

Management Plan Items/Components Discussed at BWRGWMA Advisory Committee Meeting on
December 15, 2022

(Notes compiled by T Luke, IDWR, January 23, 2023, and distributed to Advisory Committee
Members and Interested Parties on March 27, 2023)

1. Reporting deadlines

Adjust the timing of certain annual reports to allow additional time for report compilation and QA. Suggestion to move certain deadlines from December 1 to January 1 (or December 31). Several users expressed concern that WD37 and IDWR can't provide final data by December. Consider clarification and adjust report deadlines as suggested. IDWR may provide written clarification?

2. Management Plan Section V.1.B.1 regarding groundwater irrigation season of use and application to domestic lots within municipalities.

This section currently states: "Ground water users will not irrigate before May 1 or after September 15." Questions or confusion arose in 2022 as to whether this condition applies to irrigation of domestic lots within municipalities, HOAs, SVWSD etc. IDWR gave guidance to users last in 2022 that shut-off should only apply to holders of groundwater rights that include an irrigation use component and season of use. Brian Yeager, City of Hailey, said the city encouraged lot owners not to irrigate past 9/15, but would not mandate such practice, and this is likely position of other cities except SVWSD. Brian suggested the plan could be clarified consistent with Hailey's position. No additional suggestions or consensus was necessarily reached on this point.

3. Concern Regarding Season of Use for Groundwater Irrigators – 9/15 Shut-off

Representatives of SVGWD expressed concern complying with the 9/15 shut off for agricultural growers. Specifically, some growers wish to plant cover crops or winter wheat after 9/15. It was mentioned that organic growers may face challenges with the 9/15 shut off date. There was no clear recommendation or consensus to adjust the 9/15 shut off date. The plan allows individual growers to irrigate past 9/15 if they are within their individual reduction use targets.

4. Payment of Additional Storage Water Required in Dry Years.

Section V.2.B.2 states that "additional Snake River storage water may be paid through the CIEF." Concern was expressed that additional dry year storage is mandated by the management plan but payment by CIEF is optional, and there CIEF funds may be inadequate to pay for additional storage.

Parties negotiating the Management Plan Term Sheet and conditions of the management plan recommended that dry-year storage water be paid by the CIEF. No recommendation was given at the advisory committee on 12/15/2022 regarding this matter. IDWR offers no recommendation at this time.

5. Maintaining the 32-cfs Target Flow at Station 10.

A suggestion was made that it may not be necessary to maintain the 32 cfs four-day moving average flow target at Station 10 when return flows from the Big Wood Canal Company system are satisfying 1884 priority water rights downstream from Station 54.

IDWR Review: Comparison of discharges at Stations 10 and 54 during the 2022 irrigation season show that flows at Station 54 were above 32 cfs for relatively short durations of time during May and June (see graph below). During these periods, flows at Station 10 were typically above 32 cfs except for several days in May. There were several days in July where flows at Station 54 exceeded 32 cfs while flows at Station 10 were at or slightly less than 32 cfs. Magic Reservoir ran out of storage water on about July 20 and no return flows off the Richfield track contributed to Station 54 discharge for the remainder of the season except for a few days of stock water delivery in the Richfield tract during September.

Paragraph 1 on page 10 under Section V.1.E acknowledges that “the four-day moving average flow at Station 10 may drop below the 32-cfs target in extremely dry years due to lack of natural water supply and other compounding factors outside the control of the ground water users.” This language may be sufficiently flexible for review of flows at Station 54 as to adequacy for filling senior rights below Station 54 when flows at Station 10 drop below 32 cfs.

It was further noted that groundwater users may not be able to maintain the 32 cfs target early in the irrigation season prior to snowmelt/runoff and when there is little to no water use or demand by both groundwater and surface water users. Current language in Section V.1.E cited above may be adequate to address a situation like the one described where no available actions can be taken to satisfy the target flow.

