



NEWS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Idaho Water Resource Board approves funding for Phase 2 study of Lower Boise River drains and Treasure Valley Water Supply

BOISE – (Feb. 4, 2025) – The Idaho Water Resource Board voted to approve Phase 2 of a multi-year project by Water District 63 and partners to evaluate the Treasure Valley Water Supply, particularly below Middleton, where the Lower Boise River is dependent on drains and irrigation return flows to fulfill water rights downstream.

“The drains on the Boise River are our Thousand Springs,” said Daniel Hoke with Water District 63, referring to the outlet for the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer near Hagerman. “And those drain flows are dropping.”

In a special meeting on Friday, the Board funded up to \$318,820 for Phase 2 of the Treasure Valley Water Supply Project, while the Bureau of Reclamation is providing \$391,980, and Water District 63 is contributing \$63,161 to the total project cost of \$783,961. Water District 63 officials said they will be asking cities and counties to contribute to Phase 2 of the project as well, as they did in Phase 1, which may reduce the Board’s contribution.

The Idaho Water Resource Board has made the Treasure Valley Water Supply Project a high priority by placing it on the Board’s [Regional Water Sustainability List](#).

In Phase 1 of the Treasure Valley Water Supply Project, Water District 63 installed automated measuring devices on surface water diversions, drains and return flows to provide a more precise understanding of water use throughout the lower watershed. The Phase I study showed that there was a shortage of water on June 20, 2022 in Middleton, when the river flow hit zero on the gage, officials said.

In Phase 2, HDR engineering will develop a surface water model to evaluate the following:

- Quantify spills, returns, diversions and drain flows at diversions.
- Calculate direct runoff from ag fields by crop type, irrigation type and evapotranspiration (ET) data.
- Quantify gains and losses.
- Evaluate changes to drain flows and how new subdivisions, irrigation conversions, pump-backs and aquifer recharge could affect those flows.

Overall, Water District 63 officials said Phase 2 would inform how best to manage the Lower Boise River system in the future and increase efficiencies in water use.

More information about Water District 63's presentation can be found here: <https://idwr.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/iwrb//2025a/FinanceCommitteeMeeting1-25MATERIALS.pdf>

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