



NEWS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Idaho Water Resource Board approves \$5.2 million loan to the North Side Canal Co. to rebuild concrete canal channel below Milner Dam**

POCATELLO - (Sept. 19, 2016) - The Idaho Water Resource Board approved a \$5.2 million loan to the North Side Canal Company (NSCC) on Friday to rebuild a 4,200-foot-long section of concrete canal immediately downstream from the Milner Dam head gates during the board's regular meeting in Pocatello.

The concrete section of the North Side Canal dates to 1908 and 1909. The canal company has been spending approximately \$80,000 a year to patch and repair cracked and settled areas of the canal lining. NSCC is pursuing a more robust long-term fix that will stabilize the existing concrete lining with geotextile fabrics, a PVC geomembrane liner, and a 4- to 6-inch-thick reinforced concrete cap on the side walls and bottom of the canal.

The loan has a 20-year term with 3.5-percent interest. The North Side Canal Company serves 2,200 water users who irrigate about 160,000 acres of land in Jerome, Gooding and Elmore counties.

The Water Board received updates at Friday's meeting on Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA) managed recharge program activities, the status of ESPA ground water monitoring efforts, and details on the first year of implementation of the historic water settlement between surface water users and ground water users in the ESPA area.

Information presentations also were given by Elese Teton, tribal water engineer for the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. Newly elected chair of the Western States Water Council and former chair of the Idaho Water Resource Board, Jerry Rigby, provided updates on Council priorities. And the newly formed Teton Water Users Association presented a proposal to improve water management practices in the Teton Valley with a request for potential cost-share funding from the Water Resource Board.

The Water Board also heard about the status of the informational meetings and public hearings held throughout Idaho to gather comments on the board's State Water Plan Sustainability Policy. Public

comments will be accepted through Friday, Sept. 30. The Board’s Planning Committee will meet in the coming weeks to review the comments and testimony, and it ultimately will submit a final recommendation to the Board for adoption and submission to the Idaho Legislature.

In other action, the Water Board:

- Approved approximately \$328,000 for feasibility analysis and identification of potential recharge sites across the ESPA, a number of which are located in the Upper Snake River above American Falls Reservoir. The additional sites are intended to increase the capacity of managed recharge flows by the board.
- Approved up to \$200,000 toward the cost of locating and installing several new mid-elevation snow telemetry sites in Idaho with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. It is aimed at improving water supply forecasting information in priority basins such as the upper Snake River.
- Heard a presentation from Idaho Power Co. regarding cloud-seeding activities in southern Idaho. Idaho Power officials described efforts to expand the program with collaborative funding from the Water Resource Board and water users in the Upper Snake, Boise and Wood River basins. Idaho Power estimates, at full buildout over the next several years, the cloud-seeding efforts will create an additional 215,000 acre-feet, 118,000 acre-feet and 456,000 acre-feet of water in the Boise, Wood River and Upper Snake River basins, respectively.
- Following a work session on Thursday, the Water Resource Board toured the site of a rehabilitated diversion dam and canal inlet structure operated by the Last Chance Canal Company near Grace. The project involved replacement of a 100-year-old timber-crib dam and diversion structure with a new concrete dam and canal head gate. The project was partially financed with a \$2.5 million loan from the Board, approved earlier this year.

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