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## **Lewiston Orchards Project Water Exchange & Title Transfer Purpose and Need Statement**

Currently, Reclamation's LOP acquires water for irrigation by diverting surface water from within the Lapwai Creek and Captain John Creek basins, which are primarily located within the Nez Perce Reservation. Water availability is insufficient to meet system demands and contractual obligations, resulting in use restrictions for district patrons. Many features and facilities associated with LOP are also in need of substantial repair, maintenance and in many cases, total replacement, at great cost to Reclamation and LOID. In addition, LOP facilities and operations are in conflict with Tribal cultural and natural resource interests. Finally, LOP surface diversions seasonally reduce water availability and connectivity within the Lapwai Creek watershed, resulting in adverse effects to ESA-listed steelhead utilizing the watershed.

The National Performance Review goal of a Federal Government that works better and costs less seeks opportunities to develop partnerships and advance opportunities to reduce costs to the Federal Government. Reclamation's title transfer initiative implements this performance review goal by divesting all or portions of Reclamation's interest in authorized projects to local governing boards.

The purpose of the proposed action is to eliminate impacts to Tribal cultural and natural resources, reduce system rehabilitation costs to Reclamation and LOID, increase system reliability for LOID patrons, reduce costs to the Federal Government and avoid future litigation associated with surface diversions within the LOP. This would be accomplished through a water exchange and title transfer where LOID would acquire title of the Reclamation property interests located below Mann Lake and satisfy irrigation needs through use of an alternate water source. The remaining Reclamation property interests would be transferred to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to be held in trust for the Tribe for future management and administration.