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MINUTES

AQUIFER STABILIZATION COMMITTEE MEETING NO. 2-24

Water Center
Conference Rooms 602 C&D / Online Zoom
322 E. Front St.
BOISE

August 8, 2024

Committee Members: Chair Dean Stevenson, Al Barker, Brian Olmstead, and Pat McMahon.

Agenda Item No. 1: Introductions & Attendance

Chairman Stevenson called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM (MT) in Boise and online. Committee members present online were Chair Stevenson and in person were Al Barker and Pat McMahon. Other board members online were Jo Ann Cole-Hansen, Marc Gibbs, Jeff Raybould, and Dale Van Stone.

IDWR staff members present were: Brian Patton, Mathew Weaver, Brian Ragan, Mike McVay, Neal Farmer, Craig Tesch, Amy Steimke, Alex Moody, Ethan Geisler, Wesley Hipke, Cynthia Bridge Clark, Steve Stuebner, and Jennifer Strange. Online was Matt Anders.

Guests in person included Kresta Davis, Scott Pugrud, Alexis Clark, Brian Daluiso. Guests online included Ann Yribar and Jamie Neill.

Agenda Item No. 2: ESPA Aquifer Storage Update

Mike McVay discussed storage changes in the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer. The aquifer gained approximately 800,000 acre-feet from 2023 to 2024. It has gained approximately 500,000 acre-feet of storage since 2015. He further stated that undulations due to weather are to be expected; the ESPA leaks; storage gains are fleeting; and perseverance through the dry times is vital to success.

Agenda Item No. 3: ESPA Spring Discharge and Reach Gains Update

Ethan Geisler discussed discharges from the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer. He shared several graphs displaying discharge amounts.

Agenda Item No. 4: ESPA Aquifer Impacts

Alex Moody discussed the 2023-24 impacts due to aquifer management. He concluded that over half of the Board recharge impacts remains in storage; that sentinel well index is 5 points higher with aquifer management—3 points due to Board recharge; and that management has increased aquifer storage by 2.63 million acre-feet and moderated storage decline. There was discussion about that estimation. It was further explained that the amount of increase is compared to if no management had occurred.

Agenda Item No. 5: Raft River Hydrogeologic & Water Budget Analysis

Alexis Clark with the Idaho Geologic Survey provided a summary of findings that included hydrogeologic framework and groundwater budgets in the Raft River Basin from 2019 to 2024. Next steps include continued data collection to reduce uncertainty and numerical groundwater flow model to reduce and address uncertainty.

Agenda Item No. 6: ESPA Recharge Conveyance Contracts

Wesley Hipke discussed options for continuing conveyance contracts for recharge. There was some discussion on payment structure options.

Al Barker moved to recommend to the full board that one-year conveyance contracts continue for another year, after which staff will develop alternative options for new multi-year conveyance contracts for the Board to consider. Jeff Raybould seconded. Voice vote: all ayes. The motion carried.

Agenda Item No. 7: Other Items

There were no other items for discussion from the board members.

Agenda Item No. 8: Adjourn

Al Barker moved to adjourn. Chair Stevenson seconded. Voice vote: all ayes. The meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM (MT).

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Strange, Administrative Assistant to the Board.