

BEFORE THE DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
OF THE STATE OF IDAHO

IN THE MATTER OF A DECLARATION)	
OF DROUGHT EMERGENCY FOR)	ORDER DECLARING
BLAINE COUNTY)	DROUGHT EMERGENCY
_____)	

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners for Blaine County has requested that the Governor and the Director of the Idaho Department of Water Resources declare a drought emergency for Blaine County to allow administrative actions to lessen the impacts of drought conditions in the county; and

WHEREAS, Blaine County is included within the Big Wood River and Little Wood River drainages; and

WHEREAS, drainages in and around Blaine County are experiencing abnormally dry conditions with the year's snow packs having melted out about a month early and snow water equivalent levels were below normal in portions of the drainages, particularly areas within the Little Wood basin, including the Fish Creek drainage. The United States Drought Monitor Index shows Blaine County included within that portion of Southern Idaho classified as abnormally dry. Additionally, stream levels and flows are currently running from 20 to 70 percent of normal and local water district watermasters are reporting that water right priority cuts are well ahead of schedule, confirming high water demand due to high temperatures and lack of precipitation over the past one to two months; and

WHEREAS, section 42-222A, Idaho Code, provides that upon declaration of a drought emergency for an area designated by the Director of the Department of Water Resources ("Director") and approved by the Governor, the Director is authorized to allow temporary changes in the point of diversion, the place of use, and the purpose of use for valid existing water rights and temporary exchanges of water rights when the Director determines that such changes can be accomplished in accordance with the provisions of section 42-222A, Idaho Code; and

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that pursuant to the authority of the Director provided in section 42-222A, Idaho Code, a drought emergency for purposes of section 42-222A, Idaho Code, is hereby declared for Blaine County, Idaho.

IT IS FURTHER HEREBY ORDERED that pursuant to this declared drought emergency and the provisions of section 42-222A, Idaho Code, the following procedures and requirements shall apply to the filing, processing, and approval of any application for a temporary change to an existing water right within Blaine County during the pendency of this declared drought emergency:

1. An application for a temporary change to an existing water right shall be made upon forms provided by the department and shall be accompanied by an application fee of fifty dollars (\$50.00) per application.
2. The Director is not required to publish notice of the proposed change pursuant to the provisions of section 42-211, 42-222(1) or 42-240, Idaho Code, and is not required to make findings as provided in said sections. A temporary change may be approved upon completion of the application form, payment of the filing fee, and a determination by the Director that the proposed change can be properly administered and there is no information that the change will injure any other water right. If the right to be changed is administered by a watermaster within a water district, the Director shall obtain and consider the recommendations of the watermaster before approving the temporary change application.
3. All temporary changes approved pursuant to the provisions of this order shall expire on the date shown in the approval which shall not be later than December 31, 2012, and thereafter, the water right shall revert to the point of diversion and place of use existing prior to the temporary change. Nothing herein shall be construed as approval to authorize construction of a new well as a new point of diversion or to alter a stream channel.
4. The recipient of an approved temporary change issued pursuant to this order shall assume all risk of curtailment or mitigation should the diversion and use of water under the temporary change cause injury to other water rights or result in an enlargement in use of the original right.
5. Temporary changes shall only be approved for the purpose of providing a replacement water supply to lands or other uses that normally have a full water supply, except for the drought condition. Temporary changes may not be approved to provide water for new development or to allow expansion of the use of water under existing water rights. If the right to use the water is represented by shares of stock in a corporation, or if the diversion works or delivery system for such right is owned or managed by an irrigation district, no change in point of diversion, place or nature of use of such water shall be made or allowed without the written consent of such corporation or irrigation district.
6. Any applicant for a temporary change who is aggrieved by a denial of the Director for a temporary change pursuant to this order and the provisions of section 42-222A, Idaho Code, may request a hearing pursuant to section 42-1701A(3), Idaho Code, and may seek judicial review of the final order of the Director pursuant to the provisions of section 42-1701A(4), Idaho Code.

IT IS FURTHER HEREBY ORDERED that this order is effective upon approval of the Governor and expires on December 31, 2012, unless extended or terminated by order of the Director.

DATED this 13th day of July, 2012.


GARY SPACKMAN
Interim Director

APPROVED this 16th day of July, 2012.


C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER
Governor



State of Idaho

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

322 East Front Street • P.O. Box 83720 • Boise, Idaho 83720-0098

Phone: (208) 287-4800 • Fax: (208) 287-6700 • Website: www.idwr.idaho.gov

C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER
Governor

GARY SPACKMAN
Director

July 18, 2012

The Board of Blaine County Commissioners
206 First Avenue South, Suite 300
Hailey, ID 83333

Re: Drought Declaration for 2012

Dear County Commissioners:

On July 16, 2012, your request for a Declaration of Drought Emergency was approved. Enclosed is a copy of the official order declaring a drought emergency for Blaine County. To view related documents and additional information, visit the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) website at <http://www.idwr.idaho.gov/News/drought/drought.htm>.

Please direct questions regarding this order to either Tim Luke at 208-287-4800 or the IDWR Southern Region Office at 208-736-3033.

Sincerely,

Sarah Garceau
Technical Records Specialist
Water Distribution Section

Enclosure

cc: IDWR Southern Region Office



State of Idaho

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

322 East Front Street, P.O. Box 83720, Boise, Idaho 83720-0098

Phone: (208) 287-4800 FAX: (208) 287-6700 www.idwr.idaho.gov

MEMO

To: Jeff Peppersack

From: Tim Luke *TL*

Date: July 12, 2012

Subject: Hydrologic data for Big and Little Wood River Basins in Blaine County – Blaine County Drought Declaration

This memo summarizes hydrologic conditions in the Big and Little Wood River drainages, and is prepared in response to a request for drought emergency declaration from the Blaine County Commission dated July 3, 2012 (IDWR did not receive a copy of the letter request until July 10). Blaine County includes the upper Big Wood River Basin above Magic Reservoir (excluding Camas Creek drainage), and the upper Little Wood River Basin above the confluence of Silver Creek and the Little Wood River. Blaine County also extends into a small portion of the upper Salmon River from Galena Summit to its confluence with Pole and Beaver Creeks, plus Alturas Lake Creek.

Water supply and drought conditions currently vary somewhat between the Big and Little Wood River basins. Current reservoir levels and year to date precipitation totals within the two drainages actually meet or slightly exceed average historical levels. The April 2012 snowpack for the Big Wood basin was 94 percent of average but only 81 percent of average for the Little Wood basin. April snowpack for the Fish Creek drainage, a tributary to the Little Wood, was only 73 percent of normal.

Although early irrigation season conditions appeared favorable in portions of both basins, a quick snowmelt (a month early in most snow marker locations) coupled with high temperatures and little or no precipitation in late June and early July has resulted in lower than normal stream flow conditions and acceleration of water right priority cuts in water districts in both basins. For example, the stream flow on the Big Wood River at Hailey on July 12, 2012 was about 200 cfs below normal flow for that date (71 percent of average). The Big Wood River near Stanton Crossing above Magic Reservoir on July 12 was only 20 percent of normal. The Little Wood River above High Five Creek near Carey (above Little Wood Reservoir) on July 12 was about 53 percent of normal flow. Additionally, the watermaster for the Big and Little Wood Rivers water districts has reported that water right priority cuts are currently about three weeks ahead of schedule. The Fish Creek watermaster reported very hot and dry conditions with water right priority cuts well ahead of schedule and the limited storage supply expected to be gone in about ten days. The Fish Creek watermaster expects that he will begin curtailing and pro-rating the most senior priority rights when the storage supply runs out.

Finally, according to the USDA Drought Monitor, the southeast and south central portion of Idaho is affected by abnormally dry conditions. The image below shows that Blaine County is within that area of the state currently experiencing abnormally dry conditions.

U.S. Drought Monitor

Idaho

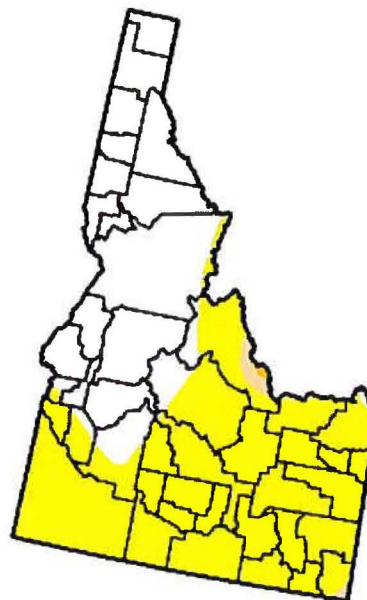
July 10, 2012

Valid 7 a.m. EST

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	40.51	59.49	1.19	0.18	0.00	0.00
Last Week (07/03/2012 map)	52.57	47.43	1.05	0.18	0.00	0.00
3 Months Ago (04/10/2012 map)	94.71	5.29	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year (12/27/2011 map)	48.90	51.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year (09/27/2011 map)	86.56	13.44	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
One Year Ago (07/05/2011 map)	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Intensity:

D0 Abnormally Dry	D3 Drought - Extreme
D1 Drought - Moderate	D4 Drought - Exceptional
D2 Drought - Severe	



The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>



Released Thursday, July 12, 2012

Rich Tinker, Climate Prediction Center/NCEP/NWS/NOAA



THE BOARD OF BLAINE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

206 FIRST AVENUE SOUTH, SUITE 300

HAILEY, IDAHO 83333

PHONE: (208) 788-5500 FAX: (208) 788-5569

www.blainecounty.org bcc@co.blaine.id.us

Lawrence Schoen, Chairman * Angenie McCleary, Vice Chair * Tom Bowman, Commissioner

Gary Spackman
Interim Director
Idaho Department of Water Resources
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, Id 83720-0098

RECEIVED
JUL 10 2012
DEPARTMENT OF
WATER RESOURCES

July 3, 2012

RE: 2012 Drought Disaster Declaration for Blaine County

Dear Mr. Spackman:

In response to irrigator concerns, the Blaine County Board of Commissioners requests you consider issuing a Declaration of Drought Emergency for Blaine County for the remainder of water year 2012. Poor snowpack and adverse weather have put much of Blaine County at risk of drought conditions in the near future. Water supply levels are dwindling rapidly.

Please consider this information provided by District 37/37M Watermaster Kevin Lakey, as of Friday June 29:

Big Wood River numbers we talked about on the phone are as follows:

Today's Big Wood River (BWR) flows at Hailey: 824 cfs

Today's 96-year average BWR flows at Hailey: 1130 cfs

Today's BWR flows in the 25th percentile: 558 cfs

Also, two separate irrigators called today to say they were in the process of closing off the Big Wood River at their respective locations. This would be approximately three weeks ahead of average.

The Fish Creek tract is severely challenged already. As far as the Little Wood basin is concerned, supplies there are likely to be adequate for season completion, although water levels will be drawn lower than in recent years.

In light of this critical situation, our local water jurisdictions will be able to address the needs of water users more effectively once this declaration has been made. We respectfully request this declaration be made as soon as possible so that our local farmers and ranchers may be able to plan and take steps necessary to ensure the best possible management of their operations this season. The Board takes this opportunity to thank you and your office for your efforts and diligence in addressing our significant water issues.

With Best Regards,

Angenie McCleary
Chairman

Tom Bowman
Vice-Chairman

Lawrence Schoen
Commissioner

cc: Governor Otter



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Gary Spackman
Interim Director
Idaho Department of Water Resources
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, Id 83720-0098

July 3, 2012

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With Best Regards,

Angenie McCleary
Chairman

Tom Bowman
Vice-Chairman

Lawrence Schoen
Commissioner

cc: Governor Otter

Gibson, Deborah

From: Luke, Tim
Sent: Monday, July 09, 2012 5:56 PM
To: Gibson, Deborah
Cc: Vincent, Sean; Merritt, Allen
Subject: FW: DroughtDeclarRequestIDWR07032012.02
Attachments: DroughtDeclarRequestIDWR07032012.02.doc

FYI. Normally the county commission prepares a resolution or order that is signed by the commissioners. This one seems a little different or more informal, but I suspect it is acceptable.

Sean – I completed a memo this afternoon evaluating hydrologic conditions for Oneida County. I'll be in the field Tuesday and back late Tuesday or early Weds. Perhaps Liz could work on a memo for Blaine County if she has time when she returns. Otherwise, I can probably complete one on Weds.

Tim

From: Lawrence Schoen [<mailto:lschoen@co.blaine.id.us>]
Sent: Monday, July 09, 2012 4:58 PM
To: Luke, Tim; Merritt, Allen
Subject: DroughtDeclarRequestIDWR07032012.02

Tim and Allen--

Here is the letter we sent last week. My sincerest apologies for not copying you more timely; I assumed, perhaps incorrectly, that the letter would be forwarded from the Director's office. The letter speaks for itself. In the face of requests from water users for this declaration, it seemed appropriate for the Department to do the evaluation, rather than the Board of Commissioners judging whether a declaration request was appropriate at this time.

Looking forward to your response. Tim, very nice speaking with you today.

With best regards,
Larry

Lawrence Schoen
Blaine County Commissioner
206 First Avenue South
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