

ANALYSIS

Project Name: BIG WOOD GRAVITY PRESSURIZED PIPELINE SYSTEM

Project Sponsor(s):

Big Wood Canal Company, American Falls Reservoir District #2

Project Description:

Install gravity pressurized pipeline system to convert approximately 8,000 ac from open channel to pipeline, provide for conversion of approximately 4,000 ac from groundwater to surface water, and recharge through two injection wells. Conversions and recharge are intended to offset reduction in incidental recharge from the pipeline.

Cost Estimates and Funding:

\$3,000,000 Potential Applicant Funding (60%)
\$2,000,000 Proposed ESPA CAMP Funding (40%)
\$5,000,000 Proposed Total Project Cost

Benefits:

Environmental – Based upon review of limited project information this project would provide significant energy savings due to reduced groundwater pumping

Impacts:

Hydrologic – Based upon review of limited project information this project appears to be aquifer neutral

Consistent with ESPA CAMP:

Unknown

Water Rights:

Sponsor is working with IDWR to review water right issues. Recharge through this proposal will use the IWRB's Big/Little Wood recharge right.

Long-term O&M:

Not enough information is known about long-term O&M at this time.

Potential Issues:

This is a long-term project.

Recommendation:

The Big Wood Canal Company Pipeline Project proposal is not recommended for CAMP funding at this time because it was not developed sufficiently to provide enough detail to evaluate the potential benefit to the aquifer. While this project provides clear benefit to the applicants including significant energy savings, the ability to extend their growing season to what was historically allowed under their water right, and conversions of groundwater irrigated lands along the canal, as well as providing benefits to both the applicants and downstream water users by development of an new managed recharge site, preliminary discussions have not clarified whether the combined impact of all actions to the aquifer will be positive, negative or neutral. The applicants were aware of the shortcomings of the proposal at the time of submission and continue to develop the proposal and secure funding matches with the hopes of resubmission at a later time. In addition, the project is likely not shovel ready for 2010.

Developing the injection well component of the proposal could be valuable for future CAMP consideration. The injection wells could assist in using the IWRB's recharge water right from the Wood River system. The Big Wood Canal Company is encouraged to better develop this concept and submit it for reconsideration in future years.