

## **College Students Analyze Water Quality and Quantity**

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This presentation will discuss the author's experience leading two years of senior capstone classes at the College of Idaho, which focused on local water quality issues and planning for a third this spring, intended to focus on water quantity issues. While the intent of the courses is to expose students to a real-world situation at which they cannot simply wave a magic ecological wand and solve, the responses of the students to the issues is indicative of the broader conversation about water. A first conclusion is that these liberal arts students, not having a technical background in water quality testing, illustrate the low level of public awareness about the intricate issues surrounding water. It is a challenge to introduce students to material that will effectively orient them to the problems requiring solutions, especially in light of students' desire to help solve issues they discover. A second conclusion is that students who attempt to bring a holistic lens to analysis of the situation inevitably link water quality and water quantity.

Material from the Spring 2015 presentation made by College of Idaho students about Lake Lowell offers one illustration of the spatial overlap in water quantity, water quality, and public narratives in the triple identity of the water body as irrigation reservoir, wildlife refuge, and recreational lake. Students commented on patterns of water quality testing, on federal space vs. space imagined as local and public, and on the needs of humans and wildlife. This spring's project will aim to follow in the footsteps of the Boise River Enhancement Network in finding small, practical activities that students can use to create greater public awareness of and appreciation for the hydrologic system in Canyon County.