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DEPARTMENT OF
WATER RESOURCES

Excerpted pages of the
1982 *Idaho State Water Plan*
(Idaho Water Res. Bd., Jan. 19, 1982)

Idaho State Water Plan



Adopted by the
Idaho Water Resource Board

January 19, 1982

STATE OF IDAHO

JOHN V. EVANS
Governor

"There shall be constituted a State Water Resource Agency composed as the Legislature may now or hereafter prescribe which shall have power to formulate and implement a state water plan for optimum development of water resources in the public interest . . ."

— Constitutional Amendment

State of Idaho
THE STATE WATER PLAN

Idaho Water Resource Board:

M. Reed Hansen
Chairman

James Shawver
Vice-Chairman

Donald R. Kramer
Secretary

Richard W. Wagner

Franklin Jones

Scott W. Reed

Herman J. McDevitt

Gene M. Gray

January 1982

A. KENNETH DUNN
DIRECTOR
IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
STATEHOUSE
BOISE, IDAHO 83720



STATE OF IDAHO

IDAHO WATER RESOURCE BOARD

STATEHOUSE
BOISE, IDAHO 83720

January 19, 1982

To the Citizens of Idaho:

It is our pleasure to present to you The State Water Plan. Valuable time and effort has been expended by many citizens around the state in helping us develop this plan, and we gratefully acknowledge this assistance. We realize that the contents of this document may not meet the desires and expectations of every citizen, but we feel that it represents the best approach for the greatest number of Idahoans.

The success of this plan depends on how actively we all work toward its implementation. The Board looks forward to working closely with individual citizens, the legislature, and local, state and federal government to make these policies a reality.

The State Water Plan will serve Idaho only as long as it continues to reflect the needs of Idaho. The plan is subject to public and formal review at least once every five years, and this document is the result of the first formal review. We urge every citizen to monitor the plan as it is put to practical use and to suggest changes to the Board when necessary.

We seek the assistance and support of the people of Idaho so that together we may work toward providing for the future economic growth and protection of our natural resources that are so important to Idaho.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "M. Reed Hansen".

M. REED HANSEN, Chairman
Idaho Water Resource Board

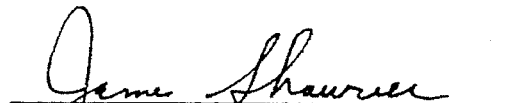
RESOLUTION TO ADOPT

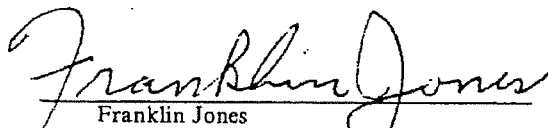
January 19, 1982

The Idaho Water Resource Board is charged with the task of formulating water resource policy, and the State Water Plan has been published and distributed to the public, and public meetings and hearings have been held.

IT IS RESOLVED that the Idaho Water Resource Board hereby adopts the attached document as the State Water Plan to guide the future use and conservation of Idaho's water resources.

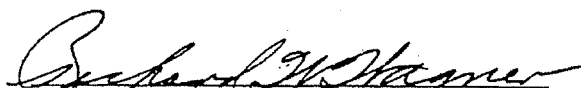

M. Reed Hansen, *Chairman*

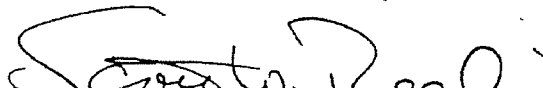

James Shawver, *Vice-Chairman*


Franklin Jones


Donald R. Kramer, *Secretary*


Gene M. Gray


Richard W. Wagner


Scott W. Reed


Herman J. McDevitt

FOREWORD

The State Water Plan is the result of much thought, study and research by the Idaho Water Resource Board to fulfill the constitutional mandate "to formulate and implement a State Water Plan"

The State Water Plan is a guide to future water resource management in Idaho and results from a series of documents. In July 1972, the *Interim State Water Plan* was published. It catalogued the resources of the state and presented various alternatives for future water policy to the public. *The State Water Plan - Part One, The Objectives*, was published in June 1974 to guide the direction of later efforts to formulate the water plan. In December 1976, *The State Water Plan - Part Two* was adopted wherein several state water policies were advanced. This document is the result of the first formal review of the objectives and policies presented in parts one and two of the *State Water Plan* as previously adopted. It contains both the objectives and the policies and replaces the earlier two-part approach.

Water policy for the Snake River, Panhandle and Bear River basins is set forth within this document. *The State Water Plan* is a series of goals and recommendations to be used to guide Idaho's future water resource management. Some of these policies may pertain only to a single basin or be applicable to each basin.

Implementation of the *State Water Plan* will require changes in Idaho law and public attitudes. The Idaho Water Resource Board will work closely with the legislature to secure changes in the law where necessary. Public understanding and compromise will be required by all interests to assure the plan's full implementation. Unless the plan is implemented, there may not be sufficient water supplies left in many areas to maintain Idaho's quality of life. The Idaho Water Resource Board has found great support among the citizens of Idaho for a state water plan and is confident that it will be accepted as a process for continuing Idaho's economic growth while protecting a quality environment.

Because public priorities in economic and social conditions change, this plan will be reviewed and updated on a continuing basis, according to statute this review must take place at least once every five years. Future reviews will re-examine the need for water allocations, evaluate groundwater and water quality policies, and address other issues on the basis of opportunities to better use, protect and preserve the state's water resources for generations to come.

**Former Members
Idaho Water Resource Board**

Carl Tappen, Ex-officio member
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George L. Crookham, Jr., Caldwell
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**Former Directors
Idaho Department of Water Resources**

R. Keith Higginson
C. Stephen Allred

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Formulation of *the State Water Plan* as adopted involved a great number of Idahoans from all walks of life. Citizen input was received through public opinion surveys, at information meetings, and public hearings. The contributions of the private sector as well as state, federal, and local agencies assured that a broad view of public interest will be considered in future water resource decisions. Without this citizen and agency response, a State Water Plan would not be possible.

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IDAHO'S WATER RESOURCES

There are five major systems in Idaho. They are the Snake, Bear, Spokane, Clark Fork-Pend Oreille, and Kootenai rivers. In this summary, the Spokane, Kootenai, and Clark Fork-Pend Oreille rivers are grouped under the heading Panhandle basins.

Snake River Basin

The Snake River is the largest river system in Idaho with a drainage area of approximately 87 percent of the state. The Snake River headwaters are in Wyoming on the western slope of the Continental Divide. Crossing Idaho's eastern border, it flows northwestward 59 miles through a canyon to Heise where it opens onto the Snake River Plain. From Heise to Milner, a distance of 219 river miles, the river is not deeply entrenched. It is in this reach that numerous diversions for irrigation are made.

At Milner, the river enters a deep canyon cut through lava and sedimentary beds and continues for 216 miles in a west and northwesterly direction. Near the Oregon border, the river emerges from the canyon and flows through a broad valley to Weiser, a distance of about 75 miles. Downstream from Weiser the river enters Hells Canyon and flows a distance of about 190 miles to Lewiston. It leaves Idaho at Lewiston, turning westward for 139 miles to its junction with the Columbia River near Pasco, Washington.

The largest tributaries of the Snake are the Salmon and the Clearwater rivers. Other important tributaries are the Henrys Fork, Wood, Boise, and Payette rivers. Basin areas outside of Idaho which contribute substantially to the river's flow include the upper basin in Wyoming, the Owyhee, Malheur, Burnt, Powder, and Imnaha rivers in Oregon and the Grande Ronde River in Washington. Small portions of the Snake River basin also lie in Utah and Nevada. Most of the streamflows of the Snake River basin are derived from snowmelt in the mountainous areas. The average runoff in the Snake River below the Clearwater River where it leaves Idaho is about 36 million acre-feet per year. Approximately one-third of the flow leaving Idaho is derived from the basin above Weiser. Another third comes from the Clearwater River basin. The Salmon River produces about one-fourth, with the remaining amount of approximately 10 percent coming from tributaries in Oregon and Washington and small streams in Idaho below Weiser. Average annual runoff under present conditions at principal gaging stations in the Snake River basin is shown in Table I. Location of these gages is shown on Figure 1. Losses from river flow between pairs of gages (Snake River, Neeley to Milner, and the Boise and Payette River gages) are due to major

Policies

The Idaho Water Resource Board adopted the State Water Plan as the basis for future water resource management. The following policies were adopted by the Idaho Water Resource Board and are in conformance with the constitutional and legislative directives given the Board:

Applications for future water permits shall not be approved if they are in conflict with the State Water Plan adopted by the Idaho Water Resource Board in the public interest. Section 42-203, Idaho Code, should be amended to provide the following: (1) protection for all existing water rights. Nothing in this plan shall adversely affect water rights established and vested under the Constitution and laws of Idaho; (2) all new water uses both consumptive and non-consumptive such as irrigation, municipal, industrial, power, mining, fish and wildlife, recreation, aquatic life, and water quality will be judged to have equal desirability as beneficial uses subject to Article XV, Section 3, of the state Constitution; (3) if conflicts occur between meeting new water uses, the approval or denial of the application shall consider the public interest including an evaluation of the beneficial and adverse economic, environmental and social impacts as identified in the State Water Plan as adopted by the Idaho Water Resource Board.

POLICY 1 Public Interest

Presently there are four criteria that must be considered by the director of the Department of Water Resources in approving or denying an application. The present criteria are:

1. Is there a water supply available?
2. Does the proposed use interfere with existing rights?
3. Does the applicant have sufficient financial resources with which to complete the work involved?
4. Is the application made for delay or speculative purposes?

This policy proposes a fifth criteria: will the proposed use conflict with the State Water Plan adopted by the Idaho Water Resource Board in the public interest?

Since statehood, questions have been raised as to whether it is in the public interest to issue water rights without considering their effect upon those not directly affected by the proposed diversion. In disputes, the question of an application being in the public interest has been raised. In the recent Malad Canyon Case, the Idaho Supreme Court decision contains language suggesting that decisions be made on a case-by-case basis as to whether a proposed appropriation of water is a beneficial use. That language seems to indicate that the question of whether the proposed use is beneficial in the public interest should be addressed. Decisions

Permits previously issued by the department, if fully developed, would reduce summertime flows in dry years to about 3300 cfs near Murphy. Sequences of consecutive years of flows of this magnitude would have occurred in the early 1930's and again in the late 1950's and early 1960's if present developments, plus the already issued permits, had been fully developed at that time. These flows were computed in a study of major outstanding permits from the Snake River in southwestern Idaho (Technical Studies Report No. 3) and a preliminary estimate of effects of full development of outstanding groundwater permits in the Upper Snake.

A flow of 3300 cfs at Swan Falls is about one-third of the flow necessary to meet the entitlement of hydro-generation of that power plant if the recorded water filings are valid. It is also less than the amount identified as needed for fish, wildlife and recreation purposes at Swan Falls or downstream. The potential uses of water in the main stem Snake River have been identified in sufficient detail to determine that remaining water supplies cannot fulfill all identified needs.

The Idaho Water Resource Board concluded, after considering all current and potential uses of water on the main stem Snake River, that depletion of flows below that currently available in the low flow months to maintain water for production of hydropower and other main stem water uses is not in the public interest.

Therefore, main stem Snake River flows will be protected against further appropriations and preserved to provide the following average daily flows at the following U.S. Geological Survey stream gaging stations:

Gaging Station	Protected Flow (Average Daily)
Milner	0 cfs
Murphy	3,300 cfs
Weiser	4,750 cfs

Studies indicate that sufficient water exists in excess of these flows to provide for additional uses if water conserving and storage facilities are constructed.

Water available in excess of the designated flows for development above an average annual flow basis are:

Gaging Station	Water Presently Available for Appropriation (Average Year)
Milner	1,473,000 acre-feet
Murphy	4,218,700 acre-feet
Weiser	7,821,000 acre-feet

The above average daily flows will allow the flow requirements contained in the Federal Power Commission License issued for the Hells Canyon hydropower complex to be met without significantly affecting hydropower production. Article 43 of the license provides the management criteria,