



NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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IDWR Director initiates administrative proceeding on water rights in the Wood River Basin, Bellevue triangle area in particular

BOISE – (May 5, 2021) – Drought conditions in the Wood River Basin will likely cause water shortages during the 2021 irrigation season. As a result, the Director of the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) has initiated an administrative proceeding concerning water rights in the Big and Little Wood River Basins, including Silver Creek (Water District 37) and Camas Creek Basin (Water District 37B), officials said Wednesday.

Anticipating that junior ground water irrigation withdrawals from the Bellevue Triangle area may diminish water available to satisfy senior surface water rights during the 2021 irrigation season, IDWR Director Gary Spackman has initiated the administrative proceeding to determine whether ground water rights in the Bellevue Triangle should be curtailed in the 2021 irrigation season.

A pre-hearing conference is scheduled for 9 a.m. on May 24 to share information about water availability in the 2021 irrigation season and help water users prepare for a hearing for the administrative proceeding. A 5-day hearing will be held June 7-11 at the IDWR state office in Boise. Water users can visit the IDWR web site at this link <https://idwr.idaho.gov/legal-actions/administrative-actions/basin-37.html> to learn how to participate in the meetings.

IDWR is sending out approximately 1,170 letters to water users within Water Districts 37 and 37B this week to notify them about the administrative proceeding.

The June hearing will focus only on water availability for the 2021 irrigation season, officials said.

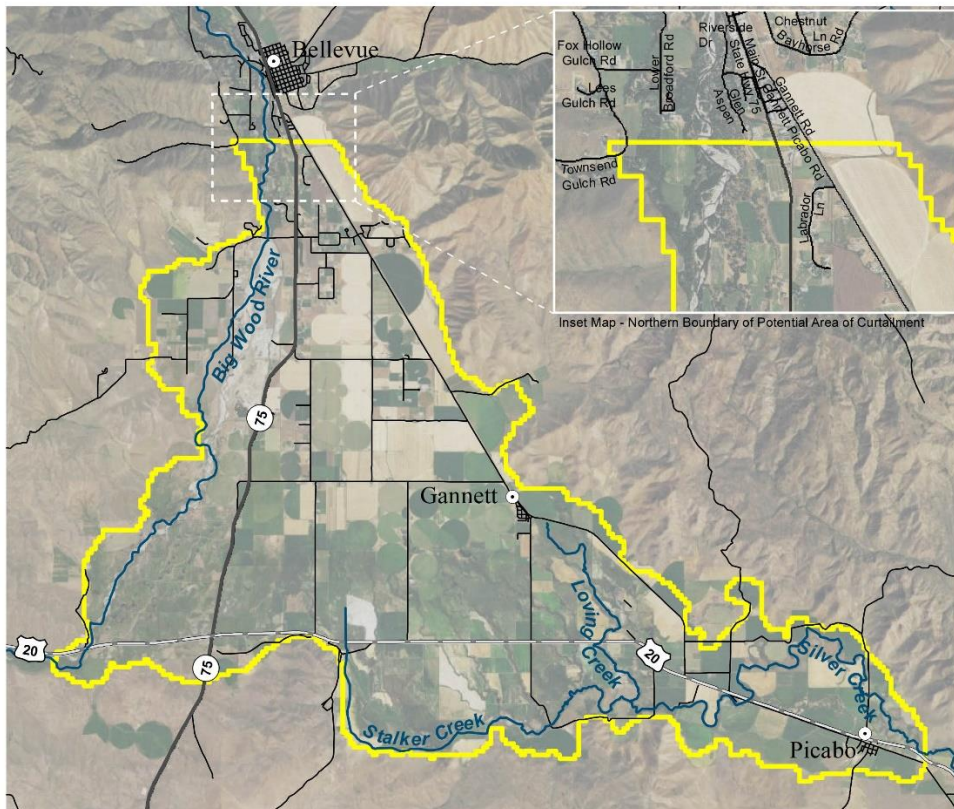
IDWR Director Gary Spackman and IDWR staff have participated in many meetings with the Big Wood Ground Water Management Area (GWMA) Advisory Committee during the last year to discuss the management of the groundwater resources in the GWMA and the potential water use and mitigation practices water users could implement to prevent injury to senior surface water users in the basin.

But with below-normal streamflow forecasts in the Wood River Basins in Summer 2021, and a current “extreme drought” classification in the area, Spackman said that curtailment may be necessary to fill senior surface water rights.

Based on model runs of the Wood River Valley Groundwater Flow Model v1.1, curtailment of ground water rights in the Bellevue Triangle area during the 2021 irrigation season “would result in increased surface water flows” for the holders of senior surface water rights on Silver Creek and its tributaries, IDWR officials said.

Therefore, the Director is initiating an administrative proceeding to determine whether water is available to fill the ground water rights, officials said. The administrative proceeding does not apply to and will not affect domestic or stockwater uses, officials said.

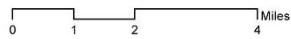
Basin 37 Administrative Proceeding



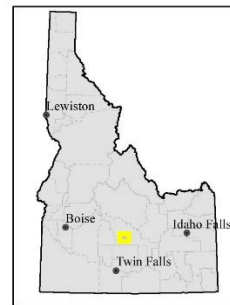
Legend

- Selected Rivers and Creeks
- Cities
- Potential Area of Curtailment

Imagery is 2019 (NAIP/FSA source)



April 29th, 2021



Location Map

Attachment A

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