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MEMORANDUM

TO: Idaho Transportation Department, Contractors and Consultants

FROM: Ken Reid, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE: June 25, 2007

RE: Agricultural Irrigation Resources

About four years ago, SHPO and ITD began discussing agricultural irrigation resources and developed a policy regarding how to approach their recordation and evaluation. This discussion was an attempt to clarify SHPO's position on irrigation resources, and we issued a memo to agencies and contractors explaining our position. Now, as the policy has been in place for a while, questions have arisen, and it seems to be the time for further refinement. This memo is therefore presented to establish SHPO policy as it pertains to all Section 106-related inquiries into irrigation-related resources, and moreover, to assist with ITD issues related to Section 4f of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966.

As stated in an earlier memo, when originally formulating our policy, SHPO staff discussed the issue with National Register of Historic Places staff at the National Park Service. Their direction was that it could be perfectly appropriate to look only at the larger elements (main canals and primary laterals) in an irrigation system, and review of smaller elements is not necessarily required.

This is essentially the position that SHPO adopted a few years ago; however the following clarification should be noted. **In reviewing irrigation systems in Idaho, SHPO will not consider those elements below primary laterals, and equivalent drains, to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and therefore we do not require their recordation.**

As stated in the previous memo, there are a few important exceptions to this policy. First, in the case of historic farmsteads, the irrigation ditches or structures would likely be considered part of the agricultural landscape, and if the farmstead is eligible, the irrigation elements may be considered contributing resources.

Second, should you encounter an unusual resource or something that you feel might merit additional research, we would expect that contractors would investigate further.

And finally, keep in mind that there are other types of ditches (e.g., unnamed mining-related ditches that may be part of a mining district) that could be considered potentially eligible; this policy applies only to historic, agricultural, irrigation resources.

If you have any questions, you may call us at 208-334-3861.