

Edl, Michele

From: Stanton, Jim
Sent: Wednesday, December 05, 2007 4:35 PM
To: Edl, Michele
Cc: Stanton, Jim
Subject: Mecham Water Permits

Michele - Today I had a long discussion with Mr. Mecham regarding the water use on his property. He told me that he owns 3 mobile homes that are rented out, and that renters sometimes bring 1 additional home there to live in; Right 37-7756 covers this use. What he has is a pipeline that carries the decreed flow of 0.714 cfs continuously to his property. A 4" pipeline comes off the main pipeline north of the homes and 2 ponds, feeding these as needed plus providing irrigation water to the property. He cannot take too much water through this branch pipeline without reducing the flow to the upper power plant below what is required for proper operation. Any water not diverted through the branch pipeline stays in the main pipeline to the upper power plant. Mecham told me that there is about 50' of head from the head of the pipeline to where the branch pipeline takes off, and about 100' of drop from there to the upper power plant.

Water leaving the upper power plant goes into a pond, which also receives about 1.82 cfs from the Reed property just to the north. A pipeline from this (fish) pond takes water about 45' downhill to the second power plant. Water reaching this plant either makes power before running into the Snake River, or can be bypassed directly to the Snake River when the plant is down for maintenance, etc. Power from both of these plants goes to the mobile homes via separate power lines, and is used as needed. Sometimes one plant provides all the power for one of the homes, and sometimes both plants provide power to the same home but for different purposes in order to avoid burning up the refrigerator (for example). Apparently this is a tricky system that needs to be continually managed to avoid problems.

The existence of these power plants actually increases the amount of water reaching the Snake River by reducing conveyance losses. Both these water streams are in pipeline for most of their travel from the source to just above the Snake, whereas the water would be in an open channel otherwise. After our conversation, Mecham left me a note that said both power plants were in continuous use for all practical purposes. So IDWR can either get on with it and issue the licenses at the measured flow rate for 24/7/365, or they bean count and nit pick and never get the licenses issued. If you want hard numbers of actual usage to justify an annual volume, this information simply does not exist. The existence of these power plants has NO EFFECT on any other water user as far as I can tell, so what difference does it make what volume gets licensed?

If you need some other specific information I will try to get it, but be reasonable. Your memo did not say EXACTLY what you needed, so I just tried to ask all the questions I could think of to Mr. Mecham that might provide useful information.