



State of Idaho

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

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File 635  
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March 7, 1995

PHILIP E. BATT  
GOVERNOR

Robert Jahn, President  
Boise City Canal Company  
3701 Tamarack Drive  
Boise, ID 83703

R. KEITH HIGGINSON  
DIRECTOR

RE: Irrigation of Quail Hollow Golf Course via Boise City Canal

Dear Mr. Jahn:

I have recently received a couple of telephone calls inquiring about the Idaho Department of Water Resources position relative to the irrigation of the Quail Hollow Golf Course via the Boise City Canal. The purpose of this letter is to advise you as the president of the Boise City Canal Company about some thoughts that I have in this regard.

This office dealt extensively with representatives from your organization several years ago during claims-taking for the Snake River Basin Adjudication, and subsequently when some of your water rights were conveyed to Boise Water Corporation. This process resulted in relatively precise identification of the extent of your water rights, which places Boise City Canal Company in a solid position regarding making water delivery decisions and participating in the water right adjudication process.

As you are aware, Quail Hollow Golf Course (Quail Hollow) has relied to a large extent on the use of low temperature geothermal water for irrigation purposes. The supply of this water is limited, so the Department has created a water district to provide for delivery during periods of shortage. Reductions in pressure within this aquifer have caused Quail Hollow to curtail pumping in the past. Therefore, Quail Hollow has installed a backup supply from Boise Water Corporation and would like to investigate other more cost-effective means of providing for irrigation water.

My interest in this matter is multi-faceted. One interest is in water delivery, because we assist the elected Watermaster in enforcing water delivery curtailments. Another interest is in the Boise River basin as a whole, where we encourage the use of Boise River water for irrigation. When an acre that has historically been irrigated with ground water is converted to irrigation with river water, the stress on the aquifer is reduced and the shallow aquifer is recharged. This is particularly important in reducing the stress on the geothermal aquifer, which has been declared to be approaching the condition of critical by being designated as a Ground Water Management Area.

Robert Jahn

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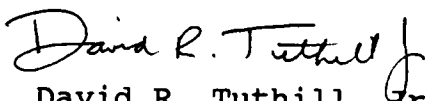
A third interest, and one which directly relates to your company, regards the on-going viability of a water delivery organization in an urbanizing area. As an area urbanizes and as shopping centers replace irrigated pastures, many of the historic uses of river water are deleted. In response to this phenomenon, Boise City Canal Company has already extracted some value from no-longer-utilized water rights via the sale to Boise Water Corporation. However, as urbanization continues, there becomes a point where there are too few waterusers for viable maintenance and upkeep of the ditch system.

To counteract the detrimental impact of urbanization, some water delivery companies have provided pressurized irrigation water for subdivisions, and streamflow for aesthetic enhancements such as waterfalls and ponds. It appears to me that the opportunity to provide irrigation water for Quail Hollow presents a similar opportunity to Boise City Canal Company. One potential benefit to the company is the addition of a potentially long-term shareholder to assist in ditch maintenance. Perhaps more important, a major user toward the end of the ditch helps to ensure that the smaller users will have enough water in the system so that ditch losses are not excessive, because the higher the flow, the lower the percentage of ditch loss.

By sending this letter I do not intend to imply that approval of addition of Quail Hollow to your service area is a foregone conclusion. On the contrary, the availability of water for additional irrigation depends on the number of acres that have gone out of production within the past five years in excess of water that was sold to Boise Water Corporation. Also, any proposed modification of this type would have to be advertised to determine if objections exist. However, if the number of urbanized acres appears to be significant, the Quail Hollow opportunity might be a good one to consider.

Based on the potential benefit to the valley for a trade of geothermal water for surface water, I would be willing to discuss the aspects of this proposal with your organization at any time. Please feel free to contact me in this regard.

Sincerely,



David R. Tuthill, Jr., P. E.  
Manager, Western Region Office

cc: Alan Winkle, Sherl Chapman, Ken Arment, Steve Lester, Norm Young