

GALENA GROUND WATER DISTRICT
PO Box 2761
Sun Valley, ID 83353
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July 8, 2015

Dear Galena Ground Water Users:

You are receiving this attachment because you own a water right within the proposed Galena Water District (“District”). You have probably received a lot of information about this District, water rights, future water calls, etc. We have found that there is a lot of misinformation out there so we would like to quickly bring you up to speed on the facts as well as give you a brief summary of some post-formation District plans and goals. Much of the below may be review for some of you but please note the important dates.

The Facts – The Galena Ground Water District

- **District Basics:** Per Idaho Law, a group of irrigators in a geographical area can form a new irrigation district for the purposes of mitigating against senior water right calls. Districts – as opposed to individual water users trying to mitigate alone – have obvious economy-of-scale advantages. Thanks to the work of Patti Lousen at the Wood River Land Trust, Dave Bell a member of the advisory Board and ditch rider for Water District 37, and Pat McMahon manager of the Sun Valley Water and Sewer District, the precursory steps have been taken to put the formation of the Galena Water District on the ballot in November.
- **Boundaries:** The District covers the northern portion of the Wood River Valley and includes some of Bellevue, all of Hailey and Ketchum, and most of the Wood River Valley going north to Galena Lodge.
- **Board of Directors:** Each water district requires division into at least three sub-districts and a Director from each sub-district is elected during the formation vote. The volunteer Directors are Pat McMahon (north), Karl Nichols (mid-valley), and Judd McMahan (south). The spelling of Pat and Judd’s names is not a typo and no, they are not related. Directors-at-large are permissible after formation so if you would like to join the Board, please contact us.

Important Dates

- **First Public Meeting:** The first public meeting has been set for next Tuesday, July 14th at 9:15 AM. The meeting will be on the third floor of the County Commissioners building. The purpose of this meeting is:
 1. To set the bond amount required for putting the formation of the District on the ballot. A bond (which will be paid back by the District, if formed) covers the county’s costs of adding the formation of the District to the ballot. Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous individual, the anticipated bond amount (\$20,000) has been covered.
 2. To set the date for the larger public hearing to discuss the formation of the District. The County Commissioner’s must approve the formation for it to be placed on the ballot.

- November Election – November 3, 2015: All water holders, regardless of residency, will have a chance to vote on the formation of the District at the November election. Ballots will be mailed by the county to the addresses on record of the District. 67% of the total of those voting is needed in order for the District to be formed. The ballots are weighted to the cubic feet per second (CFS) of the voting right.

Plans after the Formation of the District

Once the measure passes, the District must have a meeting within one month. Besides the items below, the District will need to determine a first-year assessment amount which cannot exceed \$3.00 per .02 per CFS (assessments can be larger after the first year). This assessment would fund the first year of operation with approximately \$35,000 of initial income. Assessments will be mailed directly to you.

Moving forward, the Board plans to do the following:

1. Establish a budget for our first year (with the amount discussed above) and look into the future to begin formulating subsequent budgets.
2. Assess the water usage in the Valley as compared to actual water rights.
3. Investigate mitigation plans to prevent or minimize curtailment.
4. Hire the necessary experts to give us the answers we need on the above.
5. Hire temporary office staff, if necessary.
6. Bring any plans to you so that you can vote on whether or not they should be implemented.
7. Determine how/when water is used within the District based on existing water rights.
8. Establish long term capital budgets and refine operational budgets.
9. Work with the SVGWD (South Valley Ground Water District) on opportunities for collaboration.
10. Other

As a group, we feel that we understand the needs of the Wood River Valley and want to move forward in a manner which is fair, lawful, and protects (as best as possible) the irrigation in the valley. Thankfully, we are receiving a lot of help from others and will never shy away from additional help and resources!

We understand that there are many unanswered questions as to how and when mitigation will be required (and how much it will cost). We are working on those answers and will keep you informed as best we can with, at the very least, quarterly newsletters and more frequent e-mail information. Please share your e-mail so we can communicate for efficiently. Much of the mitigation we are looking to do has been completed within other districts and to that end, we are not attempting to re-invent the wheel. However, we are very sensitive to our unique irrigation situation in the Wood River Valley and will be creative with plans – and the financing thereof – that we will ultimately put before you for a vote.

Sincerely,
Judd McMahan
Pat McMahan
Karl Nichols

The (hopefully) future Board of Directors