

## Minimum Streamflow Language

Early water management practices in the Big Wood River basin focused on surface water. By 1915, watermasters were administering Big Wood River water rights and Little Wood River water rights by priority. By 1980, IDWR recognized that surface water was fully appropriated upstream of Magic Reservoir in the Big Wood River drainage during the irrigation season and stopped issuing water right permits for new irrigation season consumptive uses there. By 1991, IDWR established a ground water management area for the Big Wood River drainage with an associated management policy for the subsequent appropriation of consumptive ground water rights. ~~Also, in~~ In the 1970s and 1980s the Idaho Water Resource Board applied for a series of minimum stream flow water rights on the Big Wood River, Little Wood River, and Silver Creek to preserve flows for wildlife, recreation, and related instream values; the reasons for appropriating minimum stream flow water rights are discussed in Idaho Code and the State Water Plan. ~~These~~ These minimum stream flow water rights, now partially decreed by the Snake River Basin Adjudication (SRBA) district court, are listed in Table 1, and their locations are depicted in Figure 1. ~~Together with IDWR's practice of no longer issuing permits proposing new consumptive uses during the irrigation season, the minimum stream flow water rights ensured that new surface water development in the Big Wood River basin did not reduce flows to the point that they could not sustain the recognized instream values. However, Consistent with the prior appropriation doctrine, the minimum stream flow water rights, with their relatively junior priority dates, did not limit diversion and use of water pursuant to prior surface water rights, with additional conditions in the SRBA partial decrees explaining how these water rights may be administered against certain junior water rights. For example, two of the minimum stream flow rights for the Big Wood River (37-8258 and 37-8307) are "subordinate to development of groundwater for domestic and municipal purposes as defined by the management plan for the Big Wood River Ground Water Management Area." Furthermore, because conjunctive administration of surface and ground water rights was not yet implemented, the minimum stream flow water rights did not affect the administration or development of ground water rights.~~