



STATE OF IDAHO
DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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Department of Water Resources
Eastern Region

444 Hospital Way, #300 • Pocatello, Idaho 83201 • (208) 236-6160
www.deq.idaho.gov

C.L. "Butch" Otter, Governor
John H. Tippetts, Director

October 14, 2015

Idaho Department of Water Resources
900 N Skyline Drive, Ste A
Idaho Falls, ID 83402-1718

RE: Water Right Application for Permit No. 25-14425

To Whom It Concerns:

The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the above-referenced application. DEQ has assessed the reach of stream where this diversion to feed a recreational pond would occur. Sellars Creek (AU= ID17040205SK010_02) fails to provide for cold water aquatic life beneficial use due to sedimentation and temperature. Reducing stream flow by withdrawing water from the stream will contribute to water temperature increases. Additionally, if withdrawn water is placed in an impoundment, heating will result prior to it flowing back in the stream, further increasing stream temperature. The Willow Creek Subbasin Assessment and TMDL includes the following assessment for Sellars Creek:

Sellars Creek

Sellars Creek is 303(d) listed for sediment and temperature. Riparian road impacts, riparian grazing, and flow alteration are the three principal causes of perturbation on Sellars Creek. Subsurface fines are higher than the target level of 28% and bank erosivities are highest above the Long Valley Road crossing. Streambank erosion on lower Sellars Creek, below Long Valley Road crossing, is nominal due to limited grazing. The current estimated erosion rate is 304 tons/mile/year. The TMDL prescribes an erosion rate of 11 tons/mile/year. Stream temperatures in Sellars Creek were above the spawning criteria 65% and 85% of the time. Temperature data show that current temperature loads are 26.7°C (maximum daily) and 18.51°C (maximum daily average). The TMDL prescribes a 51% reduction in both maximum and average daily temperatures.

Because Sellars Creek remains impaired for temperature and should IDWR approve this water right, DEQ recommends the following management practices: 1) the pond should be filled during high stream flow periods only, with enough water to fill the pond; 2) the pond should only be filled to cover evaporative losses during the warmer months (July-September), and the pond's water not be drained to the stream during July-September (i.e., the pond should not be operated as a flow-through impoundment) to avoid adding heated water to the stream; 3) the bypass reach should not be dewatered by more than ½ its flow at any time water is being

diverted to the pond. If the pond is drained in the fall or spring, it should be done gradually in order to avoid channel erosion. These measures should prevent stream temperature from being further impacted as a result of this action. The stream in this vicinity has a depauperate willow/shrub community and could be enhanced as a mitigation measure for temperature increases associated with this project.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this application. Should you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 236-6160.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Greg Mladenka", written over a horizontal line.

Greg Mladenka, Water Quality Analyst

cc: Bruce Olenick, Pocatello Regional Administrator, IDEQ
Lynn Van Every, Pocatello DEQ Water Quality Manager
Jim Mende, southeast Idaho, IDFG
Kerrie Matthews, SCA Specialist, IDWR