THE BEAR RIVER COMPACT AND ITS 20-YEAR REVIEW

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May 10, 2018
- 500 miles long; ends 90 miles from headwaters
- Largest river in North America that doesn’t flow to an ocean
- Annual supply 1.8 MAF
- About 850,000 reaches Great Salt Lake
- Ends as it discharges to Great Salt Lake
- Largest surface water tributary to Great Salt Lake
A WORD ABOUT BEAR LAKE

- Ancient Lake – 500,000 to 6,000,000 years old
- One of the oldest in North America; likely one of the 5 oldest lakes in the world
- *Paleoenvironments of Bear Lake, Utah and Idaho, and its Catchment*, 14 technical reports published by Geological Society of America as Special Paper 450, 2009
- Upper 21.65 feet, or 1,400,000 acre feet is storage reservoir
- “Lake Powell” of the Bear River – supplies Lower Division water - keeps Utah and Idaho from litigation in the US Supreme Court – extremely important to the Compact states
COMPACTING IS CONSTITUTIONAL

“No State shall, without the Consent of Congress, enter into any Agreement or Compact with foreign Power, or engage in War, unless such Agreement or Compact be necessary to such imminent Danger as will not admit of delay.”
▪ Remove the causes of present and future controversy over the distribution and use of the waters of the Bear River
▪ Provide for efficient use of water for multiple purposes
▪ Permit additional development of the water resources of Bear River
▪ Promote interstate comity
▪ Accomplish an equitable apportionment of the water of the Bear River among the compacting States
“At intervals not exceeding twenty years, the Commission shall review the provisions hereof, and after notice and public hearing, may propose amendments to any such provision, provided, however, that the provisions contained herein shall remain in full force and effect until such proposed amendments have been ratified by the legislatures of the signatory States and consented to by Congress.”

Article XIV
AMENDING THE COMPACT

- Study
- Permission from Congress
- States formally negotiate
- Public hearings
- Signed by State negotiators
- Sent to three States’ Legislatures
- Signed into law by three States’ Governors
- Sent to US Congress/hearings/bill
- Sign by President
Project Allocation
State of Utah
Water Rights (acre-feet)

Total project water rights: 220,000 ac-ft
IDAHO-UTAH APPLICATIONS TO APPROPRIATE 400,000 AF IN BEAR LAKE