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KPVI Channel 6 Pocatello

Water experts and civic leaders hold public Symposium to discuss water crisis

- Idaho Falls
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Water experts and civic leaders held a public symposium on Monday in Idaho Falls to discuss the future of the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer.

Water experts and civic leaders held a public symposium on Monday in Idaho Falls to discuss the future of the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer.

The aquifer is the life blood for many East Idaho communities, providing water to drink and to irrigate crops.

KPVI News that Works for You was at the meeting on Monday.

According to organizers of Monday's symposium, a 12 and a half percent reduction of groundwater pumping will be required this year and that could idle thousands of acres of farm land.

"Well the cutback makes it very difficult, I mean we are alfalfa farmers there and the cutback will potentially change our cropping rotations," says Chris Pratt, President of 'Recharge Development Corporation.'

Chris Pratt is the President of the 'Recharge Development Corporation' and a ground water user in Aberdeen. He says recharging the aquifer, finding a way to replenish it, is the solution users should be looking at.

"I mean we are in our problems today because the aquifer has been declining, so it only makes sense to recharge the aquifer and really use the aquifer as the final reservoir to be able to capture the water in our large years of water," says Pratt.

Hal Anderson is on the board of 'Recharge Development Corporation,' he tells KPVI that they are proposing alternatives to drying up irrigated crop lands.

"Our corporation is really trying to bring together the private interest of the ones that have the vested financial interest in making sure that they are continuing to operate their businesses, their farms or even grow their cities," says Hal Anderson, Board Member,RDC.

Anderson says it would be ideal if they could capture some of the millions of gallons of water that flows from the snake river to recharge the aquifer.

Steve Howser is the General Manager of Aberdeen Springfield Canal Company. He was at Monday's symposium. He says they deliver surface water to 62 thousand acres through 200 miles of canals and irrigate the north and west side of the Snake River.

"I think we can really accomplish this and I think we can not only heal the aquifer, but we can expand its use as well," says Steve Howser, General Manager of Aberdeen Springfield Canal Company.

Officials tell KPVI that the plan will require a partnership with the federal and state government and private industry to work.