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Proposal would reduce water usage by 12.5 percent

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IDAHO FALLS, Idaho -

A meeting was held Monday to discuss groundwater reduction across the Eastern Snake Plain.

The proposal looks to reduce groundwater usage by an average of 12.5 percent this year.

Thousands of acres of farmland will be idled due to these water reductions.

The Recharge Development Corporation organized a symposium for all interested entities that will be affected by the reduction.

Farmers, engineers, legislators, civic leaders, and water experts discussed alternative methods that would help with groundwater restoration.

General Manager of Aberdeen Springfield Canal Company, Steve Howser said "The potential for private aquifer recharge can mitigate for some of the groundwater depletion that are occurring and that are subject to the settlement agreement."

Recharge Development board member Hal Anderson said the possibility of thousands of acres of irrigated farm land will be dried up and will impact our economy.

"Capturing water in the spring time when we got a lot more water than we need. Putting it in the ground then we can use that to off set the depletion's from ground water pumping so we can keep all the lands in production," Anderson said.

Last year an agreement was reached between the Surface Water Coalition and the Idaho Ground Water Appropriators that represents Ground Water Districts in Southern and Eastern Idaho.

"That agreement aimed at reducing the amount of water that is pumped from the aquifer or increase the amount of water we put into the aquifer with the idea to restore the aquifer to previous levels or stabilize it from declining it any further," Anderson said.

President of the Idaho Groundwater Proprietors Tim Deeg said, "Some folks will go out of business."

"Those who have senior water rights will see a break in terms of reduction for example they may have to reduce 6 to 7 percent. It only seems fair to give the senior user some kind of advantage," Deeg said.

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