

Meeting Notes
Big Wood River Ground Water Management Area Advisory Committee
Lincoln County Community Center, Shoshone, Idaho
October 3, 2024

IDWR Southern Region Manager Corey Skinner called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM and took Advisory Committee roll call. He introduced IDWR personnel, the Idaho Water Resource Board member, and two Idaho State Legislators in attendance. A list of attendees is included at the conclusion of these notes.

The second agenda item was a Committee Membership Update, and it was announced that Sharon Lee was stepping down from the Advisory Committee. Ms. Lee was not present, but IDWR Deputy Director Shelley Keen thanked her for her service to the Committee and noted that the Director would accept letters of interest from those seeking to fill the vacant position. Letters are due by October 31 of this year.

Public comment was requested and Larry Schoen had several points to make regarding the Plan renewal. Larry stated that he supports evaluating whether depth to ground water can be used as predictor of stream flows. He also stated that he supports establishing stream flow targets on streams feeding Magic Reservoir. Larry stated that he opposes the elimination of fallowing as a baseline measure, and he opposes over-reliance on Snake River storage water. Laurie Lickley, of Jerome, introduced herself and said that she would be running for the District 26 seat in the Idaho State Senate this fall.

Next on the agenda was the Conservation, Infrastructure, and Efficiency Fund (CIEF) report from Larry Schoen. He noted that the fund account currently totaled \$525,778.50. Shelley Keen inquired about cloud seeding expenditures. Carl Pendelton said there is about \$77,000 in the cloud seeding account, but nothing had been spent on cloud seeding at this point. There was extensive discussion on cloud seeding and whether or not distribution of cloud seeding funds should be a duty of the CIEF. The Advisory Committee decided to recommend changing some of the language in the cloud seeding portion of the Management Plan (Section V, 1., F) to indicate that cloud seeding funds would be directed toward cloud seeding infrastructure projects. The Department will work on language to specify who will administer cloud seeding funds and where to place it in the Plan.

The fifth agenda item was the Technical Working Group report. Mike McVay couldn't attend the meeting, but he sent a memo that outlined the TWG's actions in support of the list of projects the Advisory Committee intends to propose. Corey Skinner read through Mr. McVay's memo item-by-item. There was discussion on many of the topics in the memo, with the TWG noting that some of the items may be better addressed by Water District 37, IDWR, or the Advisory Committee.

The next item on the agenda was the report from the discussion groups. Brian Yeager reported for the Cities/Ground Water Districts/Sun Valley Company, who proposed raising the CIEF contribution from those entities from \$10.00/acre-foot to \$20.00/acre-foot, with an additional \$5.00/acre-foot contribution for cloud seeding (composed of \$2.50 for operations and \$2.50 for infrastructure.) Cooper Brossy gave the Flow Target/Station 10 Target/Storage Water Acquisition report and noted that the amount of Snake River storage water to recommend is still a topic of discussion. The amount to be delivered to the Little Wood River may need to increase to as much as 3,500 AF/year, plus a conveyance loss of 17%, on an as-needed

basis, when flows at Station 54 on the Little Wood River are below 42 cfs. The amount delivered to the Big Wood may remain at 913 AF/year plus a conveyance loss of 17%, on an as-needed basis, when inflows into Magic Reservoir (the combined flows of Camas Creek, Willow Creek, and the Big Wood River at Stanton Crossing) fall below 53 cfs.

A break was taken from 11:42 AM until the meeting was resumed at 11:57 AM.

After the break, the seventh agenda item was to review and finalize the request for extension of the current Plan. Initial discussion centered around whether or not to have a timeline to insure the process would keep moving forward after the extension was granted. Shelley Keen suggested that the Director first needs to see the recommendations in the extension letter to make certain that the Department has the resources to accomplish them.

Corey Skinner then went through the draft letter to the Director with the Advisory Committee, and the Committee made minor changes to portions of the letter. Small language changes and additions were the main adjustments, but agreement could not be reached on the issue of fallowing. Shelley Keen acknowledged the ground water users' desire to eliminate fallowing as a baseline measure, but he said there may be skepticism at IDWR unless it is replaced by another consumptive use reduction measure. The discussion has been about replacing fallowing with pumping reductions, but there currently is no method for in-season reporting of pumping volumes. The Season of Use Adjustments/Fallowing Impacts/Pumping Reductions subcommittee will meet to formulate that portion of the letter for presentation to the group.

There was a long discussion on revisions to the Table 1: Recommended forecast water supply tiers and additional management actions from the Plan. Cooper Brossy presented a revised Table 1 to be incorporated into the draft letter which will be sent out to the Advisory Committee for review. The Snake River storage water delivery numbers discussed immediately before the midday break were also placed into the draft letter, with revision possible at the next meeting.

A revision to the letter was to include a new requirement for the Galena Ground Water District to contribute to the CIEF at a rate of \$25.00 per acre-foot to be specifically earmarked for storage water acquisition. Larry Schoen advocated for the proposal in the letter to tie the CIEF contributions to inflation, but the Advisory Committee decided to lock in a dollar amount not tied to inflation. The CIEF inflation adjustment section was stricken from the draft letter.

There was discussion on the separation of the CIEF funds into two separate accounts, one for the IWRB funds, and another for storage water acquisition, cloud seeding, etc. An alternative is to authorize the CIEF to maintain three funds – one for storage water acquisition, one for projects (including IWRB contributions), and one for cloud seeding. The alternative approach will be included in the draft letter. The Advisory Committee will recommend that the CIEF be authorized to acquire all storage water for delivery to the Big and Little Wood Rivers, relieving Galena Ground Water District from this duty.

The decision was made to recommend incorporating the Goals and Strategies language agreed upon during the September 18, 2024, Advisory Committee meeting into the Management Plan Goals

section of the Plan. It was also decided to recommend incorporating the language addressing the development of minimum stream flow rights into the Background Section of the Plan.

Additionally, the Advisory Committee recommends moving all annual reporting requirement references to a new section of the Plan and adjusting all the reporting dates to February 15 of the next year. The Advisory Committee discussed the CIEF contribution from the Water District 37B Ground Water Association. It may recommend an increase of an amount to be determined.

To begin the process of finalizing the contents of the letter to the Director, the Department will make the edits discussed above and send the edited letter out to the Advisory Committee by October 8, with the expectation that the discussion groups will send their recommendations for the undecided items back to the Department by October 11. The revised draft letter will then be sent back out to the Advisory Committee no later than October 18. Shelley Keen outlined the process for finalizing the letter after that and said that the Committee would formulate the final draft at the next meeting and present it to the Director. The Director will then review the proposed edits to the Plan, make any edits of his own, then probably issue an order extending the Plan. There would then be a period of time for parties to petition for reconsideration.

Shelley Keen told the Committee that the Director would like to attend the next meeting, so, to accommodate his schedule, and the schedules of the Committee members, the next meeting date was changed from October 23 to October 30, at the Blaine County Community Campus at 10:00 AM. Since the Advisory Committee meeting, IDWR learned the Blaine County location will not be available, and the location of the next Advisory Committee meeting was changed to the Lincoln County Community Center in Shoshone.

Corey Skinner adjourned the meeting at 2:26 PM.

**Big Wood River Ground Water Management Area Advisory Committee Meeting
October 3, 2024 Attendance**

Advisory Committee

Corey Allen
Cooper Brossy
Rod Hubsmith
Pat McMahon
Justin Stevenson
Carl Pendleton
Pat Purdy
Bill Simon
Nick Westendorf
Brian Yeager
Ron Taylor (Idaho State Senator representing District 26)

IDWR Staff

Shelley Keen
Corey Skinner
Corey King
Jim Bitzenburg
Matt Anders (via Zoom)
Neeley Miller (via Zoom)

IWRB Members

Pat McMahon

Members of the Public

Sunny Healey (via Zoom)
Chris Bromley
Larry Schoen
Keri York
Judd McMahon (via Zoom)
Dave Shaw (via Zoom)
Michael Lawrence (via Zoom)
Zach Hill (via Zoom)
Kent Fletcher (via Zoom)
Ned Burns (Idaho State Representative representing District 26)
Heather O'Leary (via Zoom)
Mitch Fleming
Greg Sullivan (via Zoom)
Jana Reeder
Laurie Lickley
Candice McHugh (via Zoom)

...and others via Zoom and in-person