

ESPA Comprehensive Aquifer Management Plan

Facilitation of a Framework
for Presentation to the
2007 Idaho Legislature

Idaho Water Resource Board Presentation

CDR Associates

Jonathan Bartsch and Diane Tate

November 13, 2006



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

Public Input (continued)

- **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

Public Input (continued)

■ 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

Public Input (continued)

■ 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...

Framework Concepts

- 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

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**