

Statement from Brian Yeager, BWRGWMA Advisory Committee Member representing cities within the BWRGWMA, regarding GWMA plan development.

“I’m Brian Yeager, Public Works Director for the City of Hailey. The City of Hailey is coordinating with the Cities of Bellevue and Ketchum on matters involving the Groundwater Management Area, and those Cities support my remarks to the committee today. In short, the Cities are ready and willing to participate in the process of developing a groundwater management plan that benefits ground and surface water users. The Cities support the efforts of the Galena Groundwater District whose boundary encompasses the Cities, but the Cities are not members of the District with respect to their municipal water rights. The Cities intend to participate directly in the process of developing a groundwater management plan so that issues related to their municipal water uses are properly addressed. We ask that the Department and Advisory Committee please include the Cities in all communications, meetings, and other activities related to the development of the groundwater management plan.”

“The Cities and Sun Valley Company would like Greg Sullivan to participate in the technical working group to ensure that issues related to their water uses are properly considered.”

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South Valley and Galena Groundwater Districts

Proposed Elements and Approach for BWGWMA Plan. A high-level review of key plan elements.

August 9, 2021 - BWGWMA Advisory Meeting

1. Use predictive tools to develop the potential type of water year, such as Good, Medium, Low and Extremely Low.
 - a. Hailey gage on the BWR will be used to identify an estimate of water supply for surface and ground water because there is a strong positive relationship between Hailey Gage and Sportsman's Gage on Silver Creek.
 - b. SWSI, or some other model, would be used to establish early prediction of analogous years for operational decisions.
 - c. GW users would be allocated a specific amount of water to pump in a particular year based on the predicted water supply in an analogous water year.
 - d. GW districts would allocate that supply to their members under the GW District statutes.
 - e. Monitoring of use would be implemented to ensure compliance.
2. Based on water year projections, evaluate reasonably anticipated surface water deliveries based on historical analogous year deliveries.
3. All District 37 water deliveries will be limited to IDWR standard for this Basin of 3.5 or 4.0 afa (depending on location) as described in IDWR's Beneficial Use Examination Rules, Appendix A.
4. Metrics will include methodologies to project groundwater withdrawals that could occur under conditions described in 2 and 3 above.
5. Reduction of groundwater withdrawals could be achieved by a combination of curtailment, volume reduction per groundwater district/members, fallowing fields, increase in planting of crops requiring less water (such as grains) rather than high water use crops, participation in CREP/MOUs, groundwater conversion to surface water use, removal of endguns.
 - a. Endgun removal would be phased in over time and would apply to all irrigators in Basin 37.
 - b. Support of the current application for WaterSmart grant for System Optimization Review for the Triangle Irrigation District.
 - c. Require water conservation management plans from members specific to their operations, to accomplish reduction of groundwater demand.
6. GW Districts would use recharge with flood flows and surface water rentals from land fallowed to recharge sites in the Triangle.
7. Measures will be taken to assure flows between Sportsman's and Station 10, including rodent control, bank stabilization, IDWR enforcement.
8. Support measures to provide assistance with improvements of water delivery efficiencies.
9. Support additional data collection including WRV 1.1.
10. Continue to utilize existing network of wells for groundwater level monitoring.
11. Support cloud seeding.

A technical committee identified and led by IDWR staff will develop and analyze activities and results. Compliance and enforcement of the plan would require a 3-5 year review of analysis and adaptive management to accommodate results. Reporting of these results is key and must be shared with all participants.

The contingency plan may include supply of storage water in low water years and/or injection of groundwater.

Key Elements of a Holistic GWMP

Suggested by BWLWWUA and BWCC

- **Administrative History & Background**

A brief summary of the formation of the Ground Water Management Area, causes for its formation, and subsequent administrative and legal action to provide context for the anticipated Ground Water Management Plan for the watershed.

- **Description of Current Irrigation System**

A brief description of the main elements of the current Water District, its major surface streams, aquifer, reservoirs, diversion canals etc. and generally how these elements interact with each other (e.g., return flows from BWCC users can provide irrigation water to Little Wood/Silver Creek)

- **Long-term Average Rate of Natural/Incidental Recharge**

Using existing reports and data, describe a reasonable water budget for the Wood River valley aquifer to include sources of recharge and discharge and the quantification, to the degree possible, of the magnitudes and variations of these recharge/discharge sources to provide context and possible targets for aquifer stabilization/enhancement and Water District management.

- **Historic Aquifer Conditions**

To the degree possible, characterize historic aquifer conditions, elevations and/or piezometric surfaces historically to help establish upper bounds and explore possible targets for aquifer stabilization/enhancement in the future.

- **Current Aquifer Conditions**

Characterize current aquifer conditions, elevations and/or piezometric surfaces to help determine the degree to which possible groundwater stabilization/enhancement actions may be necessary and establish lower bounds for possible aquifer targets.

- **Ground Water Management Plan Objectives**

The presentation of high-level and concise statements regarding the overall objectives of the Ground Water Management Plan that provide the foundational concepts for overall Water District Management. For example, objectives could include:

- Restore and maintain groundwater levels to support delivery of senior water rights, provide sustainable groundwater diversions, and support healthy riparian ecosystems in the Big Wood River (both above and below Magic Reservoir),

Key Elements of a Holistic GWMP Suggested by BWLWWUA and BWCC

Silver Creek, and Camas Creek, in accordance with the objectives of Idaho's groundwater management statutes.

- For ground and surface water to be managed on a time priority basis in accordance with Idaho's laws and constitution, such that consumptive groundwater use does not negatively impact other hydrologically-connected sources and associated senior surface water rights.

- **Key Aquifer & Surface Discharge Targets/Performance Metrics**

The development of key metrics to assess the health and acceptability of groundwater levels and surface discharges at specific locations to ensure senior surface divertors water rights are maintained. Annual review of available supply should occur and adaptation of targets to match supply volumes should be made, factoring in long-term aquifer health needs. In addition, consideration should be given to comparing actual groundwater diversions following the irrigation season to diversion allocations made at the start of the season. Such post-season accounting should be taken into account in setting groundwater diversion allocations for the following irrigation season.

Clear identification of consequences and actions required upon targets and metrics not being met.

- **Tools, Methods and Approaches to Increase Aquifer Levels to Target Levels**

Identification of methods to increase aquifer storage volumes to possibly include:

- Support for cloud seeding
- Recharge during years that Magic Reservoir fills
- Limiting consumptive use from groundwater diversions via volume and/or season of use restrictions that match BWCC season etc.

- **Exploration of tools and strategies to increase supply to Magic Reservoir**

- **Exploration of tools and strategies to increase stream flows that supply Big Wood River decreed rights above and below Magic Reservoir**

- **Data Gaps Analysis & Measurement of GW/SW Interaction**

Analysis of the data/information needed to develop and implement the Ground Water Management Plan compared to the data set existing, to identify any additional data/analysis needed. This may include the need for enhanced measurements to explore the relationship between groundwater pumping/pumping cessation on the discharges to impacted surface streams (i.e., Big Wood River and Silver Creek).

Key Elements of a Holistic GWMP

Suggested by BWLWWUA and BWCC

- **Surface/Groundwater Diversion Monitoring**

Identify additional surface/groundwater diversion monitoring and the needed frequency/method of diversion data collection to support GWMP objectives.

- **Predictive Forecasting**

Development of forecasting systems/methods (e.g., SWSI) to predict annually anticipated discharges to surface streams and groundwater levels. This may include:

- Interagency requests to NRCS to develop SWSI sheets specific to Sportsman Access Gage and Stanton Crossing Gage;
- Improved communication of forecasts to all watershed users (ag and non-ag) in a user-friendly format(s) on a time schedule to support users' management decisions

- **Local Water Bank**

Discussion relating to the possible establishment of a Local Water Bank, its benefits, risks, and the make-up of the local committee.

- **Cap & Trade System**

Discussion relating to the possible establishment of a customized "Cap & Trade" system that would integrate market forces into yearly allocations of GW diversion volumes.

Explore development of a "mitigation toolkit" to reduce supply interruptions for non-irrigation rights such as commercial and industrial rights, during periods of limited supply or administered curtailment.

- **Development of Water Conservation and Infrastructure Efficiency Fund**

Develop a user-funded and grant-augmented source of money to support water conservation efforts and infrastructure across WD37 and WD37B.

Project funds would be allocated on a cost/benefit basis within the watershed boundary on activities that will enhance the efficiency, resilience and sustainability of the water supply. Expenditures might include snowpack enhancement, canal and lateral piping, canal lining, channel efficiency activities, storage enhancement, system automation and other measures.

- **Adaptive Management Strategies**

Key Elements of a Holistic GWMP Suggested by BWLWWUA and BWCC

Explore terms and provisions for periodic reevaluation of the efficacy of the GWMP and its modification if necessary.

- **Administration of MSF Water Rights**

Exploration of the possible role of the various Minimum Stream Flow (MSF) rights for the Big Wood River and Silver Creek in the overall GWMP.

- **Recharge Facilities**

Discussion exploring federal, state, and local sources of funding for large recharge facilities to facilitate recharge when Magic Reservoir fills. Study of possible location, conveyance structures, and sizing of recharge facilities.

- **District 37 Water Administration Plan**

Development of a District 37 and 37B Operations Plan that integrates all the elements of the Ground Water Management Plan into a day-to-day, year-to-year implementation plan for District operations.

“I’m Corey Allen, committee member, for Sun Valley Company. The company, like the cities, is an upper valley ground water user who’s interested in finding solutions to the questions the committee was originally tasked with. Also like the cities, the company is within the boundaries of the Galena Ground Water District, supports the efforts of the district, but is not a member of Galena. The company will continue to participate in the committee with the goal of developing a ground water management plan for the basin. If there are communications and meetings that happen outside formal committee meetings that relate to formation of a ground water management plan for the Wood River valley, the company wishes to be notified and have an opportunity to participate and be heard.”