application and reimbursement examples, and customer feedback surveys, for IWRB Financial Loan and Grant Program applicants and awardees, **by December 31, 2026**.
- Manage the IWRB’s Loan Program, **ongoing**.
 - Process and approve Loan applications each fiscal year, **ongoing**.
 - Update Loan program policy as directed by the Board, **ongoing**.
- Operate the IWRB’s Grant Programs, which include the Flood Management, Aging Infrastructure, ESPA Groundwater to Surface Water Conversions, and Measuring and Monitoring²⁶ Grant programs, **ongoing**.
 - Award IWRB approved grants for qualifying projects each fiscal year, **ongoing**.
- Operate an ESPA specific Surface Water Efficiencies program, **ongoing**.
 - Award IWRB approved proposals for qualifying projects each fiscal year, **ongoing**.

Goal 5, Objective 2²⁷: Advance water supply sustainability by identifying, evaluating, prioritizing, and implementing projects and initiatives that address regional, basin, and statewide water supply needs, including through IWRB funding and coordination with federal, state, local, and other partners. (Planning & Projects Bureau)

- Maintain a list of priority projects determined to have potential regional water supply benefits and that may be eligible to receive IWRB funding or other support, **ongoing**.
 - Develop and manage a transparent process to review, evaluate, and approve projects for inclusion on the Regional Water Sustainability Projects Priority List, **ongoing**.

Consistent with Senate Joint Memorial 101 (SJM-101) (2026), the Board is prioritizing the identification and evaluation of new and expanded water storage opportunities, including on-stream and off-stream storage options, and coordinating with federal and non-federal agencies and stakeholders to address drought resiliency, population growth, and long-term water security needs in Idaho.

- Coordinate with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and stakeholders to implement the Upper Snake River Basin Study, including evaluation of new and expanded storage opportunities such as Teton Dam, a potential Minidoka Dam raise, and a potential Jackson Lake Dam raise. Complete initial scoping and baseline analysis, **by December 31, 2027**.

²⁶ The Measuring and Monitoring Grant Program supports measurement of ground and surface water diversions, with an emphasis on diversions in the ESPA.

²⁷ G5O2 was updated in FY27 from “Allocate funding appropriated to the IWRB to support implementation of projects intended to help achieve water supply sustainability on a regional, basin, or statewide scale,” to the current G5O2, for the inclusion of tasks associated with SJM-101 (2026) and HCR-34 (2026).

- Continue supporting the development of additional water storage capacity through the expansion, rehabilitation, and modernization of existing storage facilities, including projects such as the Lost Valley Reservoir Dam Raise, Anderson Ranch Dam Raise, and other dam repair and enhancement efforts, **ongoing**.

House Concurrent Resolution No. 34 (HCR-34) (2026) directs the Board to identify and implement opportunities for further development of Idaho's remaining allocation under the Bear River Compact to address Idaho's statewide water obligations.

- Complete an analysis of Idaho's remaining allocation under the Bear River Compact and submit required reports to Idaho legislative leadership evaluating current Compact allocation development, water supply availability in the Lower Division, and preliminary opportunities, costs, and timelines for developing Idaho's remaining allocation to address statewide water supply needs, **by September 30, 2026**.

Goal 5, Objective 3: Consistent with Idaho Code §§ 67-466 and 67-705, submit reports to the Idaho Legislature regarding IWRB operations and programs by the mandated filing deadline(s). (Planning & Projects Bureau).

- Maintain an administrative process and schedule for identifying required annual reports, coordinating report development, and ensuring timely submission of all required reports to the Idaho Legislature in accordance with statutory deadlines, **ongoing**.

Goal 6²⁸: Enhance the Capability of the Department to Manage and Protect the Natural Resources of the State and Serve the Public

The Department cannot accomplish its many and varied responsibilities without business operations support services including geospatial and information technology, human resources, finance, purchasing, and contracting. These functions are vital to ensuring current productivity, and effectiveness can be maintained with existing resources despite increasing workloads. Objectives in this area focus on offering support services and tools to meet employee needs, including working with (1) the Governor’s Office of Information Technology Services to build and implement up-to-date and secure technology solutions that increase the efficiency of the Department, and (2) the Division of Human Resources to recruit and retain outstanding staff.

²⁸ Formerly labeled Goal 5. Relabeled to Goal 6 in FY27 for inclusion of the SWCC’s strategic objectives to Goal 3.

Goal 6, Objective 1: Modernize and improve IDWR’s ability to create, share, and distribute water resources information and data, and analysis with its staff, water user stakeholder groups, and the public. (Technical Services Bureau, Agency-Wide)

The Department’s Geospatial Technology Section is responsible for completing the following tasks:

- Migrate existing online mapping applications to a supported platform, **by December 31, 2027.**
 - Migrate the Well Driller Locator to a supported platform, **by December 31, 2026.**
- Develop a comprehensive Southern Idaho Irrigated Lands Classification for a wet and dry year, **by June 30, 2027.**
- Present findings and conclusions to the Bear River Commission Technical Advisory Committee on the utility of Google Earth Engine's random forest classifier as a methodology to determine seasonal irrigation status, **by June 30, 2027.**

The Department’s support services in conjunction with management staff shall support the following tasks:

- Identify, prioritize, and implement edits and updates to IDWR’s webpage for compliance with Federal ADA requirements and to improve public user experience and information accessibility, **by April 24, 2027.**
 - Train website content managers on creating and maintaining ADA compliant digital content, **by April 24, 2027.**
- Maintain a social media presence to inform the public about IDWR and IWRB current events, **ongoing.**

Goal 6, Objective 2: Modernize IDWR’s workflow tracking and record retention processes in the water rights program to reduce labor costs, enhance accessibility, and limit paper use. (Water Allocation Bureau)

- Complete a water right records Document Retention Schedule **by June 30, 2027.**
 - Begin implementation of the Document Retention Schedule **by December 31, 2027.**
- In collaboration with the Office of Information Technology Services (OITS), develop a workflow software to assign and track the water rights workload digitally across all IDWR offices, measure and report individual and program performance, and adjust workload distribution to meet current needs **by June 30, 2027.**²⁹
 - Coordinate with OITS to finalize the requirements and expectations of the project and create a Proof of Concept **by December 31, 2027.**
 - Implement the new workflow software for use in the Water Allocation Bureau **by June 30, 2028.**

²⁹ Timely completion of this task and the following sub-tasks will be contingent on resources available at OITS to develop a workflow tracking software.

Goal 6, Objective 3: Expand and update geospatial and remote sensing tools, software, applications, and other resources to support IDWR’s business operations. (Technical Services Bureau)

The Department’s Geospatial Technology Section is responsible for completing the following tasks:

- Identify potential improvements to the remote sensing model using a comparison of actual evapotranspiration and consumptive use measurements with remote sensing model estimates, **ongoing**.
 - Evaluate and report on the differences between satellite-based evapotranspiration estimates that use automated cloud masks and those that use traditional hand-digitized masks, **by June 30, 2027**.
 - Test remote sensing ET model calibration improvements against measured evapotranspiration data. Report results, **by June 30, 2028**.
- Evaluate existing vector GIS datasets on the IDWR file server by staff usage, **by June 30, 2028**.
 - Inventory Non-REST services vector data on IDWR file services and develop a maintenance schedule for the datasets, **by June 30, 2027**.
- Migrate fourteen ASP.Net applications and APIs to .Net 8 or .Net 10 **by June 30, 2028**.
 - Migrate the two highest priority ASP.Net applications and APIs to .Net 8 or .Net 10, **by June 30, 2027**.

Goal 6, Objective 4: Review current hardware and software and ensure IDWR personnel have all the necessary IT resources to perform their jobs efficiently in various physical locations in and away from the office. (Agency-wide)

The Department’s Financial and Purchasing support services, and management staff are responsible for the following tasks:

- Develop and conduct periodic employee survey to assess general satisfaction with existing IT services and resources (e.g., hardware, software, internet service, etc.), **ongoing**.
- Coordinate with OITS to ensure that IDWR’s IT related objectives are included in OITS’ ITS Strategic Road Map, **ongoing**.
- Replace 4+ year old desktop computers and 3+ year old laptops, agency wide each fiscal year, **ongoing**.
- Replace 5+ year old agency servers each fiscal year as needed, **ongoing**.

Goal 6 Objective 5: Recruit qualified staff agency wide.

The Department’s managers in cooperation with the Division of Human Resources (DHR) are responsible for the following tasks:

- Facilitate an agency wide New Employee Orientation biennially, **ongoing**.

- Attend at least one career fair or job recruitment event each quarter to promote employment at IDWR, **ongoing**.
- Facilitate or offer regular hiring manager training focusing on duties and responsibilities, LUMA processes, and best practices to ensure efficient and productive employee recruitment and hiring, **ongoing**.

Goal 6 Objective 6: Retain agency staff to minimize loss of institutional knowledge, ensure agency wide productivity, and ensure high-quality work. (Director, Support Services)

The Department needs to attract and retain talented employees and ensure compensation is offered within competitive norms for the type and size of the organization and the duties, responsibilities, and performance expectations of each role.

The Department’s Fiscal and DHR support services in conjunction with managers shall support the following tasks:

- Contract for an external review and analysis of existing compensation and recommended competitive compensation, **by June 30, 2027**
- Conduct 90-day new employee feedback surveys, “stay interviews,” and “exit interviews” with employees, **ongoing**.
- Create and implement action plans responding to the state-wide employee engagement surveys, new employee feedback surveys, “stay interviews,” and “exit interviews,” **ongoing**.

Goal 6, Objective 7: Maintain and regularly update the Department’s continuity of operations processes and procedures to successfully recover IDWR’s business operations if the State Office becomes inaccessible or inoperable. (Agency-wide)

Consistent with the expectations of the Office of Emergency Management and the Governor, as set forth in Executive Order 2022-04, IDWR designated two employees as its *Agency Emergency Coordinators* (AECs). Agency Emergency Coordinators are required to “train, exercise, and participate in the State Emergency Management Program to facilitate emergency support and logistics in response to emergencies and disasters.” In fulfilling these obligations, the AECs are responsible for the following tasks:

- Designate up to two National Incident Management System-compliant AECs, **by December 31, 2026**.
- Update the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) contacts and assigned responsibilities, **by December 31, 2026**.
- Update COOP contacts and assigned responsibilities, **by December 31, 2028**.
- Review the IDWR’s Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) and Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP) biennially to update personnel contact lists and emergency contact procedures, and to meet Recovery Time Objectives and Recovery Point Objectives, **ongoing**.

-End-

Appendix A: IDWR & SWCC FY27 Organizational Structure

Idaho Department of Water Resources FY27 Organizational Chart

Governor

Director

- Fiscal & Purchasing Support Services

(dotted) Legal Services (AG Office)

(dotted) Human Resources Support Services (DHR)

Water Administration Bureau

- Water Distribution Section
- Water District Support

Resource Protection Bureau

- Ground Water Protection Section
- Stream Channel Protection Program
- Floodplain Management Unit
- Safety of Dams

Deputy Director

- IT & Web Support Services

Northern Office

Eastern Office

Southern Office

Western Office

Water Allocation Bureau

- Water Rights Section
- Adjudication Section

Deputy Director

Technology Services Bureau

- Geospatial Technology Section
- Hydrology Section

Planning & Projects Bureau

- Water Projects Section
- Financial Program

Idaho Water Resource Board

(dotted) Deputy Director

Technology Services Bureau

- Geospatial Technology Section
- Hydrology Section

Planning & Projects Bureau

- Water Projects Section
- Financial Program

Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission FY27 Organizational Chart

Governor

Soil & Water Conservation Commission

Administrator

- Engineering & Technical Services
- Fiscal Support Services
 - Resource Conservation & Rangeland Development Program (RCRDP) Loan Program

(dotted) Human Resources Support Services (DHR)

(dotted) IT Support Services (IDWR)

Deputy Administrator

- District Support Services
- Conservation Programs
 - Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
 - Water Quality Program for Agriculture