



NEWS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Idaho Water Resource Board approves 10 flood-management grants statewide, \$3.7 million for ESPA recharge infrastructure

MOSCOW - (July 31, 2018) – The Idaho Water Resource Board has approved 10 flood-management grants statewide, totaling \$767,000, to assist various flood-control districts, counties and others with 50 percent cost-share funding to repair flood damages that have occurred in recent times following heavy snowfall and peak water runoff.

Flood Control District No. 9 in Blaine County received a \$90,000 flood-management grant to restore the Big Wood River channel in the area of three irrigation head gate structures that serve 6,300 acres of agricultural land south of Bellevue, among other improvements. Flooding in the winter of 2017 changed the river channel to the point where it doesn't adequately deliver water to the head gate structures, officials said. The total cost of the project is \$273,809.

Blaine County received a flood-management grant of \$121,331 for a project to address multiple issues that have been causing the Big Wood River to flood in the Della View Subdivision in Hailey during high-water periods. The total cost of that project is \$306,334. The \$185,003 cost-share will be covered by Blaine County, the City of Hailey, and Flood Control District No. 9. The project will include activating a side channel on the Big Wood River and developing conveyance channels in the Della View subdivision.

Flood District No. 10, based in Eagle, received four flood-management grants totaling \$292,758 to repair damages resulting from heavy flooding in the winter of 2017. One project will shore up the banks of the Boise River adjacent to the New Dry Creek diversion structure, another will seal off the banks of the Boise River and stop the pit-capture of the river in the Duck Alley area, and two gravel-removal projects will restore water flows to damaged diversion projects and prevent erosion of private lands.

The 2018 Idaho Legislature set aside \$1 million for a new flood-management grant program to be administered by the Idaho Water Resource Board. The first 10 grants approved at the board meeting in Moscow account for about 76 percent of those funds. Since there is an account balance of \$233,000 remaining in the grant program, the board will open a second application period through Aug. 17 to solicit and accept more flood-management grant applications. A final decision on those applications will be announced at the board's meeting on Sept. 14.

"We thought that this was a wonderful program that the state Legislature put together, and we appreciate the hard work of our staff to act on these applications in a swift and timely manner," said Vince Alberdi, board member from Kimberly who chairs the Finance Committee. "All of the grants required a 50 percent match. We think that's important for the local entities have "skin in the game," if you will, to make these projects possible."

In other action, the board approved \$3.7 million in infrastructure improvements to enhance the capacity of the board's managed recharge program for the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA). The board set a new record with ESPA recharge in

the winter of 2018 by sending 545,000 acre-feet of water into the ESPA in the Upper Snake River Valley and the Magic Valley region. The record flows more than doubled the board’s annual goal of an average of 250,000 acre-feet per year.

The funding will go toward five infrastructure-enhancement projects for delivery of recharge water on various canal systems, including a bypass of the Milepost 28 hydro plant on the Milner-Gooding Canal, and the development of recharge sites on the North Side Canal below Wilson Lake, Farmers Friend Canal, Randall Canal, and the Butte Market Lake irrigation system.

“It’s important to develop all of these sites to give the board more capacity and flexibility in our recharge operations,” said Wesley Hipke, recharge project manager for the board.

In other action, the board:

- Is partnering with the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) to study the feasibility of increasing reservoir storage capacity on the Boise River, including potential small raises of Lucky Peak, Arrowrock, and Anderson Ranch Dams. Reclamation has received partial funding for the study under the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN Act), which may also authorize funding for construction of projects determined to be feasible by Jan. 1, 2021. In order to meet this deadline, the board approved Reclamation’s recommendation to focus the study on a potential raise of Anderson Ranch at this time, and to continue to evaluate the feasibility of other sites in the future.
- Complimented water users in the Treasure Valley, IDWR Director Gary Spackman, and others for reaching a stipulated settlement regarding the Boise River Reservoir refill issue. The settlement will create a water right for high flows that refill the reservoirs after flood-control releases have occurred. The refill water rights will be senior to any water projects that may be proposed in the future that could divert surplus flows from the Boise River. Two projects are currently in the proposal stage in the Elmore County area.

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