ESPA Comprehensive Aquifer Management
Plan

Facilitation of a Framework for Presentation to the 2007 Idaho Legislature

Idaho Water Resource Board Presentation
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Agenda

- Summary of ESPA Public Meetings
- Framework Concepts
- Schedule
Public Meeting Summary

- ESPA Public Meetings held October 11, 18 and 19, 2006
  - Pocatello, Twin Falls and Idaho Falls

- Approximately 225 members of the public participated in meetings
  - Largest attendance in Idaho Falls
Public Input

Questions posed to participants were:

– What issues/concerns do you have related to the process of developing a Framework?
– What are your thoughts on possible goals for aquifer management?
– What comments do you have on the management alternatives?
– How should the ESPA alternatives be funded? Principles?
– Other Comments?
Public Input (continued)

- What issues/concerns do you have related to the process of developing a Framework?
  - Support for developing a management plan (regardless of whether there is a ‘problem’)
  - Desire for meaningful input into development of Framework
  - Increase the involvement of stakeholders
What are your thoughts on possible goals for aquifer management?

- Reduce withdrawals to achieve aquifer stabilization (short term)
- Provide a long-term ‘sustainable’ supply of water that is predictable and ensures economic viability
- Keep senior water rights holders ‘whole’ through water rights administration (prior appropriation doctrine)
- Identify a ‘full mark’ or target aquifer level(s)
- Develop a plan that is fair to water users
What comments do you have on the management alternatives?

- Voluntary reduction of groundwater pumping (willing buyer-seller)
  - CREP, water-buyouts and gw/sw conversions
- Involuntary curtailment using priority administration
- Market-based approaches to meet water needs and ensure economic viability
- Recharge – explore opportunities for 2007 water year
Public Input (continued)

**How should the ESPA alternatives be funded? Principles?**

- State-wide water sales tax increase (quarter cent)
- Use of state surplus for ESPA management
- ESPA users fee (flat fee, volume, domestic wells)
  - Financial contributions based on priority of water right and/or extent of impact
- Outline costs and benefits for each set of alternatives for public review
Other Comments

- Groundwater model refinements necessary
- Focus on mitigation strategies during times of shortage to create predictability
  - Alternatives to involuntary curtailment
- Increased monitoring and oversight of water users, i.e. domestic wells
Framework Concepts

- Initial thoughts based on input received at the aquifer-wide public meetings, stakeholder interviews and discussions with the Board

- Draft ideas for discussion with Board and stakeholders
Framework Concepts

Purpose

- Develop an outline and strategy that positively impacts the ESPA water budget in the short term (5 - 10 years) and long term (10-50 years).
- Comprehensive management plan will evaluate alternatives in detail.
Framework Concepts

Draft ESPA Goal

– Sustain a balance between water uses and supplies so that the economic viability and social and environmental health can be maintained

Possible Objectives

– Stabilize aquifer (in X number years?)
– Create balance between demand and supply
– Establish mechanisms that create alternatives to curtailment in water short years
Possible Criteria for Goals

- Realistic and achievable
- Equitable
- Can be objectively measured
- Actually “solves the problem”
  - Less litigation, predictability, better outcomes for water users
- More?
Framework Concepts

Consistent with state law and statute

- Prior Appropriation Doctrine
- Idaho Ground Water Act
- Ground Water Management Areas
- Critical Ground Water Management
- Others…
Management Alternatives

- Supply, management and demand reductions will be considered
- Alternatives will be combined to form packages and evaluated during Framework (no action, modest, aggressive)
- Detailed evaluation will be conducted during comprehensive management plan process
Framework Concepts

Groundwater Model

- Evaluate the effectiveness of specific management alternatives (adjustments to supply/demand, impact on aquifer levels)
- Outline costs associated with each alternative using model outputs
- Refine model concurrently with development of Framework
- More?
Framework Concepts

- Targets – water budget targets will be established and expressed in a range

- Following goal and objective definition, model and stakeholder input will be used to determine the target range
  
  – 2004 ‘Strawman’ outlined a target range of 600 kaf -900 kaf annual net change

  - Is the Strawman target appropriate?
Framework Concepts

Funding Needs

- Involves administration, monitoring and enforcement
- Continued model refinement
- Management alternative implementation
- State funding for administration, monitoring and enforcement and on-going groundwater refinements
Framework Concepts

Funding

– Dedicated funding sources will be pursued (sales tax increase – surplus)
– ESPA water user funding for management alternatives
– Exploration of mitigation fund
– Domestic groundwater policy
– Other options - tax credits, ‘flexible CREP’
Framework Concepts

Monitoring & Enforcement

– Essential component to management of ESPA – use ‘adaptive management’ strategies

– Monitoring approaches will be developed with stakeholders
Interim Measures

Recharge
Increasing CREP enrollment
Mitigation Strategies
GW Model Refinements

Working Groups

Group discussions with potentially affected stakeholders to discuss management alternative ideas and opportunities