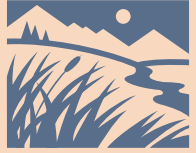


# The Idaho Conservationist



Idaho Conservation League  
Volume XVIII • Number 1 • April, 2015

## Protecting Idaho's Drinking Water

Aquifers are underground areas of rock and sediment holding water—more like giant rigid sponges than big pools. Idaho's Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA) supplies drinking water for 400,000 Idahoans. Its quality is so important for human health that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency calls it a "sole source aquifer," a designation intended to protect it from contamination. Regardless, the Idaho Conservation League is concerned about its management.

In the early 1900s, large-scale irrigated agriculture became common in southern Idaho. By the 1950s, after fifty years of flood-irrigation with water from the Snake, the

amount of water in the aquifer had grown as irrigation water percolated down. Since then, wells have been built that allow groundwater to be pumped from the ESPA to irrigate fields, and farms have converted to sprinkler irrigation. This combination has returned the aquifer to levels closer to those at statehood.

Thousands of water rights were issued across the ESPA based on the artificially inflated midcentury aquifer levels. Desperate to maintain those water rights and the industries that hold them and to provide additional water rights in the future, the state has begun using canals, injection wells

*(continued on page 3)*

**The state's aquifer recharge plans further dewater the already overworked and polluted Snake River.**





White-tailed deer in camas flowers / Jay Krajic

## FROM THE DIRECTOR: IT'S THE FINISH LINE THAT MATTERS



Pam Benham

**Rick Johnson**

*The Idaho Conservation League has been an advocate for wilderness protection in the Boulder-White Clouds since our founding, the year after the Sawtooth National Recreation Area was created. The SNRA act created the Sawtooth Wilderness but punted wilderness for the White Clouds into the future—over four decades into the future, as it turned out.*

*It's with great interest and encouragement that we see Idaho's Rep. Mike Simpson and Sen. Jim Risch introduce new wilderness legislation in Congress for the Boulder-White Clouds. Simpson's commitment is well-known; having Risch on board is an important development.*

*But if four decades teach us anything, it's that the finish line matters. Introducing a bill is all well and good, but until a bill passes, it's just paper. Excuse the cynicism, but we've seen many bills introduced. A wilderness bill for any part of Idaho's national forests has not crossed the finish line since Frank Church was Idaho's senator.*

*ICL began the recent campaign for national monument designation for the Boulder-White Clouds because Congress has failed to get the job done. The left and the right have blocked Simpson's admirable, decade-long efforts. Still seeking that mythical center, Simpson is back in the starting blocks.*

*But yet another start, however strong, does not a finisher make. A national monument can be created by presidential proclamation, and given the 16 monuments already created by Pres. Barack Obama, I can see that finish line from here.*

Rick Johnson  
Executive Director  
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# Protecting Idaho's Drinking Water

*(continued from page 1)*

and infiltration basins to guide river water directly into the aquifer, a practice called aquifer recharge. Despite the fact that the midcentury ESPA levels were artificially created and climate change will further alter water availability, the state characterizes this attempt to regain those artificial levels as a “sustainability policy.”

We think a better path to sustainability would be to acknowledge the overallocation of water and curb existing uses. Only by balancing use with available water supplies can we achieve sustainability. Diverting river water into the aquifer to prop up overuse is not sustainable. Rather, it robs water from rivers, fisheries and communities that depend on flowing rivers.

The state's aquifer recharge plans further dewater the already overworked and polluted Snake River. The regional newspaper *High Country News* recently compared the Snake River to a sewer. Water quality concerns abound along its course, with contaminated irrigation return flows and wastewater from many industries and all of the cities located along the Snake discharging into the river. This polluted river water is what Idaho

is using to refill the aquifer—the very same aquifer that provides drinking water for close to half a million Idahoans.

Contributing to aquifer contamination is Idaho's rapidly growing and politically powerful dairy industry. Across the Snake River Plain, the dairy industry has grown fivefold since 1990; dairy cows now outnumber humans, and those cows produce a lot of manure. That manure, coupled with fertilizer runoff, elevates levels of nitrate in groundwater. This is a health threat to humans, particularly infants.

Finding a balance that sustains the state's natural resources and provides for a prosperous economy is difficult. In doing so, we should not allow the contamination of Idaho's most important source of drinking water and compromise the health of Idaho's children. ICL is investigating every tool at our disposal to protect the ESPA, Snake River water quality, and all of us who depend on them. Stay tuned!

*Marie Kellner*  
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*Justin Hayes*  
Program Director

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## Learn More

To learn more about ICL's work to protect Idaho's clean water, go to [www.idahoconservation.org](http://www.idahoconservation.org)

**We should not allow the contamination of Idaho's most important source of drinking water and compromise the health of Idaho's children.**





# Ensuring a Fair Deal

Power lines / Stock photo



**Each year, Idahoans ship about \$380 million out of state to purchase electricity produced by dirty coal and gas.**

Each year, Idahoans ship about \$380 million out of state to purchase electricity produced by dirty coal and gas. A miasma of toxins follows, polluting our air and water and changing our climate. We must do better for both our economy and environment.

That's why ICL is protecting Idaho's growing clean energy sector by standing up for Idaho's clean energy rules. These rules implement a federal law—the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act (PURPA)—and allow independent clean energy developers to secure long-term purchase agreements with Idaho utilities.

This framework brought the growth in wind power that we saw between

about 2007 and 2012. Now it is bringing rapid growth in the solar sector. In both cases, Idaho has attracted millions in investments, independent businesses have built clean energy, and we are getting reliable, affordable electricity and a cleaner environment.

But electric utilities don't like PURPA: They want to be the only power plant builders because that's how they make money. In theory, that's fine, because what we really want is clean energy regardless of who builds it. But Idaho utilities don't plan to build clean energy. They build coal and gas plants and transmission lines. So until Idaho's utilities commit to replacing coal with clean energy, ICL will continue to protect Idaho's PURPA rules.

Power lines / Stock photo



**ICL is protecting Idaho's growing clean energy sector by standing up for clean energy rules.**



Scotchman Peak / Phil Hough

Today we are engaged in a case before the Idaho Public Utilities Commission where the utilities want to change the rules and agree to clean energy contracts for two years instead of twenty. It is impossible to finance a clean energy project with a two-year purchase agreement. We will coordinate our allies, bring in experts, and ensure that Idaho’s clean energy sector gets a square deal—long-term contracts at a price that’s fair to them and fair to us.

*Ben Otto*  
Energy Associate  
botto@idahoconservation.org



Coal plant and rails / Stock photo

**Idaho utilities don’t plan to build clean energy. They build coal and gas plants and transmission lines.**

## FROM THE BOARD CHAIR: ICL BY THE NUMBERS

You’ve probably seen those “By the Numbers” columns in various magazines. Here are a few Idaho numbers:

- 83,750** Square miles in Idaho, the 14th largest state and larger than all of New England
- 305** Miles from east to west
- 479** Miles from north to south
- 60** Percentage of land within Idaho that is managed by the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management
- 2.3 million** Acres in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, the largest contiguous area of protected wilderness in the lower 48 states
- 1,635,000** Idaho’s population
- 44** Counties in Idaho



**Elaine French**

So where am I going with these numbers? Let me add two more to the mix to make my point:

- 20** ICL staff members
- 100+** Current projects on which ICL staff are working

My point is that 20—just 20!—staff with heavy workloads are saving our great state for us! Every day, they deal with a state larger than New England, with lots of open space, natural resources and constituencies. And many of them have been doing this for years—Rick just celebrated his 20th anniversary at ICL; Suki, her 24th! I think we owe the whole staff a huge thank you, don’t you?

*Elaine French*  
Idaho Conservation League Board Chair

## Reducing Waste in Ada County



Household waste / Public domain

This year, Ada County completed a study of the type of waste in its landfill. ICL had urged the county to do this study in the wake of a failed garbage-to-gas plant proposal by Dynamis. At that time, it was unclear how such an incineration facility would affect our air. Understanding what is in the landfill can inform future decisions impacting air quality and lay the groundwork for a more sustainable landfill.

Food waste and yard waste accounted for a large portion of the “fill” in the landfill. You can plan meals to

reduce food waste, create a backyard composting station, and recycle. But it’s nice to know that your community leaders are mirroring these efforts on a larger scale.

Based on the study results, we are urging Ada County to set higher targets for metals recycling, improve construction and demolition waste recycling, and compost green waste.

*Sara Arkle*  
Community Conservation Associate  
sarkle@idahoconservation.org

## River Protected from Sewage



Moscow, Idaho / Steven Pavlov

It took over two years—and hundreds of hours of hard work—but the owner of the Syringa Mobile Home Park in Moscow has been ordered to stop illegally dumping sewage into the South Fork of the Palouse River and fined \$100,000 by a federal judge.

Idahoans value clean rivers and streams. We love to fish, wade and swim in them, and we rely on clean water for drinking, irrigation and industry. The South Fork Palouse is no exception.

ICL had to bring a private citizen enforcement case against the park’s

owner because neither the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency nor the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality would take enforcement action. This ruling is just the latest in a long string of Clean Water Act enforcement cases that we have brought, with penalties to polluters running as high as \$2 million.

Thanks to Bricklin & Newman for representing ICL in this case.

*Justin Hayes*  
Program Director  
jhayes@idahoconservation.org



# Cleaner Air in the Treasure Valley?

ICL is working to improve air quality in the Treasure Valley, where nearly 40 percent of Idahoans live. Ada and Canyon counties have been plagued by poor air quality for decades. A recent review of pollution data revealed that Idahoans are breathing air with dangerous levels of fine particulate matter (PM2.5), such as smoke, grit and dust.

In a petition filed on our behalf by Advocates for the West, ICL asked the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to redesignate Ada and Canyon counties as a “nonattainment area” because air quality no longer meets the national standard for PM2.5 on a 24-hour basis. Upon redesignation, the state of Idaho must implement

a plan to improve air quality within five years.

We are requesting enforcement of laws designed to protect public health and the environment from dirty air that hovers over Boise and surrounding communities.

*Courtney Washburn*  
Community Conservation Director  
cwashburn@idahoconservation.org



Boise smog, 2012 / MB Whitaker

# Volunteer to Restore Clark Fork Delta

Did you know that the Clark Fork Delta in North Idaho is one of the state’s most important wetlands? Migratory birds lay over at the delta en route to other destinations in North and South America. Deer, elk and moose browse on lush vegetation, and a wolverine has even been tracked, passing from one mountain range to another by way of the delta.

Unfortunately, the Clark Fork Delta is eroding at an alarming 15 acres a year due to hydropower operations. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game has developed an aggressive plan to stop the erosion and rebuild these vibrant wetlands.

The project requires thousands of volunteer hours until August to

plant native vegetation, such as willows and emergent plants. We are teaming up with the IDFG and other nonprofits to recruit volunteers for this undertaking. If you would like to help, sign up at [clarkforkdelta.org](http://clarkforkdelta.org).

*Brad Smith*  
Conservation Associate  
bsmith@idahoconservation.org



Clark Fork Delta / Brad Smith

## New Faces in Field Offices



Annie DeAngelo

Joining the Central Idaho office as a winter intern, **Annie DeAngelo** has been an amazing asset with her spirit and enthusiasm for protecting Idaho's special places. She made a huge splash her first week on the job by helping to organize posters, stickers, sign-up sheets and other materials for the Boulder-White Clouds support rally in Boise. She'll be with us through April, so stop in and meet her!



Scout Seley

Meanwhile, **Scout Seley** has interned in our North Idaho office since November while she continues her studies as a dual-credit student at both Sandpoint High

School and North Idaho College. Scout has been instrumental in helping with various projects, including open space and trail planning, a potential commercial recycling program, numerous outreach events and the hike series. She plans to study natural resource management and communications next year as a full-time college student.

*Nancy Dooley*  
North Idaho Outreach Coordinator  
ndooley@idahoconservation.org

*Dani Mazzotta*  
Central Idaho Associate  
dmazzotta@idahoconservation.org

## Stars Aligning for Scotchman Peaks

**You can support the effort to create a Scotchman Peaks Wilderness by becoming a friend—and doing so is free.**

For the last ten years, one of our partners, the Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness, has grown one friend at a time. The Friends hope to protect the namesake area, straddling the Idaho–Montana border, as wilderness. They introduced their 5,000th friend in January.

The stars must be aligning because, days after this milestone, the U.S. Forest Service recommended the area for wilderness when the agency adopted a revised land management plan for the Idaho Panhandle and Kootenai National Forests. More recently, the Greater Sandpoint Chamber of Commerce wrote to our congressional delegation, asking them to introduce legislation for the Scotchman Peaks.

The time has come for our congressional delegation to act. ICL is continuing to partner with the Friends to convince our elected officials to sponsor wilderness legislation for the area. You can become a friend at [www.scotchmanpeaks.org](http://www.scotchmanpeaks.org). Their friendship is free to anyone who supports the cause.



Mountain goat / Brad Smith

*B.S.*  
Conservation Associate  
bsmith@idahoconservation.org



# A Boulder-White Clouds Welcome for Obama

Just after the State of the Union address, Pres. Obama boarded Air Force One bound for Boise. If there was any question of Idahoans' support for a Boulder-White Clouds national monument, the answer was clear during his visit.

Activists at a support rally on the BSU campus greeted the president. Inside the stadium, hundreds had donned stickers promoting national monument designation. Obama heard from many folks—including our own Rick Johnson and former governor and Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus—who encouraged the president to protect the Boulder-White Clouds.

Just hours later, Rep. Mike Simpson announced his intention to reintroduce a wilderness bill. Simpson has championed this effort since 2004. While we respect his effort, we are disappointed in the reduced wilderness acreage and in retained motorized routes that would have been closed under previous versions of the bill.

Simpson has asked the Obama administration to postpone a monument designation for a few months as he tries to pass his latest bill. But a national monument



Boulder-White Clouds rally / Betsy Mizell

**Kids getting loud for the Boulder-White Clouds at the rally.**

remains our Plan A. At the end of the day, the Boulder-White Clouds must get the lasting protection they deserve. Generations from now, our children should be able to experience the amazing Boulder-White Clouds as we do today.

*Dani Mazzotta  
Central Idaho Associate  
dmazzotta@idahoconservation.org*



President Obama's arrival / MB Whitaker

# Change Is Good

Here at ICL, we are shifting some of our membership practices. Beginning in May, you will notice these changes:

## Membership Levels

Your membership level will be determined by your cumulative annual gifts rather than by your single membership donation. (In the past, your level did not reflect any special gifts you gave the rest of the year.)

- **Member:** \$15–99
- **Centennial:** \$100–999
- **Patron:** \$1,000–4,999
- **Leader:** \$5,000+
- **Advocates for Idaho:** monthly gifts of \$5 or more

## Membership Benefits

These have been expanded to show you extra love!

- **Member:** Special member events including regional porch parties and potlucks, ICL publications, and invitations to ICL Adventure Series, film screenings, lectures and more.
- **Centennial:** The above plus an annual reception, early bird registration for Wild Idaho!, 10% discount on ICL merchandise, and recognition in the annual report for gifts totaling \$250+ in a calendar year.
- **Patron:** The above plus our executive director’s “Insider” memo, and personal visits with ICL staff if desired.
- **Leader:** The above plus an additional special event with our executive director.
- **Advocates for Idaho:** Benefits listed above, based on cumulative annual gifts. Plus, the program is virtually paperless!

## Donation Acknowledgment

- **Gifts of \$249 or less:** For each, you receive a postcard of thanks.
- **Gifts of \$250 or more:** For each, you receive a letter of thanks with required IRS language.
- **Members with total gifts of \$250 or more** per calendar year receive special recognition in ICL’s annual report.

If you have questions or feedback on the planned changes, contact me. I am always happy to hear from you. Thank you for your ICL membership!

*Aimee Moran*  
Development Director  
amoran@idahoconservation.org



## Volunteers

*Our thanks to the volunteers, without whom our achievements would not happen. (October 2014–January, 2015)*

Edwina Allen	Anna Jenny
Delanira Baker	Jeff Johnson
Brianna Bambic	Tricia Kennedy
Dave & Judy Becker	Matt Kohn & Heather Steele
Devin Bloss	Mike Landa
Kinsey Bolinder	Doug Lawrence
Ed Bottum	Terri Lawrence
Lauren Brassell	Brian Lundquist
Patty & Rob Burke	Pam Marcum
Todd & Simon Chavez	Rebecca Mills
Scott Chun Ki & Suzanne Troje	Cyrus & Fosha Mimbs
Matt Clark	Kelsey Mitchell
Jen Cook	Dan Morrow
Patrice Delaney- Davies	Mike Murray
Peter DeLuca	Keena Myers
Amanda & Brian DiLeng	Beverly Nichol
Margit Donhowe	Amy O'Hara
Eileen Doten	Gary Payton
Jane Dunbar	Kathy Peter
Bill Eastlake	Lori Pierce-French
Gary Eller	Brian Reese
Joyce Fabre	Steve Rinehart
Joanie Fauci	Hannah Roberts
Daralene & John Finnell	L. B. Robertson
Foothills School of Arts and Sciences Jr High Class	Bill & Sheri Robison
Liz Fortune	Christine Schilling
Mark Frisbee	Lynne Schnupp
Craig Gehrke	Shelby Scott
Michael Gibson	Leslie Smith
Forrest Goodrum	Brett & Elizabeth Stevenson
Sarah Havens	Bob Swandby
Lisa Hecht	Reid & Sawyer Treadaway
Naomi Heindel	Bob Unnasch
Philip Hollar & Danette Phelan	Gemma Utting
Bryan Hurlbutt	Susan Valiquette
Gary Jaeger	Scott Westerlund
	Courtney White
	Jim Young
	Zena Zaleski

## Mark Your Calendar!

It's time to mark your calendar—the busy season has begun! Be sure to visit our website for details on these events:  
[www.idahoconservation.org/events/events](http://www.idahoconservation.org/events/events)

**ICL Adventure series**—Our ongoing series of hikes, outings and more is about to accelerate with the warmer weather! Check for upcoming adventures near you at [www.idahoconservation.org/events/hikes](http://www.idahoconservation.org/events/hikes).

**Thursday, May 7**—Idaho Gives 2015! One day of online giving! Our goal is \$11,500, and our sponsors will match your gift! See back page.

**Friday–Sunday, May 15–17**—Online registration begins April 1 for our annual May conference, *Wild Idaho! 2015*. Go to [www.idahoconservation.org/wildidaho](http://www.idahoconservation.org/wildidaho) for details.

**Sunday, June 7**—Celebrate National Trails Day and help protect a treasured waterfront trail at our third annual **Bay Trail Fun Run** in Sandpoint!

Phlox / MB Whitaker



## Remember the Idaho Conservation League in Your Estate Plans

We hope you will consider the Idaho Conservation League in your estate planning. Memorial gifts and bequests are placed in our endowment fund so that these gifts can permanently support conservation in Idaho. We welcome inquiries about bequests to Aimee Moran at 208.345.6933 x 15 or [amoran@idahoconservation.org](mailto:amoran@idahoconservation.org).

If you wish to make a provision in your will, the following general language is suggested:

*“I give, devise and bequeath to the Idaho Conservation League, an Idaho not-for-profit corporation, located on the date hereof at 710 North 6th Street, Boise, Idaho, 83702, the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_” (or specifically described property).*



**Membership Renewal Made Easier!** Your annual membership renewal date is printed on the mailing label below. Please help save costs by renewing your membership before it expires. Renew online at [www.idahoconservation.org](http://www.idahoconservation.org) or use the enclosed envelope.



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# It's happening May 7!



It's Idaho Gives, 24 hours of online giving across Idaho. Idaho Gives is a fun way for you to be involved with ICL, and it's for everyone, everywhere—members and nonmembers alike—so spread the word!

On May 7, go to [idahogives.razoo.com/icl](http://idahogives.razoo.com/icl) and make a gift. Your gift protects the Idaho you love! During Idaho Gives, your gift makes ICL eligible for exciting cash prizes.

It gets even better! Our goal is to raise \$11,500 on May 7. If we do, Andersen Banducci PLLC will match \$10,000 and Buffington Mohr McNeal will match \$1,500. Your gift will be matched dollar for dollar—this means ICL could raise \$23,000!

So, circle May 7 on your calendar and stick this ad to your fridge so you can join in!

**Idaho Gives. Will you give? Go Idaho!**

**ANDERSEN BANDUCCI**  
SCHWARTZMAN | WOODARD | BRAILSFORD

BUFFINGTON  
MOHR  
MCNEAL  
REGISTERED  
INVESTMENT  
ADVISOR