

# Memorandum

To: Idaho Water Resource Board

From: Mackenzie Kienholz

Date: April 30, 2025

Re: Environmental Resources Technical Working Group Meeting Report – Meeting #14



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**REQUIRED ACTION:** None

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## 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 April 30, 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
Neal Farmer	IDWR	Idaho Water Resource Board
Wesley Hipke	IDWR	Idaho Water Resource Board
Kathryn Elliott	IDEQ	Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

Nicholas Howell	IDEQ	Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
Tom Bassista	IDFG	Idaho Department of Fish & Game
Heather Neace	IPC	Idaho Power Company
Jake Hughes	IPC	Idaho Power Company
Ken Lepla	IPC	Idaho Power Company
Rob Van Kirk	HFF	Henry's Fork Foundation
Travis Thompson	Marten Law, LLP	A & B Irrigation District Burley Irrigation District Milner Irrigation District North Side Canal Company Twin Falls Canal Company
Jerry Rigby	Rigby, Andrus & Rigby Law, PLLC	Madison Ground Water District Henry's Fork Ground Water District Jefferson Clark Ground Water District Various Canal Companies & Irrigation Districts – South Fork and Henry's Fork

## 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. 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) recharge operations. Josh also presented a graph showing the amount of water available for recharge versus the amount of IWRB recharge completed for the previous 11 recharge seasons noting that the current 10-year rolling average is approximately 255,574 AF of IWRB recharge completed.
2. Tom Bassista (IDFG) inquired as to whether the diversions for LPIC, RCC, and LCC were below the compliance point on the South Fork which “triggers” flow. Rob Van Kirk (HFF) stated that he could check and report back later in the meeting.
3. Wesley Hipke then discussed the change that occurred the past legislative season moving the IWRB’s recharge goal from 250,000 AF to 350,000 AF and possible programmatic changes this may cause including increasing recharge capacity in the Upper Valley.
4. There was discussion on this topic including questions about reporting requirements for private (non-IWRB) managed recharge and the different roles that private recharge and IWRB play for water users in the ESPA.
5. Robert Van Kirk confirmed that the diversion points for LPIC, RCC, and LCC are indeed downstream of the compliance point and that flows during recharge well exceeded minimum flow requirements.
6. Mackenzie asked whether there were new items for discussion. Tom Bassista asked if a representative of Idaho Power Company could provide an update on the development of a University of Idaho sturgeon model. Ken Lepla (IPC) provided an update.
7. Mackenzie concluded the meeting by announcing that the next regularly scheduled ERTWG meeting will be held on October 29, 2025.