

Memorandum

To: Idaho Water Resource Board

From: Mackenzie Kienholz

Date: October 29, 2025

Re: Environmental Resources Technical Working Group Meeting Report – Meeting #15



REQUIRED ACTION: None

Background

The Environmental Resources Technical Working Group (ERTWG) is established to study and discuss the potential impacts of Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA) planned recharge activities on aquatic, wildlife, recreational resources, and on water quality, of the ESPA, Snake River and tributary water bodies. The working group may recommend actions to be undertaken by the Idaho Water Resource Board (IWRB) to minimize and/or mitigate the potential impacts of managed ESPA recharge activities.

The working group is convened at least twice annually, to consider:

- impacts of past recharge activities on ESPA and Snake River aquatic, wildlife and recreational resources, and on water quality;
- whether additional information should be gathered, to better understand the potential impacts of past and/or future recharge activities on ESPA, Snake River and tributary water resources;
- whether protocols for managed recharge activities should be recommended to the IWRB, to ensure potential impacts of recharge activities on water resources are adequately considered, including potential impacts on ESPA discharges and Snake River flows necessary to support aquatic species and maintain aquatic and riparian habitats.

A steering committee was established for the working group, to develop a governance structure for the working group. In the summer of 2022, the steering committee determined that a meeting report should be drafted following the conclusion of regularly scheduled working group meetings. The written working group meeting report would be provided to the IWRB, to inform the Board of the findings of the working group. This report summarizes the discussions of the working group meeting held October 29, 2025.

Attendees

The following is a list of the individuals who attended the meeting:

Individual	Association	Representation
Josh Morell	IDWR	Idaho Water Resource Board
Mackenzie Kienholz	IDWR	Idaho Water Resource Board
Matt Anders	IDWR	Idaho Water Resource Board
Kathryn Elliott	IDEQ	Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
Nicholas Howell	IDEQ	Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

Raphael Erickson	IDEQ	Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
Tom Bassista	IDFG	Idaho Department of Fish & Game
Heather Neace	IPC	Idaho Power Company
Rob Van Kirk	HFF	Henry's Fork Foundation
Abby Bitzenburg	Parsons Behle & Latimer	Surface Water Coalition

Meeting Minutes

1. Mackenzie Kienholz started the meeting at 2:00 p.m. by introducing the agenda and listing all attendees in person at the Idaho Water Resource Center in Boise, ID and online.
2. Mackenzie then handed the presentation over to Josh Morell who provided an update on the fall 2024 to spring 2025 Idaho Water Resource Board (IWRB) managed aquifer recharge operations including locations, flow rates, and total volumes of IWRB accomplished recharge. Josh also presented a graph showing Upper Snake River reservoir storage for the previous and average water year versus current water year 2026, noting that at this time water year 2026 storage is less than water year 2025 and the average.
3. Tom Bassista (IDFG) inquired as to whether the median and maximum flow rates displayed for Upper Valley recharge were representative of a combination of all the sites that completed IWRB recharge in the 2024-2025 recharge season or of a singular site. Josh confirmed that the values represented all recharge in the Upper Valley.
4. Mackenzie noted that the IWRB managed aquifer recharge webpage has dashboards that are updated periodically to show current flow rates and volumes for the current IWRB recharge season.
5. Robert Van Kirk inquired about an agreement between the IWRB and Idaho Power Company (IPC), specifically asking what the agreement is and what the source of water involved in the agreement would be. Mackenzie stated that a proposed agreement was presented in an IWRB committee meeting earlier in the week and was recommended for approval by the full Board. Matt Anders (IDWR) stated that the water is natural flow that the IWRB would elect not to divert when available under its water rights.
6. Mackenzie asked whether there were new items for discussion. No new items were suggested.
7. Mackenzie concluded the meeting by announcing that the next regularly scheduled ERTWG meeting will be held on April 29, 2026.