



NEWS RELEASE

IDAHO WATER RESOURCE BOARD

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Water Board Adopts Aquifer Management Plan

The Idaho Water Resource Board (IWRB) during a telephonic board meeting this morning unanimously approved a resolution adopting the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA) Comprehensive Aquifer Management Plan (CAMP) for submittal to the 2009 Idaho Legislature.

In light of declining aquifer levels and reduced spring and river flows, the plan is an effort to adjust water supply and demand in the ESPA over the short and long term, and to identify opportunities to manage the available water to meet current and future water needs.

The plan is a culmination of almost three years of work by stakeholder representatives, agency staff and consultants. An Advisory committee comprised of representatives from irrigation companies, ground water users, spring water users, hydro power, land developers, well owners, environmental/conservation interests, county assessors and mayors of cities within the ESPA, have been working on the plan for the last 18 months.

Monthly advisory committee meetings resulted in development of the Comprehensive Aquifer Management Plan (CAMP) for the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA). Public comment was considered via mail, e-mail and through a series of public meetings last December. The Board reviewed those comments and incorporated relevant suggestions into the plan for submittal to the Legislature.

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The Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA) provides drinking water for about one-third of Idaho's population that resides on the Eastern Snake Plain. Agriculture is the largest consumptive user of ESPA water with roughly 2.1 million irrigated acres on the ESPA (about 60% of Idaho's total). About one-half of the irrigation water applied is ground water and one half is surface water.

A finalized copy of the Eastern Snake Plan Aquifer (ESPA) Comprehensive Aquifer Management Plan (CAMP) will be available at the following web page:

<http://www.esaplan.idaho.gov/default.htm>

A document summarizing public comments on the plan and links to all written and oral public comments are also available at this web address.

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