



NEWS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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IWRB approves 11 new groundwater-to-surface water irrigation conversion projects for \$13.3 million in Southern Idaho

BOISE - (Dec. 17, 2024) – Idaho Water Resource Board (IWRB) voted to approve 11 new groundwater-to-surface water irrigation conversion projects for \$13.3 million on Monday under a new grant program that the Board created this year to encourage the reduction of groundwater use in the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA) and other aquifers in decline statewide.

Gov. Brad Little, Lt. Gov. Scott Bedke and IWRB Chairman Jeff Raybould recommended the new groundwater-to-surface water irrigation conversions grant program while the water settlement negotiations occurred earlier this year. The grants are expected to help producers who irrigate with groundwater to convert to surface water irrigation and reduce the impact on the ESPA.

The 11 grants awarded Monday are as follows (see project summaries below):

- **Aberdeen-American Falls Ground Water District (GWD)** – Lake Channel Pipeline, \$1.3M grant, \$2.6M total project cost.
- **Bingham GWD** – four grants: 1) Morgan Enterprises project, \$91,882 grant, \$183,765 total cost; 2) S&L Murdock, \$123,481 grant, \$246,962 total cost; 3) V&L Cornelison, \$32,573 grant, \$65,146 total cost; 4) R&L Polatis, \$183,666 grant, \$367,332 total cost.
- **Bonneville-Jefferson GWD** – two grants, 1) Osgood Pipeline, \$5M grant, \$25.3M total cost; 2) Brett Jensen Farms, \$65,640 grant, \$131,280 total cost.
- **Magic Valley GWD** – three grants, 1) Large conversion project, \$5M grant, \$26.6M total cost; 2) McManus project, \$131,285 grant, \$175,047 total cost; 3) PKD Properties, \$21,617 grant, \$43,734 total cost.
- **Snake River Valley Irrigation District** – West Branch Canal Improvements Project, \$1.3M grant, \$2.6M total cost.

Rep. Stephanie Mickelson with the Bonneville-Jefferson GWD said she was pleased to see two projects approved for her district. “We’re thrilled to see that the Water Board is recognizing the need to focus on these projects. There’s been a lot of talk before, but it’s exciting to see that we’re moving forward and getting projects approved and moving forward.”

There were two project applications that did not receive funding because they did not meet the IWRB criteria for this particular grant program, officials said.

Last summer, the IWRB created the groundwater-to-surface water grant program with an initial budget of \$20M. In late July, the Board adopted evaluation criteria for the groundwater-to-surface water grants.

The criteria for the groundwater-to-surface water conversion projects included the following:

Eligible Projects: Projects located in eligible geographic areas that propose to convert from groundwater to surface water irrigation.

Eligible Entities: Groundwater Districts, Irrigation Districts, Irrigation Boards of Control, Canal Companies. Individuals must apply through one of the eligible entities.

Eligible Geographic Area: Statewide basins that have been designated Critical Groundwater Areas and/or Groundwater Management Areas.

Grant Award Limit: \$5 million per application.

Please see grant summaries below:

GW to SW Conversion Project Summaries

1. AAFGWD Lake Channel Pipeline

Funding is requested for construction of a pumping station on the Snake River downstream of the Massacre Rocks State Park. The pumping station will be constructed to facilitate placement of pumps and motors capable of 17 cfs. Three 150 horsepower motors, one 75 horsepower motor with variable frequency drive, and associated pumps will deliver water through a single 27" HDPE pipe. Pipe size will decrease through various sizes until the last half mile at 10" diameter. Connections will be made directly to pivots or existing mainline with a short line to the north to connect to mainline capable of feeding some corners to the north. The system will feed pivots and some small wipers and corners at 100% capacity.

2. BGWD Morgan Enterprises

Funding is requested for a conversion project which includes installation of a new pump, pipe and bringing in 3 phase power.

3. BGWD S&L Murdock

Funding is requested for a conversion project which includes installation of a new pump, pipe and bringing in 3 phase power.

4. BGWD V&L Cornelison

Funding is requested for a conversion project which includes installation of a new pump, pipe and bringing in 3 phase power.

5. BGWD R&L Polatis

Funding is requested for a conversion project which includes installation of a new pump, pipe and bringing in 3 phase power.

6. BJGWD Osgood Pipeline

Funding is requested for a conversion and recharge project in the Bonneville-Jefferson Ground Water District (BJGWD) that will deliver storage and excess natural flow water from the Snake River to the Osgood area in Bonneville County. The first phase of the pipeline is designed to deliver 50 cfs and will be capable of delivering 7,000 acre-ft annually to more than 4,000 acres with 100% conversion capability for 3,200 acres. Injection wells will be drilled at the diversion ponds capable of recharging the full capacity of the pipeline.

7. BJGWD - Brett Jensen Farms

Water is currently supplied to the Brett Jensen - Burr system by a 150 hp turbine pump that pump from a groundwater sub pond, a 50 hp turbine pump that pumps from groundwater sub pond, and a 75 hp turbine pump that pumps from the Snake River. The pumps supply water to a full circle center pivot with a corner arm, three standard full circle center pivots, and some hand line sprinklers that irrigate approximately 450 acres with crop rotations of small grains, grass, and alfalfa.

Brett Jensen is requesting funds to complete a groundwater conversion which involves converting groundwater to surface water development where there is an existing water right and infrastructure for both systems (surface and groundwater). Existing ground water sub pond pump use will be discontinued and a new 150 hp pump with a variable frequency drive (VFD) will be installed to pump surface water from the Snake River to the system. A new main line will be installed to connect the new pump to the system.

8. MVGWD Large Conversion

In an effort to reduce the strain on the aquifer, many water users in the MVGWD have developed a plan to install infrastructure to access surface water and reduce their annual ground water diversions. The project will use a phased approach, phase 1 being considered in this application, consisting of the construction of the pump station, east leg of the pipeline, and shortened west leg.

Pump Station:

The pump station is approximately 3.35 miles south of the Minidoka Dam on the banks of Minidoka Irrigation District's Northside Main Canal. The pump station's total capacity will be 54.5 CFS, set according to historic usage and flow rate requirements of targeted lands. The new pump station will be equipped with pumps for the east line (total dynamic head of 225 feet), but with space to add additional pumps for future phases. These specifications were determined using a hydraulic model that simulated full-capacity flow, factoring in high friction losses.

Various pump layouts were considered, taking into account factors such as the number of pumps, variable frequency drives (VFDs), and pump motor speeds (1800 RPM vs. 1200 RPM). Each option has advantages and disadvantages. The final recommendation for Phase 1 includes five 400 hp motors with associated pumps and VFDs.

Transmission Pipeline(s):

Several pipeline layouts were evaluated by engineers using a simplified cost analysis that considered pipeline and energy costs. The analysis concluded that using two dedicated transmission lines would result in enough energy savings to offset the added pipeline costs. The transmission pipelines were evaluated using a hydraulic model of the proposed pumping system.

Many different layouts were explored, estimated and reviewed, and ultimately MGVWD feels that the installation of dual transmission lines will allow for the greatest benefit to the project and water users. A brief surge analysis was performed to evaluate the need for additional hydraulic transient control measures. Soft starts will be implemented for all pumps, and control valves will be operated using standard best practices to avoid sudden changes in flow.

Pond Diversions:

Water will be distributed to ponds across varying elevations. The highest point in the east leg is approximately 4,306 feet. Individual users will be responsible for infrastructure necessary to pump from the pond into their existing irrigation systems.

9. MGVWD McManus

Funding is requested to pipe water from the MID south side canal through a headgate down a 15" gravity line for approx. 0.5 mile to the road crossing. North of the road crossing there will be a 75-horsepower motor and associated pump to deliver water through a single 12" HDPE pipe to the main line tie in. The total distance from the canal to the well is approximately 0.84 miles.

10. MGVWD PKD Properties

Funding is requested for this project that will pump water from the Snake River to the existing irrigation mainline. In the river there will be an auto floating screen with a 40-horsepower turbine pump to deliver water through a single 8" HDPE pipe to the mainline tie in. The total distance from the river to the well is approximately 0.14 miles.

11. SRVID West Branch Canal Improvements

Funding is requested to increase the surface water conveyance capacity of the SRVID's West Branch Canal. The SRVID service area is within a designated Groundwater Management Area. The canal has a total length of approximately 11.7 miles and a service area of 8,758 acres. The project will enable SRVID to provide surface water to 1467 acres of existing ground water pumpers for soft conversions, enabling the ground water pumpers to use surface water when it is available, thereby decreasing their reliance on ground water. The soft conversions enabled by this project will allow a reduction of up to 26.8 cfs in groundwater pumping. The project will entail increasing the size of hydraulic structures, road crossings, and the canal prism in select areas in order to increase the conveyance capacity of the canal.

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