

Abbreviated Meeting Notes 3-16
Water District 01
Upper Snake River Advisory Meeting, April 20th, 2016

Notes: This meeting was held jointly in the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) Eastern Regional Office and State Office, with participants free to join either location to participate in person. There was also an option to connect into the meeting remotely via conference call and GoToMeeting.

1. **Introductions were made and an attendance list was circulated. The following people were in attendance:**

Roger Chase (IWRB)	Brian Olmstead (TFCC)
Wesley Hipke (IDWR)	Dan Davidson (MID)
Mat Weaver (IDWR)	Garth Stor (FFIC)
Mike Beus (USBR)	Richard Lockyer (FFIC)
John Hildreth (USBR)	Steve Howser (ASCC)
Lyle Swank (WD01)	Peter Anderson (TU)
Tony Olenichak (WD01)	Dale Kerner (Haley Aldrich)
Kresta Davis-Butts (IPC)	Kathy Decker (Haley Aldrich)
Sarah Higer (IPC)	Keith Esplin (RDC)
Walt Poole (IDFG)	

2. **Mike Beus, with the United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR):**

The USBR's Teacup Diagram shows that storage is at 80% of capacity, 111% of average, and 94% of Last Year (422,000 acre-feet less than last year). Last year the storage in the reservoir system started high due to carry-over from the previous year than was adjusted in February, with drafting of the reservoirs starting in late April, and the heavy rains in May resulted in more water being stored in the system. This year started with less carry-over in the system but has started to fill more quickly over the last week to ten days. This increase in reservoir fill is due to early run-off.

The snowpack for this year has been below average but much better than last year. The snowpack has already started melting, even earlier than last year. The current cooler weather has provided a slight reprieve from the melting. The snowpack above Palisades was close to normal, however, the early melt this year starting the decline of the snow pack at the first of April compared to mid-April in the normal curve.

Concerning this year's storage at Jackson Lake, as has been discussed previously, the Wyoming Fish and Game along with the Wyoming State Engineers office wanted to keep the flows out of Jackson Lake higher using their Palisades storage. This resulted in the reservoir levels being lower than the USBR prefers. However, there is a low risk that the lower levels will affect storage in any of the reservoirs. Currently Jackson Lake has 177,000 acre-feet more accounted storage than actual storage.

The water due to early run-off is currently being stored at Palisades Reservoir. Normally fill at the reservoir occurs much later. The early run-off is normally associated with dry years, however, this year is not a dry year. Overall, the decrease in the snowpack from 99% to 82% does not affect the forecast since all the water has been captured. For most of the year the actual Palisades storage has been less than the accounted storage, however, after mid-April the actual is above the accounted storage (202,000 acre-feet more actual storage than accounted).

Concerning the flood rules at Palisades the actual flow is starting to depart from the predicted target that was based on a forecast using 99% of average inflow. The difference between the actual flows and the target flows is expected to continue to diverge as the early run-off continues. The increase in actual storage has flattened due to an increase of flow out of Palisades (up to 7,100 cfs in a few days). The actual storage is predicted to match up with the required after the first of April.

American Falls reservoir still has a lot of space left (more than 200,000 acre-feet) and is filling slowly. Currently there is more water in the accounts than actually stored. Some of the water that belongs in American Falls is currently stored upstream. When looking at Jackson Lake, Palisades, and American Falls there is approximately 78,000 acre-feet (af) more in accounting than actual storage. Storage in Island Park, Grassy Lake, and Ririe go a long way in getting the system to balance. For American Falls to fill there would need to be more precipitation than accord last May and Palisades would need to be fuller than it is currently. At this time, it is unlikely there will be a need to discharge water from American Falls this year. The last time American Falls was full was in 2012.

The seven-day precipitation forecast has not turned dry yet, predicting up to 3 inches precipitation in the eastern Idaho area and none of the area is predicted to be dry.

Conditions are changing quickly, last week the system was short 422,000 af this week the system is short 225,000 af. The run-off forecast at Heise is 685,000 af more than last year so we are still ahead, however, not significantly. The biggest factor compared to last year is the very early irrigation diversions where this year has been slower, following a more normal startup in irrigation.

Mat Weaver asked if a little over 100,000 af was released below Milner for mitigation and this year the rainbow chart is saying 60,000 af and it could start as early as May 1. Mike confirmed that was the case, however, they have to make sure that we don't call flood flow as mitigation and also the need to see fish higher up in the river for the Technical Management team to call for mitigation flows.

Keith Esplin asked if it was correct that it was unlikely that American Falls would fill physically. Mike said that was correct and the upstream reservoirs were currently storing water that would end up in American Falls.

3. **Lyle Swank, Water District 01 Water Master:**

Given how fast the system is changing Lyle only talked about general numbers. From a water rights standpoint, the American Falls 1921 right is close to being filled. It is projected that another 23,000 af is left to fill the American Falls 1921 right. Currently American Falls is gaining about 8,000 af/day, last week it was gaining 23,000 af/day showing the effects of the cooler temperatures on the run-off. The rate of fill is likely to pickup but we will have to wait and see if the fill is greater than the diversions.

As soon as the American Falls right fills than we will start filling the 1935 Island Park and 1939 Palisades right, Grassy Lake 1936 right, and the 1969 right at Ririe. Many of the canals are running early season recharge or transitioning to irrigation. Palisades has the most to fill at 380,000 af of its 1939 right and some additional rights that are last to fill. There is a long ways to for the entire system to be filled both physically and related to water rights. Some of the canals are have their demand changing rapidly but at this time there is not much more information than what is reported on the web-report.

4. **Kresta Davis-Butts, Idaho Power:**

Flood control releases are currently occurring at Brownlee Reservoir and IPC is currently operating the Hells Canyon Complex to hold Brownlee Reservoir headwater elevation at approximately 2,051 ft. Controlled refill at Brownlee will begin the first of May. Brownlee refill operations will assure protection of spawning bass and crappie within the reservoir.

5. **Dan Stanaway, IDWR – Swan Falls Update**

This year the AADF (three-day average) is below the median flow (1981-2015) but significantly above the minimum of record and the 10th percentile. Since the first of April, flows have increased as a result of increased flows from the tributaries due to an early run-off. This year has been an increase over the past two years for this time period.

6. **Wesley Hipke, IDWR – IWRB Managed Recharge Program**

For the past recharge season the IWRB's recharge water right was in priority in the Lower Valley for 162 days. IWRB recharge was conducted for 161 days for a total of 66,217 acre-feet at an average daily rate of 207 cfs. The numbers are still provisional and are being confirmed with the canal companies and WD 01. Over this last season on average flow available for recharge was less than 500 cfs. The available water for recharge was significantly less for most of the month of March as a result of refilling the Milner Pool due to construction work on the A&B Irrigation pump project. Last year there was significantly more water available for recharge. Of the water that was available, 75,000 af was recharge with approximately 61,000 af being recharge in the Lower Valley and 14,000 af in the Upper Valley. This year 66,000 af was recharge in the Lower Valley a slight increase over the recharge that occurred last year in the Lower Valley. The IWRB's recharge was never in priority this year in the Upper Valley. The slight increase in IWRB recharge in the Lower Valley was a result of the completion of construction projects that increased the recharge capacity over the winter. As more of the projects are completed, the recharge capacity of the program will increase significantly.

Over 30,000 af of recharge was conducted by other entities last fall. More non-IWRB recharge is being conducted this spring and as the location and volumes become available they will be reported to the group.

7. **New Business:**

The group decided that the next meeting would be next October unless there was the potential for flood releases past American Falls.