

Karl Dreher, Director  
IDWR  
1301 N. Orchard  
Boise, Idaho 83706

November 10, 2003

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Department of Water Resources

Dear Mr. Dreher,

The Big Lost River Coalition for water wishes to thank you for the time you spent meeting with us and listening to our concerns about the water situation in the Big Lost River Basin. We also wish to thank your staff for the hospitality which they afforded us.

In the meeting I mentioned that the data showing the relationship between the snow water equivalent and the flow into the Mackay reservoir has changed in that the last several years the flow into the reservoir has no longer kept pace with the snow water equivalent. In fact the flow into the reservoir has deteriorated to only about half the snow water equivalent (expressed in percent of average) whereas the last 45 years, with the exception of 1989, it tracked very closely the SWE.

Obviously the water is going somewhere . We feel your explanation that it is going "into the ground" is not a satisfactory one. The only reasonable explanation is that there has been a change in the amount of water being intercepted before it reaches the dam. We therefore request that you investigate the situation and determine when and where the water is going.

With the irrigation season just ended we are concerned about the amount of water that may be wasted in attempting to fill the small stock water allotments. With respect to your rules or practices, is there any limit applied to this? Might it be better to invoke a "futile call" and leave the water in the reservoir-river system. You

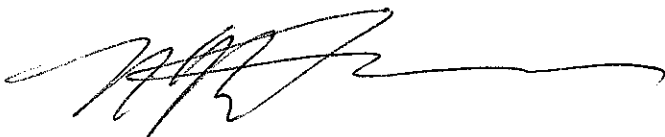
have been willing to invoke a “futile call” when difficulty is encountered in delivering water rights on the lower river.

During our meeting we discussed briefly article 50 of the District 34 rules concerning CONJUNCTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF GROUND AND SURFACE WATER RIGHTS. I am not clear as to the technical or scientific basis for the 13 percent of the average annual diversion from wells. The article also requires an annual review of these numbers. Has an annual review been made and if so, what is the current number of AFY that would apply?

At the meeting we also discussed the need for an audit or oversight function in the basin to assure that water allotments are being strictly adhered to. You stated that you didn't have the funding to perform such a function. Resource allocation always reflects established priorities. We urge you to reconsider the priority which is being given to District 34 water matters.

We respectfully request your timely response to this inquiry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. K. Sowards', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

N. K. Sowards  
Big Lost River Coalition For Water  
3212 w., 3000 N.  
Moore, Id. 83255

