

**EIWRC BOARD MEETING**  
**Thursday, March 5, 2026, 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.**  
**Idaho Falls City Council Chambers, 680 Park Ave, Idaho Falls, ID**  
**Minutes**

Present: Roger Warner, Keith Esplin, Alan Jackson, Dave Richards, Dean Mortimer, Tony LaRosa, Marynette Herndon, Tracy Hillman, and Mayor Steve Adams  
Zoom: Skyler Johns, Paul Arrington, Rebecca Casper, Courtnie Dawson, Toby McKay, and Lara Herway.

**1. Welcome – Keith Esplin**

**2. Legislative Water College**

- a. East Idaho tour will take place September 1 in the Fremont Madison area.
- b. Paul Arrington discussed purpose and value of the tours.
- c. During the legislative session, legislators only get small incremental exposure to water issues, so tours help expand knowledge and understanding.
- d. 3 to 4 stops is key. Want to end mid-afternoon. Presentations during lunch. Keep stops relatively close to one another (make things visual heavy, not verbally heavy).
- e. Discussed enhancing the educational component of the event.
- f. Discussed holding separate meetings on specific topics to educate other local officials on water issues.

**3. Administrative Business**

- a. Minutes of February 5 Board meeting.
  - i. **Dean Mortimer moved to approve, motion was seconded, and the motion carried.**
- b. Bills to pay: Keith & Roger
  - i. **Mayor Adams moved to pay the bills, motion was seconded, the motion carried.**
- c. 2026 Sponsorship program.
  - i. Committee formed: Lara, Brad, Dean, Roger, Keith, and Skyler.
  - ii. Goal is to raise money for the Coalition.

**4. Updates/Developments**

- a. Current Water Situation: Keith
  - i. Above Palisades is above normal, but weak percentages on snowpack elsewhere.
  - ii. Little to no snow at low elevations, but there is a fair amount up high.
  - iii. This means there will be little runoff in April.
  - iv. AF Reservoir on 72% full. Water Right will likely fill, but not the physical reservoir. Very unlikely to have recharge water this season.
    1. Side discussion about how this will impact the Ground Water Pumper's mitigation plan.
    2. Spring flows don't look great, but pumpers are currently doing well with compliance.
    3. If it is a hot spring, the supply will be shorter; if it is cool and wet in the spring, water users may have sufficient supply and pumpers may be able to meet their reductions.
- b. Review Water District #01 annual meeting.
  - i. NOAA predicts 89% normal runoff at Heise
  - ii. Flow augmentation likely to be 60,000 acre-feet vs 150,000 last year.
  - iii. Litigation update
    1. Pocatello suit against last to fill rule is being appealed by the Cities (they lost).
    2. Cities are concerned they won't have sufficient water to meet their recharge requirements with the last to fill rule.
    3. Irrigators view water rentals as beyond the original purpose of the water and therefore shouldn't impact the fill of other water users.
- c. Legislative Issues
  - i. Utah Fuel Export Tax & MOU dead.

1. Roger discussed Utah Fuel Tax issue and how that escalated into a “fight” over Idaho and Utah waters.
- ii. Funding Issues: \$30 million, IDWR funding, 3% Governor hold back plus 1% more by the legislature for the 26 budget. They plan on 3% plus 2% for 27. Some feel this isn’t necessary, only an effort to reduce government. Makes it hard to retain good employees.
- iii. Fixes to Domestic Well bill – signed.
  1. Fixed the prior issues
- iv. HJM14 Supports efforts to expand water storage in Idaho.
  1. Senator Cook’s push.
- v. SB1269 Cloud Seeding
  1. Need to pay attention to efforts to eliminate “weather modification” in Idaho.
  2. Opponents of cloud seeding believe it is harmful to humans and the environment.
- vi. HB737 Combing Soil & Water Commissions with IDWR, from ISDA.
  1. Governor called Director Weaver and said he wants to combine these. Should be okay.
- vii. Coeur d’ Alene Basin Adjudication settlement
  1. Finally reached a settlement, but legislature has to approve it.
- viii. SB1337 Residency changes for water districts
  1. Because farms are getting bigger and people live in different places, it is tough to find folks to serve on Boards, so they are working to change the law so they can get folks to serve on boards.
- d. Issues with transfers
  - i. Tough to get water to industrial folks wanting to expand in our area
  - ii. Rules have been such that you can transfer successive parts to municipalities, but they can’t be used for transfers for private entities
  - iii. Bingham and Bannock would benefit from expansion of, for example, Great Western Malting Plant.
    1. Roger discussed combining reaches, which is what they have done in the lower valley.
    2. However, the Department wants to have zero impacts to the reach
    3. Discussed bringing together the people working on these issues and having a discussion with James Cefalo about what changes could be proposed to the current rule scheme.

## 5. Proposed Goals for 2026

- a. Facilitate gatherings and meetings of various interest groups to discuss and resolve water issues.
- b. Participate actively in water legislation development and related political actions.
- c. Conduct water education for legislators including a Legislative Water College Tour in Eastern Idaho.
- d. Further develop a year-long sponsorship program.
- e. Work on ways to make it easier for transfers and to supply new business and industry with water.
- f. Continue to foster and build a relationship with the Water Council managers for the Sho-Ban Tribes.
- g. Monitor and participate in the ESPA Groundwater Management Area process.
- h. Continue to fund an expert to participate on the ESPA Aquifer Modeling Committee, meet with representative to discuss needs.
- i. **Dean Mortimer moved to approve, seconded, and the Motion carried.**

## 6. EIWRC Directors’ 2026 Schedule:

- a. April 2 Board Meeting, Rexburg

## 7. Meeting Adjourns -