

Swan Falls Implementation Group Meeting Minutes

Friday, May 17, 2024; 10:00 am

IDWR State Office 6th Floor Conference Rooms

1. Welcome and Introductions

Brian Patton, Mac Beers, Cynthia Clark, Shilynn Novak, Scott Pugrud, John Simpson, Allie Smith, Ethan Geisler

Ann Yribar, Sandra Holmes, Jeff Raybould, Bob Turner, Remington Buyer, Sophia Sigstedt, Kresta Davis

2. AADF Review – Ethan Geisler, IDWR

Review of average adjusted flow. Ethan presenting for Mac, any questions should go to Mac. We are in relatively good shape with the flows at Murphy Gage.

Bureau anticipates flow augmentation releases end of May – early June for about a month. Waiting for flood management to be done.

Simpson: asked about elevated AADF where coming from?

Ethan: Mostly coming from the Bruneau and some from Malad.

Simpson: Water District 2 – have they kicked on

Ethan: Yes, showing that next

3. Swan Falls Summer Forecast – Ethan Geisler, IDWR

Quick recap on the components of the forecast tool. Run a winter and spring forecast. Pretty good water supply in the Southern Idaho basins. The current spring forecast is about 700 cfs above minimum. We have been below average in 2023 and 2024 but ground water levels are higher on average than 2023.

Simpson: Groundwater levels are on the ESPA, part of the mass measurement that is done in April?

Ethan: yes, those are collected from 02/15-03/31, is when we pull the data.

4. Update on Question #5 – Ethan Geisler, IDWR

Technical working group has been working on Question 5 since last November. Currently still working on the memo to review and comment on the proposed question. The TWG has met a couple of times and are going to meet again on June 27.

Simpson: Any thought about, when you are looking at that information, you said the low flow period in July. And also considering that period where we have that transition from 36-39.

Ethan: we have talked about that a little bit. There are so many variables that need to be forecasted in closer to near real time as far as like the Bruneau runoff and watershed 2 demand, the aquifer levels aren't as big of a factor at that point. It is more the Bruneau and watershed 2 turning off or coming on. I think that will almost be a different pool potentially.

Simpson: That is part of the reason I thought about it. You get July and really almost the entirety of the flows attributed to the Murphy minimums are coming out of the Springs. You can have that same situation at that end of March-April 1 transition depending on how the runoff occurs. So it seems like removing all those other influences on flows, like the Bruneau, like the Northside return and such - might be beneficial just to consider and maybe it's the same analysis. We still have to have that same groundwater level that meet 39 whether it is or April 1 or July 1.

Ethan: I think looking at the data, I think that is kind of the case. If you get June July up to a certain point, I think that also covers that shoulder as well. For the most part. I think that is something we can take a look at a little bit. I think a lot of it depends on watershed 2 demand. If they take a lot – it doesn't matter what ESPA discharge is, if they take a 1,000 cfs it is going to cut into that shoulder season.

Simpson: Will that be part of your assumptions? We are looking at worst case scenario what is necessary in terms of ground water levels to maintain that 3900.

Patton proposed that this be put on the list to have the Technical Working Group to tackle this issue. We'll ask the TWG how the question should be worded and revisit at the next meeting.

5. Update on Trust Water Right List – Cody Parker, Shilynn Novak, IDWR

Shilynn presented on the 2024 Trust Water Rights.

Pugrud: has the department put in intent language in those applications given the moratorium and limited exceptions that the moratorium has.

The department will follow-up on the question and will queue up for a presentation and we'll provide written documentation.

6. Review Trust Water Right Administration “Framing Questions” – Brian Patton, IDWR

Discussion of Framing Questions. The plan is to take the questions submitted and condense those down to 3 questions for submission to the AG's office. IDWR will consolidate down to 3 questions and bring to next meeting to see if the group agrees on the three questions.

7. Next Meeting

Opted to go with a TBD to coordinate with when the Technical Working Group is ready. IDWR will reach out to reschedule.

Meeting Adjourned