Chairman's Summary - Representative Bert Stevenson
Mountain Home Working Group
September 14, 2004

The Mountain Home Working Group is exploring water supply and management options. According to the Idaho Department of Water Resources, the only way recharge can really work in Mountain Home is to import water into the basin or address canal losses from the three reservoirs - Little Camas, Long Tom and Mountain Home Reservoir - in the system located there.

The Bennett Creek Pipeline would cost an estimated $2,600,000 or $913/AF and could carry the average system fill at Bennett Creek Reservoir of 2,847 acre/feet (AF). This does not include the cost of acquiring the reservoirs, annual operation & maintenance, or on-farm delivery modifications.

Little Camas Canal Lining: There are several options.

Canal Lining	Pipeline 1	Pipeline 2	Canal & Pipeline
Length: 10.64 miles	2.7 miles	2.3 miles	Line - 3.5 miles
	Replaces 6.5 miles of canal	Replaces 5.2 miles of canal	Pipeline - 2.7 miles
Cost: $3.4 million	$1.3 million	$1.1 million	$3.4 million
Acft Saved at 30% loss: 3665	2585	1875	3790
Cost/Acft Saved: $928/AF	$503/AF	$587/AF	$897/AF

More detailed feasibility studies are required. Concerns were expressed about the prohibitive cost of the projects to local people and limitations of the current system's delivery capacity. An increased supply should extend the irrigation season and reduce pumping, but losses in the lower elevation are probably a source of recharge.

The Mountain Home Irrigation District is experimenting with the use of a long-strand polymer to line the canal. If successful, the relatively cheap process may be a good alternative. The district is improving measuring and monitoring efforts, but it's difficult to gauge the amount of water in the system's tunnels and feeder streams.

Critical Ground Water Management Area and Ground Water Management Area Designations. When designating a critical ground water management area and a ground water management area, the law implies a more individual review of an application in a critical ground water management area and tighter criteria for approval by the Director. Historically the earliest designations were almost all critical ground water management areas and may have led to a public perception that there was no opportunity for flexible management. In Mountain Home, IDWR designated both a critical ground water management area and a ground water management within one year. Questions were raised about the possibility of extending the critical ground water management area here and either designation's impact on potential development and domestic use. Hope was expressed that, when the legislature considers its options, local people will be allowed to address and administer issues locally as much as possible, perhaps through planning & zoning commissions.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 13, 2004, at 9:30 a.m. in the Mountain Home City Hall Meeting Room.