



# IDAHO WATER USERS ASSOCIATION

## Quarterly Newsletter



September 2015

## IWUA's 32nd Annual Water Law Seminar Scheduled For Nov. 19-20 in Boise

Start making plans now for the Association's 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Water Law and Resource Issues Seminar set for Nov. 19-20 at The Riverside Hotel in Boise.

The fall seminar traditionally features panels and presentations dealing with Idaho's most sensitive and pressing water related issues. Seminar registration information, the seminar program guide plus hotel reservation information will be available soon on the IWUA website: [iwua.org](http://iwua.org).

## Treasure Valley Water Users Form New Association

The Treasure Valley Water Users Association has been formed to address the need for collaboration among Treasure Valley water delivery entities for the mutual benefit of their respective water users.

Although these entities have worked collaboratively in the past, until now, there is no organization that focuses its sole attention and efforts on the unique issues facing Treasure Valley water delivery entities.

Activities that will be undertaken by this association include: sharing information and providing educational opportunities to association members; public outreach to Treasure Valley residents, communities, governmental entities, businesses and others to provide information regarding association members and enhance relationships, and advocacy regarding issues of common concern to association members including effectuating policy at the state and local levels.

IWUA is working closely with the group on issues of mutual concern to water users, as it does with other local water user groups in Idaho, such as the Payette River Water Users Association and the Committee of Nine.

"We welcome the opportunity to work with TVWUA. I've already attended several of their board meetings, as I do for other groups, and will be providing whatever assistance IWUA can supply," said Norm Semanko, IWUA Executive Director.

Representatives of irrigation districts and canal companies, as well as agricultural associations, individuals and other Treasure Valley water users, have already joined this association. A Board of Directors headed by Clinton Pine has been selected.



**A Treasure Valley irrigation canal carries Boise River water to both agriculture and residential users.**

"The Association has already engaged all of the Treasure Valley's legislators about the development of the organization and an invitation to work together as we move forward. Positive response from our elected officials has been generated. We will continue to do the same with others in the community to pull people together on water issues as well as pulling together the irrigation delivery community," said Roger Batt, the TVWUA Executive Director..

One immediate issue that the Association is working on is education and outreach to the citizens of the Treasure Valley about the "refill water rights" issue and the impacts to them as water users. At issue is IDWR's legal position that now counts flood control releases against the storage rights of water right holders.

For more information, contact Roger Batt at (208) 412-5760 or [roger@amgidaho.com](mailto:roger@amgidaho.com).

# SW Idaho Project One of 23 Awarded Total of \$5.2 Million In Bureau of Rec. Drought Grant Funding

A total of 23 projects, including one in Idaho, have been selected to receive grants totaling \$5.2 million for proactive drought planning and other efforts to build long-term drought resiliency in nine states in the West, Bureau of Reclamation officials announced in mid-August.

South Board of Control in Homedale was picked to receive a \$300,000 grant for improvement of Gem Irrigation District #2 Pumping Plant. The \$602,690 project will install new pumps to more than double the existing capacity of the Gem #2 Pumping Plant.

The project will provide additional flow from the Snake River to replace supplies out of Sage and Succor Creeks, which are dwindling due to the current drought, allowing the Board to fully deliver to its customers.

This project, supported by the SBOC's Drought Contingency Plan, will also reduce withdrawals from Reclamation's Owyhee Reservoir and give the Board more flexibility in drought planning and response. The Board expects the project to result in the better management of 9,212 acre-feet per year.

A total of 12 drought resiliency projects and 11 drought contingency planning projects in the states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas and Washington were picked to receive grants.

A total of 12 drought resiliency projects and 11 drought contingency planning projects in the states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas and Washington were picked to receive grants.

## Reclamation Awards Contract for Electrical Work at Anderson Ranch

The Bureau of Reclamation awarded a \$1.6 million construction contract to Burke Electric LLC, a small business based in Bellevue, Washington, to replace critical electrical infrastructure used to operate the Anderson Ranch Field Station.

Anderson Ranch Dam and Powerplant are located on the south fork of the Boise River about 28 miles northeast of Mountain Home, Idaho.

On-site work is expected to begin October 2016 with completion in March 2017. Any interruption of power generation during this construction interval is expected to be minimal.

"A number of people depend upon Anderson Ranch Dam for agricultural and residential irrigation, recreation and clean hydropower so it is important that the facility operates efficiently and safely," said Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner López. "When it is complete, this work will significantly improve the long-term dependability of the facility."

Anderson Ranch Dam was constructed by Reclamation in 1950 as part of the Arrowrock Division of the Boise Project. It is a multipurpose facility that provides for irrigation, flood control, hydropower and recreation.



Anderson Ranch Dam near Mountain Home.

## MARK THE DATES

**IWUA 78<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention**  
**January 19 – 21, 2016**  
**The Riverside Hotel**  
**Boise, Idaho**

# Deadline Nears For Applications For Special RCPP Funding For Water Conservation Practices

Time is running out for farmers in the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer region to apply for special Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service to carry out water conservation practices. The sign-up period runs through September 25, 2015.



The Idaho Water Resource Board's (Board) Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer Stabilization RCPP project will receive NRCS funding in the amount of \$1.1 million. The Board's Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer Stabilization RCPP projects will help farmers employ several specific strategies to stabilize and recover groundwater levels. The Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer is an essential resource for agriculture in southeastern Idaho.

The Board identified four ways farmers can contribute to sustaining the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer: 1) removal of end-guns and irrigated corners on pivot irrigated fields, 2) variable rate irrigation (VRI) pivot enhancements, 3) flood irrigation enhancements, and 4) Thousand Springs conservation projects.

The Board associated these methods with specific project areas within the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer so recommended practices vary from county to county.

Farmers can apply for RCPP funding for activities that relate to these four strategies. Farmers can apply to and contract directly with NRCS. Applications must be received by September 25, 2015.

To find out what practices are available in your county, contact one of these NRCS offices to get more information or apply for the program:

**American Falls - Kirk Whitehead, 208-226-2177 x 109; 2769 Fairground Rd., Ste. A, American Falls**

**Arco – Jesse Fullmer, 208-527-8557 x 105; 125 South Water St., Arco**

**Blackfoot - Dean Smith, 208-785-6505 x 124; 725 Jensen Grove Dr., Suite 3, Blackfoot**

**Burley & Rupert – David Mabey, 208-678-1225 x 108; 1361 East 16th St., Burley**

**Gooding – Steve Thompson, 208-934-8481 x 114; 820 Main St., Gooding**

**Idaho Falls – Josh Miller, 208-522-6250 x 108; 1120 Lincoln Rd., Suite A, Idaho Falls**

**Jerome & Shoshone – Patti Hurley, 208-886-2258 x 112; 215 West "F" St., Shoshone**

**Pocatello – Nate Matlack, 208-237-4628 x 125; 1551 Baldy Ave., Suite 2, Pocatello**

**Mountain Home – Connie Tharp, 208-587-3616; 795 South Haskett, Mountain Home**

**Rigby – Howard Johnson, 208-745-6664 x 101; 210 S 5th W, Rigby**

**Rexburg & St. Anthony – Ken Beckmann, 208-624-3341 x 102; 1210 S. Industrial Park Rd., St. Anthony**

**Twin Falls – Steve Schuyler, 208-733-5380 x 130; 1441 Fillmore St., Suite A, Twin Falls**

## Upper Snake Basin Advisory Group (BAG)

The Upper Snake Basin Advisory Group consists of members appointed by the director of DEQ to represent stakeholder groups from 19 southern Idaho counties. The BAG meets, as necessary, to advise DEQ on surface water issues and prioritize 319 water quality non-point source projects throughout the region.

### Next Scheduled Meeting Date

**Wednesday, October 7, 2015**

**DEQ Idaho Falls Regional Office**

**900 N. Skyline, Ste. B, Idaho Falls**

# USGS CONDUCTING LOW FLOW STREAM STUDY TO PROVIDE FUTURE DROUGHT PLANNING EFFORTS

U.S. Geological Survey hydrologic technicians are currently taking measurements from hundreds of streams and rivers across the western United States as part of a low flow study. The goal is to provide information to resource managers to help understand differences in how streams respond to drought and plan for future drought impacts throughout the region, according to USGS officials.

Spring snowpack in the western United States was extremely low in 2015 compared to long-term averages. Warmer winter temperatures meant that precipitation fell more often as rain than snow and some places received less-than-normal precipitation.

In August and September, USGS hydrologic technicians will measure stream flow and water temperature in nearly 500 rivers and streams in California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Washington to document the severity of this year's drought.

With less spring and summer snowmelt at higher elevations, many western rivers and streams reached their peak flows earlier than normal and are now at or near historically low flows. These conditions create stresses on domestic and agricultural water supplies, fish and wildlife, and forests and rangelands.

Hydrologic technicians from USGS water science centers are measuring streamflow and USGS scientists will then compare those data with measurements from previous years to answer several water-management questions, including:

- Which rivers and streams depend on snowmelt and/or groundwater to sustain flows?
- How are low flows and associated higher stream temperatures affecting habitat for fish and other aquatic species?
- Does 2015 serve as a model for how streams will respond to climate change?
- Which rivers were most vulnerable to warm, dry weather in terms of reaching historic low flow levels in 2015?

The data will be compiled and analyzed with a summary report of findings planned for publication in late 2016.



**A hydrologic technician from the USGS Idaho Water Science Center measures streamflow in Fall Creek near Anderson Ranch Dam in southwestern Idaho. The USGS is collecting data at hundreds of sites on rivers and streams in six western states to document the 2015 drought. USGS scientists will analyze the data to identify which rivers and streams may be most vulnerable to future droughts. USGS Photo**

# DEQ seeks public comments on water quality improvement plan to reduce temperatures in Little Lost River subbasin water bodies

The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is seeking public comment on proposed plans to address elevated temperatures in streams within the Little Lost River subbasin.

The subbasin is located in east-central Idaho northwest of the U.S. Department of Energy's Idaho National Laboratory.

Temperature is a key factor in the health of fish and other coldwater organisms. Recent analyses of water quality data demonstrated that temperatures are above recommended levels in a number of streams in the Little Lost River subbasin due to a lack of shade.

The *Little Lost River Subbasin Assessment and Total Maximum Daily Load: 2015 Temperature Addendum* proposes to establish total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) designed to lower temperatures in the following water bodies: Little Lost River and tributaries, Big Springs Creek, Sawmill Creek and tributaries, Squaw Creek, Timber Creek, Moffett Creek, Summit Creek, Dry Creek and tributaries, Wet Creek, and Deer Creek.

The recommended actions seek to bring the streams into compliance with state water quality standards and restore them to conditions supporting their beneficial uses, which include cold water aquatic life, salmonid spawning, and primary and secondary contact recreation.

The document is available for review at DEQ's Idaho Falls Regional Office and on DEQ's website (download at right).

Submit written comments by October 8, 2015, at 5 p.m. MDT on DEQ's website, by mail or e-mail to:

**Troy Saffle**

**DEQ Idaho Falls Regional Office**

**900 N. Skyline Drive, Suite B**

**Idaho Falls, ID 83402**

**Email: [troy.saffle@deq.idaho.gov](mailto:troy.saffle@deq.idaho.gov)**

## ARROWROCK DAM NEARS 100<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

Arrowrock Dam has been a cornerstone of development in Idaho's Treasure Valley, providing irrigation water to farmers and flood control on the lower Boise River for 100 years.

It was built by the United States Reclamation Service (now known as the Bureau of Reclamation). It is located about 20 miles east of Boise, Idaho.

Arrowrock was built for the Arrowrock Division of Reclamation's Boise Project which provides water to 397,000 acres in Idaho and Oregon. The Boise Project stretches from Boise, Idaho to Nyssa, Oregon.

Arrowrock cost \$4,796,488.82 to build, which was \$2 million under budget. Construction began in 1911. Cableway systems were used to move the concrete to build the dam.

A powerplant housing three 500-kilowatt hydroelectric generating units was added to the Boise River Diversion Dam, which is located 14 miles downstream, to furnish electric power for the construction of Arrowrock Dam.

The Boise & Arrowrock Railroad was the first government owned standard gauge common carrier railroad. The railroad was 17 miles long and extended from the construction camp (referred to as Arrowrock City) to Barber Junction just northeast of Boise. The trains transported supplies, workers and visitors to the dam site.

The dam was officially dedicated Oct. 4, 1915, with approximately 5,000 people in attendance. Construction was completed in November and it was the tallest dam in the world until 1925.

The BoR has an extensive pictorial history of the construction of Arrowrock and the cultural impact including a railroad and a construction camp that existed during the four years of work. The display is available online at:

**<http://www.usbr.gov/pn/snakeriver/arrowrock100/index.html>**

A small selection of the photos from the Arrowrock pictorial history is found on the next two pages. All photos courtesy of the Bureau of Reclamation Arrowrock history website.



**(Above left) September 16, 1911. Arrowrock Camp and railroad bridge. The arrow marks the future spillway area. (Above right) November 12, 1912. The Arrowrock dam tunnel inlet and upper cofferdam. A steam shovel is working on the future spillway.**



**August 1914. Looking down stream as the Arrowrock dam rises from the bedrock. The top of the highest section of the dam (on the right) is 75 feet below the eventual top of the finished dam.**



**(Above left) August 1914. Work is underway on the spillway trench looking upstream. (Above right) March 1915. Pouring concrete via the concrete distributing system. Conveying bucket dumping concrete into cableway hopper and through a chute into place in the dam.**



**Arrowrock dam on October 1, 1915, after four years of construction. View of downstream face of dam from a point near the railroad bridge across the Boise River. Arrowrock dam was originally 350 feet tall with a crest length of 1,150 feet. It was repaired and raised 5 feet between 1935 and 1937, increasing its storage by 9,000 acre-feet with a total storage capacity of 272,200 acre-feet.**