



NEWS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Idaho Water Resource Board contact: Brian Patton, Chief, Planning Bureau, 208-287-4800

## **Idaho Water Resource Board approves plan to build embankment at MP 31 recharge site to prevent water from affecting BLM road, fence**

BOISE - (Oct. 15, 2020) – The Idaho Water Resource Board approved a 14-foot-high earthfill embankment to be built on the north end of the Milepost 31 recharge basin near Eden to prevent recharge water from flooding a dirt road and livestock fence on Bureau of Land Management property. The Board held a special virtual meeting on Tuesday to consider the MP 31 project and several other matters.

The embankment will allow the Board to recharge up to 650 cubic feet per second of water flow – the maximum capacity of the project – into the 322-acre MP 31 recharge basin to filter into the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer below the land surface, officials said. Without the embankment, the Board would have to maintain a lower flow amount of 350 cfs, officials said.

Wesley Hipke, ESPA recharge project manager for the Board, said the embankment will need to be built approximately 350 feet wide and 14 feet high to prevent any flooding of the BLM road and cattle fence. The project is expected to cost about \$320,000 for the embankment and road and fence repairs, Hipke said.

The project will ensure that the Board meets the terms of its easement with the BLM to operate a recharge project in the lava rock recharge basin. The MP 31 recharge site is one of the most productive among many recharge sites across the Eastern Snake Plain, from Shoshone to St. Anthony.

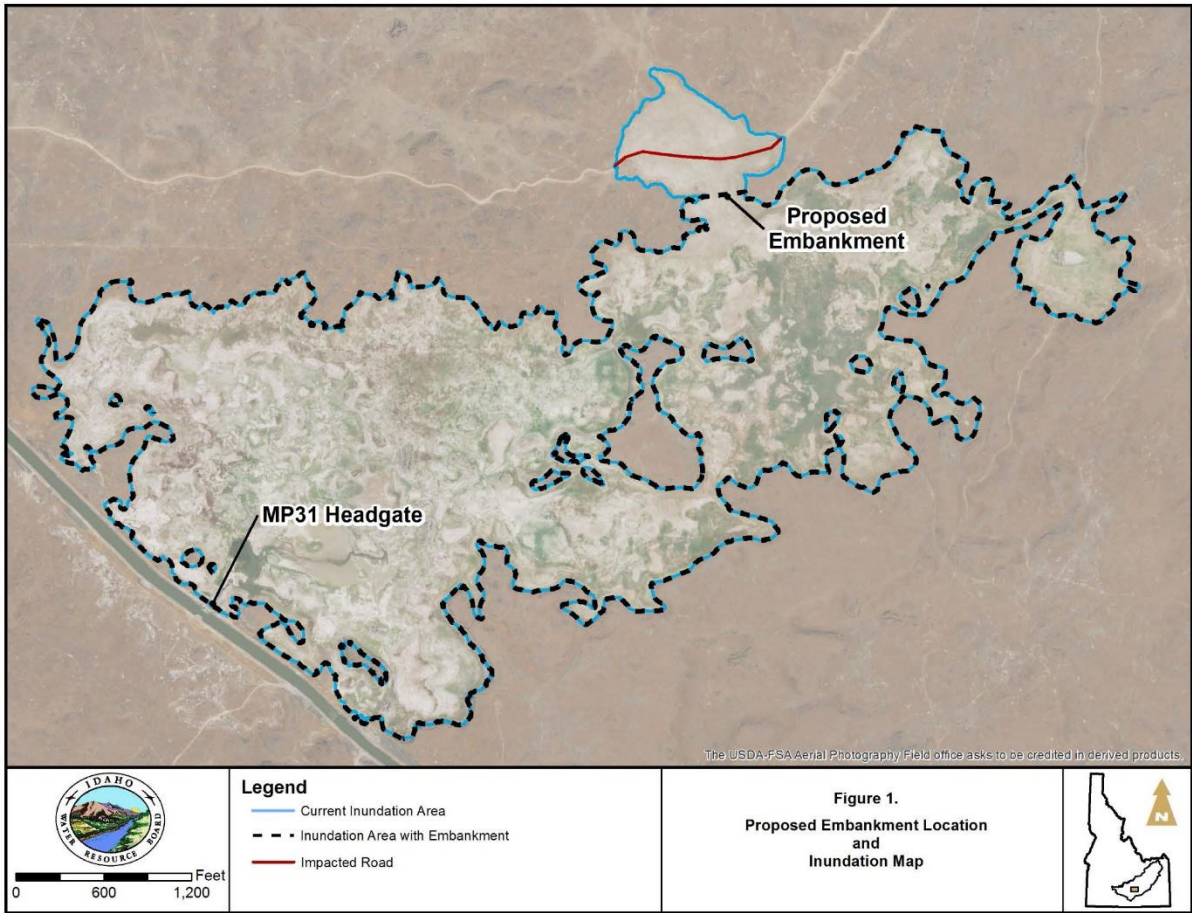
The Board plans to use local rock and dirt to build the embankment, Hipke said. Construction is expected to occur this fall and winter to allow the Board to maximize recharge flows at the site, he said.

“The BLM has given us a notice to proceed,” he said. “This is their preferred solution.”

The Board voted unanimously to approve the funds. A contingency of \$500,000 had been set aside by the Board to cover any costs related to ESPA recharge operations this fiscal year.

To restore the ESPA to sustainable levels, the Board has a goal of recharging at least an annual average of 250,000 acre-feet of water into the ESPA each fall, winter and spring outside of the irrigation season. ESPA recharge operations have begun for the 2020-21 winter season in the Upper Snake region, with about 28,000 acre-feet of water being recharged at five Upper Valley sites, officials said this week. The recharge flows are part of a total of 58,330 acre feet of water being donated to the Board by the Surface Water Coalition this recharge season to help restore the aquifer.

Map of MP 31 site and embankment location:



For more information, contact Wesley Hipke or Brian Patton at IDWR, 208-287-4800.

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