

# IWRB Regional Water Sustainability Priority List

Sustainability focuses on the overall stewardship of the state's water resources for the good of the people of the State of Idaho. In the [Sustainability section](#) of the [State Water Plan](#) (SWP) the Idaho Water Resource Board (IWRB) defines sustainability as the active stewardship of Idaho's water resources to satisfy current uses and assure future uses of this renewable resource in accordance with state law and policy. Since Idaho's water resources are not inexhaustible, stewardship also includes taking affirmative steps to address declining trends in Idaho's water supplies.

The IWRB will support implementation of water sustainability projects, including studies (collectively projects), that provide benefits on a regional, basin-wide, or statewide scale. The IWRB will maintain a [Regional Water Sustainability Priority List](#) (List) of those projects the IWRB has determined have the potential to help achieve regional water sustainability.

**Eligible Entities:** Irrigation Districts, Irrigation Boards of Control, Canal Companies, Drainage Districts, Groundwater Districts, Ditch Companies, Flood Control Districts, Regional Water Supply Organizations, Municipal Irrigation Districts (formed per Title 42, chapter 18, Idaho Code), Water Districts, cities, counties, and water-related stakeholders.

**Eligible Geographic Area:** Statewide.

**Regional Water Sustainability Priority List:** During its July 2021 meeting, the IWRB adopted a priority list of water projects that provide regional benefits. The IWRB updated the list at their January 2022 meeting to reflect funding allocations and related decisions and actions by Congress, the Idaho legislature and the IWRB. The updated "Idaho Water Resource Board Regional Water Sustainability Priority List" is attached hereto.

Projects, including studies, to be undertaken by eligible entities that provide water sustainability on a regional, basin-wide, or statewide scale are eligible to be included on the List. An eligible entity that requests inclusion of the project on the list is a "Project Sponsor." For projects that are included on the List, the IWRB may 1) help advocate for Federal funding opportunities for these projects, 2) facilitate state funding consideration, and 3) help with letters of support related to necessary funding and/or permitting authorizations.

Inclusion on the List is not a funding commitment, but rather a recognition that the project has the potential to help achieve water sustainability. To obtain funding from an existing grant, loan or other funding program, the Project Sponsor will be required to submit the requisite application(s), and the project will be considered for funding pursuant to the procedures and criteria of the program. Additionally, the IWRB may at its discretion assist the Project Sponsor in obtaining funding from other funding sources.

Each project on the List is unique and will have its own implementation timeline and milestones.

**Process for inclusion on the List:** Two ways for a project to be included on the list: 1) Project Sponsors will submit a request to the IWRB for a project to be added to the List by December 1<sup>st</sup>,

and 2) the IWRB can add projects to the List at its discretion.

The IWRB Finance Committee will consider these requests and make a recommendation to the IWRB. The List will be updated annually at the regularly scheduled January IWRB meeting.

**Project Sponsors will provide the following information:**

- Cover letter with project summary.
- Project background (infrastructure description, repair, rehabilitation, improvement needs/objectives/benefits).
- Project Sponsor description (organization type, background, revenue sources, current operations).
- Project description (narrative, map, conceptual plan and design, land entitlements at project location, description of any known environmental issues).
- Cost estimate and budget.
- Project funding sources.
- Project implementation schedule.

**Considerations for List Qualification and Tier Prioritization:**

- Project helps to achieve water sustainability.
- Project provides sustainability benefits on a regional scale (basin-wide or statewide) based on geographic area or number of impacted individuals. Projects with multiple benefits may be prioritized.
- Relative economic and public benefits including consideration of public benefits such as how the project: 1. Protects existing water rights and uses identified in I.C. § 42-1760(2)(d), including consideration of the value of existing hydropower to the state's economy. I.C. § 42-1760(2)(d) states: Any project selected pursuant to paragraph (c) of this subsection must protect all existing water rights and consider the effects of such projects on other water uses, such as water quality, fish and wildlife, recreation, and hydropower, that provide economic value, stability, water sustainability, drought resiliency, and other benefits to the citizens of the state. 2. Provides water for future development; and 3. Addresses aging water storage and delivery infrastructure for projects that provide environmental, safety or recreational benefits
- Project has broad stakeholder support or provides solutions that have been developed through collaborative processes.
- Project provides or contributes to resolution of long-standing water supply challenges or anticipated water use conflicts.
- Project leads to stabilization and recovery of groundwater levels in basins where

groundwater declines are occurring.

- Project readiness (may influence tier).

**How a project is removed from the List:**

- Project is fully funded and/or implemented.
- Sponsor of the project requests the project be removed.
- IWRB at its discretion removes project.