THE TREASURE VALLEY WATER ATLAS

INTRODUCTION

The Treasure Valley is growing and experiencing new and increasing pressures on its water system from both population growth and climate variability. This interdisciplinary study uses a holistic approach to problem solving by combining biophysical data with focus groups and interviews of water users and managers to uncover the strengths and weaknesses of the Treasure Valley water system in the face of different pressures. The findings of this study will soon be publicly available through the Treasure Valley Water Atlas (TVWA), a collection of informative web-based stories that tell how the Boise River moves through the Treasure Valley, both from biophysical and management perspectives.

As we look at the operations of the water system currently, and make observations about what the future holds, the Treasure Valley Water Atlas will be used to engage multiple stakeholder groups and serve as a **decision-support** system for stakeholders in the Valley. The Atlas will be officially launched in spring 2018 at the Andrus Center for Public Policy annual meeting.

THE ATLAS

The Treasure Valley Water Atlas tells multiple stories using an interdisciplinary approach by combining biophysical date with social information to look at systems operations from multiple perspectives. Special attention has been paid to creating quality graphics to visually communicate key findings for each section.

METHODS

INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

What makes the TVWA unique from other water atlases is not only the stakeholder communication that went on throughout the development process, but also its interdisciplinary design. Because the problems that were most important to stakeholders are both biophysical as well as social and political, a team of researchers from hydrology, land use modeling, environmental sciences, public policy, cultural studies, and graphic design was assembled and present during all phases of the research, from design to implementation.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The Treasure Valley Water Atlas has emerged from iteratively engaging stakeholders in problem definition, research design, feedback, and dialogue.

This five-year long project began with biophysical research and modeling in the Boise River Watershed, but scientists realized that designing a tool without users in mind wouldn't be successful. As a result, stakeholders were engaged in every step of the research process:

Problem Definition Key stakeholders were engaged through focus groups. Issues facing river management identified by stakeholders, such as population growth, development, farmland loss, and climatic changes, were central to project design.

Date Collection Data from focus groups and interviews was collected and analyzed. That was then combined with biophysical data to inform the Treasure Valley Water Atlas.

Review The TVWA will be taken back to stakeholders for review later this fall and early next spring, and refined using their input and expertise.
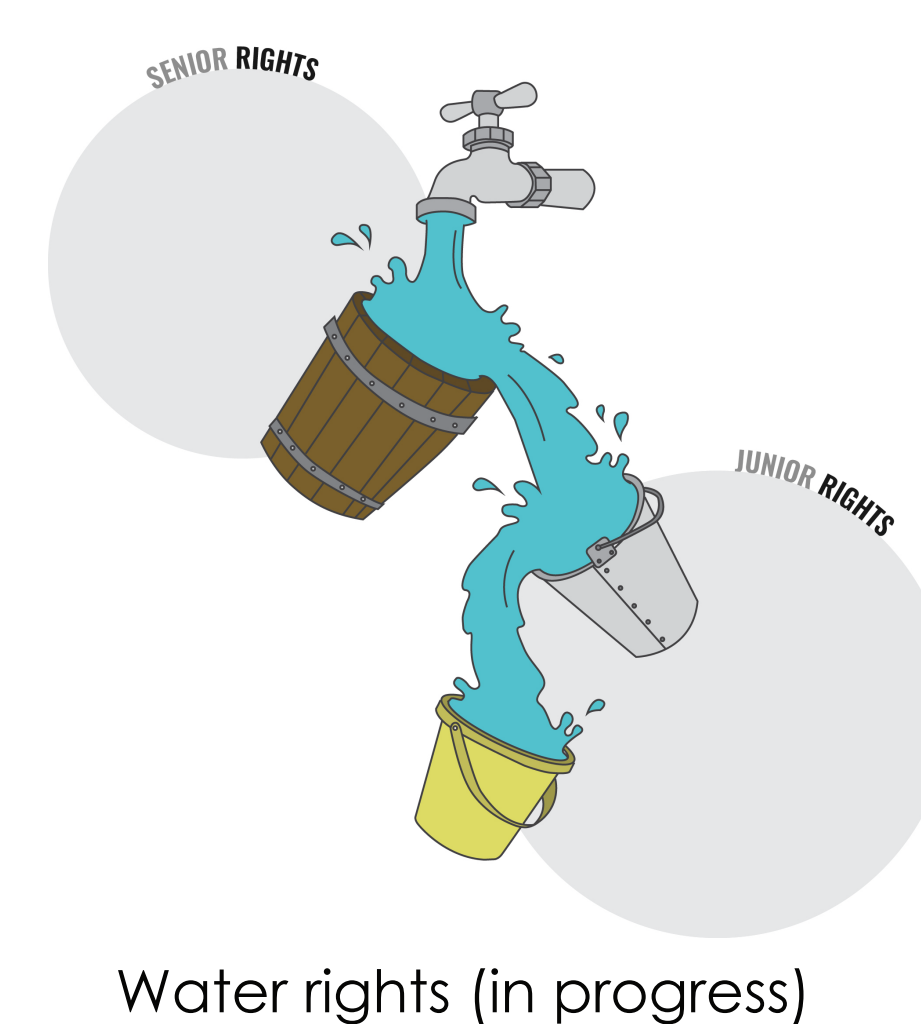

Where does our water come from?
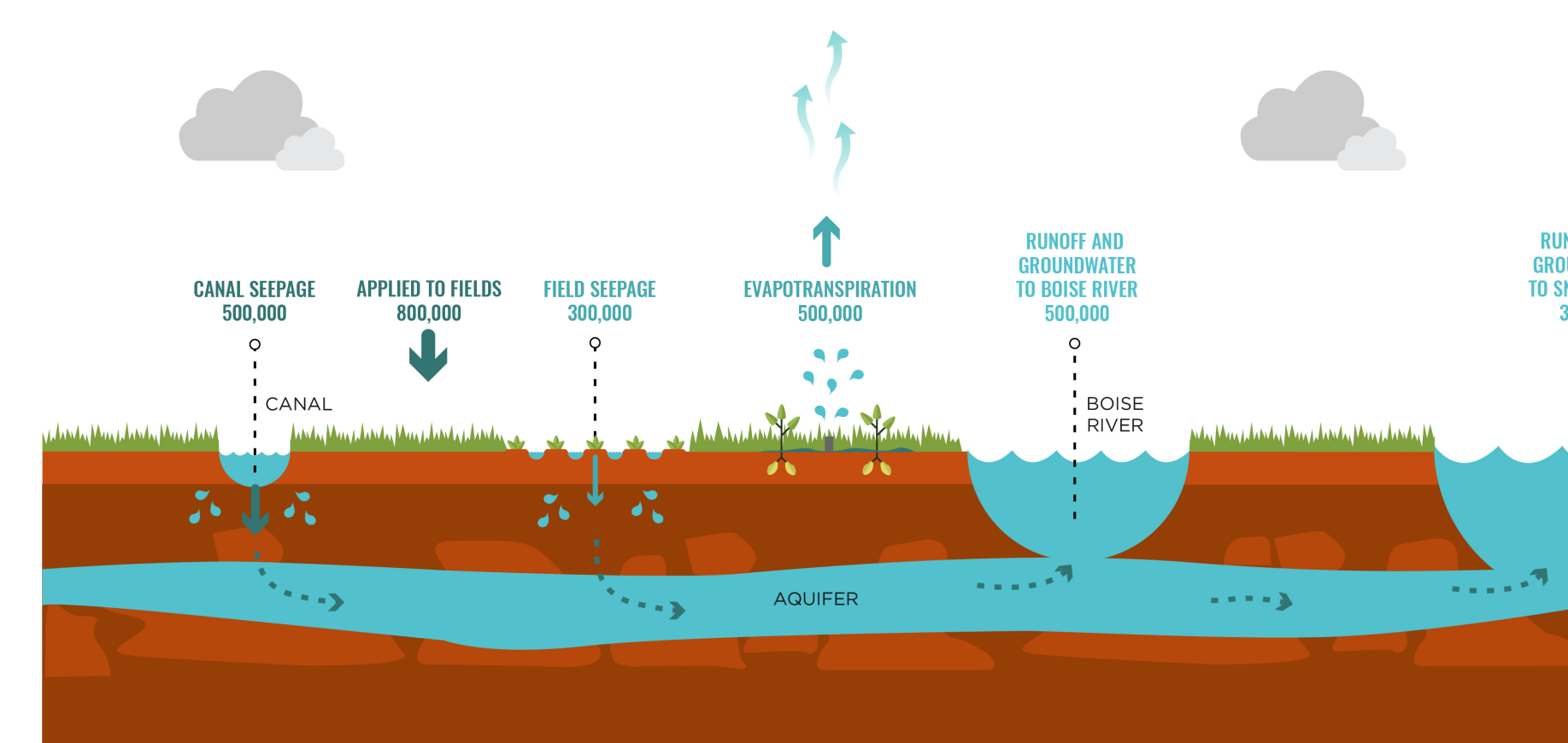The story of how water is stored and moves through the Boise River.
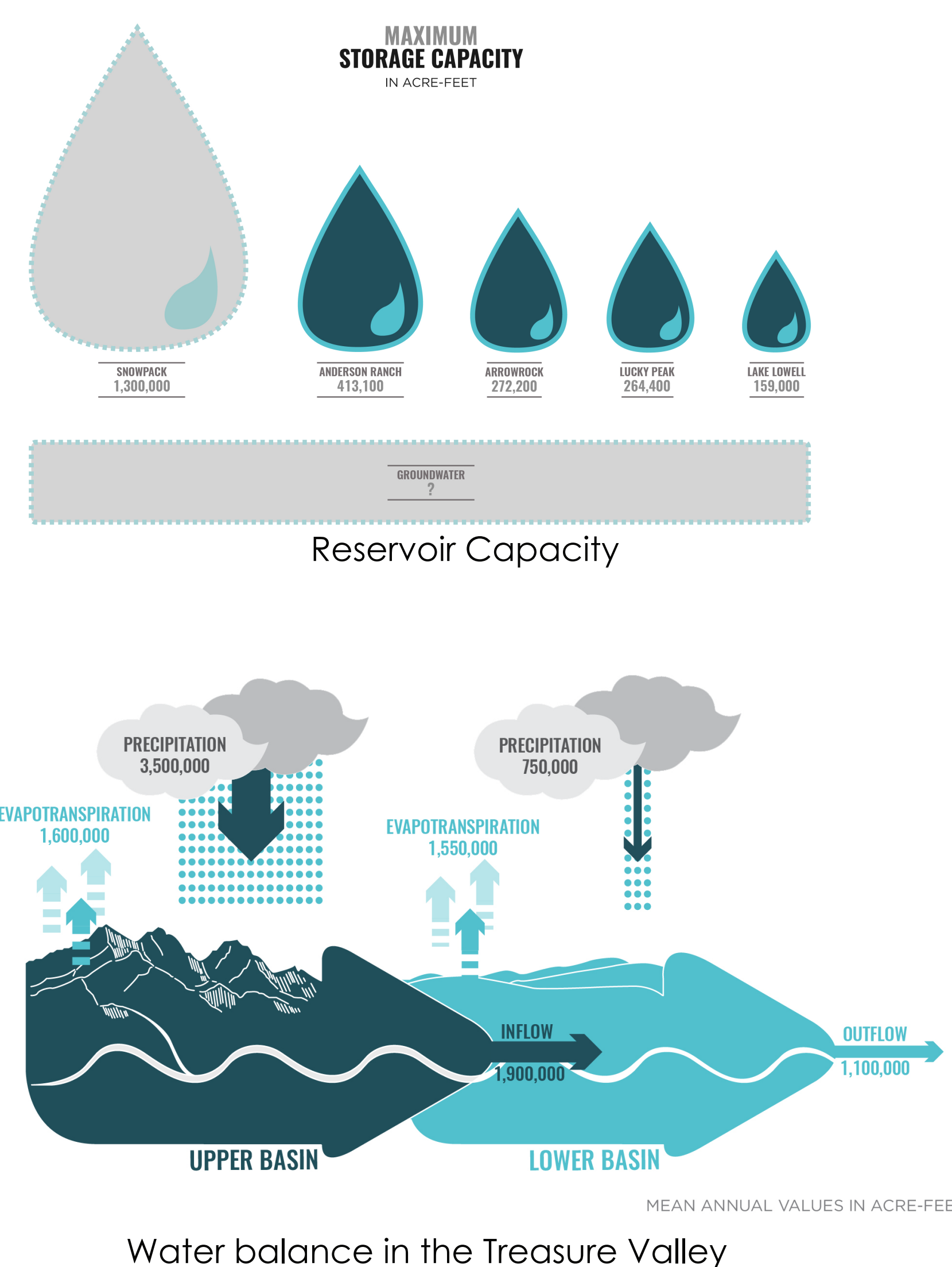
The (Re)Fill Debate
A case study reviewing the legal actions taken to assign the second fill water in the Treasure Valley.
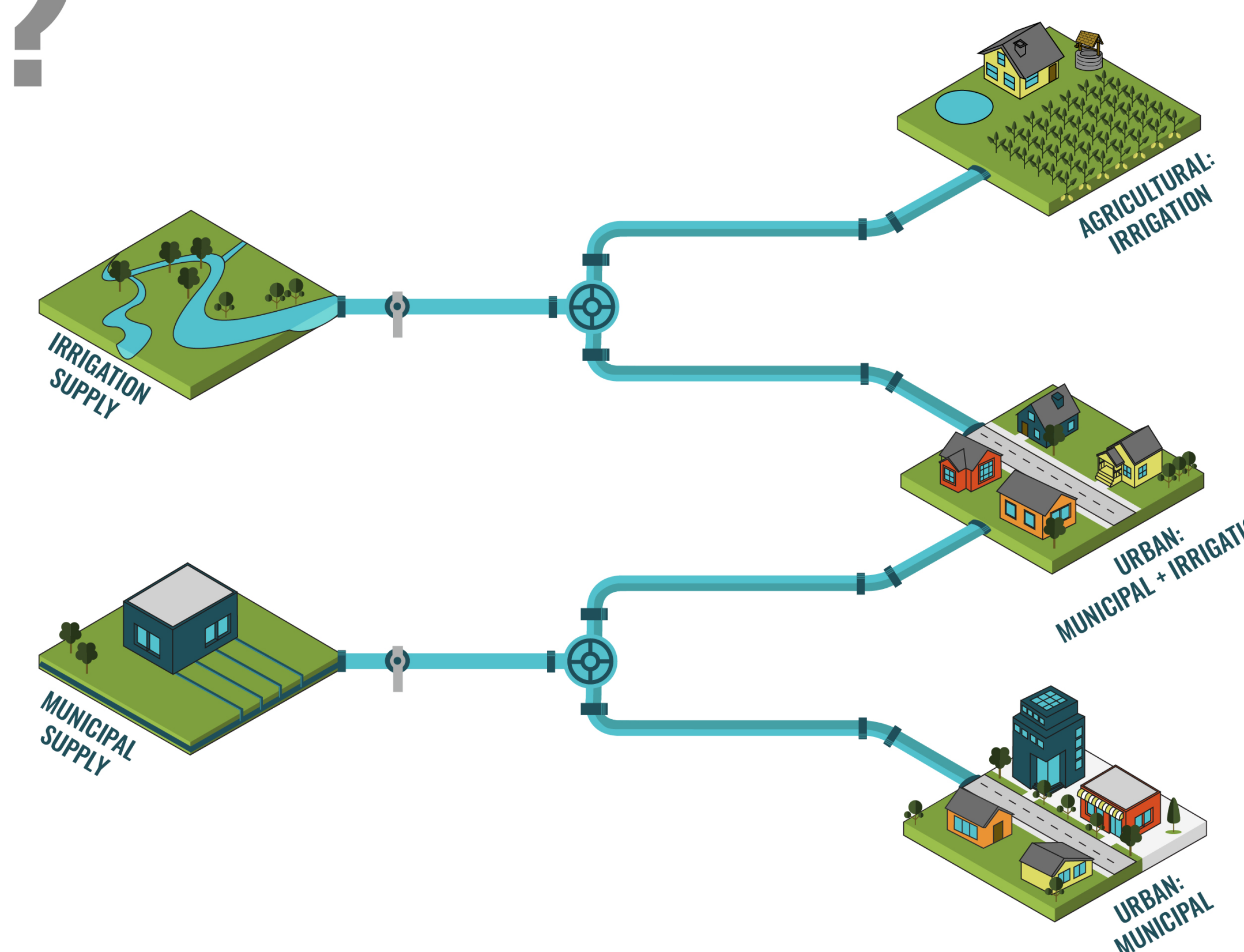
Water Law in the West
A brief overview of the laws that manage water in the west and the Treasure Valley.

Do We Have Enough Water?
The story of water use in the Treasure Valley. It looks at who uses the water, current inefficiencies, and how use might change in the future.
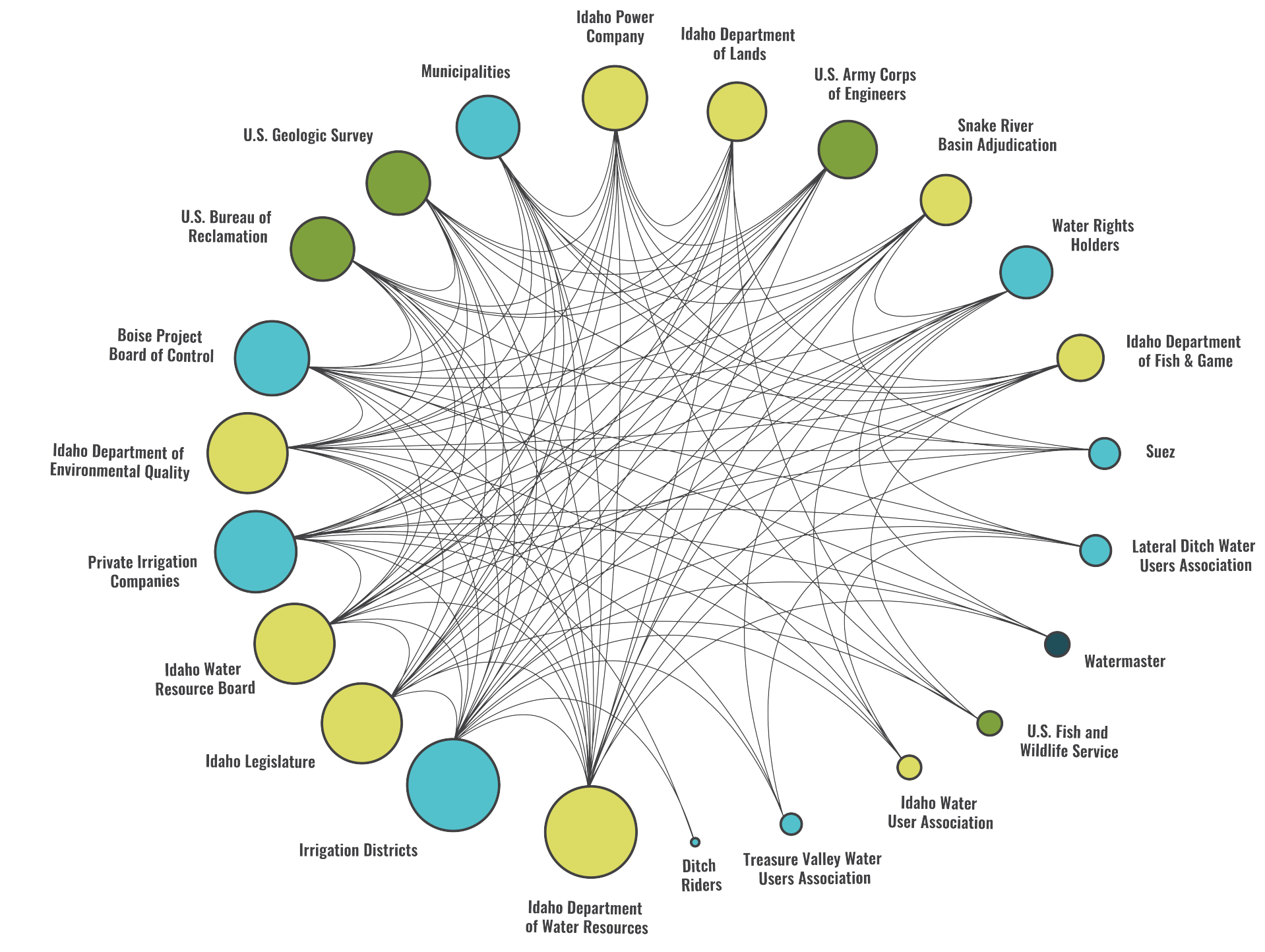
How is Water Delivered?
This story follows a single drop of water from where it falls in the mountains east of the Treasure Valley, through the complex storage, irrigation and management system, to farmers' fields downstream.

The Future of Water in the Treasure Valley
A look at what social and biophysical issues face the Treasure Valley's water, and what the future might hold in the face of various pressures.

Reservoir Capacity

Water balance in the Treasure Valley

Water rights (in progress)

Field efficiencies (in progress)

WHO USES WHAT WATER ?

Water supply (in progress)

Formal relationships in water management

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