BEFORE THE DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

OF THE STATE OF IDAHO

IN THE MATTER OF DISTRIBUTION OF WATER TO WATER RIGHTS HELD BY MEMBERS OF THE BIG WOOD & LITTLE WOOD WATER USERS ASSOCIATION DIVERTING FROM THE BIG WOOD RIVER

Docket No. CM-DC-2015-001

IN THE MATTER OF DISTRIBUTION OF WATER TO WATER RIGHTS HELD BY MEMBERS OF THE BIG WOOD & LITTLE WOOD WATER USERS ASSOCIATION DIVERTING FROM THE LITTLE WOOD RIVER

Docket No. CM-DC-2015-002

ORDER GRANTING SUN VALLEY COMPANY'S MOTION TO COMPEL; DENYING REQUEST FOR ATTORNEY FEES AND COSTS

BACKGROUND

On February 24, 2015, the Director ("Director") of the Idaho Department of Water Resources ("Department") received two conjunctive management water delivery call letters from counsel for members of the Big Wood & Little Wood Water Users Association ("Petitioners"). The letters allege senior surface water users on the Big Wood and Little Wood Rivers are being injured by water users diverting ground water hydraulically connected to the Big Wood and Little Wood Rivers. The letters request the Director regulate junior ground water users consistent with the prior appropriation doctrine.

The Director initiated new contested case proceedings and assigned each delivery call letter its own docket number. The Big Wood Delivery Call was assigned docket no. CM-DC-2015-001. The Little Wood Delivery Call was assigned docket no. CM-DC-2015-002.

On March 20, 2015, the Department sent letters to ground water users the Department identified as potentially affected by one or both of the above-described delivery calls. The purpose of the letters was to inform the water users of the delivery calls and notify them of a planned status conference. The letters invited the water users to file a written notice with the Department if they planned to participate in delivery call proceedings. The Department received over 100 notices of intent to participate, including a notice filed by Sun Valley Company ("SVC").

The Department also published general notice of the delivery calls and the status conference in the Idaho Mountain Express and Camas Courier on March 25th, 2015 & April 1st, 2015; and the Times News on March 26th, 2015 & April 2nd, 2015.

On April 29, 2015, the Department received Sun Valley Company's Motion for Order Authorizing Discovery. On May 13, 2015, the Director issued an Order Authorizing Discovery; Notice of Pre-Hearing Conference. On May 19, 2015, the Department received Notice of Service of Sun Valley Company's First Set of Discovery Requests to the Big Wood and Little Wood Water Users Association and its Members.

On May 20, 2015, the Director sent a letter to counsel for Petitioners, requesting additional information about Petitioners' diversion and use of water ("Letter"). The Letter requested a response to the information request within thirty days.

On June 2, 2015, Petitioners filed *Petitioner's Motion for Scheduling Order and Motion for Protective Order* asking the Director to suspend authorization of discovery by the parties.

On June 3, 2015, the Director held a prehearing conference. At the prehearing conference the participants discussed information in the Department's possession and how it might be disseminated to the parties and participants. The Director stated he would request that staff prepare memoranda regarding how water is delivered to the Petitioners. The Director also stated the staff memoranda would summarize relevant hydrologic and hydrogeologic data and information in the possession of the Department. The Director issued a *Request for Staff Memoranda* ("Request") on June 12, 2015. The Director stated the "staff memoranda shall be submitted to the presiding officer on or before August 21, 2015, and also served upon the parties to this matter." *Request* at 4.

On July 2, 2015, the Director issued an *Order Denying Motion for Protective Order; Scheduling Order*, denying Petitioner's motion for protective order and ordering discovery to proceed consistent with requirements set forth in the Department's Rules of Procedure and the Idaho Rules of Civil Procedure.

On July 16, 2015, the Department received Sun Valley Company's Motion to Compel ("Motion to Compel"). SVC seeks an order from the Director compelling the Petitioners to immediately tender answers and responses to SVC's first set of discovery requests, served on Petitioners on or about May 19, 2015 (the "Discovery Requests"). Motion to Compel at 2. SVC asserts "Petitioners have failed to respond, in any manner, to the Discovery Requests" in violation of timetables for responses to discovery requests set forth in the Idaho Rules of Civil Procedure. Id. at 3-4. Petitioners submitted no response to SVC's Motion to Compel.

Petitioners' failure to timely respond to SVC's Discovery Requests in accordance with the Idaho Civil Rules of Procedure violates the Director's July 2, 2015, Order Denying Motion for Protective Order. The Director will grant the Motion to Compel. SVC also asks the Director to award attorney fees and costs incurred in bringing the Motion to Compel. Motion to Compel at 6. However, the Department's Rules of Procedure do not provide for a sanction of attorneys fees in this circumstance. See IDAPA 37.01.01.531 (authorizing sanctions for failure to comply with an order compelling discovery). Accordingly, the Director will deny SVC's request for attorney fees and costs incurred in bringing the Motion to Compel.

In addition to Petitioners' failure to timely respond to SVC's Discovery Requests, Petitioners failed to timely respond to the Director's May 20, 2015, Letter. The Department received a response from the Petitioners on August 3, 2015, well after the thirty day deadline established in the Letter. Time is of the essence in the Big Wood and Little Wood Delivery Calls. Petitioners have requested the Director hold a hearing before the 2016 irrigation season. In recognition of the need to timely address the Big Wood and Little Wood Delivery Calls, the Director set a deadline for staff memoranda of August 21, 2015, and sent a letter to participants on June 11, 2015, asking them to reserve the dates of January 11-22, 2016, for hearing. Given the Petitioners' failure to timely respond to SVC's Discovery Requests and the Director's May 20, 2015, Letter, the Director will move the deadline for staff memoranda to August 28, 2015, and vacate the unofficial dates of January 11-22, 2016, for hearing in the Big and Little Wood Delivery Calls.

ORDER

Based upon and consistent with the foregoing, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that SVC's Motion to Compel is GRANTED.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Petitioners must fully respond to SVC's Discovery Requests by August 19, 2015. If Petitioners fail to respond as ordered, the Director may take action as authorized by the Department's Rules of Procedure (IDAPA 37.01.01) including, but not limited to, the issuance of a notice of proposed default.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that SVC's request for costs and attorney fees is DENIED.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the deadline for staff memoranda is moved to August 28, 2015. The unofficial hearing dates of January 11-22, 2016, are vacated.

DATED this 12 day of August 2015.

GARY SPACKMAN

Director

¹ A copy of the Petitioners' response is posted on the Department's website: http://www.idwr.idaho.gov/legal-actions/delivery-call-actions/. The CD accompanying the August 3, 2015, response was missing certain documents. A corrected CD was received by the Department on August 10, 2015. The CD is also posted on the Department's website.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that, on this day of August 2015, I served a true and correct copy of the above and foregoing document by placing a copy of the same in the United States mail, postage prepaid and properly addressed and by e-mail to participants who have provided e-mail addresses to the Department for service to the following:

BIG WOOD WATER USERS ASSN LITTLE WOOD WATER USERS ASSN C/O JOSEPH F. JAMES BROWN & JAMES 130 FOURTH AVENUE WEST GOODING ID 83330 joe@brownjameslaw.com

dana@brownjameslaw.com

sle@idahowaters.com

SOUTH VALLEY GROUND WATER DIST C/O ALBERT BARKER BARKER ROSHOLT & SIMPSON LLP PO BOX 2139 BOISE ID 83701-2139 apb@idahowaters.com

HAILEY CEMETERY MAINTENCE DIST JACOB & RUTH BLOOM C/O PATRICK D BROWN PATRICK D BROWN PC PO BOX 125 TWIN FALLS ID 83303 pat@pblaw.co

IDAHO GROUND WATER APPROPRIATORS INC

C/O RANDALL C BUDGE THOMAS J BUDGE JOSEPH G BALLSTAEDT RACINE OLSON PO BOX 1391 POCATELLO ID 83204-1391 rcb@racinelaw.net tjb@racinelaw.net igb@racinelaw.net CITY OF FAIRFIELD
CITY OF KETCHUM
C/O SUSAN E BUXTON
CHERESE D MCLAIN
MOORE SMITH BUXTON & TURCKE
950 W BANNOCK ST STE 520
BOISE ID 83702
seb@msbtlaw.com
cdm@msbtlaw.com

SINCLAIR OIL CORPORATION DBA SUN
VALLEY COMPANY
C/O SCOTT L CAMPBELL
MATTHEW J MCGEE
MOFFATT THOMAS
PO BOX 829
BOISE ID 83701-0829
slc@moffatt.com

CITY OF HAILEY
VALLEY CLUB INC
C/O MICHAEL C CREAMER
MICHAEL P LAWRENCE
GIVENS PURLSEY LLP
PO BOX 2720
BOISE ID 83701-2720
mcc@givenspursley.com
mpl@givenspursley.com
lisahughes@givenspursley.com
lorigibson@givenspursley.com

STROM RANCHES INC
DENNIS STROM
C/O S BRYCE FARRIS
SAWTOOTH LAW OFFICES PLLC
PO BOX 7985
BOISE ID 83707-7985
bryce@sawtoothlaw.com

AF 2014 TRUST
GEOFFREY SMITH LLC
MARIANA S PAEN TRUST
C/O FRITZ HAEMMERLE
HAEMMERLE & HAMMERLE PLLC
PO BOX 1800
HAILEY ID 83333
fxh@haemlaw.com

ANIMAL SHELTER OF WOOD RIVER VALLEY DENNIS J CARD & MAUREEN M MCCANTY **EDWARD A LAWSON** FLYING HEART RANCH II SUBDIVISION **OWNERS ASSN** HELIOS DEVELOPMENT LLC SOUTHERN COMFORT HOMEOWNERS **ASSN** THE VILLAGE GREEN VCHOA C/O JAMES R LASKI **HEATHER O'LEARY** LAWSON LASKI CLARK & POGUE PLLC PO BOX 3310 KETCHUM ID 83340 heo@lawsonlaski.com jrl@lawsonlaski.com

WATER DISTRICT 37-B GROUNDWATER GROUP C/O DYLAN B LAWRENCE VARIN WARDWELL LLC PO BOX 1676 BOISE ID 83701-1676 dylanlawrence@varinwardwell.com

IDAHO FOUNDATION FOR PARKS AND LANDS INC C/O CHAS MCDEVITT MCDEVITT & MILLER LLP PO BOX 2564 BOISE ID 83701 chas@mcdevitt-miller.com

C/O EILEEN MCDEVITT 732 FALLS VIEW DR TWIN FALLS ID 83301 emcdevitt1@msn.com CITY OF BELLEVUE
MICHELLE WOLF
C/O CANDICE MCHUGH
CHRIS BROMLEY
MCHUGH BROMLEY PLLC
380 S 4TH STREET STE 103
BOISE ID 83702
cmchugh@ mchughbromley.com
cbromley@ mchughbromley.com

ECCLES FLYING HAT RANCH LLC
ECCLES WINDOW ROCK RANCH LLC
HOLLY FARMS LTD
J EVAN ROBERTSON
SUN VALLEY WATER & SEWER DISTRICT
C/O J EVAN ROBERTSON
ROBERTSON & SLETTE PLLC
PO BOX 1906
TWIN FALLS ID 83303-1906
erobertson@rsidaholaw.com

IDAHO POWER COMPANY
C/O JOHN K SIMPSON
BARKER ROSHOLT & SIMPSON LLP
PO BOX 2139
BOISE ID 83701-2139
jks@idahowaters.com
jlw@idahowaters.com

AIRPORT WEST BUSINESS PARK OWNERS

ASSN INC AQUARIUS SAW LLC ASPEN HOLLOW HOMEOWNERS ASSN (ALLAN PATZER & WILLIAM LEHMAN) B LAMBERT TRUST (TOBY B LAMBERT) BARBER FAMILY ASSOCIATES LP **BARRIE FAMILY PARTNERS** BELLEUE FARMS LANDOWNERS ASSN INC **BLAINE COUNTY RECREATION DISTRICT** BLAINE COUNTY SCHOOL DIST NO. 61 **CAROL BURDZY THIELEN CHARLES & COLLEEN WEAVER CHARLES L MATTHIESEN** CLEAR CREEK LLC CLIFFSIDE HOMEOWNERS ASSN INC COMMUNITY SCHOOL (JANELL L GODDARD) DAN S FAIRMAN MD & MELYNDA KIM STANDLEE FAIRMAN

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(CHERI HICKS)

GRIFFIN RANCH SUBDIVISION HOA (CHERI HICKS)

GULCH TRUST (TERESA L MASON) HEATHERLANDS HOMEOWNERS ASSN

HENRY & JANNE BURDICK

IDAHO RANCH LLC

JAMES K & SANDRA FIGGE

JAMES P & JOAN CONGER

KIRIL SOKOLOFF

LAURA L LUCERE

LINDA WOODCOCK

LOUISA JANE H JUDGE

MARGO PECK

MARION R & ROBERT M ROSENTHAL

MATS & SONYA WILANDER

MICHAEL E WILLARD

MID-VALLEY WATER CO LLC

PIONEER RESIDENTIAL & RECREATIONAL PROPERTIES LLC

R THOMAS GOODRICH & REBECCA LEA **PATTON**

RALPH R LAPHAM

RED CLIFFS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION REDCLIFF PARTNERS LP (RANNEY E

DRAPER)

RHYTHM RANCH HOMEOWNERS ASSN

RIVER ROCK RANCH LP (SHEILA WITMER)

ROBERT ROHE

SAGEWILLOW LLC

SALIGAO LLC

SANDOR & TERI SZOMBATHY

STARLITE HOMEOWNERS ASSN

STONEGATE HOMEOWNERS ASSN LLC

THE ANNE L WINGATE TRUST

THE BARKER LIVING TRUST

THE DANIEL T MONOOGIAN REVOCABLE

TRUST

THE JONES TRUST

THE RALPH W & KANDI L GIRTON 1999

REVOCABLE TRUST

THE RESTATED MCMAHAN 1986

REVOCABLE TRUST

THE VERNOY IRREVOCABLE TRUST

THOMAS W WEISEL

TIMBERVIEW TERRACE HOA INC

C/O JAMES P SPECK SPECK & AANESTAD

PO BOX 987

KETCHUM ID 83340

jim@speckandaanestad.com

DEAN R ROGERS INC (DEAN R ROGERS III) C/O LAIRD B STONE

STEPHAN KVANVIG STONE & TRAINOR PO BOX 83

TWIN FALLS ID 83303-0083

sks&t@idaho-law.com

CATHERINE S DAWSON REVOCABLE TRUST

DEER CREEK RANCH INC ROBERT L BAKER REVOCABLE TRUST

SYRINGA RANCH LLC

C/O TRAVIS L THOMPSON BARKER ROSHOLT & SIMPSON LLP

195 RIVER VISTA PL STE 204 TWIN FALLS ID 83301-3029

tlt@idahowaters.com

ANTHONY & JUDY D ANGELO

PO BOX 3267

KETCHUM ID 83340

judydangelore@gmail.com

BARBARA CALL PO BOX 4

ROSS CA 94957

barbcall@sbcglobal.net

BERNARD I FRIEDLANDER PHD 116 VALLEY CLUB DRIVE

HAILEY ID 83333

BLUEGROUSE RIDGE HOA C/O BRIAN MCCOY PO BOX 3510 KETCHUM ID 83340

brian@seabrd.net

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BRIAN L SMITH & DIANE STEFFEY-SMITH PO BOX 629 BELLEVUE ID 83313

brianlamarsmith@me.com

BRITTA S HUBBARD PO BOX 1167 KETCHUM ID 83340 brittahubbard@gmail.com

BRUCE & KAREN TRUXAL PO BOX 431 BELLEVUE ID 83313 btruxal@powereng.com

CANADIAN CLUB HOMEOWNERS ASSN PO BOX 4041 KETCHUM ID 83340

COLD SPRINGS WATER COMPANY PO BOX 254 KETCHUM ID 83340

DAVID BERMAN PO BOX 1738 CAVE CREEK AZ 85327 berman.dlb@gmail.com

DOUGLAS C WALTON DIANA L WHITING 109 RIVER GROVE LN HAILEY ID 83333

ERNEST & JUDITH GETTO TRUST ERNEST J GETTO 417 ENNISBROOK DR SANTA BARBARA CA 93108

GARY HOFFMAN PO BOX 1529 KETCHUM ID 83340 GREGORY R BLOOMFIELD REVOCABLE TRUST PO BOX 757 HAILEY ID 83333

HARRY S RINKER 949 SOUTH COAST DR STE 500 COSTA MESA CA 92626 hrinker@rinkercompany.com

HARRY S RINKER PO BOX 7250 NEWPORT BEACH CA 92658 toni@rinkercompany.com

HULEN MEADOWS WATER COMPANY AND ASSN INC PO BOX 254 KETCHUM ID 83340

INNOVATIVE MITIGATION SOLUTIONS LLC 2918 N EL RANCHO PL BOISE ID 83704

JAMES D WHITE PO BOX 367 BELLEVUE ID 83313 jdwhite@q.com

JARED R WILLIAMS REVOCABLE TRUST PO BOX 99658 SEATTLE WA 98139

JIM W KOONCE PO BOX 2015 HAILEY ID 83333

KATHERINE BRECKENRIDGE B BAR B INC PO BOX 685 PICABO ID 83348 **KEN SANGHA** ASAM TRUST PO BOX 9200 KETCHUM ID 83340

kensangha@gmail.com

KEVIN D LAKEY WATER DISTRICT 37 107 W 1ST **SHOSHONE ID 83352** watermanager@cableone.net

LAWRENCE SCHOEN 18351 US HWY 20 **BELLEVUE ID 83313**

LUBOFF SENAVSKY & **CHARLES TIMOTHY FLOYD** PO BOX 1240 **EAGLE ID 83616** bsfloyd@mac.com

MARLYS J SCHMIDT 10901 HWY 75 BELLEVUE ID 83313 mjschmidt49@msn.com

NANCIE C TATUM & THOMAS F HENNIG PO BOX 1365 SUN VALLEY ID 83353

PAUL & POLLY CARNEY LLOYD & DEANN RICHINS MARK & SUSAN WILLIAMS FISH CREEK RESERVOIR RANCH, LLC 384 2 2900 E **PAUL ID 83347**

PAUL & TANA DEAN 40 FREEDOM LOOP **BELLEVUE ID 83313**

PETER ZACH SEWELL LORI SEWELL PO BOX 3175 HAILEY ID 83333 zlsewell@gmail.com

PHILIP J VANDERHOEF KATHLEEN MCKAY 5069 HAROLD PL NE SEATTLE WA 98105

POPPY ENGLEHARDT 10965 HIGHWAY 75 **BELLEVUE ID 83313**

ROBERT BOUTTIER **PO BOX 476 BELLEVUE ID 83313**

ROBERT & JUDITH PITTMAN 121 LOWER BROADFORD RD **BELLEVUE ID 83313**

ROBERT J STRUTHERS 762 ROBERT ST PICABO ROUTE BELLEVUE ID 83313

RUSTY KRAMER **WATER DISTRICT 37B** PO BOX 591 FAIRFIELD ID 83327 waterdistrict37b@outlook.com

SAGE SPRINGS HOMEOWNERS ASSN INC PO BOX 254 KETCHUM ID 83340

SILVER SAGE OWNERS ASSN INC C/O CAROL'S BOOKKEEPING PO BOX 1702 KETCHUM ID 83340

STARWEATHER OWNERS ASSN INC PO BOX 254 KETCHUM ID 83340 VALLEY CLUB OWNERS ASSN INC PO BOX 254 KETCHUM ID 83340

STEVEN C FUNK 90 FREEDOM LOOP BELLEVUE ID 83313

WILLIAM R & KATHRYN L RATLIFFE 206 BAYHORSE RD BELLEVUE ID 83313

THOMAS & AMY MISTICK 149 ASPEN LAKES DR HAILEY ID 83333

WOOD RIVER LAND TRUST 119 E BULLION ST HAILEY ID 83333

USDA FOREST SERVICE ATTN JAMIE GOUGH 324 25TH ST OGDEN UT 84401 jgough@fs.fed.us

COURTESEY COPIES TO: ED REAGAN COURIER NEWS PO BOX 339 FAIRFIELD ID 83327 news@highway46.org

Deborah Gibson

Administrative Assistant