IDAHO COMPREHENSIVE STATE WATER PLAN

South Fork Snake River Basin

Idaho Water Resource Board

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December 1996

BEFORE THE WATER RESOURCE BOARD
OF THE STATE OF IDAHO

IN THE MATTER OF THE SOUTH FORK SNAKE RIVER BASIN COMPONENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE STATE WATER PLAN	))))	A RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Board, pursuant to its planning authorities in 42-1734A and 42-1734B, Idaho Code, has developed a Comprehensive State Water Plan for the South Fork Snake River Basin; and

WHEREAS, the Board is directed to identify goals and objectives, as well as make recommendations for improving, developing or conserving the water resources of the planning area; and

WHEREAS, the Board as part of its planning process is authorized to designate protected river reaches as "natural" or "recreational" and to prohibit certain activities within the stream bed; and

WHEREAS, the Board has sought and received substantial public participation throughout the planning process for the South Fork Snake River Basin component of the Comprehensive State Water Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, having considered the draft plan and the public comment received, the Board hereby adopts the attached Comprehensive State Water Plan - South Fork Snake River Basin.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 13th day of December, 1996.

Clarence Parr
CLARENCE PARR, Chairman

ATTEST:

J David Erickson
J. DAVID ERICKSON, Secretary

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INTRODUCTION

The Idaho Water Resource Board (Board) is a constitutional agency responsible for developing a plan for the State's water resources (Article XV, Section 7 of the Idaho Constitution). Legislation in 1988 provided for the development of a "comprehensive state water plan" based upon river basins or other geographic considerations. Each basin or waterway plan becomes a component of the State Water Plan.

The South Fork Snake River Basin Plan examines existing and planned resource uses in the basin, and discusses the Board's goals, objectives, recommendations and actions for improving, developing, and conserving water resources in the public interest. The area covered is the watershed draining into the Snake River from the Idaho-Wyoming state line to the Henrys Fork confluence. This reach of the Snake River is commonly called the South Fork Snake.

The 1988 legislation authorized the Idaho Water Resource Board to prepare comprehensive state water plans for conservation, development, management and optimum use of all unappropriated water resources and waterways in the state. As part of that plan, some highly-valued waterways may be designated as state protected rivers. If the Board decides that the values of preserving a waterway in its existing condition outweigh the values of future development, it can, subject to legislative approval, designate that waterway either a "natural" or a "recreational" river to protect existing values and resources.

Because public concerns, values, and demands change over time, the Board will review and reevaluate each component of the Comprehensive State Water Plan at least every five years [Idaho Code 42-1734B(7)]. Private parties and public agencies may propose plan amendments. The Board will decide whether to amend the plan based on an evaluation of the impact of such change on the protection and preservation of the state's waterways, its economic impact on the State as a whole, whether it affects existing water rights, whether it is necessary to provide adequate and safe water for human consumption, and whether it is necessary to protect life. All amendments to the Comprehensive State Water Plan are submitted for review to the Idaho Legislature as required by law.

Planning Process

The planning process encompassed six steps which are described below. Not all steps occurred in the order presented. Some occurred throughout the planning process and/or simultaneously with others.

1) ***Inventory of resource attributes*** - The resource attribute inventory is summarized in the *Basin Description* section of the South Fork Snake River Basin Plan. Resource information, figures, and statistics for this plan were obtained through literature review, field reconnaissance, contact with agency personnel, and citizen input. Maps of resource data were prepared at a scale of 1:24,000 or 1:100,000 using a geographic information system (GIS). Resource data were reviewed for accuracy by government agencies, a local citizens advisory group, and interested public.

2) ***Identify local issues, concerns, and goals*** - Issues, concerns and goals related to water use help frame the scope of the South Fork Snake River Basin Plan. These were identified through meetings with the public, formation of a local citizens advisory group, and meetings with management agencies and local officials. Issues, concerns and goals for the South Fork Snake River Basin Plan are described in the *Issues, Considerations and Plan Objectives* portion of the plan, and summarized in Appendix B.

3) ***Assess current and potential water uses and constraints*** - An assessment of current and potential water uses and constraints is contained in the Water Resources portion of the *Basin Description* section and the *Institutional Constraints and Opportunities* section of the South Fork Snake River Basin Plan. This information was obtained by review of water right files, pertinent literature, regulations and law, and discussion with agency personnel.

4) ***Assess and identify river segments with outstanding resource values*** - Waterways possessing outstanding fish and wildlife, recreation, scenic or geologic values are eligible for state designation as natural or recreational waterways (Idaho Code, Sec. 42-1731). Outstanding resources are indicated by 1) unique or rare features regionally or nationally, 2) significant public concern voiced for protection, and/or 3) legal protection or special agency management designation to protect important resource values. Specific criteria for defining outstanding fish and wildlife, recreation and scenic resources are described in the *Resource Evaluation* section of the South Fork Snake River Basin Plan.

5) ***Generate strategies*** - Strategies may be actions, recommendations or policies to respond to issues and concerns identified, and achieve the selected goals. They represent alternatives considered by the Board. The strategies considered for the South Fork Snake River Basin are listed in Appendix C.

6) ***Develop actions and recommendations*** - After considering alternatives and the public interest, actions and recommendations relative to improving, developing, and conserving water resources are proposed by the Board. Many actions and recommendations were the result of consensus achieved at local citizens advisory group meetings, and are described in the *Actions and Recommendations* section of the South Fork Snake River Basin Plan.

Public Involvement

Public involvement is an important part of the planning process. Input from local citizens is necessary in assessing viewpoints and conditions in the basin. Information meetings, agency coordination meetings, and local advisory group meetings provided opportunity for public critique and suggestions on the South Fork Snake River Basin Plan. In February and March 1995, public information meetings were conducted in Irwin, Victor, Ririe and Idaho Falls to inform the public about preparation of a South Fork Snake River Basin Plan, and to ask the public to identify issues and concerns.

In April 1995, the Board selected a seventeen member advisory group comprised of local citizens. The South Fork Snake Advisory Group (SFSAG) informed the Board and its staff of local concerns, reviewed information used in the development of the plan, and provided feedback and suggestions for the Board's consideration (Rule 30.01.b, Comprehensive State Water Plan Rules, Idaho Water Resource Board, 1992). Members represented local government, water-users, conservation groups, industry, land owners, recreationists and private citizens. The group met nine times over a period of a year. All advisory group meetings were advertised and open to the public. A list of the South Fork Snake Advisory Group members and a summary of advisory group meetings is furnished in Appendix A. Newsletters were circulated to more than 200 individuals summarizing the development of the South Fork Snake River Basin Plan, notifying of advisory group meetings, and requesting comment on key pieces of information.

The Idaho Water Resource Board circulated a Draft Comprehensive State Water Plan for the South Fork Snake River Basin on October 11, 1996. Information meetings and hearings were scheduled in Ririe, Rexburg, Boise, Twin Falls and Idaho Falls in October and November 1996 to discuss and receive comment on the draft plan.

Twenty people testified at public hearings and 69 written comments were received by the Board prior to the close of the comment period on December 10, 1996.

After considering the record, the Board revised the draft plan. The Board adopted the final plan in 1996. The South Fork Snake River Basin Plan was presented to the Idaho Legislature for its consideration as required by Section 42-1734B, Idaho Code. The Legislature ratified the plan in 1997. The South Fork Snake River Basin Plan is a component of the comprehensive State Water Plan of the Board.

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