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Idaho Ground Water Appropriators Mark Milestone Year with Conservation, Infrastructure Investments and New Leadership

POCATELLO, Idaho — November 12, 2025 — As Idaho marks the one-year anniversary of the 2024 Mitigation Agreement between surface water users and groundwater users in the Magic Valley and eastern Idaho this month, Idaho Ground Water Appropriators (IGWA) is reporting on a pivotal year of progress protecting Idaho's water resources and looking ahead to more innovation and collaboration.

In the first year of the landmark agreement designed to protect the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer and avoid curtailment of water rights, Idaho groundwater users conserved **376,000 acre-feet of water**, and most groundwater irrigators are operating at an extremely efficient **1.5 to 2 acre-feet per acre**. For 2025, **75,000 acre-feet of storage** has already been leased and assigned to the Surface Water Coalition (SWC). Continued support for the 2024 agreement is critical to keep farmland in production and avoid the massive water curtailment experienced in 2024.

“We appreciate the good-faith efforts from our friends in the Surface Water Coalition and the steady leadership from Governor Little and Lt. Governor Bedke. They helped create an environment where folks could sit down, work through the hard stuff, and come to an agreement that actually sticks,” said Stephanie Mickelsen, IGWA Board Chair. “As farmers, we know how important this aquifer is — it’s our lifeblood. IGWA’s districts are fully committed to doing our part, following through on the 2024 plan, and making sure Idaho agriculture stays strong for generations to come.”

As part of those efforts, IGWA launched a new website — idahogroundwater.org to improve education, transparency, and engagement. The website provides information about ongoing mitigation efforts, conservation, member districts, and resources to track water and learn more about Idaho’s water rights.



In addition, the IGWA Board has appointed Lara Herway as Executive Director following the retirement of Bob Turner. Herway, a fourth-generation Idahoan, founder of Sunnybrook Strategies and a member of the Risch Pisca team, brings extensive government affairs experience to the role. She previously served as an educator and has deep roots in eastern Idaho.

"I've had the privilege of stepping into this role at a time when Idaho's groundwater users have made remarkable progress. We've proven that conservation and efficiency are now part of how we do business," Herway said. "That's why continued investment by our leaders at the statehouse — like the **\$30 million** recently dedicated to aquifer sustainability — isn't just about avoiding curtailment; it's about keeping farmland in production and keeping Idaho's economy strong."

IGWA's growers and districts are adjusting practices, sharing data, and investing tens of millions of private dollars in mitigation projects, supplementing \$30 million in state funding for aquifer sustainability and water infrastructure. Highlights include:

Bingham Ground Water District:

- Advanced telemetry-based flow meter monitoring system (\$145,590 award, total cost \$1,079,620)
- Ethos-developed telemetry system deployment (\$250,000 award, total cost \$1,079,620)
- Soft conversions (4 completed, 7 approved)
- New 112-acre recharge basin

Bonneville-Jefferson Ground Water District:

- Flow meter installation (\$97,082 award, total cost \$372,054)
- New recharge basin construction
- Strategic dry-up programs
- Pipeline project for recharge and soft conversions
- Canal study for recharge and soft conversions
- Recharge wells

Magic Valley Ground Water District:

- \$30 million pipeline and conversion project (50% funded by the district)
- 1,000-acre conversion project

Jefferson-Clark Ground Water District:

- Montevieu canal lining
- \$2.5 million piping project covering 8 miles of ditches



- 2 new pumping plants, 6 miles of piping, and adding measurement devices on the Jefferson Irrigation canal system



American Falls-Aberdeen Area Ground Water District:

- Lake Channel conversion project covering 1,000 acres

Southwest Irrigation District:

- Historic injection well program

About Idaho Ground Water Appropriators

Idaho Ground Water Appropriators, Inc. (IGWA) is a nonprofit organization comprised of 10 groundwater districts and one irrigation district that work together to protect one of Idaho's most precious natural resources: the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer. Our members include farmers, businesses, and communities who rely on the aquifer and its tributaries every day to power Idaho's economy. Each member district elects its own leadership and works on local solutions, while collaborating through IGWA on aquifer-wide and state-wide initiatives. IGWA protects the rights of groundwater users by promoting smart policy, responsible stewardship, strategic water management, and sound science. For more information, visit www.idahogroundwater.org.

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