A four-year project to modernize and renovate the Minidoka Dam spillway came to a formal end May 27 as a special dedication ceremony was held to formally open the gates of the new facility. A variety of dignitaries and a large crowd of onlookers took part in the ceremony.

IWUA President Dan Darrington was among the dignitaries who attended and watched as Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Estevan López threw the switch to formally open the 12 new radial gates that replaced the stop logs that had been used for decades. Commissioner López was keynote speaker at the ceremony.

Darrington also spoke during the ceremony (photo below) noting that “this location is such that the water supply is sustainable and reliable. Because of this structure, the entire area is living — thriving as a progressive community that expands from agriculture to additional commerce and industry.”

You can view 5-minute video on the internet about the project at the following address:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqgL7FbHAoU
The 12 new concrete gates at the renovated Minidoka Dam were decked out with American flags at the formal opening ceremony held May 27th. At right is the diversion point at the head of an irrigation canal. Below, the gates are open and Snake River water is flowing through the dam. (Photos by Norm Semanko & Bureau of Reclamation.)

Four Idaho Irrigation Entities Receive Bureau of Reclamation Water/Energy Grants Projects

Four Idaho irrigation entities are included in a pair of Bureau of Reclamation grant programs to improve water efficiency and conservation in Idaho and 11 other western states, BoR officials announced recently.

Salmon River Canal Company in Twin Falls received a WaterSMART grant of $300,000. The funds will be used in a canal lining and energy conservation project with a total cost of $708,746. The Salmon River Canal Company will line 19,619 linear feet of the unlined Lateral 214 canal with a heavy-duty geocomposite fabric. In addition, the project will widen the lateral to allow for future planned improvements for water delivery and management. The project is expected to result in annual water savings of 2,069 acre-feet, which will remain in the Salmon Falls Creek watersheds instead of being diverted.
North Side Pumping Company in Jerome received a WaterSMART grant of $600,000. The funds will be used in a comprehensive project totaling $1,297,073. The project will implement a modernization project that will eliminate 20.5 miles of open-ditch water delivery systems and close an outdated, century-old pumping plant (photo at right.) The project includes building regulating reservoirs, connecting water users to new lateral canal delivery points, installing individual headgates and measurement devices, and automating deliveries with variable frequency drives.

The project is expected to result in annual water savings of 9,150 acre-feet by reducing water currently lost to spills, evaporation, and seepage. Water savings resulting from the project will assist in addressing shortages the Company is experiencing as a result of ongoing drought conditions. The closure of the pumping plant will result in an overall annual reduction of approximately 522,000 kilowatt hours of energy.

St. John's Irrigating Company in St. John's Canal Enclosure Project Reclamation Funding: $1,000,000 ($400,000 in FY 2015) Total Project Cost: $2,429,775 The St. John's Irrigating Company in southeastern Idaho will pipe a 6-mile portion of the Company’s main open ditch canal and a one-mile section of laterals. An inlet/screening structure will be constructed along with an outlet structure and meters will be placed on all laterals that are along the new pipeline. The project is expected to result in annual water savings of 1,454 acre-feet currently being lost to seepage. Conserved water will be used primarily to meet existing irrigation demands.

In a related Bureau of Reclamation grant program, Riverside Irrigation District in Parma has received a $25,000 grant from the Bureau’s Water Conservation Field Services Program. The funds will be used to help the District design, purchase, and install an automated water control gate and related operation and control equipment at the Centennial Park site near Caldwell. The project will save an estimated 1,400 acre-feet of water per year.

The Bureau’s WCFS program provides technical and financial assistance to encourage water conservation on Reclamation Projects by assisting irrigation districts to develop and implement water conservation plans, and to foster improved water management.

The grants require a 50 percent or better cost-share. Eligible activities include water management planning, such as updating or developing a water conservation plan, and implementing water conservation projects, piping and lining canals, installing water measurement and automating gates.

For information on the program visit: http://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/wat/.

Summer Water Law & Resource Issues Seminar Runs June 22-23 in Sun Valley

Idaho’s largest water user organization will hold its annual Summer Water Law and Resource Issues Seminar June 22 and 23 at the Sun Valley Resort in Sun Valley, the Idaho Water Users Association announced today.

Water supply and how it is to be managed in light of Idaho’s ongoing drought, delivery calls and competing demands will dominate this year’s seminar topics, according to Norm Semanko, IWUA Executive Director and General Counsel.
Seminar registration is now open. Seminar registration and panel details plus hotel accommodation information is available online at the IWUA website: [www.iwua.org](http://www.iwua.org).

Presentations and panel topics include an update on the surface versus groundwater settlement in the southern Idaho water delivery call. Another panel will address storage, flood control and water rights accounting.

The 2015 water supply situation and just what Idaho water users will face if it doesn’t snow next winter will be examined in yet another special presentation.

“The seminar topics this year will zero in on some of the most challenging issues with which water users in Idaho are now dealing so we anticipate that demand for participation will be unusually high. We encourage people who are interested in attending the seminar to not delay in making their reservations and getting registered,” Semanko said.

**SEMINAR AGENDA MONDAY – JUNE 22, 2015**

**7:30 REGISTRATION**

**8:30** WATER DELIVERY CALL UPDATE: CURTAILMENT OR SETTLEMENT? Randy Budge – Partner, Racine, Olson Nye Budge & Bailey, Chtd., Pocatello Travis L. Thompson – Partner, Barker Rosholt & Simpson LLP, Twin Falls

**9:15** NSCC’S HEAD OF THE U GATE STRUCTURE REPLACEMENT AND HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT Alan Hansten – Manager, North Side Canal Company, Jerome Dan Murrer – Project Manager, CH2M Hill, Boise

**10:15** ESPA RECHARGE UPDATE: MOVING FROM PILOT-SCALE TO FULL-SCALE PROGRAM Brian Patton – Bureau Chief, Idaho Department of Water Resources, Boise

**11:00** RECHARGE CHALLENGES: STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES Candice McHugh – Partner, McHugh Bromley, Boise Steve Howser – Manager, Aberdeen-Springfield Canal Company, Aberdeen Peter Anderson – Counsel-Idaho Water Program, Trout Unlimited, Boise


**2:00** RANGEN AND SWC CALLS – HYDROLOGIC CONDITIONS AND STANDARDS FOR RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS Gary Spackman – Director, Idaho Department of Water Resources, Boise


**3:30** 2015 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE Norman M. Semanko – Executive Director & General Counsel, Idaho Water Users Association, Boise

**4:00** STORAGE, FLOOD CONTROL & WATER RIGHTS ACCOUNTING: HOW DOES IT WORK? Ron Shurtleff – Watermaster, Water District #65, Payette Rex Barrie – Watermaster, Water District #63, Star Lyle Swank – Watermaster, Water District #1, Idaho Falls

**IWUA SEMINAR AGENDA TUESDAY – JUNE 23, 2015**

**8:30** CHALLENGES & APPROACHES TO MEETING WATER QUALITY STANDARDS Lance McCleve and Bryon Welch – Principal Evaluators, Office of Performance Evaluations, Boise

**9:15** RESERVOIR STORAGE FILL/REFILL SETTLEMENT IN WATER DISTRICT #1 Kent Fletcher – Attorney, Fletcher Law Office, Burley Jerry R. Rigby – Partner, Rigby, Andrus & Rigby, Chtd., Rexburg
Fish & Wildlife Service Seeks Comments on Draft Bull Trout Recovery Plans

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has released draft recovery plans (Implementation Plans) that will be part of a final recovery plan outlining the conservation actions needed to recover bull trout (Salvelinus confluentus). The six draft Implementation plans are available for public comment during a 45-day period, which closes July 20, 2015.

Bull trout are a cold-water salmonid of relatively pristine stream and lake habitats in western North America. Once abundant in Oregon, Washington, California, Nevada, Idaho and Montana, bull trout are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in the lower 48 states. The draft Implementation Plans were developed in collaboration with interested and knowledgeable federal, tribal, state, private, and other parties. Each of the six draft Implementation Plans identifies recovery unit-specific conservation actions needed to address threats such as loss of habitat connectivity and passage barriers, non-native fish competition and predation, and the sometimes adverse effects of land-management practices such as road building, forest management and land conversion.

The overarching goal of the Bull Trout Recovery Plan is to conserve bull trout so that the fish are geographically widespread with stable populations in each of the six recovery units. Accordingly, the plan’s recovery criteria focus on effective management of known threats to bull trout. The Coastal, Columbia Headwaters, Klamath, Mid-Columbia, Saint Mary and Upper Snake are the six designated recovery units that are home to the threatened population in the lower 48 states.

Electronic copies of the draft recovery unit implementation plans, the revised draft recovery plan of September 2014 and a summary of newly proposed recovery criteria are available at www.fws.gov/endangered/species/recovery-plans.html and www.fws.gov/pacific/ecoservices/endangered/recovery/plans.html.

These documents are also available by request from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office, 1387 S. Vinnell Way, Room 368, Boise, ID 83709; telephone (208) 378–5345. You may mail or hand-deliver written comments and materials to Bull Trout Recovery, Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office, at the above Boise address, or fax them to (208) 378–5262, or via email to fw1bulltroutrecoveryplan@fws.gov.

Mark Your Calendar

June 22-23  -  IWUA Summer Water Law & Resource Issues Seminar – Sun Valley
August 4-6  -  NWRA Western Water Seminar – Monterey, CA
November 4-6  -  NWRA Annual Convention – Denver, CO
November 19-20  -  IWUA 32nd Annual Water Law Seminar – Boise
January 19-21, 2016 -  IWUA Annual Convention – Boise