



**IDAHO TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT**

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Department of Water Resources  
Eastern Region

July 5, 2011

Mr. James Cefalo, Water Resources Program Manager  
Idaho Department of Water Resources  
900 North Skyline Drive, Suite A  
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83402

RE: Application to Appropriate Water in Upper Salmon River Basin 74-15892

Dear Mr. Cefalo:

Please accept this as the Idaho Transportation Department's (ITD) response to your letter of June 8, 2011, regarding an application to Appropriate Water 74-15892. In your letter you request that the Department discuss how this appropriation "... invokes any local public interest concerns for ESA species recovery." This application requests a water right to divert ground water for domestic and fire fighting purposes at our relocated highway maintenance facility at Leadore, Idaho.

The Department recognizes the long term conservation plan for the benefit of the ESA listed species in the Lemhi River Basin and has been involved with several ESA related conservation projects. The Department will continue to partner with agencies on ESA conservation issues in the Lemhi and Salmon River watersheds when appropriate. The Department has operated a maintenance facility in Leadore since the early 1950's as an essential part of our obligation to maintain State Highway 28 and 29 in Lemhi County. The facility houses large construction equipment, sand and rock material stockpiles, and a mechanical shop used by our staff in their daily jobs. The facility is also used as a local office for our employees to carry out necessary administrative functions. Part of the Department's responsibility is providing sanitary restrooms and drinking water for our employees, along with water supply for general shop maintenance.

The existing facility in Leadore (which received water from the Leadore municipal water system) became too small for modern equipment. At that time the Department built a new facility a few miles south of Leadore. The new facility is outside the city limits of Leadore, so the Department had to secure its own domestic water supply, the subject of Water Appropriation Application 74-15892. The State Fire Marshal required that the Department install a water system that was capable of supplying at least 0.22 cfs for fire protection along with the domestic use. The Department believes that this appropriation will have no effect to listed ESA species because the amount of water used will be very small (de' minmus domestic from groundwater). This water use is in the public interest and is necessary for the Department to continue its statutory obligations for maintaining state highways in Lemhi County.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue, and please contact my office if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Blake Rindlisbacher, P.E.  
District Six Engineer

BR:wj