



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF
WATER RESOURCES

Strategic Plan

Fiscal Years 2026 - 2029

July 1, 2025

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About the Idaho Department of Water Resources

Agency 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 (IWRB or Board) and, in 1974, renamed the Department of Water Administration to the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR or Department).

The Department Today

Consistent with its original legislative purpose, IDWR approves or denies proposals to appropriate water or change existing water rights, archives water right records, recommends and records adjudicated water rights, and oversees the delivery of water in times of shortage. Additional responsibilities include hydrologic and water resource data collection and analysis, dam and impoundment structure inspection, groundwater protection (well construction oversight), regulation of stream channel alterations, and coordination with local communities to comply with the National Flood Insurance Program.

The Department and the Board 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 accounts 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 from the Governor and the Legislature, will form a Water Administration Bureau to support and train water districts and watermasters, develop and enforce water measurement standards, and conduct priority water administration. In addition, the previous Water Compliance Bureau was renamed the Resource Protection Bureau and organized to include the Department's groundwater protection, stream channel protection, flood management, and safety of dams programs.

The Department also has four regional offices in Boise, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho Falls, and Twin Falls, and two field offices in Salmon and Preston. The regional and field offices implement Department programs and services throughout Idaho. The Legal, Purchasing, and Financial groups support IDWR staff. (See organizational chart on page 4). The Department receives human resources support from the Division of Human Resources and information technology support from the Office of Information Technology Services.

Looking Forward

Greater demand for a finite supply of water has changed the focus of IDWR and the Board in recent years. 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 water (surface and groundwater) use by priority in times of water shortage. The Board has exerted significant efforts to enhance water supplies to address shortages 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.

About IDWR's Strategic Plan

Statutory Requirement

Idaho law requires state agencies to develop a strategic plan defining performance commitment and assessing progress toward agency goals (Idaho Code § 67-1903). Strategic planning periods are based on the state fiscal year (July 1 through June 30). This document strategically plans for a 4-year period, including the year in which it is developed, and is updated annually.

Goals, Objectives, & Performance Measures

This plan contains five goals. Each goal relates to essential IDWR and IWRB functions: managing water resources, administering water rights, developing and financing projects, and supporting staff. Objectives and tasks guide the Department to accomplish its goals. Performance measures with defined benchmarks for key objectives inform the Department of its progress.

Each year, IDWR generates a fiscal year end Performance Report.¹ The Performance Report lists the Department's progress on many of the performance measures in this strategic plan. The performance measures reported in Part II of the Performance Report are listed in this strategic plan in **bold font** and are numbered according to the order listed in Part II of the Performance Report. The bureau responsible for accomplishing an objective is stated in parentheses after each objective (**Responsible Bureau**). Where applicable, IDWR-specific headers listed in the Performance Report under "Cases Managed, Key Services Provided" are listed and underlined in this plan, below the associated objective.

External Factors

Several factors outside of the Department's control could affect this plan and the Department's 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

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/>.

- Litigation and court decisions
- Staff recruitment and retention in a challenging job market
- State and national economic and governance trends

Plan Development and Approval

The IDWR Strategic Plan, developed by the Director’s Executive Team, establishes the agency’s near and long-term priorities and tangible objectives. By evaluating productivity with performance measures, the Department and the public can assess IDWR’s progress and success in implementing and achieving its goals. The Department welcomes input from staff and publishes the plan for the public and all IDWR employees to reference.

The Director’s Executive Team consists of the following: Mathew Weaver, Director; Brian Patton, Deputy Director; Shelley Keen, Deputy Director; Megan Jenkins, Executive Assistant; Craig Saxton, Water Allocation Bureau Chief; Erik Boe, Compliance 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.

IDWR’s Mission, Vision, and Commitment

Our Mission:

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

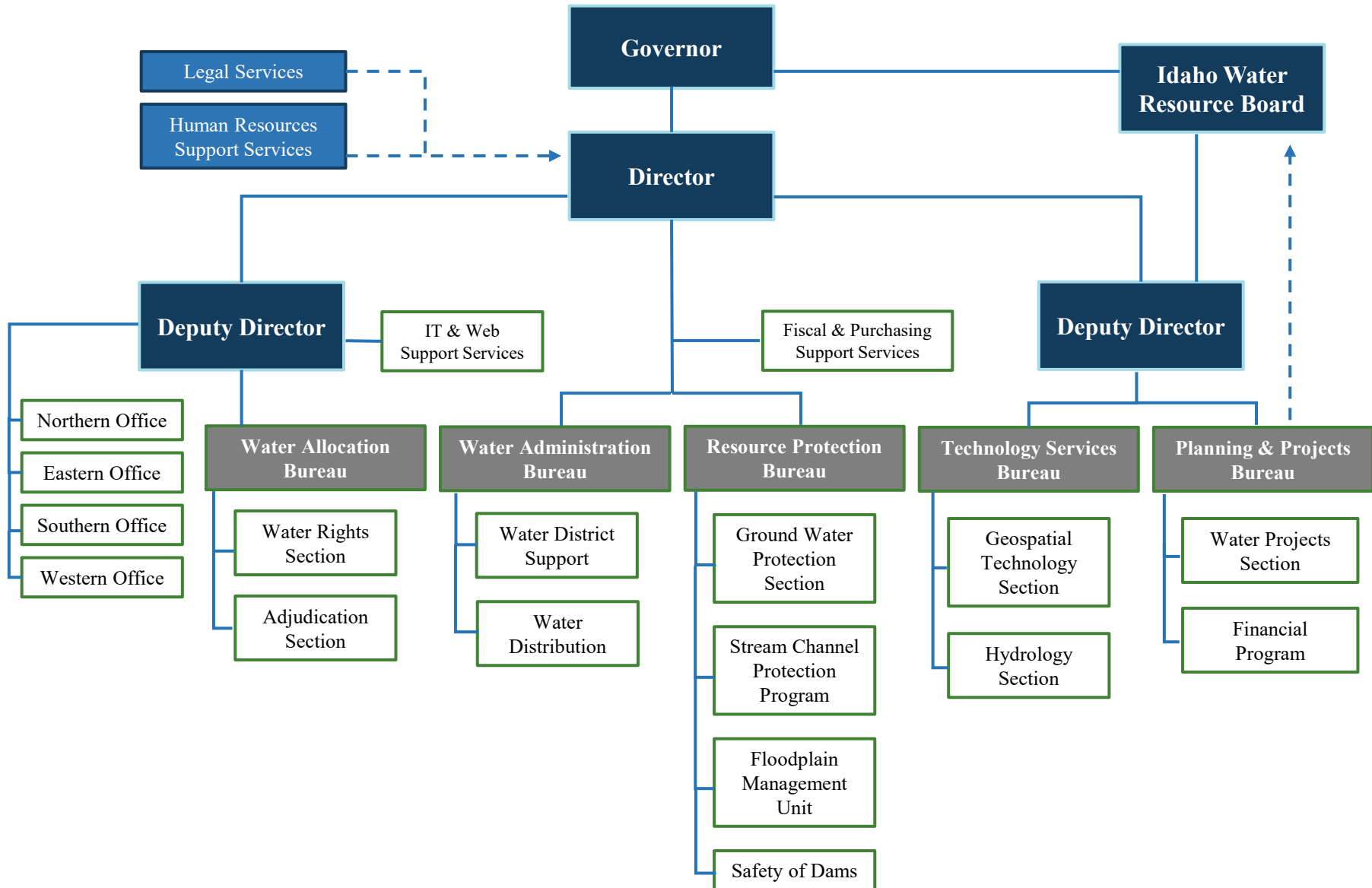
Our Vision:

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

Our Commitment:

- Sustain Idaho’s water resources for the public good.
- Serve our customers responsively and timely.
- Balance competing interests consistent with Idaho law.
- Be forward-looking and innovative.
- Deliver uncompromising ethical behavior.
- Communicate early, honestly, and completely.
- Return to the taxpayer an honest day’s time and effort.

IDWR FY26 Organizational Structure



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)

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	FY26 Benchmark	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark
1. Number of pending, unprotested Applications for Permit, not subject to a moratorium²	Water Rights Section	325	325	300	300
2. Number of pending Water Right Transfer applications	Water Rights Section	100	100	100	100
Number of permits needing Water Right Licensing	Water Rights Section	525	475	450	425
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

² In FY25, IDWR began reporting the number of *Pending, unprotested Applications for Permit, which are not subject to a moratorium*, as the first of nine performance measure in the Department's annual Performance Report. The previous reported performance measure was the *Number of permits needing Water Right Licensing*, which is still outlined in the table above and reported as an additional measure under the Water Allocation Bureau section in the annual Performance Report.

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 (State Law Based Claims)

- Submit a Director’s Report for Basin 97 Part 2 in the Clark Fork – Pend Oreille River Basin Adjudication, **by December 31, 2025.**
- Upon commencement of the Kootenai River Basin Adjudication, send first round commencement notices to property owners within Basin 98, **by March 31, 2026.**
- Submit the Preliminary Director’s Report for Basin 13, Part 1, in the Bear River Basin Adjudication **by June 30, 2026.**

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY26 Benchmark	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark
4. Total number of statewide adjudication claims taken, and recommendations completed.³	Adjudication Section	3000⁴	3500	3000	2500
Total number of Northern Idaho Adjudication claims taken, and recommendations completed.	Adjudication Section	500	900	1400	900
Total number of Bear River Basin Adjudication claims taken, and recommendations completed.	Adjudication Section	1500	750	1500	1500
⁵ Total number of Kootenai River Basin Adjudication claims taken, and recommendations completed.	Adjudication Section	1000	1850	100	100

³ 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.

⁴ 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. Those adjudications are also separate performance measures to assist the Department with adjudications planning and resource allocation.

⁵ The performance measure, *total number of Kootenai River Basin Adjudication claims taken and recommendations completed*, is new for FY26 and added in anticipation of the Idaho Water Adjudications court issuing an order to commence the KRBA in 2025.

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 Alterations Program

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	FY26 Benchmark	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 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	43%	44%	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	FY26 Benchmark	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark
Percent of non-federal high-hazard dams with an up-to-date Operation/Emergency Plan.	Safety of Dams Program	90%	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	FY26 Benchmark	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 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	FY26 Benchmark	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark
Number of IGWA well driller workshops or online course presentations supported by IDWR	Ground Water Protection Section	3	3	3	3

Floodplain Management Unit

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 30 to five. Capping new CAVs at two per year aligns with FEMA's planned transition to a streamlined audit process in FY27 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.

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

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY26 Benchmark	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark
Number of NFIP Community Assistance Visits (CAV) initiated	Floodplain Management Unit	2	2	2	2
Number of NFIP Community Assistance Contacts (CAC) initiated	Floodplain Management Unit	2	5	5	5
Number of NFIP Training, Outreach, & Presentations facilitated by IDWR	Floodplain Management Unit	6	6	6	6

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

Idaho Code § 42-604 requires the Director to divide the state into water districts. Priorities include adding basins tributary to the ESPA that are not currently administering groundwater. A benchmark of two districts created or modified per year is realistic based on the Department's current staff resources and workloads.

- Create a water district to administer groundwater in the Teton River tributary basin by **December 31, 2025**.
- Create a water district to administer groundwater in the Rock Creek tributary basin by **December 31, 2026**.
- Create water districts to administer groundwater in the Henry's Fork, Medicine, Birch, Beaver, Camas, Willow, and Blackfoot River tributary basins by **December 31, 2027**.
- Create water districts to administer ground water in the Palisades and Salt River tributary basins by **December 31, 2028**.

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY26 Benchmark	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark
6. Number of water districts created or modified	Water Distribution Section	≥2	≥3	≥4	≥4

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	FY26 Benchmark	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 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 and 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	FY26 Benchmark	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 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	FY26 Benchmark	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark
Total number of appointed Hearing Officers ⁶	Director	8-10	8-10	8-10	8-10

⁶ 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.

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 and Groundwater Management Tools

- Update and expand the current Snake River Planning Model to include downstream of the Hells Canyon Complex **by December 31, 2025.**
- Prepare a Treasure Valley groundwater change map for annual publication **by June 30, 2026.**
- 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 December 31, 2026.**
- 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.**

Groundwater Model Revisions and Recalibration efforts

- Construct and calibrate a transient groundwater flow model for the Big Lost River basin and publish the final project report, **by December 31, 2025.**
- Revise and recalibrate the ESPAM v2.2 and publish the final project report, **by June 30, 2026.**
- Revise and recalibrate the Wood River groundwater model and publish the final project report, **by December 31, 2026.**
- Construct and calibrate a transient groundwater flow model for the Western Snake River Plain including the Mountain Home Plateau, **by December 31, 2028.**
- Construct and calibrate a transient groundwater flow model for the Raft River basin, **by December 31, 2029.**

Water Right Accounting Program Modernization efforts

- Develop a Water Right Accounting SQL database to replace the existing Microsoft Access databases, **by December 31, 2025.**
- Develop a Big Wood River Basin Water Right Accounting program, **by June 30, 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 characterizing and summarizing the surface and groundwater hydrology of the Mountain Home Plateau, **by December 31, 2025.**

- 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 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.

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY26 Benchmark	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 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 CGWMA	Hydrology Section	≥1	≥1	≥1	≥1

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

Water Measurement Sites and 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 collect more data across multiple growing monitoring networks while maintaining a static workforce, IDWR must modernize and automate historically manual processes. Automated processes include deploying measurement instrumentation, establishing telemetered communication networks, and automating data collection, processing, and publication programs.

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**.
- Install automated hydrologic data collection equipment to facilitate the gathering of real-time, high-frequency data for model calibration and trend analysis, **ongoing**.

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY26 Benchmark	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark
7. Number of additional pressure transducers installed annually into monitoring wells	Hydrology Section	10	10	10	10
8. Number of telemetry stations and instrumentation upgraded annually	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 identify and submit questions to the Attorney General's Office for legal review regarding IDWR's authorities around Trust Rights, **by June 30, 2026.**
- Plan for and develop criteria for reviewing term limited TWRs, **by December 31, 2026.**
- Initiate a review of term limited TWRs, **by June 30, 2027.**

The Water Administration Bureau is responsible for the following task:

- 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 December 31, 2026.**

Goal 3: 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.

Goal 3, 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).

Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer - Aquifer Management

- Through Senate Concurrent Resolution 110, the 2025 Idaho Legislature supported the revision of the State Water Plan and ESPA Comprehensive Aquifer Management Plan to establish a state-funded, ESPA managed recharge goal of 350,000 acre-feet of water on an average annual basis. Complete directed revisions **by June 30, 2026**.
- Develop sufficient recharge capacity through construction of recharge sites, water diversion facility enhancements, delivery agreements, and refinement of operational protocol to support targeted annual average recharge volumes, **by December 31, 2026**.

Performance Measure	Responsible Section	FY26 Benchmark	FY27 Benchmark	FY28 Benchmark	FY29 Benchmark
9. Annual volume of water recharged into the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer	Water Projects Section	250,000 acre-feet	350,000 acre-feet	350,000 acre-feet	350,000 acre-feet

Goal 3, 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).

- Commence construction upon finalization of a project contract with the U.S. Air Force. Complete the project **by June 30, 2026**.

Goal 3, 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).

- Conduct and complete the final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, **by December 31, 2025**.
- Coordinate with Boise River basin water users and USBR to identify and contract for the use of additional water storage, **by December 31, 2025**.
- Complete the Anderson Ranch Dam Raise project, **by December 31, 2030**.

Goal 3, 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, **by December 31, 2026**.

- 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, **ongoing**.
- Implement actions assigned to the Water Board as part of the Lemhi Settlement Agreement including:
 - Complete Managed Recharge and Surface Storage Feasibility Studies, **by December 31, 2026**.
 - Assess the feasibility of developing a cloudseeding program, **by December 31, 2025**.

Goal 3, Objective 5: Work with interested stakeholders to investigate the potential 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, 2025**.

Goal 3, 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, **by December 31, 2028**.
- 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**.

Goal 3, 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, 2025**.
 - Develop Asset Management Plan for future maintenance, operations, and upgrades, **by December 31, 2025**.

Goal 4: Promote and Finance Water Infrastructure Projects to Sustain Idaho's Water Resources for the Benefit of the Citizens of the State and for Future Generations⁷

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.

⁷ A new Goal 4 was created in FY25 to guide objectives related to the IWRB's responsibility to fund and promote water infrastructure projects. IDWR's former strategic Goal 4 is now listed below as Goal 5.

Goal 4, 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 an ESPA-specific Groundwater to Surface Water Conversions Grant program and award the first round of IWRB approved grants for qualifying projects, **by December 31, 2025**.
- Develop a Measuring and Monitoring Grant program to support measurement of ground and surface water diversions across the ESPA and award the first round of IWRB approved grants for qualifying projects **by December 31, 2025**.
- Develop a program to support surface water efficiencies on water delivery systems within the ESPA Area of Common Groundwater Supply, **ongoing**.
- 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 Flood Management Grant program, **ongoing**.
 - Award IWRB approved grants for qualifying projects each fiscal year, **ongoing**.
- Operate the Aging Infrastructure Grant program, **ongoing**.
 - Award IWRB approved grants for qualifying projects each fiscal year, **ongoing**.
- Operate a statewide Groundwater to Surface Water Conversions Grant program, **ongoing**.

Goal 4, Objective 2: 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. (Planning & Projects Bureau).

- Develop and 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 and approve projects to be added to the list of priority projects, **ongoing**.
- Report progress of projects on the Regional Water Sustainability Projects Priority List on an annual basis, **ongoing**.

Goal 4, 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).

- Identify required reports, develop a submission schedule, and submit 2025 required reports **by December 15, 2025**.

Goal 5: Enhance the Capability of the Department to Manage and Protect the Water 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.

Goal 5, 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:

- Complete and include on IDWR’s website a software application to serve trust water right information related to the implementation of the Swan Falls Settlement **by June 30, 2026.**
- Migrate existing online mapping applications to a supported platform, **by December 31, 2027.**
 - Migrate the highest priority online mapping applications, **by December 31, 2025.**
- 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, 2026.**
 - Train website content managers on creating and maintaining ADA compliant digital content, **by December 31, 2025.**
- Maintain a social media presence to inform the public about IDWR and IWRB current events, **ongoing.**

Goal 5, 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, 2026.**
 - Begin implementation of the Document Retention Schedule **by December 31, 2026.**
- 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.**⁸
 - Coordinate with OITS to finalize the requirements and expectations of the project and create a Proof of Concept **by December 31, 2026.**
 - Implement the new workflow software for use in the Water Allocation Bureau **by June 30, 2027.**

⁸ 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 5, 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:

- Update and migrate IDWR's WREdit data management extension to ArcGIS Pro, **by December 31, 2025.**
- 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, 2026.**
- Migrate all staff from ArcGIS Desktop to ArcGIS Pro licensing, **by December 31, 2026.**
- Evaluate existing vector GIS datasets on the IDWR file server by staff usage, **by June 30, 2027.**
 - Publish the 15 highest-ranked datasets to ArcGIS Enterprise for access by IDWR staff, **by December 31, 2026.**
- Migrate fourteen ASP.Net applications and APIs to .Net 6 or .Net 8 **by June 30, 2027.**
 - Migrate the two highest priority ASP.Net applications and APIs to .Net 6 or .Net 8 **by June 30, 2026.**

Goal 5, 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 an annual employee survey to assess general satisfaction with existing IT resources (e.g., hardware, software, internet service, etc.), **by December 31, 2026.**
- 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 5 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, **by December 31, 2025, and 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 5 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, 2026**
- 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 5, 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 2014-07, 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:

- 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-