



**Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA)
Comprehensive Aquifer Management Plan**

Demand Reduction Working Group Meeting

**DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY
July 1, 2009
Idaho Dept. of Water Resources
900 N. Skyline
Idaho Falls, Id. 83402**

OVERVIEW

The Demand Reduction Working Group achieved the following during their July 1, 2009 meeting:

- Agreed on Working Group charge, parameters and workplan, including the necessity to incrementally build a demand reduction program in Phase I.
- Identified issues regarding CREP enrollment and identified potential incentives to increase CREP acres.
- Held initial discussions on surface water conservation; including the need to focus on site-specific actions to accomplish the 50kaf target in Phase I.
- Determined group's interest in exploring demand reduction programs in other states
- Scheduled the next meeting and agreed upon agenda topics

The outcomes of these discussions are included in this meeting summary.

CREP INCENTIVES

The group determined that one demand reduction priority is to focus on incentivizing CREP. Building on the existing CREP program, financial incentives would provide a potentially cost-effective way to reduce demand. Through ESPA Plan incentives, could focus and target hydrologic areas of importance. Ideas for increasing CREP enrollment include:

- Use of the existing CREP program and potentially modify the rules/criteria regarding priority areas and the 'highly erodible' requirements. Erodability was identified as one of Program rules that limited enrollment. The FSA guidelines may provide some ideas, however, there are a number of reasons to caution against re-opening the contract (increased competition from other states).
- A \$20 to \$40/acre increase from the established \$130/acre/year would produce more acreage. The incentive could be added to the existing contract as an addendum. If existing enrollees agree to remain in the program for the duration of the program, they could also potentially receive this incentive. . Additional up-front incentive may be more enticing than a annual payments (farmers are notorious for being cash poor)
- The ESPA plan incentive payment could be used to target geographic/hydrologic priorities, 'above the rim' in Jerome and Gooding Counties. Modeling and surveys are needed to

determine how much of a premium would be required to serve as an effective incentive. A scale/prioritization process could be developed based on geographic and hydrological benefits.

- There could be an ability to back out of the program as well as an option to purchase additional time at the end of the 15 year term. Could include paying a forward fee signing bonus. .
- A greater premium for permanent retirement of areas that will produce hydrologic benefits. One of the priority areas is Thousand Springs. What would it take to permanently buyout the water right in order to provide certainty of the program. An anti-backsliding provision could be included in the ESPA Plan incentives For example, Idaho Power's is looking for projects that will qualify for the TEMP program (20 year) and would be unable to participate if there is not long-term program certainty (CREP is a 15 year term).

DEMAND REDUCTION PROGRAMS IN OTHER STATES

Members suggested looking at programs in Utah, Colorado (both states run programs through NRCS).

SURFACE WATER CONSERVATION

The following points were discussed in relation to Surface Water Conservation in preparation for the August meeting:

- The Demand Reduction WG will examine the issue of downstream tributary basins. A downstream transfer policy is needed that addresses the legal issues, particularly of water past junior water rights holders. There is a need to further define and determine what a workable downstream transfer policy would be.
- Twin Falls Canal conservation could include building checks that would potentially result in more available water for recharge and conversions. The location of the check structure(s) need to be established – cost estimates are between \$100k and \$1 million. The accounting issues would need to be worked out with the other impacted canal companies (Lyle Swank and Randy Bingham). Additionally, use of aquatic herbicides, pump backs, re-regulating reservoirs and other reductions that do not impact wells in Twin Falls should be examined. Incentives to reduce water use need to be explored further. .

AGREEMENTS, NEXT STEPS & UPCOMING MEETING

Agreements

- The Demand Reduction Working Group will focus on developing a long-term plan for Demand Reduction during Phase I, including pilot projects and other research. The following topics will be addressed in 2009:
 1. Increasing CREP enrollment
 2. Surface Water Conservation on the Twin Falls Canal tract, Raft River basin and other upper tributaries.
 3. Crop Mix on the Aberdeen/Bingham groundwater district.
 4. Buy-downs & Buy-outs

- The Working Group will address the issue of downstream transfers, included in the Plan as part of the ‘Additional Plan Components’ It is envisioned that only consumptive use would be transferred and there are questions about a ‘workable’ transfer in terms of size and the distance of which the water can be protected. Clarity regarding what we are trying to do, how it would work and why is important. Additionally, identifying the points of diversion where we would need additional flow for recharge/conversions need to be identified.
- The Working Group will explore and develop information regarding relevant demand reduction programs.

Next Steps

| Action | Responsible |
|---|--|
| 1. Conduct modeling of the hydrologic benefits by count of increased CREP enrollment, including retention time in aquifer (likely a unit response analysis) | David Blew Brian Patton |
| 2. Refine proposals for the incentives for CREP | Jennifer Graham Neeley Miller |
| 3. Research likely incentive rates used and determine what the incentive would have to be by county to increase CREP enrollment; report back at the next meeting. | Lynn Tominaga |
| 4. Identify relevant demand reduction programs in other states. Propose questions that will focus the research—what do we want to learn from these programs? | All |
| 5. Send out demand reduction links that were included in the matrix | Jennifer Graham |
| 6. Continue pursuing surface water conservation opportunities on the Twin Falls Canal Company tract, and the Raft river basin | Neely Miller Brian Olmstead Rich Rigby |
| 7. Establish dates for a field visit to the see the aquatic reed control practices developed by Brian Olmstead | Brian Olmstead Working Group |
| 8. Contact Harriet to see if there is someone who can present on the Lemhi River System | Jennifer Graham |
| 9. Conduct a literature review on evaporation loss | Rich Rigby |
| 10. Put together a list of potential locations for surface water conservation | Neeley Miller |
| 11. Connect with Farm Service Agency and Ron Abbot regarding potential issues of parallel contract with CREP. | Don Dixon (Senator Crapo’s office) |
| 12. Distribute Bryce Contor’s crop mix analysis | Jennifer Graham |

Next Meeting

Tuesday, August 4th 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon. The meeting will be a teleconference. For those wishing to participate in a face to face meeting, a teleconference will be available at the IDWR offices in Idaho Falls as well as at the IDWR offices in Boise. The call in number will be provided at a later date.

Agenda Items

- Refine list of CREP incentives for increased enrollment
- Presentation on CREP modeling by county

- Update on Twin Falls
- Identification of surface water conservation sites

MEETING MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED

- List of ESPA Elements Related to Demand Reduction
- CREP Update Presentation

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Demand Reduction Working Group Members

| NAME | AFFILIATION |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Brian Olmstead | Surface Water User |
| 2. Charles Correll | Cities & Counties |
| 3. James Tucker | Hydropower |
| 4. Mayor Lance Clow | City of Twin Falls |
| 5. Peter Anderson | Conservation |
| 6. Randy MacMillan | Spring Water Users |
| 7. Steven Serr | Bonneville County |
| 8. Tim Deeg | Water District 120 |
| 9. Will Whelan | Conservation |

Ex Officio Members & Other Attendees

| NAME | AFFILIATION |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 10. Brian Patton | IDWR |
| 11. Cynthia Bridge Clark | IDWR |
| 12. David Blew | Hydropower |
| 13. Don Dixon | Senator Crepo's office |
| 14. Jennifer Graham | CDR |
| 15. Joan Kathol | CDR |
| 16. Jon Bowling | Hydropower |
| 17. Jonathan Bartsch | CDR |
| 18. Lynn Tominaga | Groundwater Users |
| 19. Neeley Miller | IDWR |
| 20. Walt Poole | Conservation |
| 21. Will Thompson | MID |

Demand Reduction Working Group Work Plan

| SUBJECT | SURFACE WATER CONSERVATION | CROP MIX | BUY OUTS & BUY DOWNS |
|--------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Issues | Aquatic reed control | TBD | TBD |
| | Pump backs: North Side Canal to others | | |
| | Re-regulating reservoir on Brian Olmstead's system | | |
| | Seepage reduction | | |
| | Late season incentives | | |
| Information Needs | Information on the Lemhi | Chart out agriculturally-based water use by crop | In groundwater are there gradations of irrigated land, with some less valuable and available than others? Is it possible to take water off of marginal land? |
| | Evaporation losses (Rich Rigby to conduct a literature review from BOR library in Denver) | What can be planted? What are the limitations? What are the costs? | |
| | Potential surface water conservation sites (initial ideas: Any canal that diverts at Milner; Upper Teton, Upper Henry's Fork; Upper Portneuf) | Inventory existing programs and research (Will Whelen & IDWR) | |
| | | Revisit the Bryce Contor's analysis | |
| Criteria/considerations | Site specific | Start small and do not 'stub toe' on a small, hydrological, program | Targeted locations |
| | Does not affect incidental recharge | | Take into consideration impacts of water rights |
| | | Build on existing initiatives with United Potato association | |
| Technical Support | Potential visit to understand use of aquatic herbicide (Brian Olmstead) | University of Idaho NRCS USDA: Research on drought resistance crops | Farm Service Agency NRCS Groundwater Districts |