

FINAL REPORT

Natural Resource Interim Committee HCR 012 (2019-2020)

Members of the Committee:

Senator Steve Bair, Co-chair
Senator Jim Patrick
Senator Lee Heider
Senator Bert Brackett
Senator Michelle Stennett

Representative Marc Gibbs, Co-chair
Speaker of the House Scott Bedke
Representative Mike Moyle
Representative Terry Gestrin
Representative Ilana Rubel

Ad Hoc Members of the Committee:

Senator Maryanne Jordan

Representative Paul Shepherd
Representative Britt Raybould

Staff: Katharine Gerrity, Rob Sepich, Jennifer Kish

NATURAL RESOURCES INTERIM COMMITTEE

2021

FINAL REPORT

Charge

The Natural Resources Interim Committee was a two-year committee formed in 2019 pursuant to the authority of HCR 012. The resolution authorized the committee to undertake and complete a study of various natural resource issues of importance to the state of Idaho. The committee was directed to make a Progress Report to the First Regular Session of the Sixty-fifth Idaho Legislature and a Final Report to the Second Regular Session of the Sixty-fifth Idaho Legislature.

Meetings

The Committee met in Boise on October 15, 2020.

Scope of Study and Recommendations

A copy of the 2019 Progress Report is attached.

Meeting of October 15, 2020:

The Idaho Water Resource Board and the Idaho Department of Water Resources provided an update on a number of topics including Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer management, the Anderson Ranch enlargement project, the Priest Lake water management project, Lemhi River water use settlement discussions, the Clark Fork-Pend Oreille River Basin Adjudication, and the Bear River Basin Adjudication.

Chairman Roger Chase, Chairman, Idaho Water Resource Board, addressed results of recharge efforts and noted that new areas needed to be scouted, especially with the growing population of the state.

Mr. Brian Patton, Chief of Planning Division, Idaho Department of Water Resources, continued with details related to aquifer management. There was a discussion of the use of sentinel wells to measure the aquifer as well as measuring the “wet water” within the river rather than using wells. Mr. Patton also addressed cloud seeding.

Mr. Clive Strong and Mr. Norm Semanko gave their joint presentation on the Lemhi River Water Use Settlement.

Mr. Shelley Keen, Water Allocation Bureau Chief for the Idaho Department of Water Resources, began his presentation covering the Clark Fork-Pend Oreille River Basin Adjudication, the Bear River Basin Adjudication, and the water rights program.

Gary Spackman, Director for the Idaho Department of Water Resources, reported on rulemaking issues for the department. He noted that the department is participating in the governor's Red Tape Reduction Act to reduce and eliminate out-of-date rules over the next five years.

Idaho Power provided the committee with a presentation related to cloud seeding.

Director Ed Schriever, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and others from the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, provided updates on wolf management, crop depredation prevention and compensation, mountain lion conflict management, and chronic wasting disease.

Jess Byrne, newly appointed Director for the Department of Environmental Quality, introduced himself to the committee via video conference. Mr. Byrne previously served

as the Deputy Director of the department.

Mr. Dustin Miller, Director of the Idaho Department of Lands, participated via video conference and provided updates on the past fire season, the Good Neighbor Authority, the Shared Stewardship Program, and items to be addressed within the rulemaking process. Mr. Craig Foss, Idaho State Forester and Administrator of Forestry & Fire for IDL, also joined via video conference.

The Committee has no specific recommendations at this time.

Speakers - The following is a list of people, groups or agencies that testified or provided comments during the committee meeting:

Chairman Roger Chase, Chairman, Idaho Water Resource Board

Director Gary Spackman, Idaho Department of Water Resources

Mr. Brian Patton, Chief of Planning Division, Idaho Department of Water Resources

Mr. Shelley Keen, Water Allocation Bureau Chief, Idaho Department of Water Resources

Mr. Paul Arrington, Executive Director and General Counsel, Idaho Water Users Association

Mr. Clive Strong

Mr. Norm Semanko

Ms. Kresta Davis, Idaho Power Water Resources and Policy Senior Manager

Mr. Ralph Myers, Idaho Power Environmental Manager

Director Ed Schriever, Idaho Fish and Game

Mr. Paul Kline, Deputy Director, Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Mr. Craig White, Magic Valley Regional Supervisor, Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Mr. Scott Reinecker, Deputy Director, Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Director Jess Byrne, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

Director Dustin Miller, Idaho Department of Lands

Mr. Craig Foss, State Forester, Administrator Forestry and Fire, Idaho Department of Lands

PROGRESS REPORT

Natural Resource Interim Committee **HCR 012 (2019-2020)**

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Senator Lee Heider
Senator Bert Brackett
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NATURAL RESOURCES INTERIM COMMITTEE

2020

PROGRESS REPORT

Charge

The Natural Resources Interim Committee is a two-year committee formed in 2019 pursuant to the authority of HCR 012. The resolution authorized the Committee to undertake and complete a study of various natural resource issues of importance to the state of Idaho. The Committee was directed to make a progress report to the Second Regular Session of the Sixty-fifth Idaho Legislature.

Meetings

The committee met in Twin Falls on September 12, 2019.

Scope of Study and Recommendations

The Natural Resources Interim Committee met in Twin Falls on September 12, 2019. The committee received testimony from a number of state agencies and entities.

Mr. Scott Pugrud, Administrator, Office of Species Conservation briefed the members as to coordinated efforts with other agencies to implement the 2015 plan regarding sage grouse status and the adoption of a mitigation manual.

Mr. Pugrud also addressed the Governor's Salmon Workgroup. The Office of Species Conservation has been tasked with forming a collaborative work group from diverse stakeholders to develop policy recommendations to assist with salmon and steelhead recovery efforts.

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game, through Director Ed Schriever and additional personnel, addressed the committee regarding the department's big game depredation program, elk populations, and chronic wasting disease.

Director Dustin Miller and Division Administrator for Forest and Fire, Craig Foss, Idaho Department of Lands, were joined by U.S. Forest Service, Region 1 and 4, Coordinator Andy Brunelle, to update the committee on the Good Neighbor Authority and the 2018 Farm Bill, and also to provide a statewide fire update.

Members of the Southern Idaho Water Quality Coalition, including Dr. Randy MacMillan, Mr. Jason Brown with the City of Twin Falls, and Mr. Brian Olmstead with the Twin Falls Canal Company, provided an update regarding use of funding in the Upper Snake/Rock Creek Subbasin. They encouraged the legislature to continue funding for flood risk reduction and flood prevention projects, as well as water quality data collection, monitoring, and modeling of the Middle Snake River.

Director Gary Spackman, Idaho Department of Water Resources, provided an update on Basin 63 refill and noted that all agreements of the settlement have been satisfied. Mr. Shelley Keen, Water Allocation Bureau Chief, addressed the committee regarding groundwater transfer analysis, the Northern Idaho Adjudication, and a status update of the ESPA Ground Water Management Area. Mr. Brian Patton, Chief of Planning Division, provided updates relating to the Comprehensive Aquifer Management Plan and accounting, in addition to providing updates associated with recharge, the Anderson Ranch/Mountain Home AFB projects, and the Priest Lake Project.

The committee has no specific recommendations at this time.

Speakers

The following is a list of people, groups or agencies that testified or provided comments during the Committee meeting:

Director Gary Spackman, Idaho Department of Water Resources

Mr. Brian Patton, Chief of Planning Division, Idaho Department of Water Resources

Mr. Shelley Keen, Water Allocation Bureau Chief, Idaho Department of Water Resources

Director Ed Schriever, Idaho Fish and Game

Mr. Scott Reinecker, Deputy Director, Operations, Idaho Fish and Game

Mr. Paul Kline, Deputy Director, Programs and Policy, Idaho Fish and Game

Mr. Toby Boudreau, Wildlife Bureau Chief, Idaho Fish and Game

Mr. Craig White, Magic Valley Regional Supervisor, Idaho Fish and Game

Mr. Scott Pugrud, Administrator, Office of Species Conservation

Director Dustin Miller, Idaho Department of Lands

Mr. Craig Foss, Division Administrator, Idaho Department of Lands

Mr. Andy Brunelle, Idaho Capital City Coordinator, Forest Service, Intermountain and Northern Regions

Dr. Randy MacMillan, Southern Idaho Water Quality Coalition

Mr. Jason Brown, City of Twin Falls

Mr. Brian Olmstead, Twin Falls Canal Company