



AGRICULTURAL WATER ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

IDAHO WATER RESOURCE BOARD PROGRAM GROUND WATER TO SURFACE WATER CONVERSION PROJECTS TO SUPPORT THE ESPA CAMP

WATER RIGHT AND PROJECT ELIGIBILITY REVIEW

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) is a voluntary conservation initiative that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to implement water enhancement activities on agricultural land for the purposes of conserving surface and ground water and improving water quality. The program is administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

In 2009, an AWEP proposal submitted by the Idaho Water Resource Board (IWRB), on behalf of the State of Idaho, was approved to implement projects over five years that support the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA) Comprehensive Aquifer Management Plan (CAMP). The goal of the ESPA CAMP is to improve the condition of the aquifer through a combination of strategies including a reduction of ground water pumping. One of the programs funded under the IWRB's AWEP is Ground Water to Surface Water Conversion Projects (conversion projects). The purpose of conversion projects is to reduce ground water pumping within the ESPA by using surface water in lieu of ground water for irrigation whenever possible. Funding available through the AWEP is expected to be used to develop long-term conversion projects equally above and below American Falls.

IDWR/IWRB'S ROLE IN APPLICATION REVIEW AND RANKING PROCESS

1. **Project Review by IDWR/IWRB:** Projects will be reviewed by staff from the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) and the IWRB to determine if proposals are consistent with the goals of the ESPA CAMP (reduction of ground water pumping from the ESPA).
2. **Project Ranking:** Proposed projects must meet both NRCS EQIP requirements and the goals of the ESPA CAMP to be eligible for consideration. Eligible applications will be ranked based on the national objectives of the EQIP and AWEP, as well as criteria identified to most effectively implement the ESPA CAMP. Available funding will be allocated according to project ranking.
3. **Contractual Agreements and Producer Commitments:** Producers of selected projects will be required to make the following commitments:
 - a) Prior to entering into an agreement with the NRCS to receive AWEP funding, the producer will be required to provide a statement from the conveyance company expected to deliver surface water to the project indicating the company is capable and willing to cooperate in developing the project (see attached Statement of Intent form).

- b) Prior to project construction, producers will be required to develop a measurement plan in coordination with the surface water delivery company and the corresponding Water District Watermaster to measure and report annual water use information prior to project construction.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Proposed projects must meet both EQIP requirements and the goals of the ESPA CAMP to be eligible for funding through AWEP. **In order to expedite the review process, applicants are encouraged to coordinate with the IWRB staff prior to filing an AWEP application with the NRCS to determine whether the proposed project is eligible for consideration based on the criteria set forth through ESPA CAMP process.** Eligibility criterion includes the following:

1. Wells associated with the proposed conversion project must be located within the ESPA boundary.
2. The proposed conversion project must result in a benefit to the ESPA through the reduction of ground water pumping.
3. Lands to receive conversion surface water must have valid ground water rights.
4. Delivery of surface water through a conversion project may not injure other existing water rights or adversely impact existing shareholders on the corresponding canal system.
5. The conveyance company is willing to deliver water to the proposed conversion project and there is capacity in the system to provide water to the proposed site.
6. Applicants must agree to measure and report annual water use for the duration of the agreement with the IWRB in order to quantify the annual ground water savings.

IWRB staff will evaluate the proposed project based on the criteria set forth above, perform a review of associated water rights, and coordinate with the applicants and the corresponding water district to develop a water measurement plan to provide for measurement of annual water use.

SUBMITTAL OF INFORMATION FOR PROJECT EVALUATION BY IDWR/IWRB

Please supply the following information for project review:

- 1) A map showing irrigation system before and after project including the information described below (see Attachments A and B for examples).
 - a. Describe all of the lands serviced by the irrigation system.
 - b. Clearly identify all sources of irrigation water to the lands within the proposed project boundary (e.g. ground water, surface water, waste water, etc.).
 - c. Identify the existing irrigation system.
 - d. Identify the proposed irrigation system.
 - e. Clearly mark all well locations on the map.

- f. Clearly mark the location of all canal company headgates or surface water diversion points on the map.
 - g. Clearly mark all proposed diversion points or headgates where the water for the AWEP project will be diverted.
- 2) Submit a Statement of Intent form from the canal company or water delivery entity that will be used to deliver the surface water to the proposed project to document that the company is aware of the project and is willing to consider cooperating in the delivery and monitoring of surface water to the project (see attached form). A statement from the conveyance company is not required for project review by the IDWR/IWRB, but will be considered during project ranking. Notice from the conveyance company will be required prior to entering into a contract with the NRCS for AWEP funding.

All water right reviews are currently being completed by Stuart VanGreuningen at the Idaho Department of Water Resources. Please mail or email your project information and map with a request for a water right review to:

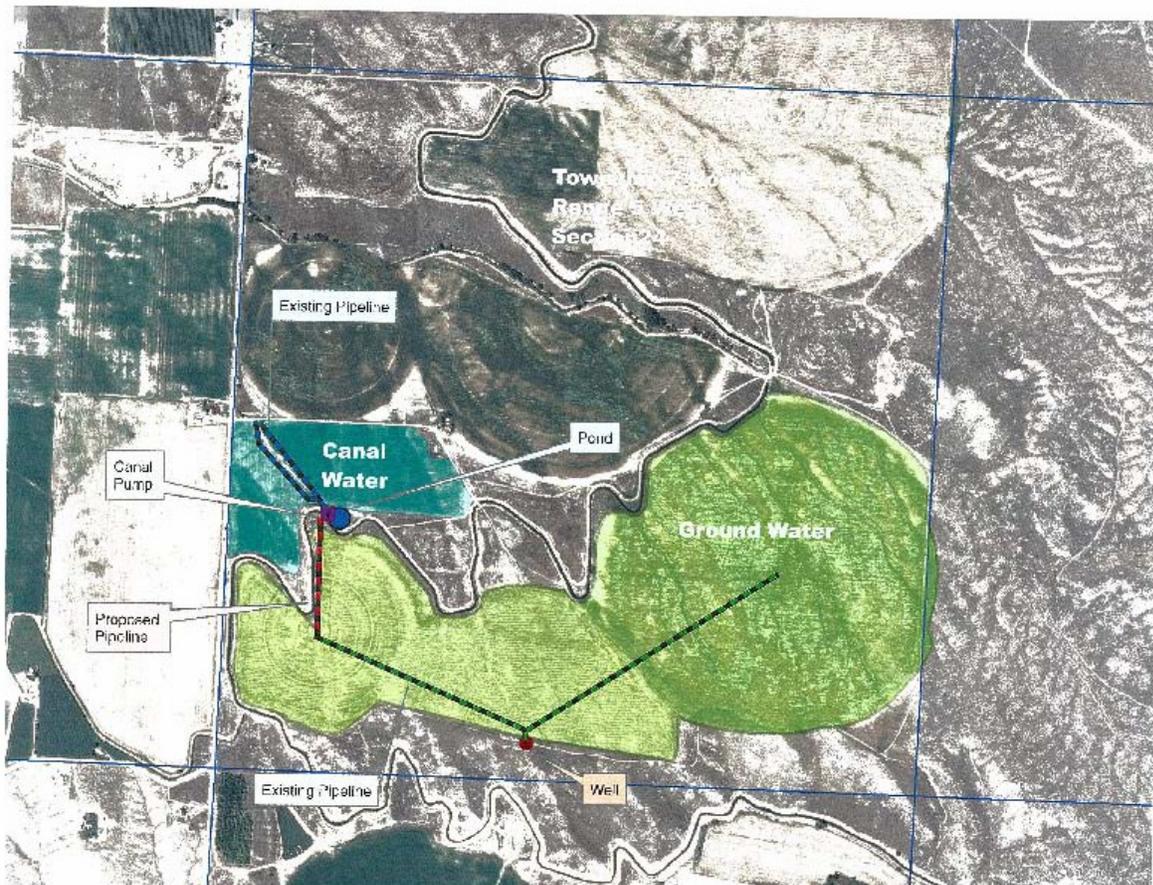
**Mail: Idaho Department of Water Resources,
ATTN Stuart VanGreuningen
PO Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720**

E-mail: stuart.vangreuningen@idwr.idaho.gov

ATTACHMENT A

EXAMPLE PROJECT MAP

This diagram shows a computer drawn map. The map shows the existing irrigation system and the changes proposed by the AWEPP proposal. In this project the applicant proposes to connect a surface water system to the ground water system. The two systems are shown and the land serviced by canal water and land serviced by ground water is clearly identified. The entire property serviced by the delivery system will be included in the AWEPP proposal (System Area), but only the lands irrigated under a valid ground water right will be counted as conversion project acres. Also note that the well and the location of the diversion from the canal are marked on the map. The legal description identifying the Township, Range, and Section must be included on the map. Everything must be labeled and the proposed changes to the system clearly identified. A brief explanation of proposed project would be helpful for reviewers, but is not required if the map is clear and concise.



ATTACHMENT B

EXAMPLE PROJECT MAP

This diagram shows a hand drawn map. The map shows the existing irrigation system and the changes proposed by the AWEPP proposal. In this project the applicant proposes to connect a surface water system to the ground water system. The two systems are shown and the land serviced by canal water and land serviced by ground water is clearly identified. The entire property serviced by the delivery system will be included in the AWEPP proposal (System Area), but only the lands irrigated under a valid ground water right will be counted as conversion project acres. Also note that the well and the location of the diversion from the canal are marked on the map. The legal description identifying the Township, Range, and Section must be included on the map. Everything must be labeled and the proposed changes to the system clearly identified. A brief explanation of proposed project would be helpful for reviewers, but is not required if the map is clear and concise. You can obtain aerial photography maps from the Farm Service Agency, County, Idaho Department of Water Resources office, or the internet. Any of these aerial photograph maps are acceptable.



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STATEMENT OF INTENT FROM SURFACE WATER DELIVERY ENTITY

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Idaho Water Resource Board (IWRB) are partnering to provide financial and technical assistance to owners and operators of agricultural and nonindustrial private forest lands through the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP). One of the programs funded by AWEP includes projects that convert ground water use to the use of surface water when it is available. The purpose of the conversion projects is to reduce ground water pumping to benefit the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA) in accordance with the ESPA Comprehensive Aquifer Management Plan (CAMP).

Prior to entering into an agreement with the NRCS to receive AWEP funding for conversion projects, the applicant is required to provide a statement from the entity expected to deliver and monitor the amount surface water being delivered to the proposed project indicating whether the company is willing to cooperate in developing the project.

Please note this statement does not commit the entity to deliver water or participate in the conversion project. This statement is intended to document that the entity has been informed of the proposed project and to identify whether there is potential capacity in the canal system to deliver surface water to the project.

STATEMENT OF INTENT FROM SURFACE WATER DELIVERY ENTITY

AWEP Applicant Name: _____

Name and contact information for canal company or water delivery entity expected to deliver water to the proposed conversion project:

Company Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone No. / E-mail address: _____

I, _____, represent _____ (Canal Company or Delivery Entity). We have been informed of the application to receive funding through the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program to construct a conversion project. I understand the following:

- The intent of the conversion project is to receive surface water through the above referenced canal system for use on lands currently irrigated with ground water.
- To the best of my knowledge, capacity in the canal system to deliver water to the described lands exists or can be developed with infrastructure improvements included in the proposal. The box checked below best describes expected capacity availability:
 - During all or most of the irrigation season
 - During part of the irrigation season
 - no capacity is expected to be available
- The above referenced entity is willing to consider cooperating in delivering surface water to the proposed conversion project, and monitoring the amount of water delivered.

Signature of Delivery Entity Representative: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name & Title: _____