

ESPA Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP)

ESPA CAMP Implementation Committee Meeting
August 13, 2009

AWEP Background

- Program was included in the 2008 Farm Bill.
- Goal is to develop partnerships between the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and states, (or tribes, others) to direct the use of federal funds to address certain water problems based on a coordinated plan.
- ESPA was included in the federal legislation as one of a few priority areas nationwide.

AWEP Background

- The Idaho Water Resource Board, through the ESPA CAMP Advisory Committee, had just completed the ESPA Comprehensive Aquifer Management Plan (CAMP).
- A request for proposals for AWEP was issued in late January of 2009 in the federal register, with a due date in early March.
- Based on the CAMP being the state-approved coordinated plan for the ESPA, and direction in the CAMP to seek funding sources to supplement the water user and state funds, the Water Board proceeded to apply for AWEP funds to assist with implementing the CAMP.

AWEP Background

- A drafting committee made up of several CAMP Advisory Committee members and agency personnel was convened to draft a proposal.
- The proposal was submitted to the NRCS on March 2, 2009.
- We were notified a few weeks ago that the proposal had been funded at about \$15.3 million over 5 years.

AWEP Components

- AWEP will be run through the NRCS using existing NRCS EQIP protocols.
- Some CAMP actions fit very well under AWEP, while others, including recharge and cloud seeding, do not.

AWEP Components and 5-Year Funding Levels

■ Ground water –to- surface water conversions	\$8,960,000
■ Demand reduction	\$2,625,000
■ Delivery system improvements below the rim in the Thousand Springs reach	
■ Aquifer demand reduction incentives	\$1,400,000
■ Conversion to dry land farming	\$1,400,000
■ Crop mix modification pilot project	\$875,000

AWEP Funding

- AWEP funds would go to landowners to undertake projects that qualify.
- Projects that include multiple landowners, such as large conversion projects, are possible.
- AWEP funds will pay up to 75% of the cost of qualifying projects, with the remainder coming from CAMP funds or other sources.

Current Status

- The *AWEP* agreement between the NRCS and the Idaho Water Resource Board has been signed.
- \$3.22 million is available for conversions and Thousand Springs delivery system improvements this federal fiscal year.
- Proposals are currently being received at NRCS offices in the ESPA region.

Questions?