

## A&B Irrigation District

*Software Implementation & Upgrade Project*

Applicant Contact:

Megan South, Secretary Treasurer

A&B Irrigation District

414 11<sup>th</sup> Street

Rupert, ID 83350

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# Technical Proposal and Evaluation Criteria

## Executive Summary

### Applicant Information

**Application Date:** 07/09/2024

**Applicant Name:** A&B Irrigation District

**City, County, State:** Rupert, Minidoka County, ID

**Project Manager:**

Megan South, Secretary-Treasurer

A&B Irrigation District

208-436-3152

msouth@abirrigation.org

**Requested Reclamation Funding:** \$47,500.00; **Total Project Cost:** \$95,000.00

### Project Summary

The A&B Irrigation District (ABID) is a Category A applicant. In January 2021, A&B Irrigation District completed the Title Transfer Process with the Bureau of Reclamation for 82,600 acres of irrigable land, rights, and facilities in the Minidoka Project. ABID maintains a relationship with the Bureau of Reclamation using other Bureau water rights and facilities, and power produced by the Minidoka Dam. ABID in Eastern Idaho is working to upgrade and improve its operational efficiency with technological upgrades that impact its operational distribution of water to users in its area. ABID requests funding assistance through the WaterSMART Small-Scale Water Efficiency Project funding program to upgrade its software, which will automate report generation, synchronize records management, improve security system-wide, efficiently deliver water to customers, and save water and power in the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA) for other stakeholders. The intent of this WaterSMART-funded project is to keep water in the Snake River and ESPA for the legitimate purposes of stakeholders, to improve the efficiency of the Company's operations by reducing manual labor, and to improve transparency about the District's performance. The most important benefit sought by this proposal is to improve the District's efficiency and performance by improving water ordering efficiency, removing human error in the collection and management of data, and in turn, keeping more water in the ESPA and Snake River by accurately matching the availability of water in ESPA and Snake River to the demand of its users.

ABID is pursuing funding assistance through the Idaho Water Resource Board's Aging Infrastructure grant funding program to match funds provided through the grant assistance from the WaterSMART SWEP program. ABID will work with Rubicon Water Systems to perform \$95,000 worth of software migration and integration of new processes to improve the efficiency of ABID operations. This proposal is seeking \$47,500.00 in grant assistance from the WaterSMART SWEP program, and the work is expected to be completed within 12 months of notification of the award.

The longest milestones in the schedule are USBR funding approval and the Extract, Transfer, Load, and Network Visualization parts of the software migration effort. If the Bureau notifies award recipients by January 2025, then this project will be completed by February 2026.

## Project Location

A&B Irrigation District's software Implementation and Upgrade project will be completed at ABID headquarters in Rupert, ID. ABID Headquarters are located at the precise address of 414 11<sup>th</sup> St, Rupert, ID, 83350.

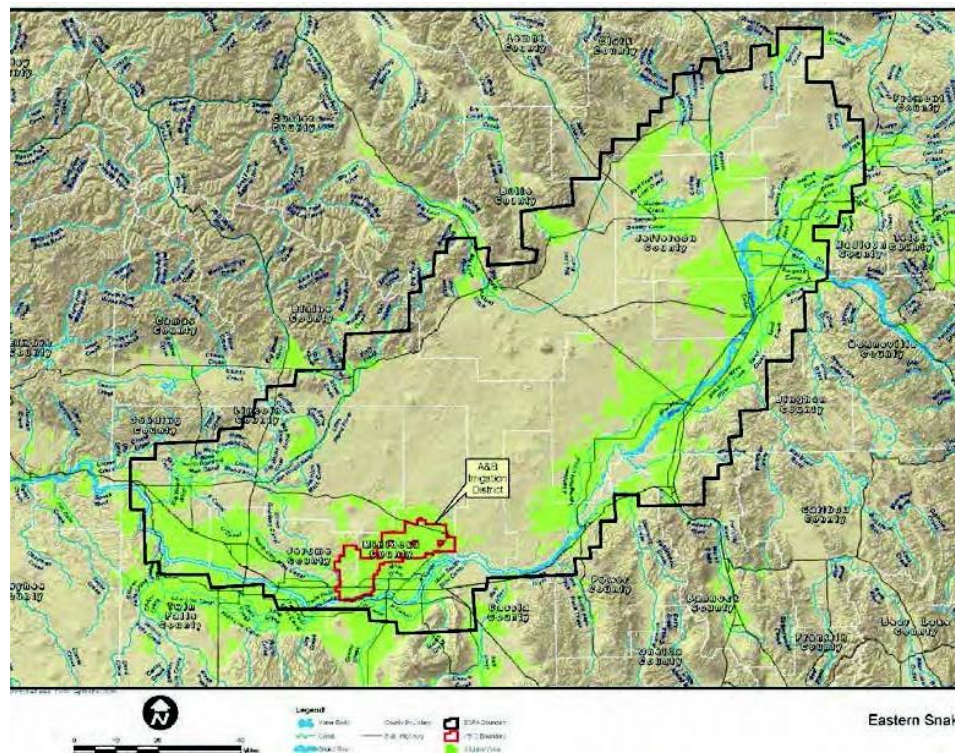


Figure 1 A&B Irrigation District Regional Map, See ABID outlined in red

## Technical Project Description

The proposed project work will be completed at the ABID headquarters in Rupert, Idaho. It will consist of a software migration phase that will extract the District's existing data about ABID users and facilities, configure the data to the Rubicon software format, configure the Amazon Web Services and Oracle databases, and then load that information into the databases. Additionally, the ABID network of users and facilities will be visually configured with relevant tagged information that will be used to generate reporting requirements of the Bureau, ABID, and water users. The final step will be a diagnostic audit of the system to validate the data and generate the baseline from which water savings can be calculated. Reducing human error with this software modernization effort will deliver water savings and operational efficiency to ABID. This project

aligns with the goals set forward by the A&B Irrigation District Water Management and Conservation Plan (contact ABID for reference document), Idaho Department of Water Resources 2016 ESPA: Review of Comprehensive Aquifer Recharge Program-Final Report (Appendix A) and the 2016 Implementation Strategies of the Sustainability Section to the Idaho State Water Plan (Appendix B).

## Evaluation Criteria

### Evaluation Criteria A – Project Benefits

#### *Benefits to the Category A Applicant's Water Delivery System:*

- *Clearly explain the anticipated water management benefits to the Category A applicant's water supply delivery system and water customers.*
  - ❖ The precise delivery, security, and management of ABID's water throughout the district's system is crucial for the sustainable and efficient function of the district as a whole. The addition of upgraded and expanded software capabilities will allow ABID to generate a baseline from which water savings can be calculated. Reducing human error with this software modernization effort will deliver quantified water savings and operational efficiency for the district and its customers. More specifically, this project will automate report generation, synchronize records management, improve security system-wide, efficiently deliver water to customers, and save water and power in the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA) for other stakeholders.
- *Explain the significance of the anticipated water management benefits for the Category A applicant's water delivery system and customers.*
  - ❖ *Are customers not currently getting their full water right at certain times of the year?*
    - Yes, during the peak of irrigation season (late June—early July), when all stakeholders are demanding the most water, ABID's pumps are only designed to pump certain criteria. When demand outweighs the criteria, the district has to put those water rights on allotments to distribute the water equally.
  - ❖ *Does this project have the potential to prevent lawsuits or water calls?*
    - Yes, this project will allow the district to better measure, manage, and quantify district water throughout the year to ensure consistent and sustainable delivery of water required to meet stakeholder demand. The proposed upgrade will automate report generation, synchronize records management, improve security system-wide, efficiently deliver water to



customers, and save water and power in the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA) for other stakeholders.

❖ *What are the consequences of not making the improvement?*

Forgoing the proposed improvements will affect the district's ability to precisely gather, store, and process flow data, and limit the software-based support that the district can offer to its customers. Additionally, if no software upgrades are made, water throughout the district could continue to be lost through inefficiencies created by a lack of canal control, quantifiable water savings, and flow data records.

❖ *Are customer water restrictions currently required?*

- No, not at this time. As stated above, intermittent restrictions may be required throughout the year.

❖ *Other significant concerns that support the need for the project.*

- The proposed project's lack of completion will result in continued inefficient water management and delivery within the district due to a lack of precise flow management and delivery tools such as up-to-date software.

**Broader Benefits:**

- *Will the project improve broader water supply reliability at the sub-basin or basin scale?*

❖ Benefits are expected to be geographically localized to the district and its patrons.

- *Is the project in an area that is experiencing or has recently experienced drought or water scarcity? Will the project help address drought conditions at the sub-basin or basin scale? Please explain.*

❖ The proposed project is in an area that regularly experiences varying drought conditions. The project site is located close to the Snake River and the surrounding riparian area, which would see direct benefits from efficient and proper water management. This project is also in an area where adequate water management allows for more efficient management of waters returned to water systems, rivers, streams, and lakes, which feed into the Snake River.

- *Will the project benefit species (e.g., federally threatened or endangered, a federally recognized candidate species, a state-listed species, or a species of particular recreational or economic importance)? Please explain.*

❖ Yes. By reducing the amount of water wasted through spillage and inefficient flow management, additional water flows can be left in the river to augment downstream flows to the Snake River, home to some threatened and endangered species, such as the Snake River Sockeye salmon.

- *Will the proposed project positively impact/benefit various sectors and economies within the applicable geographic area (e.g., impacts on agriculture, environment, recreation, and tourism)? Please explain.*

❖ The proposed project will allow more available water to stay in the canal and be returned to the system by reducing water delivery inefficiencies that arise from

spillage, mismanagement, and over-delivery. Increasing the efficiency of water management within the system through upgraded software systems allows for the district to have direct access to up-to-date water savings, flow data, and more, avoiding the over-allocation of integral resources. This positively impacts agricultural producers, residential users, and riparian ecosystems by allowing only the water required for service to continue through the district's system, ensuring all stakeholders have access to timely and consistent water deliveries, with no unnecessary over-deliveries, spillages, or losses.

- *Will the project complement work being done in coordination with NRCS in the area (e.g., the area with a direct connection to the district's water supply)? Please explain.*

❖ No.

## Evaluation Criteria B – Planning Efforts Supporting the Project

### *Plan Description and Objectives:*

- ❖ This project aligns with the goals set forward by the A&B Irrigation District Water Management and Conservation Plan, Idaho Department of Water Resources 2016 ESPA: Review of Comprehensive Aquifer Recharge Program-Final Report (Appendix A) and the 2016 Implementation Strategies of the Sustainability Section to the Idaho State Water Plan (Appendix B). Along with these plans, the ABID board considers accurate data collection and management to be a priority consistent with the A&B Irrigation District Water Management and Conservation Plan.

### *Plan Development:*

- ❖ These plans were developed by both the district and the state, along with stakeholder input as a tool for planning and sustainability for the future of Idaho's water management and infrastructure.

### *Support for the Project:*

- *Is the project identified specifically by name and location in the planning effort?*
  - ❖ While this project is not specifically identified by name or location within these referenced planning documents, this project is in alignment with specific efficiency and data management goals set forth within the planning documents. Specifically, within the 2016 Implementation Strategies of the Sustainability Section of the Idaho State Water Plan (Appendix B), The document sites the improvement of data management – as accurate and abundant data is necessary to assist with ensuring stewardship of Idaho's water resources to satisfy current and future uses – as a major goal and milestone.
- *Is this type of project identified in the planning effort?*
  - ❖ Yes, this type of project is referenced within the Idaho State Water Plan, as referenced above.
- *Explain whether the proposed project implements a goal or addresses a need or problem identified in the existing planning effort.*

- ❖ The implementation of upgraded software within ABID addresses a milestone goal of the Idaho State Water Plan. The upgraded software allows for improved data collection and management throughout the district, allowing the district to set itself up with precisely managed historical and current data for current and future water management needs.
- *Explain how the proposed project has been determined as a priority in the existing planning effort as opposed to other potential projects/measures.*
  - ❖ The Idaho State Water Plan stresses the importance of a district's ability to record and store data precisely. The document marks the improvement of data management as a milestone. Similarly, the ABID board, supported by the A&B Irrigation District Water Management and Conservation Plan, places a high value on efficient and accurate collection of water measurements and data management.

## Evaluation Criteria C – Implementation and Results

- *Describe the implementation plan for the proposed project.*
  - ❖ The proposed project work will be completed at the ABID headquarters in Rupert, Idaho. It will consist of a software migration phase that will extract the District's existing data about ABID users and facilities, configure the data to the Rubicon software format, configure the Amazon Web Services and Oracle databases, and then load that information into the databases. Additionally, the ABID network of users and facilities will be visually configured with relevant tagged information that will be used to generate reporting requirements of the Bureau, ABID, and water users. The final step will be a diagnostic audit of the system to validate the data and generate the baseline from which water savings can be calculated. Reducing human error with this software modernization effort will deliver water savings and operational efficiency to ABID.
    - January 2025 - Software migration from A&B Irrigation database into Rubicon software
    - March 2025 – Visual Configuration and report generation
    - April 2025 – Diagnostic audit to validate data. Rubicon software will run simultaneously with current District software
    - April 2025 - January 2026 – Adjustment period to the new software as needed
    - February 2026 – A&B Irrigation has a fully functional software program with additional support from Rubicon as needed
- *Describe any permits that will be required, along with the process for obtaining such permits*
  - ❖ No permits will be required for the completion of this project.



- *Identify and describe any engineering or design work performed specifically in support of the proposed project. What level of engineering design is the project currently?*
  - ❖ This project's software design and implementation will be coordinated with a software team of specialists. ABID will likely purchase the software products through Rubicon Water, so technical support for this project will likely occur via their team of software analysts and specialists. The process will include a software migration phase that will extract the District's existing data about ABID users and facilities, configure the data to the Rubicon software format, configure the Amazon Web Services and Oracle databases, and then load that information into the databases. Additionally, the ABID network of users and facilities will be visually configured with relevant tagged information that will be used to generate reporting requirements of the Bureau, ABID, and water users. The final step will be a diagnostic audit of the system to validate the data and generate the baseline from which water savings can be calculated.
- *Describe any new policies or administrative actions required to implement the project.*
  - ❖ After the installation, the timing, measurement, and movement of water will be refined for operational efficiency.
- *Does the applicant have access to the land or water source where the project is located? Has the applicant obtained any easements that are required for the project?*
  - ❖ Yes, the district has full access to areas encompassed within the proposed project location. All work described and to be performed will be done inside the district's right of way.
- *Identify whether the applicant has contacted the local Reclamation office to discuss the potential environmental and cultural resource compliance requirements for the project and the associated costs. Has a line item been included in the budget for costs associated with compliance?*
  - ❖ As the project does not include any ground-disturbing activities, the district will comply with any other necessary environmental and cultural resource compliance requirements as the local Reclamation office sees fit.

## Evaluation Criteria D – Nexus to Reclamation

*Describe the nexus between the proposed project and a Reclamation project or activity:*

- ❖ The District has a direct nexus to the Bureau of Reclamation. A&B was a Reclamation District until proceeding with title transfer in January of 2021. However, once this project is complete, A&B will still utilize a Reclamation water right.
- *Will the proposed work benefit an existing Reclamation project area or activity?*
  - ❖ Yes. The project is located in the Upper Snake River Basin, where Reclamation has several projects. It will benefit Reclamation storage facilities above Milner Dam.

## Evaluation Criteria E – Presidential and DoI Priorities

### **Sub-criterion No. E1. Climate Change**

- ❖ The addition of the proposed Software upgrade to the district's systems will address the impacts of climate change through the responsible and efficient usage of available water. The use of the upgrade software will improve the District's efficiency and performance of water in the ESPA and Snake River by accurately matching the availability of water in ESPA and Snake River to the demand of its users. Additionally, the upgraded software negates the need for individual employees to travel to specific field water measuring sites and to gather data manually. The elimination of routine vehicle travel reduces the overall carbon emissions associated with manual gate operations.
- *Does this proposed project strengthen water supply sustainability to increase resilience to climate change?*
  - ❖ Yes, the project will increase the district's ability to accurately collect and manage flow data, allowing ABID to build and manage a library of current and historic data to make more informed and sustainable management decisions now and in the future. This will allow ABID to increase sustainability and resiliency during droughts brought on by climate change.
- *Does the proposed project contribute to climate change resiliency in other ways not described above?*
  - ❖ Yes, the data collected and managed by the upgraded software will quantify water fluctuations in the canal, which will improve long-term resource management and drought planning.

### **Sub-criterion No. E2. Disadvantaged or Underserved Communities**

- *Will the proposed project serve or benefit a disadvantaged or historically underserved community?*
  - ❖ Yes, the project will positively impact customers in the district's service area who stand to be disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change. This will be achieved by improving the district's ability to accurately and precisely deliver and manage water in a timely manner. The upgraded software will give the district the ability to collect, manage, and quantify data that will be used for future water management and decision-making.
- *Please use the White House Council on Environmental Quality's interactive Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, available online at <http://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov>, to identify any disadvantaged communities that will benefit from your project.*
  - ❖ Communities found to be disadvantaged via the White House Council on Environmental Quality's interactive Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool within beneficial proximity to this project include the majority of communities

within the area surrounding the proposed project location. Tract 16067970400 is identified as disadvantaged. This tract is located within Minidoka County, ID, with a population of just over 4,400. This tract is considered disadvantaged because it meets more than 1 burden threshold and the associated socioeconomic threshold.

- *If applicable, describe how the project benefits those disadvantaged or underserved communities identified using the tool. For example, does the project increase reliability for water supplies, improve water quality, provide economic growth opportunities, improve or expand public access to natural areas or recreation, or provide other benefits in a disadvantaged or underserved community?*
  - ❖ The proposed project benefits the above-listed disadvantaged communities by contributing to more reliable and consistent management of water supplies, more predictable and dependable water flow downstream, and a myriad of other benefits, as seen from the availability of consistent and sustainable water flow and management within the region. Sustainable water sources play a crucial role in promoting health, recreation, education, economic development, and overall well-being in disadvantaged communities. Communities like these can build a foundation for long-term resilience by addressing water-related challenges via canal automation.

#### **E.1.5.3. Sub-criterion No. E.3. Tribal Benefits**

- *Does the proposed project directly serve and/or benefit a Tribe? Will the project improve water management for a Tribe?*
  - ❖ Implementation of upgraded software that would allow for more precise measuring and management of water within the system could improve long-term groundwater storage in the local aquifer. This has the potential to improve spring flows and reach gains in the American Falls area, which would benefit the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes.
- *Does the proposed project support Reclamation's Tribal trust responsibilities or Reclamation activity with a tribe?*
  - ❖ No, this project does not immediately directly impact this.
- *Does the proposed project support Tribal resilience to climate change and drought impacts or provide other Tribal benefits, such as improved public health and safety by addressing water quality, new water supplies, or economic growth opportunities?*
  - ❖ This project does not immediately directly impact this.

## Project Budget – Funding Plan and Letters of Commitment

- *Any monetary contributions by the applicant towards the cost-share requirement and source of funds (e.g., reserve account, tax revenue, and/or assessments)*

- ❖ ABID plans to contribute \$16,150.00 to the total project cost from a reserve account within the District's accounting program.
- Any costs that will be contributed by the applicant
  - ❖ N/A
- Any third-party in-kind costs (i.e., goods and services provided by a third party)
  - ❖ None anticipated.
- Any cash requested or received from other non-Federal entities
  - ❖ None anticipated.
- Any pending funding requests (i.e., grants or loans) that have not yet been approved and explain how the project will be affected if such funding is denied
  - ❖ ABID is also applying for \$31,350.00 of funding from the Idaho Water Resource Board Aging Infrastructure funding and plans to utilize those funds to cover 33% of the total project cost. The district and board are in full support of this project and will seek other funding if the IWRB aging infrastructure application is not approved to ensure project completion.

## Budget Proposal

Table 1.—Summary of Non-Federal and Federal Funding Sources

FUNDING SOURCES	AMOUNT
Non-Federal Entities	
1. Idaho Water Resource Board	\$31,350.00
2. A&B Irrigation District	\$16,150.00
Non-Federal Subtotal	\$47,500.00
REQUESTED RECLAMATION FUNDING	\$47,500.00

Table 2. —Total Project Cost Table

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Costs to be reimbursed with the requested Federal funding	\$47,500.00
Costs to be paid by the applicant	\$16,150.00
Value of third-party contributions	\$31,350.00
TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$95,000.00

Table 3. —Budget Proposal Software Implementation & Upgrade

BUDGET ITEM DESCRIPTION	COMPUTATION		Quantity	TOTAL
	\$/Unit	Quantity	Type	COST
Salaries and Wages				
Project Manager			N/A	\$0

			This district does not anticipate that any employee time will be needed directly and solely for this project.	
Project Supervisor			N/A	\$0
<b>Fringe Benefits</b>				
Full-Time Employees			N/A	\$0
Part-Time Employees			N/A	\$0
<b>Contractual/ Construction</b>				
Cultural Review			N/A	\$0
<b>Onboarding Implementation Services (Setup and Configuration)</b>				
Setup of AWS Infrastructure and Installation Software	\$8,000	1	Units	\$8,000
Irrigation Network Schematic Creation (Per Site)	\$20	1500	Units	\$30,000
Water Ordering Setup	\$15,000	1	Units	\$15,000
Billing Setup	\$5,000	1	Units	\$5,000
<b>Custom Functionality Development</b>				
USBR Power Usage Report	\$5,000	1	Units	\$5,000
Ditchrider's White Card associated with parcel numbers and associated water rights	\$5,000	1	Units	\$5,000
<b>Other</b>				
Initial NeuroFlo Private Cloud Hosting and Licensing Fee	\$27,000	1	Units	\$27,000
<b>TOTAL DIRECT COSTS</b>				<b>\$95,000</b>
Sales Tax		\$	District is Tax Exempt	\$0
<b>TOTAL INDIRECT COSTS</b>				<b>\$0</b>
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COSTS</b>				<b>\$95,000</b>

## Budget Narrative

### Salaries and Wages

The district does not anticipate that any staff time will be needed directly and solely for this project. Therefore, salaries and wages are not included in this budget, and the district is not seeking any fringe benefits for this project. Similarly, there is no travel authorized for this project nor included in the budget proposal.

### Equipment, Materials, Supplies, and Indirect Costs



All equipment to be used on this project is owned by ABID or will be purchased by ABID. Therefore, the equipment budget is shown as an in-kind contribution by ABID as if it were owned by ABID. The rates in the budget proposal are in accordance with the USACE equipment rates for the region. The time estimate for each piece of equipment was determined from the average usage on similar past District projects. The materials and supplies listed in the budget proposal are all for installation efforts related to the upgrade and installation of new software systems. The costs for materials were estimated from budgetary quotes obtained from distributors. The dollar amount listed under the Initial NeuroFlo Private Cloud Hosting and Licensing Fee is an initial fee for implementing the upgraded software programming. There are no indirect costs listed, as the district is tax-exempt.

#### Environmental and Regulatory Compliance Costs & Contractual & Third-Party In-Kind Contributions

As the project does not include any ground-disturbing activities, there is not currently a budgeted line item for this. The district will comply with any other necessary environmental and cultural resource compliance requirements as the local Reclamation office sees fit. After this initial implementation and upgrade to the district's software, ABID will execute a yearly contract with Rubicon Water for customer support and database management at an approximate cost of \$20,000/year. This will bolster ABID's ability to sustainably manage its gathered data. The district does not anticipate any contributions matching this description.

## Environmental & Cultural Resource Compliance

- *Will the proposed project impact the surrounding environment (e.g., soil [dust], air, water [quality and quantity], animal habitat)?*
  - ❖ **No, the project will not have any of these effects.**
- *Are you aware of any species listed or proposed to be listed as a Federal threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat in the project area? If so, would they be affected by any activities associated with the proposed project?*
  - ❖ **The district is not aware of any such species within the proposed project areas.**
- *Are there wetlands or other surface waters inside the project boundaries that potentially fall under CWA jurisdiction as "Waters of the United States"? If so, please describe and estimate any impacts the proposed project may have.*
  - ❖ **No, this project has no impact on any wetlands or surface waters that potentially fall under CWA jurisdiction as "Waters of the United States".**
- *When was the water delivery system constructed?*
  - ❖ **A&B Irrigation District's water delivery system was completed and began delivery of water in 1962.**
- *Will the proposed project result in any modification of or effects to, individual features of an irrigation system (e.g., headgates, canals, or flumes)? If so, state when those features were constructed and describe the nature and timing of any extensive alterations or modifications to those features completed previously.*

❖ No.

- *Are any buildings, structures, or features in the irrigation district listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places? A cultural resources specialist at your local Reclamation office or the State Historic Preservation Office can assist in answering this question.*

❖ No.

- *Are there any known archeological sites in the proposed project area?*

❖ No, there are no known archeological sites within the proposed project area.

- *Will the proposed project have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low-income or minority populations?*

❖ No, the project will not have any disproportionately high adverse effects on low-income or minority populations.

- *Will the proposed project limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites or result in other impacts on tribal lands?*

❖ No, the project will not contribute to any of the above-mentioned impacts to tribal sacred sites or tribal lands.

- *Will the proposed project contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area?*

❖ No, the proposed project will not contribute to this.

## Required Permits and Approvals

None applicable for this project.

# Official Resolution

## OFFICIAL RESOLUTION OF THE A&B IRRIGATION DISTRICT

Resolution NO. 2024-01

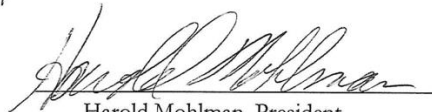
**WHEREAS**, the United States Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, has announced the WaterSMART Grants for Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects for Fiscal Year 2024 to provide financial assistance to water managers.

- ❖ **WHEREAS**, A&B Irrigation District has a present need for funding to implement software upgrades that will allow for improved data collection and management throughout the District.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the A&B Irrigation District Directors agree to and authorize the following:

- The A&B Irrigation District Directors have reviewed and support the proposal submitted;
- The A&B Irrigation District is capable of providing the amount of funding and/or in-kind contributions, specified in the funding plan; and
- If selected for a WaterSMART Grant, A&B irrigation District will work with the Reclamation to meet the established deadlines for entering into a cooperative agreement.

DATED: 7/8/2024



Harold Mohlman, President  
A&B Irrigation District

ATTEST:



Megan South, Secretary  
A&B Irrigation District

# Appendices

Appendix A – [Idaho Department of Water Resources 2016 ESPA: Review of Comprehensive Aquifer Recharge Program-Final Report](#)

## Appendix B – 2016 Implementation Strategies of the Sustainability Section to the Idaho State Water Plan

Proposed Sustainability Section to be added to the Idaho State Water Plan

### 8. SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability focuses on the overall stewardship of the State's water resources for the good of the people of the State of Idaho.

#### 8A - SUSTAINABILITY OF IDAHO'S WATER RESOURCES

**Sustainability is the active stewardship of Idaho's water resources to satisfy current uses and assure future uses of this renewable resource in accordance with State law and policy.**

##### **Discussion:**

Water is the foundation of Idaho's economy and culture; the lives and livelihoods of Idahoans depend on a reliable supply of water. Stewardship of Idaho's water resources begins with the realization that the water resources of the State are not inexhaustible and therefore it is necessary to manage, administer, and take action to sustain, maintain and enhance the resource. Stewardship, by necessity, also includes taking affirmative steps to address declining trends in the resource where those trends exist and to establish policies that will prevent future unsustainable declines. The goal must be overall stewardship of the State's water resources for the good of the people of the State of Idaho.

The State of Idaho encompasses some of the most diverse and awe inspiring physical and geological features in the country. From the depths of Hells Canyon to the peak of Mount Borah, from sage brush deserts, to the extensive agricultural farm and ranch land, to alpine forests and meadows, to the cities and towns, the ecosystems of each of these varied areas all rely on the water resources of the State. The people of the State interact with and depend upon the water resources in these different landscapes in many different ways. Therefore, the water sustainability policy of the state of Idaho must embrace the diversity of the State, while recognizing the potential for a use or activity in one place to affect the water resources in another part of the State.

Sustainable water management strategies to meet current and future needs must be based on adequate knowledge regarding available supplies, existing use, competing economic and social demands, and future needs. Planning and management actions to promote water sustainability must be designed and implemented to ensure that existing water rights are protected and the economic vitality of Idaho is optimized.

The goal of sustainable use of water resources of the State must recognize that the goals of sustainable economic growth and protection of existing rights must coexist and are enhanced by measures that protect and maintain surface and ground water resources and the aquatic, riparian and human resources that depend on these water resources. Recognizing these needs will



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promote economic and environmental security and enhance the quality of life for the people of the State of Idaho.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Ensure that all actions taken toward a sustainable water future protect and respect private property rights, both in the land and water rights
- Inventory Idaho's water supply, current uses, and future water supply needs
- Evaluate long-term and short-term trends in water availability for present and future uses
- Identify areas where present water supplies are either inadequate for present uses or not sustainable, and develop management plans to address supply in an appropriate timeframe respecting private property rights
- Identify management alternatives and projects that optimize existing and future water supplies without compromising water quality
- Prioritize and implement management alternatives and projects where competing demands and future needs are most critical
- Enhance water transfer mechanisms in Idaho law, policy and regulations to allow future economic opportunities to utilize existing water supplies, while protecting existing uses
- Utilize the Idaho Water Resource Board's Funding Program and prioritize allocation of funds for projects that ensure water sustainability across the state
- Identify water conservation measures that water users, municipalities, governmental agencies and other entities can undertake to help protect the water resources of the State and provide guidance to those entities on best practices to implement those conservation measures
- Recognize that conservation measures may reduce water supplies utilized by others in other parts of the resource
- Identify and provide funding for aquifer stabilization strategies throughout the state with due regard to the priorities of basin specific Comprehensive Aquifer Management Plans
- Pursue enhancement of surface water storage supply as a mechanism for meeting Idaho's future water needs
- Use a grassroots approach to identify problems and developing optimal solutions. The needs of individual basins must be taken into consideration in how the resource should be managed while recognizing the potential for decisions in one basin to affect the resources of another basin. An integrated and collaborative approach to water resource management is critical for the sound and efficient use of Idaho's water resources. The State of Idaho when appropriate should work together with, water users, tribes, local communities, neighboring states, and the federal government to resolve water issues

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- Protection of the quality of existing water supplies, particularly those ground water resources that are used for drinking water supplies, to ensure the vitality of local communities. This goal requires other state and local agencies to exercise their appropriate authorities to protect the water resources and to assist in meeting the goal of sustainable economic growth

**Milestones:**

- Respect for private property rights in accordance with State law and policy
- Identify number of basins where water supply and demand have been inventoried
- Identify number of basins where management alternatives have been identified and implemented to optimize existing and future water supplies, including surface water storage, ground water recharge, conservation measures and weather modification
- Obtain more accurate water supply, water measurement, and forecasting information
- Disseminate water supply forecasts to water users in cooperation with other federal and state agencies
- Measure utilization of water bank and transfer procedures to allow sustainable use of the resource
- Determination and implementation of measures and policies to enhance the utility of the water bank and transfer procedures
- Financial programs and funding strategies that meet the future water resource needs of the State of Idaho. Secure funding and resources in cooperation with the Governor and legislature. Reliable on-going, long-term funding will be needed to enable and support active stewardship of Idaho's water resources.
- Basin aquifer stabilization - stabilization of ground water levels in basins where declines are occurring to restore and maintain sustainable aquifer levels
- Initiate and facilitate construction of additional surface water storage to meet current and future needs
- Use of adaptive management to identify and address uncertainties for success, including those related to data, modeling, and impacts of climate variability
- Balance water supply and demand – supply and demand must be in balance to support current and future use within a particular basin
- Improve data management – accurate and abundant data is necessary to assist with ensuring stewardship of Idaho's water resources to satisfy current and future uses
- Coordination with State and local entities on measures to protect and enhance ground water and surface water resources so that these resources are available for use by the people of the State of Idaho