



NEWS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **IWRB tours New York Canal Rehabilitation Project - Construction of first mile of 6-mile project will be built in Winter 2024-25**

BOISE - (Nov. 25, 2024) – Idaho Water Resource Board (IWRB) members toured the New York Canal Rehabilitation Project last week in Boise as part of its regular bimonthly meeting.

“This project is huge to us,” said Bob Carter, Project Manager for the Boise Project Board of Control. “With the Water Board’s support, we’re going to do one mile of rehabilitation per year. That’s a big morale boost for our 100 employees, and we’ll get the project done in six years instead of 50.”

Carter noted that the Boise Project has been doing the rehabilitation work on shorter sections of the canal, typically 400 to 500 feet per year. The IWRB has budgeted \$50 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds over the next six years for the New York Canal Rehabilitation Project, due to be completed by 2030. The total cost is \$81 million.

“We’re doing this for the health and safety of the community,” Carter said during the tour, noting that the New York Canal is perched above thousands of homes in the Boise area.

The New York Canal delivers irrigation water to five irrigation districts in the Treasure Valley. The districts serve about 165,000 acres of farmland throughout the valley and 1,500 miles of canals, laterals and drains. The Bureau of Reclamation has designated the New York Canal as an “Urban Canal of Concern” due to its age and public safety. It was completed in 1909.

With about 2,500 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water flow moving through the large canal – located high on a bench above the city of Boise – the prospect of any water leaks in the canal raises the safety question. Thus, rehabilitating and improving the New York Canal is a high priority for Boise Project, Carter said.

“Given the age of the canal, we’re trying to be proactive with our maintenance activities to prevent any kind of major event from happening,” Carter said.

The rehabilitation project involves deepening the New York Canal to its original depth, compacting the dirt, and then adding a black liner that consists of polyester non-wovens bonded to a polyethylene geomembrane. On top of that, construction crews add rebar and six inches of concrete. The deepening of the canal will allow the Boise Project to restore the full capacity of the canal water flow to 2,800 cfs.

The New York Canal Rehabilitation Project is also a high priority for the IWRB given the importance of the canal to the five irrigation districts and hundreds of farms and ranches in the Treasure Valley. The project is on the IWRB's Regional Water Sustainability Projects Priority List of major water projects statewide.

The canal is owned by the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and operated by the Boise Project Board of Control, the operating agent for the five irrigation districts in the Treasure Valley: Boise-Kuna Irrigation District, Big Bend Irrigation District, Nampa & Meridian Irrigation District, New York Irrigation District, and Wilder Irrigation District.

**The New York Canal serves as the backbone of agricultural production in the Treasure Valley.** The regional agricultural industry has an estimated value of \$1 billion in direct and indirect economic impact. Primary crops raised in the valley include alfalfa hay, corn, mint, sugar beets, wheat and seed production.

In other action, the IWRB:

- Voted to approve \$200,000 per year to match local water users' contribution to the Conservation, Infrastructure, and Efficiency Fund (CIEF) for the Big Wood Groundwater Management Plan for the next three years. The fund is part of a multi-pronged management plan recommended by surface water and groundwater users in the Big Wood Basin to provide a sustainable water supply for all users.
- Voted to approve \$250,000 in fiscal 2025 and \$600,000 over the next three fiscal years for the IDWR hydrology team to work together with the U.S. Geological Survey to develop a new groundwater model for the Western Snake Plain, including the Mountain Home Plateau Aquifer. The model for the Western Snake Plain will tie together with the recently completed Treasure Valley Groundwater Flow Model, officials said.

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