

Memorandum

To: Idaho Water Resource Board
From: Remington Buyer
Date: November 16, 2022
Re: Environmental Resources Technical Working Group Meeting Report



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 November 16, 2022.

Attendees

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

Individual	Association	Representation
Remington Buyer	IDWR	Idaho Water Resource Board
Wesley Hipke	IDWR	Idaho Water Resource Board
Neal Farmer	IDWR	Idaho Water Resource Board
Josh Morell	IDWR	Idaho Water Resource Board
Ann Yribar	Idaho Attorney General's Office	Idaho Water Resource Board
Tom Bassista	IDFG	IDFG
Bradley Dawson	IDFG	IDFG
Jason Brown	Twin Falls Canal Company (TFCC)	TFCC
Nathan Erickson	City of Twin Falls	City of Twin Falls
Tanya Hibler	Idaho Dairymen's Association (IDA)	IDA
Marie Kellner	Idaho Conservation League (ICL)	ICL
Nick Kunath	Idaho Rivers United (IRU)	IRU
Rob Van Kirk	Henrys Fork Foundation (HFF)	HFF
Mike Peterson	IDFG	IDFG
Scott Pugrud	Idaho Power Company (IPC)	IPC

Jerry Rigby	Rigby, Andrus & Rigby PLLC	Fremont Madison Irrigation District
Megan Satterwhite	University of Idaho (U of I)	U of I
Norm Semanko	Parsons Behle & Latimer	Aberdeen Springfield Canal Company
Travis Thompson	Barker Rosholt Simpson PLLC	A & B Irrigation District Burley Irrigation District Milner Irrigation District North Side Canal Company Twin Falls Canal Company
Paul Woods	Jacobs Engineering	City of Twin Falls

Meeting Minutes

1. Remington Buyer started the meeting by introducing the agenda and listing all attendees on the call. Remington then handed the presentation over to Neal Farmer, who gave a presentation on summer 2022 managed recharge operations, and the forecast for winter 2022/2023 recharge operations.
2. Neal informed the group that it should be expected that wintertime flows over Milner dam should be expected to go to zero from the beginning of January through the end of February.
3. Once Neal concluded his presentation, Marie Kellner introduced Nathan Erikson of the City of Twin Falls, and Paul Woods, a consultant for the City of Twin Falls, who presented on the Mid-Snake River water quality issues above and below the city's waste water treatment facility, and the Clean Water Act (CWA) constraints faced by the city in securing future Idaho Pollution Discharge Elimination System (IPDES) permits. Nathan informed the group that the City of Twin Falls is actively monitoring water quality, and the city does not presently foresee that low wintertime flows will impact total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) in the Snake, as TMDL limits are more of a concern in the summer.

Marie asked Nathan and Paul to describe the distinctions between summertime and wintertime flows IPDES permitting constraints. Paul described that the CWA requires the city to consider reducing discharges during the summer, when flows are low.

Wesley Hipke asked Nathan and Paul about whether the city has acquired Snake River water samples prior to IWRB recharge efforts being undertaken, as well as within recent years, to establish a baseline of the impact that recharge might be having on Mid-Snake water quality issues. The two informed Wes that they have been taking water quality samples, however, the results of testing are not yet conclusive.

4. Rob Van Kirk provided an update on the work of an ERTWG steering committee and informed the group that a tentative governance structure for the group has been drafted. Rob then asked Marie Kellner and Tom Bassista to provide any additional information about the work of the steering committee. Marie informed the ERTWG that there was a need for more volunteers from the ERTWG to be present at future meetings of the steering committee. Travis Thompson committed to speaking with the irrigation organizations he represents about getting representation from one of those organizations on the steering committee. Scott Pugrud committed to speaking with Idaho Power Company staff responsible for addressing water quality issues to consider being present for future steering committee meetings.
5. Rob moved to conclude the ERTWG meeting by listing future discussion topics that group should consider, which included:
 - a. continuing to monitor Mid and Lower Snake River water quality issues;
 - b. obtaining and analyzing data specific to recharge efforts and aquifer responses;
 - c. tracking buildout of future IWRB recharge sites; and
 - d. learning more about non-IWRB recharge efforts happening in southern Idaho.
6. Remington concluded the meeting by announcing the next ERTWG meeting will be April 19, 2023.