A barge loaded with grain passes through the Lewiston railroad bridge from the Lewis-Clark Terminal on its way last year into the Snake River and on to the west coast. Grain barging is crucial to Idaho and Washington grain producers. See more on Page 2. (Photo by Scott Zuger, Lewis-Clark Terminal)

Make Plans Now For 33rd Water Law Seminar

A variety of important water and legal issue presentations will be on the agenda when the Idaho Water Users Association holds its 33rd Annual Fall Water Law and Resources Issues Seminar Nov. 3-4 at the Riverside Hotel in Boise.

“The two days will be filled with topics of high interest to the legal, technical and water management communities. I think this will be one of the best fall seminars we have had because we are fortunate to have top subject matter experts from around the nation on hand to provide folks with special insights into the various areas,” according to Norm Semanko, IWUA Executive Director and General Counsel.

The seminar program plus registration information for both the seminar and on-line hotel registration will be available soon on the IWUA website - www.iwua.org. For more information contact the Idaho Water Users Association at (208) 344-6690.

Mark Your Calendar

November 2, 2016 – IWUA Board Meeting – The Riverside Hotel – Boise
November 2, 2016 – IWUA Legislative Committee Meeting – The Riverside Hotel – Boise
November 3-4, 2016 – IWUA 33rd Water Law Seminar – The Riverside Hotel – Boise
November 14-16, 2016 – NWRA Annual Convention – Hotel del Coronado – San Diego, CA
January 24-26, 2017 – IWUA Annual Convention – The Riverside Hotel – Boise
February 14-17, 2017 – IWUA Ditchrider Workshops – Idaho Falls, Rupert, Jerome, Meridian
February 23-24, 2017 – Family Farm Alliance Annual Meeting – Las Vegas, Nevada
February 28 - March 2, 2017 – IWUA Applicator Recertification Workshops – Rupert, Jerome, Meridian
Lewis-Clark Terminal Barge Shipments
Now in Full Grain Harvest Time Operation

A grain barge is loaded at the Lewis-Clark facility in Clarkston. It takes approximately five hours to fully load the barge with grain (Photo by Scott Zuger, Lewis-Clark Terminal)

Grain barge loading operations at Idaho’s inland seaport have been in full swing as Idaho and Washington grain producers harvest and ship their annual wheat and barley crops with 45 barges having left Lewiston during July and August.

“The harvest we are now completing is the largest on record. We have received over 11,000,000 bushels of grain of 2016 crop since July 6, 2016. We received over 10,500 semi-trucks carrying these bushels,” said Scott Zuger, LCT General Manager.

The Lewis-Clark Terminal in Lewiston exported over 24 million bushels of wheat and barley in 2013-14, the largest crop handled to-date by LCT. In 2014, 49% of all U.S. wheat exports were handled along the Columbia-Snake River system. Of those, on average, 10% of all U.S. wheat exports go by barge through the Snake River dams.

Grain shipping through the terminal is so busy during harvest time that it is not uncommon for up to 350 grain trucks per day to pull into the LTC operations during July and August.

An informational brochure published by the Port of Lewiston quotes the Idaho Grain Producers as stating: “The existence of the Port of Lewiston and the dam-lock structures allow the use of barge transportation along the river system. This infrastructure is a major factor in why Idaho has a $1 billion vibrant wheat and barley industry that helps serve as a backbone to the economy of Idaho and its many rural communities.”

Port of Lewiston officials say 60 percent of Washington and Idaho wheat is shipped by barge—the most efficient and cost-effective method of export. Without river shipping, export costs would easily double for farmers, meaning far less revenue for local economies.

The barge trip from Lewiston to Portland takes about 50 hours and passes through eight different locks. Each barge trip carries 120,000 bushels of grain. That much grain would require 120 truckloads if the same amount of grain was shipped via 18-wheelers using Northwest highways.

Barging also yields a major environmental result because barges produce 33 percent less emissions than railroad trains and 20 percent fewer emissions than trucks.
Idaho’s largest water user group is applauding the state’s two U.S. Senators for their efforts to get President Obama to support relief from the overregulation of pesticide users, including mosquito control authorities, so current and future threats to public health, including the Zika virus, can be addressed.

A filibuster by Senate Democrats has blocked legislation that would provide $1.1 billion to fight the spread of the Zika virus. As the legislative debate continues, Sen. Mike Crapo and Sen. Jim Risch continue to advocate for inclusion of their bill, S. 1500, the Sensible Environmental Protection Act.

The bill is supported by a group of bipartisan Senators and would remove redundant, time-consuming and costly permitting requirements on the nation’s pest control professionals as well as farmers, ranchers, municipalities, water users and forest managers.

“The S. 1500 legislation is crucial for Idaho water users’ continued economic viability because it removes an abusive layer of pointless regulation from their operations. We are grateful to our two senators for their continued efforts to get it through the legislative process and on to the President’s desk for signature,” noted Norm Semanko, Executive Director and General Counsel of the Idaho Water Users Association.

Removing that unnecessary layer of time-consuming bureaucratic work is especially important given the focus on efforts to combat the spread of Zika because it reduces regulatory burdens on pesticide applicators and frees up staff time and budgets so we can focus on mosquito eradication instead of needless paperwork, the IWUA official added

President Obama opposes the regulatory relief provided by Crapo and Risch’s bill. However, officials from his own administration at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Environmental Protection Agency recently announced that aerial insecticide applications are the “most important tool” for combating the spread of Zika on the U.S. mainland and territories.

Senator Crapo, along with members of the Senate and House, recently sent a letter to the President asking him to heed the recommendations of his administration’s officials and reconsider his opposition to S.1500.

"Many Idaho businesses, communities, and irrigation districts are in need of support when it comes to focusing on mosquito eradication.” said Senator Risch. “This legislation would make it so that all involved could focus their resources and energy on combating Zika, not navigating red tape and bureaucracy.”

Palisades Dam Crest Temporarily Closed for Utility Construction

The Bureau of Reclamation has resumed construction activities at Palisades Dam to replace aging overhead utilities with an underground system.

For safety reasons, the limited access across the dam via foot, all-terrain vehicle, motorcycle or horse will be closed from Aug. 15 through the completion of the project, no later than Nov. 4.

Palisades Dam, 55 miles southeast of Idaho Falls, Idaho, was constructed by Reclamation in 1957 as part of the Palisades Project. It is a multipurpose facility that provides for irrigation, flood control, hydropower and recreation.
The two ads included a listing of key points about canal and ditch easements to help educate area water users. Here are some of them:

- We have the right to deposit material on the ditch banks that has been removed during cleaning and maintenance and it is not to be removed from the banks.

- We have the legal right to remove anything that blocks the easement and to prohibit activities which unreasonably interfere with maintenance. This includes buildings, parking areas, fences, landscaping and other structures or activities.

- We may need to cut trees or remove shrubs from an easement area. Tree branches can droop or fall into the canal and obstruct water flows. Tree roots can actually rob the system of water. Tree roots can also cause seepage and result in eventual canal breaks.

- Easement areas are not public property and are not open to public use. Unauthorized use of these strips of land amounts to trespassing. Swimming in canals or laterals is very dangerous and not allowed. It also constitutes trespassing.

- Construction or other activities are not allowed in easement areas if they will interfere with the irrigation entity’s access, operation, maintenance and repair activities.

- Be aware that the irrigation entity sometimes uses chemical weed killer as part of its regular bank maintenance. In these cases, every possible effort is made to make sure the spray is applied only in the easement area and not on any private property that may be in the immediate area. Weed burning may also pose a risk to structures, fences, landscaping or shrubbery that have encroached into the easement area.

- More information about rights-of-way and easements for irrigation districts, canal companies, etc., can be found in Idaho Code Title 42, Chapters 11 and 12.