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Council OKs deal to fill grove

**Blackfoot will buy 1900
water right from the New
Sweden Irrigation District
to help keep lake full for
at least part of summer**

By **SHEL WILLIAMS**
swilliams@postregister.com

BLACKFOOT — This year, the lake at Jensen Grove was dry by July.

The City Council has taken steps to assure that won't happen next year.

The council approved a contract Tuesday with the New Sweden Irrigation District, agreeing to buy a 1900 water right to fill Jensen Grove's man-made lake for at least part of each summer. The lake is the city's recreational gem, attracting hundreds of boaters and water skiers every summer.

"The water right ... should ensure that the lake would remain full into late June and early July, as

Did you know?

A cubic foot equals 6.2 gallons.
Blackfoot's water right is 46 cubic feet per second, which means water will flow into Jensen Grove's lake at a rate of more than 285 gallons per second.



long as snow melt and runoff keeps water flowing in the Snake River," Mayor R. Scott Reese said.

How much the city will pay for the water is unclear, but in 2004, the city landed a \$471,000 grant from the United States Legislature's Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development subcommittee to find a long-term solution to keeping the lake filled.

Before buying the water, however, the city must make sure the move is environmentally sound. So the City Council also approved hiring Wild Horse Environmental in Idaho Falls to conduct a \$35,000 environmental impact study.

Buying a water right is only the first step in keeping water in the lake during the summer months.

Reese also hopes to have the Idaho Department of Water Resources designate the lake as a recharge site. Such sites recycle water for agricultural use.

In this case, city leaders would like irrigators to put their unused water into the lake instead of releasing it into the river. Because thousands of gallons of water seep through the lake bed, the aquifer would eventually be restored and irrigators downstream would still get their share.

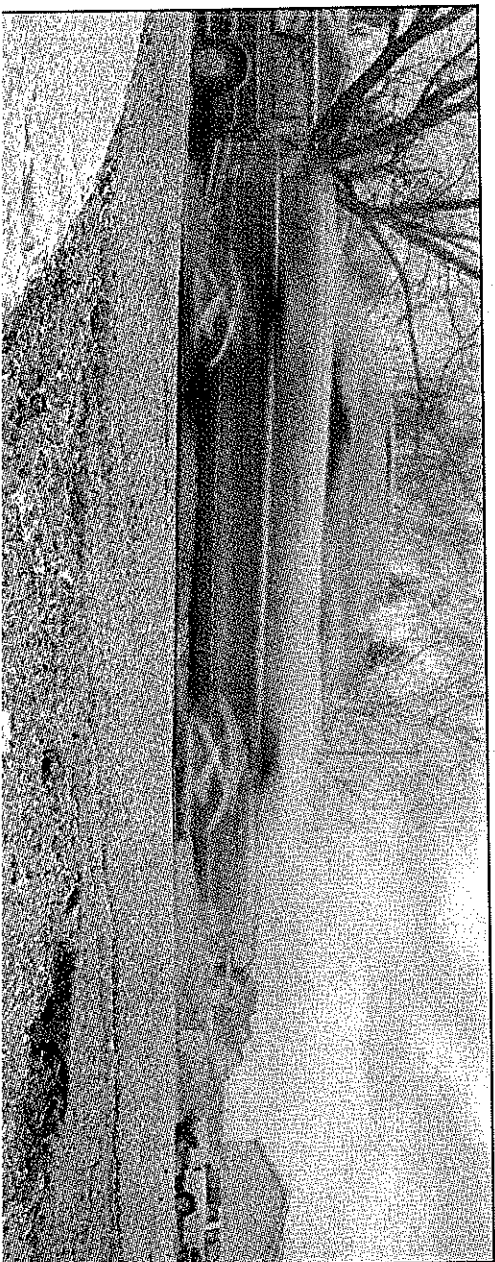
It would be a win-win situation for the city, boaters and irrigators, city leaders said.

"Sometime during the year, (irrigators) have to put a certain number of gallons back into the ground," City Treasurer Ginette Manwaring said. "The users could use that pond to dump the water to fulfill their mitigation requirements."

The third step in keeping the lake full is to ensure water in the Snake River can reach it. The river's diversion toward the lake has eroded over the years. That must be fixed, too, the mayor said.

"After we get the water, the next hurdle is to get it into the lake," Reese said.

Bingham County reporter Shel Williams can be reached at 542-6743.



State awards roads contract

Washington Group,
CH2M Hill chosen