



PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

MAYOR: Lauren McLean | DIRECTOR: Doug Holloway

MEMO

TO: Cass Jones, Stream Channel Protection Program, Idaho Department of Water Resources

FROM: Sara Arkle, Parks Superintendent

CC: Mort McMillen, McMillen Corporation
Darrel Early, Deputy City Attorney, Boise City Attorney's Office

DATE: 12/15/2023

RE: Boise Whitewater Park Phase II Modifications – IDWR Response

The following memo is submitted for your consideration during the processing of the Joint Application for Permits for modifications to the Boise Whitewater Park Phase II which was approved under permit #S63-20701. The information presented in this memo is intended to resolve questions raised during the meeting held on December 5, 2023 regarding future plans for downstream passage by recreational users of the river.

Background

In 2019, an in-river recreational feature was constructed associated with improvements to the Farmer's Union diversion adjacent to Esther Simplot Park. Unfortunately, the waveshaper recreational feature has not performed according to expectations and the City has not issued a certificate of completion for the structure. The City has been working with the engineering firm under contract to address operational challenges with the waveshaper and the team is ready to modify the structures to improve the function of the recreational feature and user experience. These modifications are necessary to create a consistent and reliable in-river wave feature and to address known hazards. In addition, the modifications must be completed during the winter non-irrigation season to ensure water delivery commitments are met to Farmer's Union Irrigation District.

Resolution of concerns regarding downstream passage for the upcoming 2024 floating season is dependent upon timely issuance of a stream channel alteration permit so that construction of the modifications can be completed the 2023-2024 winter non-irrigation season.

Actions Relating to Downstream Passage:

As discussed in the December informational meeting, during the 2020-2023 floating seasons, instability of the recreational wave feature at Drop Structure 1 (DS1) in the

Phase II section of the park required the City of Boise to close the wave feature except for monitored sessions.

During the 2023 floating season, recreational floaters seeking to pass DS1, were instructed by signage upstream of DS1 and information on the Boise City Parks and Recreation Department website to portage around DS1. This determination was made out of an abundance of caution and based on the observations of our wave technicians and the experience of users. In addition, throughout the 2020 and 2023 floating seasons, the tuber bypass channel was largely operational and could serve as an option for through floaters. There were times however, during monitored sessions, when low flows in the river required the tuber bypass to be closed to maintain wave shape and performance while still meeting irrigation demand in the Farmers Union Canal diversion. Thus, for the majority of the 2020-2023 floating seasons, recreational floaters had two options for passage of DS1.

- A. The tuber bypass channel
- B. Portage

Commercial recreational operators on the river were advised to use their judgment on which of these options to select.

To protect against possible injury or loss of life due to a potentially unstable wave, the DS1 wave feature was closed to all users other than during monitored sessions and the log boom was deployed in a manner different than originally permitted to discourage any downstream passage of recreational users of the river through the wave feature.

As discussed during the December 5, 2023 meeting, through the current Joint Application for Permits submittal, the engineering firm under contract is working with the City to resolve the wave stability issues with the DS1, wave feature. And, presuming the modifications to the wave feature perform as designed, it is the intention of the City to complete the construction and move the log boom back to its originally permitted position. There, it will serve its intended purpose to deflect debris away from the Farmer's Union Canal Diversion Trash Rack and leave an unobstructed pathway through the wave feature, in addition to the adjacent tuber bypass.

In other words, if the modifications are successful, recreational river users will have three options for downstream passage of the DS1 wave feature during the 2024 floating season and beyond.

- A. The tuber bypass channel
- B. Transiting through the wave feature
- C. Portage

Utilization of these alternatives will be left to the judgment of the recreational user of the river as governed by U.S. Coast Guard Rules and proper boating etiquette.



Signage associated with the Boise Whitewater Park will be modified to conform to the new passage configuration and inform boaters approaching the whitewater park of their options.

Should issuance of the permit be delayed so that construction is not possible during the 2023/2024 winter season, or should the modifications proposed in the permit application do not adequately resolve safety concerns and monitored sessions are still required, the City will have little choice but to continue with the strategies deployed in the 2020-2023 seasons for safety reasons. In that case the City will seek emergency approval from IDWR pursuant to IDAPA 37.03.07.050 for the continued deployment of the log boom to discourage downstream passage through the wave feature while still allowing for downstream passage by either the tuber bypass or portage.

