

MEETING MINUTES
Big Wood River Ground Water Management Area Advisory Committee
IDWR State Office at Idaho Water Center, Boise, Idaho
January 5, 2021

The meeting started at approximately 1:30 p.m. Director Gary Spackman and IDWR staff members Shelley Keen and Tim Luke attended at the IDWR State Office in Boise. Other attendees participated via Zoom videoconferencing or telephone. See the attached list of attendees.

After a brief introduction and taking of attendance, the committee discussed old business items. Tim Luke gave an update on information he had gathered concerning losses in Silver Creek near the Highway 93 crossing. Tim stated that a copy of the June 2018 Brockway Engineering Report has been shared with committee members. The report indicated that widening the bridge crossing would have minimal impact or benefit on streamflow, but the report did recommend re-grading the channel and cleaning the culvert west of the highway bridge to increase flow velocity. Tim has copies of the 2016 Stream Channel Alteration application. The Army Corps of Engineers may have concerns about some elements of the proposal. Tim stated that there may be simple fixes worth exploring, and the Idaho Transportation Department and Simplot Industries would need to be consulted.

Carl Pendleton of the Big Wood Canal Company (BWCC) then gave a presentation relating to BWCC operations and water saving efforts. Carl stated that the areas of possible leakage along the Richfield Canal seen in Google Earth images appear to be wet areas from surface runoff and side drainages, not leakage from the canal. Carl outlined various system improvements (e.g., canal linings and pipeline installations) costing several million dollars that have been completed over the years. Carl also discussed the BWCC annual budget and costs, including BWCC's cost for American Falls Reservoir District 2 (AFRD2) water. The total annual budget for BWCC is about \$5.8 million (including AFRD2 portion); the annual cost of water is approximately \$5.00 an acre-foot and about \$33.58 per share (at 5/8-inch of water per share). Carl mentioned the need to consider the value of the crops within the system. He also stated that historically the BWCC used 275,000 – 280,000 acre-feet of water annually from Magic Reservoir and the Big Wood River, but in the last 20 years it has reduced the amount to 225,000 – 235,000 acre-feet. Carl committed to forwarding his notes to IDWR so they may be posted with meeting materials on the IDWR website.

Cherie Palmer of IDWR then gave a presentation on supplemental ground water rights and conditions. Cherie's presentation included information on how a supplemental right could be used during the irrigation season and the current conditions IDWR places on approval for supplemental water rights. Cherie stated that there are 145 water rights that have supplemental condition(s) within the Big Wood Ground Water Management Area. Follow up discussion indicated that advisory committee members are interested in quantifying the amount (water, acres, etc.) associated with these 145 diversions. Tim Luke committed to trying to find the information requested by the advisory committee members.

Due to time constraints, Tim Luke did not give his presentation relating to Big Wood & Little Wood Rivers return flows and natural flow determinations. Instead, Tim will post information on this subject with other meeting materials on IDWR's web page for the advisory committee.

Jennifer Sukow of IDWR then gave a presentation relating to domestic water use. The takeaway was that water use by small community water systems and individual domestic wells is estimated to be about 5,200 acre-feet per year within the Wood River Valley aquifer model area, much less than Jim Bartolino's estimate presented in a 2009 USGS publication.

Senator Michelle Stennett described proposed legislation discussed at the December 18, 2020, meeting of the Idaho Water Resource Board's (IWRB) Water Supply Bank subcommittee. The proposed legislation would authorize the IWRB to create local rental pools for natural flow water rights in the Water Supply Bank. This update resulted in quite a bit of discussion. Director Gary Spackman explained that the Water Supply Bank is an IWRB program that relies on IDWR staff for evaluating and processing applications. Director Spackman indicated that the proposed legislation has not yet been brought to the entire IWRB and that there are legitimate concerns relating to the proposed legislation. The proposed legislation is scheduled to be discussed at the Idaho Water Users' Legislative Committee meeting on January 6, 2021.

The meeting was then opened up for public comments, questions, and potential discussion topics for future meetings. Cooper Brossy said that he thought Eric Miller would be available to present information relating to concerns from the surface water users. Sean Vincent indicated that he could present additional information relating to the 2019 study of ground water levels in the Wood River Valley. Carl Pendleton suggested that an update on the proposed legislation relating to allowing for local rental pools might be needed. William Simon indicated that he could present information relating to agriculture in the Camas Prairie.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:15 p.m.

Next Committee Meeting: January 22, 2021, 1:30 p.m., IDWR State Office at IDWR Water Center - Boise

**Big Wood River Ground Water Management Area Advisory Committee
January 5, 2021 Attendance**

Advisory Committee

Corey Allen
Cooper Brossy
Rod Hubsmith
Sharon Lee
Pat McMahan
Kristy Molyneux
Carl Pendleton
Pat Purdy
Bill Simon
Michelle Stennett
Nick Westendorf
Brian Yeager

IDWR Staff

Clinton Barnes
Shelley Keen
Tim Luke
Caitlin McCoy
Cherie Palmer
Corey Skinner
Gary Spackman
Jennifer Sukow
Sean Vincent

Members of the Public

Chris Bromley
Mary Beth Collins
Kira Finkler
Kent Fletcher
Sunny Healey
Chris Johnson
Rusty Kramer
Kevin Lakey
Sarah Lien
Greg Loomis
Judd McMahan
Eric Miller
Heather O'Leary
Norm Semanko
Dave Shaw
Larry Shoen
Jim Speck
David Stephenson
Lynn Tominaga
Peter VanderMeulen
Keri York