



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

Demand Reduction Working Group Meeting

**DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY
October 20, 2009
Teleconference**

PERC Program

At the October 13th Implementation Committee meeting, the Demand Reduction WG presented their recommendations for a PERC Program, a program that would further incentivize CREP enrollment and serve as a stand-alone program to dry out farmland in the ESPA. The Implementation Committee requested that the Demand Reduction WG further consider a cap on PERC enrollment and criteria for project selection. The group discussed these points and whether to limit the further CREP incentive.

Discussion Points

- The WG discussed the PERC program and a potential cap with the lens that the overall goal of all the strategies is to improve the balance of the ESPA. This particular program is one with “the most verifiable benefit” and a cap should not be considered at this point. The more acres in PERC, the better. The cost is relatively low compared to the aquifer benefit.
- Utilizing criteria to rank the projects could be logistically and administratively difficult, given the number of individual projects that could enter into the PERC program. Therefore, the WG is not promoting such a plan. In a future Phase 1 year, there might be further discussion about applying criteria and ranking these projects.
- The WG would like to determine if there are certain regions/locations that might provide more bang for the buck when it comes to PERC enrollment.
- The WG discussed the similarities of evaluating benefit/bang for the buck between recharge and demand reduction strategies. Recharge benefits are temporally dependent and demand reduction strategies are not. Therefore, it is difficult to compare the two.
- WG members would like to see benefit applied uniformly throughout the ESPA when it comes to PERC enrollment.

Agreements

- ✓ The WG is recommending that applying criteria and ranking to PERC projects is not necessary at this time.
- ✓ The WG is not making a recommendation regarding a cap to PERC enrollment. It is premature to make a conclusion of any sort (to have a cap or not) until more is known about funding for all demand reduction strategies. If it necessary to include a cap in the final proposal to the IWRB, the WG would like the full Implementation Committee to make a proposal.
- ✓ The WG is recommending that only new CREP enrollees be able to receive the PERC incentive. Therefore, previous and existing CREP enrollees are not eligible for PERC funds.

Demand Reduction Components for 2010 AWEP

Neeley Miller (IDWR) presented the three elements of the AWEP funds for demand reduction. They include: aquifer demand reduction strategies, conversion to dry land farming and crop mix modifications. NRCS would like to move forward with 2010 projects early in 2010. Therefore, the

Demand Reduction WG is to make any recommendations for AWEP projects soon in order to coordinate their efforts with the 2010 AWEP application and selection process.

Discussion Points:

- AWEP funds can be used to further incentivize CREP and PERC enrollment.
- The downstream transfer policy, one of the additional plan components, is one of the considerations to be made in future conversations about AWEP projects. WG members are holding conversations with various property owners in an effort to discuss what opportunities are out there and what a successful program might include (incentives, etc). This conversation should include what water might then be available for recharge and conversions projects.
- The crop mix modification elements included in AWEP are a pilot-like program, although the plans will need to include a proposal for how these projects might become sustainable in years beyond the AWEP funding. Additionally, the program is likely to include lower water requirements as a way to help property owners' transition to a different crop mix. The WG would like to consider incentives for these projects on a future call.

Next Steps:

- ✓ Neeley will send the IWERRI study on consumptive use out to the Demand Reduction WG.
- ✓ Chuck Pentzer and Neeley will work together on developing BMPs for AWEP projects and present them to the WG for review and discussion.
- ✓ On future Demand Reduction teleconferences, the three AWEP demand reduction strategies will be reviewed and discussed.

Surface Water Conservation

Brian Olmstead updated the group on surface water conservation practices occurring in the Twin Falls Canal tract. He focused primarily on the aquatic herbicides that are being tested. This experimentation is going very well, and might be considered for all canals in the ESPA. With the assistance of the IDWR, particularly in regards to engineering studies and monitoring, unintended and negative consequences might be addressed and prevented.

Discussion Points:

- A number of canal managers, including the Port Nuef canal manager, would like to visit the Twin Falls Canal demand reduction project sites. This tour will take place early next season, and Demand Reduction WG members are invited along.
- The possibility of lining canals was addressed. While this is an option, it is a very costly one that can have unintended consequences on the aquifer.
- In future conversations about surface water conservation, the WG would like to include discussions around the times at which these strategies would be most effective and how their implementation can be most effective (i.e. speed bumps during low water use periods).
- Peter Anderson inquired about water budget changes in relation to surface water conservation. There is a concern that some of these strategies will not drastically change the water budget, but will help with filling water rights downstream.
- Further discussion needs to occur around these strategies and what support role that the IDWR staff can play (monitoring, engineering, etc)

Next Steps

- ✓ At upcoming Demand Reduction WG meetings, the group will review and discuss other potential locations where surface water conservation might benefit the aquifer.

Next Steps and Upcoming Meeting

Action	Responsible
Coordinate with Jason Peltier, Westlands Water District in CA, at the Water Law Conference in Boise	Neeley Miller and Randy MacMillan (others?)
Address AWEP demand reduction strategies at upcoming meetings	WG
Lynn Tominaga to coordinate with Peter Anderson and IDWR to develop an outreach strategy for AWEP	Lynn Tominaga and Peter Anderson
Continue conversations on surface water conservation strategies	WG

Next Meeting

A teleconference on November 17th from 1:00pm-3:00pm

List of Participants

Demand Reduction Working Group Members

NAME	AFFILIATION
1. Peter Anderson	Conservation
2. Craig Evans	Groundwater User
3. Brian Olmstead	Surface Water User
4. Randy MacMillan	Spring Water Users
5. Walt Poole	Idaho Fish and Game
6. Steven Serr	Counties
7. James Tucker	Water District 120

Ex Officio Members & Other Attendees

NAME	AFFILIATION
8. David Blew	IPC
9. Brian Patton	IDWR
10. Chuck Pentzer	Soil Conservation Service
11. Neeley Miller	IDWR
12. Joan Sabott	CDR Associates