Meeting Minutes
May 12, 2026

Hosted in-person at the Fremont County Annex Building in St. Anthony, ID and hybrid via Zoom

Attendance

- **31** in-person
- **22** via Zoom

Introductions and Community Building

Christina Morrisett, Henry's Fork Watershed Council co-facilitator on behalf of the Henry's Fork Foundation, welcomed everyone to the hybrid meeting. The group went through introductions and then called for a moment of silence before opening for community building.

Mark Chandler gave an update on the invasive species prevention effort that's been underway in Fremont County for about a year. Fremont County secured the first pot of state funding for maintenance and equipment (cleaning/washing machines) for invasive species control, with strong support from ISDA and thanks to legislation sponsored by Senator Burtenshaw (originally credited to Rep. Raymond). They are funded through 2027 but still need to hire 18 people to operate two stations. Mark hopes to coordinate with Montana and the State of Idaho to design an efficient, non redundant inspection routine. He also thanks the Upper Valley Fly Fishermen, who are helping with substrates and are very engaged, noting that the situation with invasive species is "horrible" and complacency has been a problem.

Water Supply Update (Upper Snake Basin)
Brian Stevens, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Brian shared the status of the Upper Snake River storage system and highlighted key reservoirs. The main storage reservoirs are Jackson, Palisades, American Falls, as well as Island Park, Henrys Lake, Ririe, Willow Creek. The current flow augmentation release is about 3,400 CFS and Brian expects it to finish next week on the current schedule. Total system storage (incl. Henrys Lake) is about 70% full (~2.8 MAF), roughly 90% of average, but ~742,000 acre-feet less than last year (~25% less storage). Heise produces about half of the runoff in the basin and drives flood risk management. Currently, there is no FRM (flood risk management) risk at Palisades. But Brian noted there is potential for FRM at Jackson Lake in a couple of weeks, especially if the region receives rain.

In terms of individual reservoirs and snowpack, Island Park is about 97% full (~4,000 acre-feet shy of full) and expected to fill late May–early June. The forecast for Jackson Lake is ~75% of normal. Basin-wide snowpack is ~53% of median (since 1982), with analog years 2001, 2016. If May–July precipitation is 100% of normal, then we can expect ~70% runoff; if precipitation is only 50–60%,

then we can expect ~50–60% runoff. The outlook is dry, so the system will likely rely heavily on existing snowpack rather than rain.

Brian talked about runoff, diversions, and their trajectory. Natural flow has recently increased; a mid-May peak is likely, with a possible second peak in June if upper-elevation snow above Jackson holds. System storage peaked at ~3.1 MAF, but diversions overtook natural flow in early May, so the system has been drafting since then. Many canals are delaying storage diversion to June–August as a conservation strategy. By fall, projected carryover is in the 200,000–400,000 acre-feet range, with a real risk of ~100,000 acre-feet or less if irrigation storage diversions are high, and there is limited additional runoff / rain.

The primary management priorities are to deliver water to spaceholders and irrigators, maintain water quality during drawdown, maintain power generation at Palisades by keeping water in the Snake River above Palisades as much as possible.

Brian noted an expectation of "quite low" reservoir levels system-wide by fall, with outcomes highly sensitive to irrigation demand and crop choices, and June precipitation and runoff behavior.

Q&A: USBR Water Supply Update (Upper Snake Basin)

- **Brian Murdock** asked Reclamation if they could delay diverting the last 20,000 acre-feet of the planned 90,000 acre feet powerhead release. His goal is to keep that 20,000 acre-feet in the Upper Snake while a separate effort is underway to secure replacement water from another part of the state to meet downstream obligations (Nez Perce agreement), thereby reducing drawdown impacts upstream.
    - **Brian Stevens** said that he has seen the request and Reclamation is looking at it closely.
    - **Brian Murdock** acknowledged that the 90,000 acre-feet powerhead release is required to meet Nez Perce agreement obligations, so the action is technically justified. However, he noted the optics are poor for the Upper Snake, and reiterated a request to delay the final 20,000 acre-feet while efforts continue to secure substitute water from elsewhere in Idaho, which would lessen local storage impacts.
    - **Brian Stevens** explained that the 90,000 acre-feet powerhead volume was an early estimate, made while the biological opinion and payout system were still being finalized, so additional releases might still be needed. If the proposed 20,000 acre-foot "cap" / replacement water from elsewhere in the state materializes, Reclamation could likely structure a swap that fits within their existing operational plan. Brian confirmed the request to hold off on the last 20,000 acre-feet is under active review, and Reclamation are watching it closely.
- **Brian Murdock** asked whether this year's flow augmentation/powerhead release is happening earlier than usual, noting that in past years it has typically occurred around late June to early July, and sought clarification on the timing difference.
    - **Brian Stevens** agreed the augmentation/powerhead release is earlier than usual, but says it aligns with current conditions. Reclamation waits to start until they're

confident no further meaningful storage will accrue. This year, storage has already peaked and is declining, so that criterion is met. Warm spring temperatures have led to high diversions and earlier emergence of juvenile/non-advanced fish downstream, so earlier water better matches biological needs. Reclamation's Technical Management Team (via Chris Runyan) has coordinated this timing with regional groups in Portland through a public, transparent process, and the early release is consistent with the overall augmentation framework, even though it is earlier than in typical years.

    - **Brian Murdock** confirmed that his question was answered, noting that the fish life stage is a key reason for the earlier release and acknowledged that "everything's early this year anyway," then closed by thanking Brian.

- **Glade Mason** asked for details on power generation at Palisades Dam, comparing it to Lake Powell's potential "dead pool" situation where power production becomes impossible. He wanted to know: how much power Palisades normally produces, whether its turbine setup differs from Lake Powell's, and if there is a specific low-storage threshold at which Palisades can no longer generate power.
    - **Brian Stevens** shared that Palisades has reserved power customers who receive ~50–60 MW under contract. The dam's total generation capacity is ~176 MW. With low reservoir levels expected this fall (due to low runoff and already low starting storage), Reclamation's goal is to maintain generation for reserved customers as long as possible; if power can't be produced, those customers would need to purchase power elsewhere. There is a risk of losing power generation at Palisades at very low reservoir elevations, potentially before "0% full", although the exact threshold is uncertain because the system hasn't operated at such low levels before. The 90,000 acre-feet powerhead release increases the chance of reduced power generation, since 0% full is at the top of the powerhead elevation, but Reclamation plans to mitigate impacts to reserved customers consistent with the first term sheet and is managing the broader system to minimize effects.
    - **Ryan Bliss** confirmed there is a reservoir elevation below which power generation at Palisades is no longer possible. The exact shutoff point depends on how water is being used and system demands at the time. Even after power generation must stop, the outlet works have lower intakes than the power plant, allowing Reclamation to continue releasing water from the reservoir. Ryan noted that low water conditions also create an opportunity to inspect infrastructure that is difficult to access at higher reservoir levels.
- **Mike Rasmusson** asked if they are delivering the full 427,000 acre-ft.
    - **Brian Stevens** confirmed that with the powerhead, Reclamation is able to get to 427,000 acre-ft this year for flow augmentation.

Water Supply Update (Upper Snake Basin)
Craig Chandler, Water District 1

Craig Chandler, Water Master for Water District 1 (Upper Snake River), provided a water-rights administration and supply overview.

In terms of hydrologic conditions, 2026 had a very unusual winter: very warm temperatures, decent precipitation, but low snowpack and quick runoff, especially at low elevations. As a result, we have a very poor water-supply year and a second consecutive drought-type year. Additionally, last year ended with very low carryover, high storage use, and low late-season natural flows.

In terms of canal operations / mitigation, most canals are not in "normal" operation. Many are starting the season at roughly 60% of normal deliveries and will adjust up/down as the season progresses. Canals are actively practicing reduced use/mitigation to stretch limited supplies.

The day of allocation is the last day any reservoir water right accrues. As of now, the last accrual was April 19, which would be the earliest day of allocation on record, but there is still high-elevation snow, unregulated flows at Heise are peaking, and a later, higher runoff pulse could push the day of allocation later. To move the day of allocation out, natural flow must exceed diversions, roughly needing ~20,000 CFS unregulated above Heise. Any additional reservoir fill is expected to be modest, so allocations are mostly knowable now.

In terms of reservoir status & priority details, Jackson Lake's 1906 & 1910 rights filled. Its 1913 space (held by Northside & Twin Falls Canals) is currently at ~91%. American Falls, Palisades winter water savings, Island Park winter water savings, and Lake Walcott have completely filled. Henrys Lake is at ~82%; 1917 right may come back into priority if natural flow exceeds diversions. Island Park & Grassy Lake are ~60% full and could gain some additional fill if 1935 right returns to priority. Palisades is ~48% full, but most is carryover. Some spaceholders carried over most of last year's water; others carried over none. Only 2–3% new accrual so far; average allocation ~50%, but highly uneven among spaceholders. Ririe Reservoir (1969 right) is very unlikely to receive new fill; stuck with ~27% carryover. This storage belongs to Mitigation Inc, leaving them in a very difficult position.

After April 19, priorities dropped sharply as flows receded with loss of low-elevation snow. They saw record-low priorities for the date, including splitting the river and dropping below 1900 above Blackfoot in April/May—Craig noted this as highly unusual. For a couple of weeks, priority got down to about an 1891 water right, forcing canals to heavily manage operations and rely on storage. Canals have already diverted ~300,000 acre-feet of storage this year—very high use for this early in the season. Recent snowmelt has improved priorities back to ~1903, but it's unclear how long this improvement will last, or whether it will be enough to turn reservoir rights back on in a meaningful way.

Relative to the outlook for natural flow, last year's post-snowmelt natural flow above Blackfoot was in about the 10th percentile of the past 30 years (very low baseflow). Craig does not expect this winter to have changed that dynamic much. Craig anticipates late-season natural flows this summer will again be low and similar to last year.

Q&A: WD1 Water Supply Update (Upper Snake Basin)

- **Aaron Dalling** added that due to priorities dropping lower than ever before, several local canals have already been severely constrained. Twin Groves Canal effectively shut off for six days. Chester Canal dropped from ~40 CFS to ~4 CFS (near shutoff). Fish & Game's Dewey Canal had to fully shut off. Aaron also noted that Fremont-Madison canals hold ~30% of Mitigation Inc

shares tied to Ririe Reservoir. Normally, Mitigation Inc water is used to mitigate to the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes under the 1994 Hall Agreement. Because Ririe/Mitigation Inc has very little water, Island Park, Fremont-Madison, and North Fork Reservoir Co. (Henrys Lake) will now have to supply water to Mitigation Inc to meet that obligation. Aaron also commented on early storage use. More specifically, ~8,000 acre-feet of Fremont-Madison storage has already been diverted, a volume they wouldn't typically see used until late June, underscoring how early and severe the shortages are.

- **Dan Powers** asked for clarification on why summer baseflows are so low, specifically whether this is primarily due to a depleted aquifer or if there are other drivers behind the reduced baseflow conditions.
    - **Craig Chandler** said it's not possible to pin low summer baseflows on a single cause. The aquifer is likely part of the problem, but so are low tributary flows and temperature/weather patterns, all interacting. Because there are multiple overlapping drivers, they can't attribute the low baseflows solely to aquifer decline, though the aquifer "certainly plays a part."

Introduction to USBR's Operations and Maintenance Division
Ryan Bliss, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Ryan Bliss clarified roles within Reclamation, particularly compared to Brian Stevens (previous speaker). Ryan noted that water operations decides how much water to release and when; operations & maintenance (O&M) ensures facilities and staff are capable of making those releases when requested. For regional context, Ryan shared that he works out of the Snake River Area Office (one of three in the CPN region), which covers northern ID, eastern OR, western ID, and parts of WY (including Jackson and Grassy facilities), with a large geographic footprint and many dams.

Ryan introduced the topic of aging infrastructure using a car analogy, describing his 1985 Pontiac Fiero (long family history, high mileage) to illustrate how equipment ages and accumulates issues over time—setting up the comparison to aging dam infrastructure. Ryan stated his philosophy to maximize asset life but repair/replace before failure, rather than waiting for something to break. To illustrate why proactive maintenance is essential, Ryan shared an example from California of consequence-of-failure maintenance, where a a radial spillway gate had a seized bearing that caused a buckled gate arm and uncontrolled release. Ryan described the late-1980s Safety of Dams project at Jackson Dam, where liquefaction risk in the dike (due to native sand/sediment fill from early 1900s construction) drove reconstruction with better material and compaction. That was the last time Upper Snake reclamation had a reservoir restriction for dam safety construction.

Ryan provided clarity on the ownership/operation models in the region. Reserved facilities (e.g., Palisades, American Falls, Ririe) are federally owned and operated/maintained by Reclamation staff; funding is based on cost allocation (e.g., Palisades: power, appropriations, spaceholders). O&M transferred facilities (e.g., Island Park where Rod [Dalling?] does maintenance, Aaron Dalling runs dam operations). Reclamation owns but local entity does O&M. In cases of title

transfer, Reclamation divests ownership. This is used separately from O&M transfer, so "transferred" can mean two different things.

Focusing in on Palisades, Ryan noted that it is at end of life for some components: the largest jet-flow gates in the U.S. were installed recently and will be commissioned in early June, illustrating ongoing capital renewal. Ryan explained that jet flow gates as high-head outlet works (200–300 ft of head at Palisades) are used when flows exceed powerplant capacity or when the powerplant is down. These jet flow gates replace older 96-inch hollow jet valves with new 90-inch gates that can handle high energy dissipation.

Ryan reiterated ongoing cost–benefit analysis: how much to keep investing in an old "Fiero" (aging infrastructure) versus replacing with a "newer car," framing policy/financial decisions around overhauls vs. replacement and priority categories (Cat 1 "do now," Cat 2–3 "plan and schedule").

Aaron Dalling *noted that Ryan Bliss makes reporting sound simple. But comprehensive reviews are hundreds of pages, whereas a normal annual report is only 30–35 pages long.* ***Ryan Bliss*** *added that engineering reports are long and technical, which can be hard for non-engineers to digest.*

Ryan noted that within the Snake River Area Office, there are many transferred and reserved facilities. In the Middle Snake, there are multiple transferred facilities and reserved facilities (not all named here). Some examples of reserved facilities in the Middle Snake include Anderson Ranch, Arrowrock, Black Canyon, Boise Diversion, Cascade, Deadwood. Anderson Ranch and Black Canyon serving as staffing hubs whose crews travel to other dams. All of these facilities have remote monitoring capabilities. In the Upper Snake transferred facilities include Island Park, Grassy, and Little Wood (near Carey). Reserved facilities are Minidoka, American Falls, Ryrie, Palisades, Jackson, each with on-site staff, with the office based in Heyburn. Most staff are based at Minidoka and Palisades; single-person coverage at Jackson, American Falls, and Ririe, with additional staff deployed as needed. Ryan emphasized resource sharing between sites to cover workload.

In terms of ownership and authority, facilities are federally owned (public assets); Reclamation is delegated authority to operate and maintain them. The Area Manager holds ultimate delegated authority for these facilities.

Pivoting to policies, standards, and tools, maintenance and operations follow Reclamation directives and standards, including FIST requirements (maintenance instructions) and safety requirements. Key asset-management tools include Maximo/KARMA: maintenance management system for work orders, asset inventory, history, and notes; DAMS: repository for instrumentation and monitoring data; other analytical tools (e.g., HyPerMOD) support decision-making on aging infrastructure.

Reclamation has a risk-based maintenance philosophy. In continuing the car analogy, Ryan shared how some items are run-to-failure (e.g., AC), while others are replaced before failure (e.g., tires). He used an oil-change analogy to show using condition-based data (oil sampling in hydraulic systems every ~5 years) rather than rigid intervals. The long operating history at these dams informs where to prioritize effort and money.

Ryan provided orientation to Reclamation's inspection program (FAC 01-07). The program includes annual site inspections by civil engineers for three consecutive years (4–6 hours on site: walk-

through, operate equipment, discuss issues). In Year 4, a Periodic Facility Review is conducted by by regional office engineers. The cycle then repeats: three more years of annuals, then a Comprehensive Review (Denver asset management staff, focus on potential failure modes and larger issues). For examinations of inaccessible features (as needed), Reclamation uses dive and rope teams for stilling basins, intake structures, and underwater elements. Comprehensive reviews are resource-intensive, requiring hundreds of staff hours.

A comprehensive review is budgeted at ~$80,000. For O&M-transferred facilities, Reclamation pays for these examinations and does not charge the district. For reserved facilities, costs are billed to stakeholders based on the existing cost allocation. Annual reviews produce relatively short reports; periodic reviews are longer; comprehensive reviews are the most detailed.

For inaccessible feature examinations, Underwater / hard-to-reach elements (e.g., stilling basins, intakes) are examined when water levels, staff, and crew time allow. Ryan noted that dive and rope teams are currently on pause while Reclamation reassesses staffing and training requirements.

In reference to CMP 10-05 – Substantial Changes, Ryan shared that this policy governs major configuration changes at both transferred and reserved facilities. For example, the Island Park Dam / Lower Valley proposal to replace rubber spillway bladders with concrete triggered CMP 10-05. Any such "non-OEM" change (analogous to putting different-sized tires on a car) must undergo engineering review, design participation, and construction oversight by Reclamation.

For FAC 02-01 – Facility Operations / Gate Testing, Ryan explained that work under this category requires annual full-stroke testing of each gate in the dry (typically late season, with bulkhead in place). At or near full pool, they also test by moving gates one foot up, one foot down to confirm reliable operation under load. Every dam must have a designated dam tender (with a backup); Rod [Dalling?] is the dam tender for Grassy and Island Park. Aaron Dalling serves as the back up.

Ryan Bliss asked **Aaron Dalling** what it takes to be a dam tender. Aaron noted that it requires classroom training every 4 years, as well as an initial training that took a couple of days on site and in the office (called on-site dam tenders training). With Ryan's prompting, Aaron added that dam tenders operate based off of the standard operating procedure (SOP). Ryan added that the SOP drives how we operate, and that SOPs are driven from years of experience and knowledge, and is updated when changes are made to the facility. Aaron's SOPs are both on-site and in the FMID office. The log book is on-site at the gatehouse. Ryan added that all changes are put in the log book to document operations and maintenance.

Proposed changes go through risk neutrality evaluations by technical review teams (multi-disciplinary, based in Denver) to assess how a change could affect structural risk. Each dam also has an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) copy on site and in the office. EAPs define event types and response actions and are coordinated with local first responders, counties, and others.

Operational Configuration Management (OCMP) tracks departures from original design. Any non–like-kind replacement of critical components (e.g., hydraulic pump for a gate) requires engineering review; minor items (e.g., a ventilation fan) do not. Components that affect gate operation timing and safety fit under this category.

In terms of security, Ryan emphasized physical facility security: ensuring authorized access only, to protect both public safety and the structures.

For survey and deformation monitoring, Ryan recognizes that every dam leaks and moves a little. A survey program monitors dam movement (survey points on mountains and structures) to track whether the dam is moving downstream/upstream or vertically, with a focus on changes over time.

For instrumentation and leakage monitoring, Reclamation uses the DAMS system to store and analyze instrumentation data. They monitor flows/leakage vs. reservoir level (e.g., more leakage at full pool, less when drawn down) and flag departures from historic patterns. Monthly data collection is reviewed by instrumentation engineers in Denver. Instrumentation at these dams includes drain flow measurements, among other sensor types.

At Grassy Lake/Island Park, **Aaron Dalling** noted they monitor drain flows, v-notch weirs, piezometers, observation wells, and concrete joint movement points (used extensively on the rebuilt Grassy Lake spillway).

Ryan noted that within the CPN region there are 5,000+ monitoring points, and across Reclamation 40,000+ instrumentation points, reflecting the priority on knowing structural behavior over time. Older dams have fewer built-in sensors than modern structures, analogous to a 1985 car vs. a 2026 car—newer builds incorporate more monitoring to support data-driven maintenance decisions.

Q&A: Introduction to USBR's Operations and Maintenance Division

- **Brian Murdock**, using the car analogy, asked about Jackson Lake Dam's future over the next 10–20 years. He noted there's a separate scoping/basin study underway, but he wants to know specifically what the Bureau of Reclamation itself plans to do to Jackson Lake Dam. Framing options in lay terms, Brian asked whether Reclamation is planning a major overhaul or replacement ("replace the motor, strip and sandblast the body") versus more incremental, minor fixes ("replace some lights on the rear end").
    - **Ryan Bliss** shared that Reclamation has completed a value planning study for Jackson Lake Dam and identified three main alternatives: 1) Build a new dam structure downstream of the existing one; 2) Build a new structure at the current location; 3) Rehabilitate the existing dam, stripping down to sound concrete and rebuilding. The next step is an ExM (major repair/replacement) study to evaluate these three alternatives in detail, and exit the study ready to move into design for the selected option. Regardless of which alternative is chosen, Ryan noted that some actions are certain. New outlet gates will be installed (existing gates are riveted steel, wood-lined, single wire rope, from ~1911–1919; characterized as difficult to operate and not sufficiently safe for the 2020s). Deteriorated/spalling concrete will be replaced down to structurally sound concrete. Core sampling shows questionable concrete quality and unknown depth to good concrete, which makes a full rehab of the existing structure higher-risk than a full replacement—one of the key issues the ExM study will address.
    - **Brian Murdock** asked about the timeline.

- **Ryan Bliss** noted that USBR has requested ~$5 million from spaceholders/customers starting about three years from now to fund the ExM (major repair/replacement) study for Jackson Lake Dam. The ExM study will likely include an environmental impact analysis (EIA/NEPA) and is intended to flow directly into design for the selected alternative. They estimate being ~8 years away from entering full design and "moving it forward." The budget lead commits to giving 3–5 years' advance notice before seeking large capital contributions from customers/spaceholders, as a matter of fairness and planning.
- **Brian Murdock** asked how the new basin study will interact with Reclamation's work on Jackson Lake Dam—specifically whether it will duplicate efforts or if it will advance/complement the ExM and planning work already underway.
- **Ryan Bliss** clarified that Reclamation is limited to Jackson Lake Dam's currently authorized purposes and storage elevation. Any actions to increase storage or expand benefits are outside his authority and would require new congressional authorization. Therefore, the Jackson Dam project he's discussing will not pursue additional storage unless Congress explicitly authorizes it.
- **Ryan Elkhorn** clarified that Jackson Lake ExM planning is governed by CMP 09-04, Reclamation's directive for major repair and replacement planning, which specifies what types of studies are required when making significant changes to an asset. The basin study now being proposed is separate from the Jackson Lake ExM planning, but the two efforts will inform each other. ExM work on Jackson can supply technical information to the basin study. The basin study can, in turn, recommend additional actions or alternatives for further evaluation beyond the ExM scope. Bottom line: they are distinct but complementary processes, designed to avoid duplication while sharing data and insights.
- **Brian Murdock** requested confirmation that some major action on Jackson is inevitable, independent of the separate proposal to raise the reservoir.
- **Ryan Bliss** confirmed that Jackson needs rehabilitation.

- **Glade Mason** noted his background as a concrete mixer driver and familiarity with modern concrete mix designs. He acknowledged that the original Jackson Lake Dam concrete was excellent for its era, but pointed out that if it is now degraded and porous, the better long-term solution is to replace it with modern concrete. His point: new, high-quality concrete would allow the dam to function as intended without constant "babysitting", reducing ongoing risk and operational worry associated with an aging structure.
  - **Ryan Bliss** noted that the goal is to act proactively on Jackson Lake Dam before regulators/directives force a reduction in authorized storage due to safety concerns.
- **Brian Murdock** asked Ryan for his prediction on which of the three Jackson Lake alternatives will ultimately be selected.
  - **Ryan Bliss** noted his personal expectation is that Jackson Lake Dam will likely see either a new structure downstream or a new structure in the current footprint, rather than a full rehab of the existing dam. He views rehabilitating the current structure as high-risk and

potentially very costly, because once you start demolition you may uncover significant hidden problems in the old, buried concrete.
    - **Ryan Elkhorn** joked that Reclamation is happy they don't just have to rely on Ryan Bliss' gut.
    - **Ryan Bliss** reinforced the risk and uncertainty of rehabilitating the existing Jackson Lake Dam by comparing it to remodeling a house: once you start opening things up, you don't know what hidden problems you'll find.
- **Josh Rydalch** asked for confirmation that work at Jackson Lake is still ten years out.
    - **Ryan Bliss** responded that Reclamation will likely have a design within a decade, but won't yet be breaking ground.
    - **Ryan Elkhorn** underscored that any Jackson Lake Dam solution will take a long time, reinforcing the long planning and design horizon. He reiterated that Jackson Dam work and the basin study will inform each other: basin study outcomes may shape future recommendations and potential additional benefits to evaluate. He noted that if circumstances change and there is interest in additional benefits (e.g., more storage), that would require further study and new congressional authorization, all of which is "playing together" with current planning.
    - **Ryan Bliss** added that the two will complement to a certain extent.
- **Jack McLaren** asked for clarification of "title transfer"—specifically, what it means legally and practically when a Reclamation structure's title is transferred to another entity. He distinguished this from O&M transfer and want to understand what full title transfer implies for control, ownership, and responsibilities.
    - **Ryan Bliss** defined title transfer as the federal government sells and transfers ownership (title) of the structure to another entity. In doing so, the government divests its ownership interest in that facility (unlike O&M transfer, where ownership stays federal).
    - **Jack McLaren** requested confirmation that title transfer means transfer of full control and responsibility.
    - **Ryan Bliss** responded that even after a title transfer, Reclamation may still have some involvement at the system level, especially regarding basin-wide storage and operations, referencing Brian Stevens and Craig Chandler's earlier presentations. However, Reclamation's day to day role is greatly reduced compared to reserved or O&M transferred facilities; primary responsibility shifts to the new owner.
    - Adding to the title transfer explanation, **Aaron Dalling** noted that the receiving entity would typically need to agree to operate the facility in a way that's similar to historic operations. The intent is to ensure operations remain consistent with the interests of all affected parties, even though ownership shifts away from Reclamation.
    - **Ryan Bliss** added that with title transfer, the new owner generally must continue operating the facility in a way that's consistent with its historical function and broader system interests. However, once title is transferred, Reclamation no longer performs the regular inspections and compliance oversight (e.g., checking SOP updates, running EAP exercises) that it does for reserved or O&M-transferred facilities.

    - **Ryan Elkhorn** emphasized that Reclamation operates the entire system as an integrated whole—whether in the Upper Snake, Boise, or Payette, operations are coordinated across basins. The goal is to keep water users as whole as possible, especially in dry years, by making system-wide decisions that balance the needs of water users, the state, and other interested parties.
- **Kathy Lynch**, anticipating low carryover, asks how nimble Reclamation can be with operations and maintenance. Specifically, they want to know whether Reclamation can take advantage of low reservoir levels to perform O&M at multiple facilities simultaneously (e.g., if four dams need work, can they all be addressed during this low-water window), and what that realistically looks like in practice.
    - **Ryan Bliss'** philosophy is "don't let a good crisis go to waste": low water years create opportunities to access features that are normally submerged or inaccessible. He shared an example from Palisades during a previous low water year: with trash rack grating exposed, they installed hatches and used a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) for underwater gate inspections; they hope to deploy the ROV again this low water year. In general, USBR looks specifically at "inaccessible features" that become dry or reachable to prioritize extra inspections, repairs, and maintenance, such as repairing a concrete spall on the spillway chute where there is currently no leakage. While they do try to be nimble, Ryan noted that tight staffing limits how creative they can be, so they focus on the highest value, hard to reach locations during low water periods.
- **Kathy Lynch** asked if the potential for dredging out sediment come into play when the reservoirs are low.
    - **Ryan Bliss** shared that sediment management is a known, unresolved challenge; Reclamation acknowledges they haven't yet figured out an effective, scalable approach. Ryan and colleagues are discussing development of a formal sediment management program so they can act when opportunities arise (e.g., low water, access points). They are exploring options to partner with local communities and rock quarries (e.g., upper Palisades quarries used for gravel production) to remove material and reduce costs, but emphasize that some action will be necessary in the long term.
    - **Aaron Dalling** highlighted the sheer scale of sediment removal, estimating on the order of tens of truckloads (≈80 or more) per acre-foot of storage. This illustrates that mechanically clearing sediment to meaningfully increase storage is extremely difficult and resource-intensive, reinforcing why sediment management is such a challenging problem.
    - **Jeff Raybould**, in reference to sediment events at Island Park Dam in the 1990s, joked that "We do know how not to do it. We've had some experience with that. Yeah, just empty the reservoir and let's suddenly go downstream."
    - **Ryan Bliss** compared a large spoil pile near Ririe's recharge pond to the amount of sediment that enters Palisades in a single year, underscoring the massive volume involved. When translated into truckloads, the required removal becomes "overwhelming and daunting," emphasizing that large-scale sediment excavation is

extremely challenging. Ryan notes that acting sooner is always better than later ("this year's better than next year"), and stresses that sediment is a problem that this generation—or the next—will have to address, inviting ideas on how to tackle it.

- **Jeff Raybould** told Ryan Bliss that he found an 87 Fierro on an auto auction site, as an aside.
- **Aaron Dalling** noted appreciation for Ryan Bliss and the O&M staff that attended today's meeting. He appreciates their great relationship and patience.

Island Park and Grassy Lake Operations and Maintenance
Aaron Dalling, Fremont-Madison Irrigation District

Aaron Dalling shared about operations and maintenance at two local facilities: Island Park Dam and Grassy Lake, starting with an orientation to emergency action plans (EAPs). EAPs are **exercised annually** using practice drills that involve **local sheriffs and other emergency responders**, to ensure everyone is prepared if an incident occurs.

Fremont-Madison helps with O&M at Island Park and Grassy Lake. Historically, Grassy used an old hydrostatic instrument (circa 1939) to monitor internal water levels at 60–70 points, but it failed last year and is no longer in use. Current monitoring relies on ~15 wells where staff measure depth to water within the dam and ~8 seepage measurement sites, tracked with weirs. Seepage paths can shift over time, as shown by seepage moving outside the original constructed channel in about 2024.

Ryan Bliss noted that soils play into seepage. He pointed out that the orange color in the photo is algae that seems to clog things up.

Aaron continued that Grassy Lake has a significant iron algae problem, which is natural to the area. When releases begin, the iron algae can cause a large orange flush into Fall River, leading to angry/surprised anglers who have seen the river turn reddish and felt their fishing was ruined. The dam also has toe drains and toe wells along each dam toe that collect and convey seepage to the stream just below the spillway, forming part of the seepage management system.

Aaron described looking down into a manhole for the toe drain, where a steady seepage stream can be seen moving through. Toe drains were last cleaned around 2018, and they plan to clean them again this year because iron algae tends to clog the system. Although jokingly framed as "easy to get to," access actually involves steep, constrained stairs, underscoring that this maintenance is nontrivial but necessary.

Ryan Bliss added that it is a confined space. They are monitoring air and rescue.

Aaron explained that Grassy Lake and Island Park Dams were built in 1938–1939 (~90 years old). Recent work at Grassy Lake gatehouse includes repairing spalling/cracking concrete on the ventilation system and patching areas where decorative rock had fallen out, leaving gaps where water could flow. Grassy Lake has a 39-inch penstock. Recent and planned work includes

considering ultrasound inspection of metal hydraulic lines/hoses to evaluate condition. In 2018, contractors sandblasted and recoated the penstock interior, spending ~3 weeks working inside the 39-inch pipe. The original 80–90-year-old gate at the end of the penstock still seals well, with only minor leaks that were patched during that project. The 2018 recoating required significant ventilation equipment and logistics; crews barely got equipment out before winter access closed in October (snow, long seasonal closure at Grassy).

Aaron shared a photo of the Cascade Creek log crib dam and diversion. This structure (also circa 1939) routes supplemental flows into Grassy Lake; it is still structurally sound. Associated diversion works can move on the order of tens of cfs (often ~50–70 cfs) into Grassy—significant for a small reservoir. The area hosts a scout camp, with frequent youth use of the structure as a crossing and recreational point.

Aaron added that, even in winter, crews must visit monthly to inspect the dam at Grassy Lake and complete a controlled checklist (monitoring locations are sensitive). Access is difficult: deep snow, challenging travel, and finding buried piezometers/monitoring points can be tricky. In heavy-snow years, the gatehouse door can be fully buried, requiring staff to walk off a snowdrift, grab a ladder, and descend to a suspended platform over a pond of water to access the door and logbook—raising safety concerns. Recent conditions have been unusually dry. This last winter, snow only reached about halfway up the door, and Grassy Lake's SNOTEL site was at record-low levels all winter, described as "really sad/pathetic." Spring access (May–June) is especially challenging. Roads alternate between shaded, lingering snow sections and sunny, deep-mud sections, making it difficult for both snowmobiles (risk of damage) and vehicles (steep, tilted, slippery segments). Aaron shared that Ryan Bliss was taken up once specifically to see how miserable and hazardous access conditions can be during this period. The best mode of transportation is a side-by-side with tracks. In the winter, reaching the dam can require a ~22-mile snowmobile trip, often limited to ~20 mph.

At Island Park Dam, the berm on the south and east sides (just over a mile long) is all considered part of the dam, with monitoring locations distributed around it. About 15 wells are used to measure depth to water within the dam. There are three seepage monitoring sites, each with a weir to measure flow. The gatehouse is below the spillway, housing hydraulic levers used to operate the dam. The outlet configuration includes a guard gate (upstream isolation for working on downstream equipment) and a control gate. It is very difficult to work on the guard gates because you cannot fully relieve water pressure on them. Significant concrete rehabilitation was done in the early 2000s in the area between the guard and control gates.

Jeff Raybould added that when minimal releases are made through the Island Park outlet, cavitation occurs in the outlet structure. This cavitation erodes the concrete, which required a rehabilitation project to repair and protect the outlet. They have since identified materials/techniques that perform well, and the repaired concrete is holding up effectively so far.

There was some conversation between Jeff and Aaron about the length of the structure, ranging from 600 ft to a quarter mile.

In closing, Aaron shared that, at Island Park, crews routinely patch areas of concrete loss in the outlet tunnel almost every year to maintain structural integrity. One seepage monitoring site is located a few hundred feet below the dam, where seepage water emerges and passes through a weir for measurement—something visitors can see in the field.

Q&A: Island Park and Grassy Lake Operations and Maintenance
None.

Intro to IWRRI
Grace Peven, Idaho Water Resources Research Institute (IWRRI)

Grace Peven introduced herself as a new research scientist at IWRI (Idaho Water Resources Research Institute), one of three new hires funded by new/ongoing legislative annual appropriations. In today's talk, Grace will introduce who IWRI is and how they prioritize water research across Idaho, as well as provide an overview of current projects, with emphasis on eastern Idaho and ESPA work.

IWRRI is one of 54 state water research institutes created under a 1964 Act of Congress. Their mission is to address state water research needs to support water resource issues across Idaho. IWRRI functions as a hub connecting stakeholders, researchers, and students to produce actionable, on the ground water research. IWRRI is an independent, unbiased research entity.

Legislative funding allowed **significant expansion** of the research program and staff (photo, left to right):

- **Meg Wolf** – Assistant Director (Coeur d'Alene)
- **Kendra Kaiser** – Director (Boise)
- **Grace PEven** – Research Scientist (Boise)
- **Phil Marguerite** – Hydrogeologist & groundwater modeler (Boise)
- **Steve Powers** – Water quality scientist (Boise)

IWRRI uses a research prioritization process. This process is led by a Research Advisory Committee (RAC) with 32 members from agencies, municipalities, industry, conservation groups, and academic institutions. Anyone can submit research ideas; RAC reviews and scores them using relevance to state water research priorities, gap-filling potential, community impact, feasibility, and geographic representation across Idaho. The RAC selects top priorities; an executive board then allocates funding to universities and internal IWRRI projects.

In year one, >90 project ideas were submitted. Most ideas fell under water scarcity and availability, categorized using USGS water priority categories (scarcity, tech/innovation, water quality). In terms of geographic scope, over half of proposed projects were statewide in relevance. The executive board funded 16 priority projects with a rough balance between statewide vs. regional projects and between university faculty-led vs. internal IWRRI staff-led. There is a strong skew toward water scarcity due to demand.

IWRRI is also creating an Idaho Water Data Hub to make water data more accessible and usable to the public and researchers. The project initially focuses on groundwater. They are ingesting groundwater data from IDWR into a unified platform and digitizing domestic well logs statewide, including lithologic data from drilling reports, to support finer scale groundwater flow modeling. Grace shared an screenshot of the a draft dashboard of IDWR monitoring wells showing groundwater trends, where blue = stable water levels, red = decreasing, green = increasing. The dashboard provides a quick visual assessment of where and how groundwater levels are changing across the state.

Grace provided orientation to a Snowpack & SWE Visualization Project (led by Boise State – Otto Lang). Otto is developing visualization tools for most probable future snowpack and SWE through the season using weather models and forecasts. Otto aims to integrate existing tools across Idaho into a single platform with improved visualizations. Grace shared an example from Banner Summit SNOTEL. Forecasts showed it was very unlikely to reach median SWE, which proved accurate later in the season.

A multi-university project is working to identify spatial gaps in Idaho's weather and climate monitoring stations. There is currently noted bias in the system, where there are many SNOTEL sites at higher elevations, leaving low–mid elevation conditions under-monitored. The project goal is to inform strategic additions/upgrades to the monitoring network.

Another Boise State snow project is working to evaluate a new LIDAR dataset to track snow depth and snow water storage over time. This project is intended to improve predictions of downstream flow.

IWRRI also has a Water Quality Project Portfolio (5 projects).

- Harmful algal blooms (HABs): Using Sentinel-2 satellite imagery to detect/monitor HABs.
- Managed aquifer recharge (MAR): Assessing water quality implications of recharge via injection wells and recycled water.
- Sensitive aquifer recharge mapping tool: Evaluating an existing northern Idaho tool (used by city/county planners) that identifies sensitive recharge areas from a water quality standpoint.
- Statewide water quality data review: Faculty-led project to evaluate all Idaho water quality monitoring data, identify gaps and opportunities to improve monitoring.
- Groundwater tracers (U of I): Using traditional and non-traditional tracers to map recharge zones and flow paths.

Grace also shared about a project she's working on with Meg Wolf and the speaker on adaptive reservoir management at Lake Pend Oreille. For background, Albeni Falls Dam controls the lake; management focuses on flood risk upstream, which is atypical (Sandpoint is upstream of the dam). There is strong community interest in raising lake levels earlier than the current rule curve for recreation and economic benefits. So far, Grace and Meg have analyzed historical flood data and inflows to quantify flood risk under different lake level scenarios and considered multiple

beneficial uses: fisheries, recreation, power generation, flood control. This approach may be expanded to other Idaho reservoirs if feasible.

Zooming in more locally, Grace shared the ESPA Research Priorities (set by the RAC + Executive Board). These priorities are to evaluate aquifer recovery strategies to support reach gains in the Blackfoot–Minidoka reach, quantify headwater contributions entering the ESPA and trends over time, identify gaps & reduce uncertainty in ESPA water budgets to inform long-term management, and leverage IWRRI expertise for near-term planning and rapid decision support.

For the Blackfoot–Minidoka Reach Gains Study, the core question is: which management actions drive reach gains in the Blackfoot–Minidoka reach? To answer this question, IWRRI's approach is to calculate reach gains over time and assess year-to-year variability, explore correlations with tributary inflows, and develop process-based, higher-resolution models to identify key drivers (management actions vs. hydrologic supply). In the initial analysis, they compared Portneuf January baseflow (red line) with July reach gains below Blackfoot (blue). Big Portneuf water years appear associated with higher reach gains ~1 year later, but statistical model fit was poor, so Portneuf alone is not a reliable predictor. The current conclusion is that tributary inflow matters, but is not sufficient alone to explain variability.

IWRRI is also considering development and calibration of a new ESPA Hydrogeologic Model as a research tool, not for administrative/regulatory use. IWRRI is currently in early-stage conversations with water user representatives on where to refine the model and how to better predict reach gains and simulate drivers (management actions, tributary inflows). The key tension is how to use state-of-the-art tools without creating competing models or legal exposure. They are developing a work plan collaboratively with water users to ensure practical value and broad buy in.

In another project, IWRRI's Phil Marguerite is using a USGS soil water balance model for application to all tributaries to the ESPA to estimate recharge and inflow. The model output will include irrigated and non-irrigated recharge, runoff, and evapotranspiration with uncertainty ranges, at multiple time steps. IWRRI plans to have the model framework running by this summer; with calibration and refinement to follow. Model output will feed into the Blackfoot–Minidoka reach gain analysis to link recharge and tributary inflow with reach behavior.

IWRRI is also working on near-term planning & methodology order support. In late January, IWRRI received a request from the Governor's Office for an early preview of potential surface water shortfalls for the coming summer, given very low snowpack. They were assigned to tun the Methodology Order normally done by IDWR, a court ordered process estimating potential groundwater curtailment based on streamflow forecasts, storage carryover, and groundwater pumping estimates. IWRRI completed it about a month earlier than usual (with results ready by early March). IWRRI also enhanced the process by automating the methodology so it can be re run annually with updated inputs ("press a button" workflow). IWRRI also compared multiple forecasts instead of relying on the single joint forecast, using the joint forecast at Heise, NRCS forecast range, and Northwest River Forecast Center forecast. They generated a matrix of shortfall estimates (1000

acre feet) under various storage carryover scenarios. Results showed shortfalls on the higher end of the probable range.

For eastern Idaho, the overall ESPA work plan includes continue refining the Blackfoot–Minidoka reach gains work plan with technical advisors and water users, advance the soil water balance model to improve upper Snake/ESPA water budget components, and remain ready to rerun the Methodology Order analysis next year if requested (automation in place).

IWRRI just completed the second year of the RAC process. They reviewed new research proposals and reevaluated last year's priorities for alignment with current conditions. There will be an Executive Board meeting in the coming days to review RAC recommendations and decide on allocation of state research funds for the next year.

Grace provided a quick summary of IWRRI's education and outreach programs. The Confluence Project is a year-long youth science curriculum focused on Idaho water resources. It includes field trips (e.g., digging snow pits) and hands-on watershed learning. The project has been running for ~14 years in northern Idaho; first year in the Treasure Valley this year. The project culminates in the Youth Water Summit, that was recently held in the Treasure Valley where ~170 students from 5 high schools presented water research projects. The is also the Storm Water Erosion Education Program (SEEP) that is currently active in the Panhandle, with plans to expand statewide. SEEP provides training for contractors on BMPs for construction to reduce erosion and protect rivers and streams.

Grace closed the presentation with high-level institutional achievements over the past year. IWRRI developed a formal research prioritization process using a 32-member RAC, allocated >$500,000 in state funding to faculty across all Idaho public universities, and hired new research staff to build internal capacity. IWRRI launched and advanced multiple applied research projects while engaging stakeholders statewide and focusing on the most critical water research needs for Idaho (e.g., ESPA, water scarcity, data gaps).

Q&A: Intro to IWRRI

- **Rep. Jerald Raymond** asked about the makeup of IWRRI's executive board that sets IWRRI priorities.
    - **Grace Peven** didn't know the exact composition of the IWRRI executive board offhand, but noted that the board includes representatives from water user groups and Idaho Power, with roughly 8–10 members total. Grace directed the audience to IWRRI's website for the full, accurate list of board members.
    - **Rep. Jerald Raymond** added that the upshot is that the board is not a bunch of bureaucrats, but industry folks engaged in the water statewide.
- **Brian Murdock** noted there was a funding issue this year and expresses gratitude to Representative Raymond and others for getting IWRI funding approved. He explained that water users wanted IWRRI as an independent source—neither IDWR nor agricultural stakeholders—to

provide unbiased, technical analysis on complex water issues. Brian expressed dissatisfaction with the current groundwater model, describing it as outdated and not using the latest technology. Brian asked if developing a new, more modern groundwater model is part of IWRI's intended role/mandate, or if that's just their personal hope.

  - Grace **Peven** confirmed that developing an updated, state of the art groundwater model is indeed a goal. She clarified that IWRRI's primary role is to answer research questions; how the model is ultimately used (e.g., in administration or litigation) is outside their control. IWRRI aims to make the model accessible, modern, and technically robust. Grace noted that IWRRI's hydrogeologist/groundwater modeler is actively working on this, while IWRRI carefully navigates how the work fits within broader institutional and legal contexts.

- **Brian Murdock** noted IWRRI is already looking at managed aquifer recharge/injection wells and filtration, and joked about avoiding the term "injection." He raised cloud seeding as an additional issue they expected IWRI to address. He explains there is significant public concern in the Boise/Treasure Valley about cloud seeding. Brian suggested that an independent IWRRI study could help clarify the real issues and calm concerns, and ask directly whether IWRRI is currently working on cloud seeding.
  - **Grace Peven** noted that cloud seeding hasn't been identified as a research priority so far, but that it could be elevated next year.
  - **Brian Murdock** added that he is sure the Idaho Legislature would love to be able to tell people to call IWRRI.
  - **Grace Peven** affirmed that IWRRI crowdsources research ideas, rather than picking them internally. Priorities are driven by what stakeholders say will be most useful. Grace added that **Rob Van Kirk** serves on the RAC and asked him if cloud seeding came up in RAC discussions.
  - **Rob Van Kirk** added that cloud seeding was on the initial list of ~90 research ideas but was ranked low priority by the RAC. Higher priority went to issues with more immediate impact on water users and water rights, such as: Blackfoot–Minidoka reach gains, ESPA water budget work, and key water quality issues in North Idaho. With limited funding, the RAC focused on problems that must be solved now. Rob noted cloud seeding is viewed more as an education/outreach issue than a core science gap, though he acknowledged the legislature would likely welcome an independent review.
- **Kathy Lynch** asked for more detail on the reservoir management work at Lake Pend Oreille. Specifically, Kathy asked what expansion to other reservoirs would look like and whether IWRRI had identified additional reservoirs that might be good candidates for similar adaptive management approaches.
  - **Grace Peven** shared that IWRRI is in active conversations with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who are doing similar work under "forecast-informed reservoir operations" (FIRO)—essentially another form of adaptive reservoir management. FIRO focuses on using forecast skill to decide how much water to release or store, often with the goal of maximizing storage while managing flood risk and other uses. IWRRI is assessing who is

already working on these issues and how IWRRI can add value rather than duplicate efforts. They have not yet identified other specific reservoirs in Idaho as case studies. Current efforts are concentrated on Lake Pend Oreille because there is strong local interest in raising lake levels earlier for economic and recreational benefits.

- **Glade Mason** asked about the groundwater well dashboard and if it was showing all well sites.
    - **Grace Peven** clarified that mapped wells shown are only Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) monitoring wells, not all wells in the state. Many wells do not have continuous water-level monitoring, so they are not included. To assess trends over time (increasing, decreasing, stable), IWRRI requires a minimum amount of time-series data per well to fit a statistically meaningful trend line. Therefore, the trend map reflects only those monitored wells with sufficient data, not the full population of wells.
    - **Glade Mason** that, in eastern Idaho, the map shows a mix of stable and decreasing groundwater levels. He asked whether IWRRI sees any correlation or explanation for this pattern—what might be driving the difference between nearby wells showing different trends.
    - **Grace Peven** emphasized that the groundwater trend results are preliminary and not yet public. IWRRI is still deciding how much data is required per well to confidently fit a trend (increasing/decreasing/stable). She offered that a detailed explanation of local differences would be better answered by IWRRI's hydrogeologist, but her tentative hypothesis / speculative guess is that small scale hydrogeologic variability (aquifer conditions) may explain why nearby wells show different groundwater trends.
- **Keith Esplin** added that he appreciated learning about IWRRI research and looks forward to seeing the results.

Community Building and Wrap Up

- **Rob Van Kirk** asked about the meeting schedule over the next few months.
    - **Christina Morrisett** shared that there will not be a meeting in June or July. The Watershed Council will reconvene in August for a field tour, currently in planning stages.
- **Rep. Jerald Raymond** reflected that the overall water outlook presented was "grim." He suggested that only a major shift in weather ("Mother Nature") is likely to change the situation. He contrasted people's gratitude for "beautiful weather" with the actual need for a multi-day soaking rain. Speaking from a faith-based perspective, he urged people to pray more specifically for needed precipitation, believing that is what could ultimately change the picture.
- **Glade Mason** noted that the recent thunderstorms produced very little rain, highlighting ongoing dry conditions ("no building washer in a long time"). He emphasized that water is essential for all sectors—business, commercial, and residential. He shared a story of past conflict over water (a gunfight at a headgate) as a warning of how tense things can become. He urges everyone to stay level-headed, respect existing rules, regulations, and water rights, and accept that while decisions may be unpopular, they exist for a reason and must be followed to avoid conflict.

- **Brandon Hoffner** thanked USBR O&M staff for attending today's meeting and sharing what they do.
- **Aaron Dalling** noted that while Brian Stevens is often the public face talking about water issues in the media, it's easy to overlook Reclamation's O&M staff, who work behind the scenes to keep infrastructure operating.
- **Aaron Dalling** announced that the Idaho Water Users Association and Eastern Idaho Water Rights Coalition will hold their legislative tour in this watershed this year. It is tentatively scheduled for September 1. The tour will start in Rexburg, then move downstream through the watershed to tour local water infrastructure.
- **Christina Morrisett** reminded the group that in February, she presented on the Watershed Integrity Review and Evaluation (WIRE) process, a project review and endorsement system created at the start of the Henry's Fork Watershed Council. WIRE allows groups and entities to bring project proposals to the Council for a working-group style review, with the goal of obtaining a Watershed Council endorsement that can strengthen grant applications and broader watershed support. The process has not been used in ~10 years, so the Council discussed whether it still has value and there was interest in reviving it. **Christina Morrisett** and **Aaron Dalling** committed that by fall: the WIRE paperwork will be updated, new forms will be available online, and the Council will be ready to accept WIRE applications. They anticipate at least one Watershed Council meeting in the fall will be dedicated to running a WIRE process, and an email notice will go out once details and application procedures are finalized.
- **Aaron Dalling** adjourned the meeting.