COMPREHENSIVE STATE WATER PLAN

Appendices
Snake River: Milner Dam to King Hill

Idaho Water Resource Board

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APPENDIX A

Middle Snake Advisory Group

Many special interest groups, private organizations, and political entities have a major interest in the Middle Snake plan. In order to involve local participation in the early stages of the planning process, a local planning advisory group was formed. Sixteen local individuals with an interest in state water planning were invited to help coordinate local input throughout the plan formulation phases, and review and comment on evaluation studies and plan alternatives.

1.	Hydropower - Idaho Power Company	Roger Fuhrman
2.	Idaho Aquaculture Association	Harold Johnson
3.	North Side Canal Company	John Beukers
4.	Twin Falls Canal Company	Chuck Coiner
5.	King Hill Irrigation District	Gary Stiehl
6.	Outfitters & Guides	Randy McBride
7.	Idaho Wildlife Federation	Donald Zuck
8.	Idaho Rivers United	Gail Ater
9.	Hagerman Valley Citizen Alert	Carter Wilson
10	Mining	Keith Sligar
11.	Twin Falls Chamber of Commerce (Oregon Trail Commission)	Kent Just
12.	Gooding County (Middle Snake Study Group)	Bob Muffley
13.	Jerome County (Middle Snake Study Group)	Veronica Lierman
14.	Twin Falls County (Middle Snake Study Group)	Marvin Hempleman
15.	Local energy & conservation activist	Bill Chisholm
16.	Association of Soil Conservation Districts (Middle Snake Study Group)	Gary Grindstaff

ADVISORY GROUP MEETINGS

1. Thursday, January 30, 1992, 7:30 p.m.
   Jerome County Courthouse, Jerome, ID

Bill Graham, Planning Section Manager for the Idaho Department of Water Resources, introduced himself, Ruth Schellbach, lead-planner for the Middle Snake, and two members of the Idaho Water Resource Board, Clarence Parr and Don Kramer.

After a round of self-introductions by Advisory Group members, B. Graham spoke briefly about two hand-outs, (1) a short description of what the Middle Snake plan will address and (2) a flow chart outlining the planning process.

R. Schellbach passed-out a tentative schedule for the Middle Snake plan and a list of resource attributes the planning staff will be assembling for the GIS mapping.

The Advisory Group decided that public "scoping" meetings were important to the planning process and two meetings should be held in the area: one at Hagerman, and one at Twin Falls.

Each Advisory Group member was asked to briefly voice important issues concerning the Board's plan for the Middle Snake. Each member spoke and their concerns were recorded as follows:

Local Issues and Concerns:

(1) Bypass flows at hydro projects.
(2) Remove nutrients and sediments from the river.
(3) Quantity and quality of tributaries.
(4) Enforcement of water rights/diversions.
(5) River pollution/water quality (macrophytes).
(6) Conservation-based energy policy. Inventory, assess, and prioritize.
(7) Assess individual pollution sources.
(8) Concern for recreational and aesthetic aspects.
(9) Flexibility in power production at existing and future hydro sites.
(10) Tourist and recreational concerns: Shoshone Falls, Murtaugh whitewater, Pillar Falls.
(11) Good-quality spring water.
(12) Balanced, conscientious planning approach.
(13) Continue to implement Agricultural BMPs to enhance quality of return flows.
(14) Enhance river flows by shaping storage releases.
(15) Consider Middle Snake Study Group plan.

2. Thursday, April 16, 1992, 7:00 p.m.
KMVT Community Room, Twin Falls, ID

The topic for the meeting was water quality. Ruth Schellbach, Idaho Dept of Water Resources, introduced Chuck Brockway, Tim Litke, and Bob Muffley as the evening speakers.

Dr. Chuck Brockway, [University of Idaho, Kimberly Research Station], spoke first about the 1990-91 water quality monitoring study of the Middle Snake reach. Concurrent sampling of 55 sites, including 13 instream sites, effluent from 10 fish hatcheries, 19 irrigation return flow streams, and 13 tributary streams, was conducted for the period June 1, 1990 through July 25, 1991.

Findings from the study indicate that the Middle Snake reach accumulates and transports up to 30 tons/day of nitrate+nitrite nitrogen, two tons/day of Phosphate as phosphorus, and 350 tons/day of suspended solids. During the study period, over 13,000 tons of sediment accumulated in the reach. Nitrate+nitrite nitrogen, phosphorus concentrations, and water temperature exceed guidelines or adopted water quality criteria for the designated beneficial uses in the main stem of the Snake River. Low river flows at Milner and decreased spring inflow during the last five years have exacerbated the algae and macrophyte problems in the reach. The study data will be utilized in a river water quality model being developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Dr. Tim Litke [Idaho Dept of Health and Welfare, Division of Environmental Quality] showed slides that illustrate water quality problems on the Middle Snake reach, and then briefly described his agency's responsibilities in the development of a Nutrient Management Plan. Four committees, representing general public and industry interests, have been established to work with the DEQ.

The DEQ must develop a Total Maximum Daily Load for the Middle Snake reach between Shoshone Falls and Lower Salmon Dam. The first step is to determine what the river can assimilate and then load allowances for point discharges and Best Management Practices (BMPs) for non-point sources will be adjusted.

Bob Muffley briefly described the purpose of the Middle Snake Study Group and their Draft Plan. The Middle Snake Study Group, is a joint effort among the counties of Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln, and Twin Falls to address water quality problems within the four-county area and ultimately enhance the water quality in the Middle Snake reach. The group is made up of one County Commissioner, one Planning and Zoning member, and one public member from each of the four counties. The Draft Plan is a water resource management plan which will help direct local, state, and

national resources, as well as formulate recommendations for changes in state and local laws, ordinances, and regulations.

3. Thursday, May 21, 1992, 7:00 p.m.
Hagerman Senior Citizens' Center, Hagerman, ID

The topic for the meeting was "Diverting Water for Beneficial Uses". Roger Fuhrman - Idaho Power Company, Harold Johnson - Idaho Aquaculture Association, and Chuck Coiner, John Beukers, & Gary Stiehl - Twin Falls & North Side Canal Companies, and King Hill Irrigation District respectively, were the meeting speakers. The meeting was both an educational forum and a platform to air issues and ask questions.

Roger Fuhrman touched on several topics. Keynotes were the obligation to provide electric power at a low cost and the increasing demand for power with population growth; river fluctuations; power sales; relicensing activities; new resources for power; the Wiley project; and conservation. Fuhrman also noted that Idaho Power is concerned with flexibility for future power production development, and would like to help with wording that would specifically call for the reevaluation of the hydro potential of the reach for future needs. Idaho Power would like interim protection for the Wiley reach to continue through 1994, and calls for the Comprehensive Plan to state that the plan cannot be used to pursue federal "Wild and Scenic" river designations.

Harold Johnson spoke about the aquaculture industry and its contribution to the economy of the area in terms of employment and revenue. Primary concerns of the aquaculture industry are "mining" of the Snake Plain aquifer and a subsequent reduction in north side spring flows on which the industry is dependent. The industry is also concerned with development limitations exercised by the DEQ due to the water quality conditions of the Snake River. Johnson invited everyone to tour local aquaculture facilities. (If you are interested in a tour, please get in touch with Harold).

Chuck Coiner, John Beukers, and Gary Stiehl covered irrigation development and issues. Coiner concentrated on the new Milner power plant and water quality projects the canal company is building. Ted Diehl presented a brief history of the North Side Canal Company. Conversion to sprinklers and hydropower development were a focus of his talk. Concerns for water planning focused on recharge vs. water conservation. Stiehl described the extent of the King Hill Irrigation District and talked about screen cleaning problems associated with their pumps on the Snake River. The District has spent $62,000 on cleaning at Glenns Ferry alone.

4. Wednesday, September 30, 7:00 p.m. - 9:40 p.m.
Jerome County Courthouse, Jerome, ID

This meeting covered the "Screening" step in the planning process. Agency personnel presented their inventories and evaluations of the reach in regard to fish and wildlife, recreation, geologic and scenic resources. This evaluation or "screening" considered the uniqueness, rarity or significance of the resource; the degree of protection accorded the resource through statute, regulation, rules, or agency management policy; and the potential for resource impact or opportunity to mitigate. Maps displayed the findings.

The meeting also served as an opportunity for the planning staff to receive input from the Advisory Group and the attending public about the inventories and evaluation. Comments on the evaluations provided by Advisory Group members or members of the public were recorded and are listed below:

Comments on Inventory and Evaluation Maps

Cultural Resources

- Upstream of Shoshone Falls - Depression era mining
- Murtaugh Bridge to Milner Dam - Chinese mining sites - Ron James
  [Twin Falls - Robert Stuart Jr. High]

Recreation

- Note Clear Lakes Bridge Pull-Out
- Concerned Citizens For Caldron Linn - Conducting Recreation Survey - average of six people per day, April-November at Star Falls; Activities - fishing; target practice; pictures; rock climbing; see historic features; sightseeing.

Geologic Features

- Whole canyon is significant; present canyon is a remnant of the former Snake. Shoshone and Twin Falls were probably much higher. From Twin Falls downstream, probably giant cataracts.
- Contact Larry Dee (retired BLM geologist) now living in Idaho Falls.

Fish and Wildlife, Biological Communities

- Extend outstanding evaluation to Shoshone Falls.
- Niagara WMA - excellent diversity of game, e.g. rabbits, deer, pheasant, beaver, muskrat, skunks, etc.; excellent duck populations - mallard, wood duck, g.w. teal, some canvasback.
- Idaho Power Company is inventorying wetland/riparian vegetation from Twin Falls to C.J. Strike.
- Get better wildlife species representation:

1) turkey - Niagara WMA
2) waterfowl, shorebirds

- Hagerman WMA waterfowl populations at 200,000+.
- Perrine Bridge to Lower Salmon Falls tremendous waterfowl populations (fall)
- Better wildlife assessment above Shoshone:
  1) 25-30 deer at Star Falls area
  2) Star Falls P.A. studies (B&C Energy)
  3) IWT studies - BLM [Gary Wright]
  4) Fox, coyotes, beaver, etc. (springs area)
  5) Bobcat, Mountain Lion (Star Falls)
- Need trout assessment for public
- Rock Creek returning as a spawning stream - Cedar Draw/Salmon Falls Creek

Chuck Coiner and Gail Ater briefly discussed water flows needed for the Milner and Murtaugh segments - what is and is not "floatable" in regard to rating the stretch for outstanding recreation.

5. Tuesday, October 20, 7:00 p.m. - 9:40 p.m.
Jerome County Courthouse, Jerome, ID

R. Schellbach presented five alternatives addressing actions and recommendations the Idaho Water Resource Board might take for the Middle Snake plan. A hand-out given to the Advisory Group members summarized the five alternatives.

Advisory Group members were asked to comment on each alternative. Comments were summarized and recorded, and are included in these meeting minutes. A sixth alternative was constructed in response to Advisory Group comments. A summary of that alternative is included with these minutes. Additional comments Advisory Group members may wish to submit should be sent to R. Schellbach in the next two weeks.

Comments on Alternative Actions and Recommendations

ALTERNATIVE - No Action

- Public wouldn't look at it as an Alternative.
- Not a good Alternative after all this input and time.
- This is a reasonable Alternative because more governmental intervention will not necessarily solve the problem.

ALTERNATIVE - Protect All Outstanding Segments

- Community at large pays for small minority that can boat 1.6 mile boating stretch by protecting that stretch. Cost of supplying water to boat Milner segment exceeds its value.
- Too encompassing - covers too much of the river.
- Concerned about availability of energy development options with this Alternative.
- Need to take all encompassing look at the river. We need to stop everything - look at it, and then correct. Need to be fair to everyone.
- Totally undefensible.
- Lower Salmon Falls Reservoir will receive significant use because of National Monument - should receive the highest protection.
- Too encompassing.
- Refine to protect "truly outstanding" sections - look at sections that have been designated Outstanding for more than one resource. [Staff Note: We looked at the evaluation maps. All Outstanding segments are so classified for more than one resource.]

ALTERNATIVE - Protect All Free-Flowing Segments

- Too all encompassing. People are saying they want to protect the remaining falls and rapids on the river. This Alternative supports the Middle Snake Study Group Plan, but on the map it's too much.
- Too all encompassing and there are energy development concerns.
- Too inclusive. People want to protect the rapids, and falls. This Alternative goes beyond that.
- Some reservoirs have outstanding values (scenery, geology and recreation opportunities).
- Idaho Power Co. may be neutral on designation for Lower Salmon Falls Reservoir, but R. Fuhrman will check this out and respond formally to R. Schellbach.

ALTERNATIVE - Hydropower Allowances

- Not encompassing enough from a public-input perspective.
- It's better, but I still prefer the No Action Alternative - the bureaucracy is large enough.
- Not encompassing enough - public is looking for more.
- It stinks.
- Doesn't address public concerns.
- Doesn't protect rapids.

[Staff Note: no recorded comment from Idaho Power Company - R. Fuhrman will respond formally to IDWR].

ALTERNATIVE - Federal Protection

- River management can be better addressed by state protection rather than federal protection. This Alternative does not protect sections the public would want protected.
- Idaho Power Co wouldn't be able to build any hydro projects with federal designation.
- I like this Alternative. State proposal should add three rapids area (Boulder, Empire, Kanaka). But as a public official I would have to go with State protection of all Outstanding segments, or all free-flowing segments.
- This Alternative does not give us the best combination.

- It's stretching it to say that the Middle Snake is Wild and Scenic status worthy.
- Don't need another level of study on the Snake River.
- The whole river is useful for passive recreation from many perspectives.
- I feel more comfortable with this Alternative than with the State protection designations. The No Action Alternative is still best.

NEW ALTERNATIVE - Protect Rapids and Falls

- Make this Alternative like the federal designations, with the addition of the three rapids (Boulder, Empire, Kanaka) as a state plan, not federal.
- Don't want any more power facilities. Public wishes to protect remaining rapids/falls.
- Because of flexibility, a state plan like the BLM proposals with the three rapids area is the best combination.
- Start protection in the Milner segment below the main Idaho Power Co. power plant.
- Need to add protection of Lower Salmon Falls Reservoir for the Hagerman Fossil Beds.
- Idaho Power Co. questions what kinds of regulations go with protection designations.
- Flat-water stretches are important too for wildlife habitat, and from a scenic viewpoint. The Outstanding values encompass more than just the rapids.

- Public would prefer state management.
- Ideal objective: Authority with FERC, but state flexibility to change plan.
- Throw out federal protection Alternative. All Outstanding reaches might be too much, but on second look, it's defensible.
- The Middle Snake Study Group Plan is in line with the All Outstanding Reaches Alternative or All Free-Flowing Segments Alternative.
- Idaho Aquaculture Association members prefer "No Action."

Recommendations

- Shaping upstream flows may be an impingement on Idaho Power Co's property rights.
- Counties would like more input into water allocation issues (i.e., water diversions and water pollution).
- Excellent idea to protect spring flows.
- Protection of senior water rights: the policy now seems to be to sacrifice senior water rights for junior rights.
- Enforcement of injection well regulations and monitoring to protect ground water.
- There are conflicts with protection of spring flows and encouraging water conservation: should we restrict sprinklers? That increases water quality problems.