



NEWS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bureau of Reclamation presents updated design and estimated costs for raising Anderson Ranch Dam to create additional water storage

IDAHO FALLS - (May 24, 2023) – Bureau of Reclamation officials provided updated design and cost estimates for enlarging the size of Anderson Ranch Reservoir on the South Fork of the Boise River on Friday at the Idaho Water Resource Board’s bimonthly meeting here in Idaho Falls.

The updated estimates were provided at the 30 percent design stage, which includes a more-refined design of the dam raise, spillway modification, and more than 18 mitigation projects around the reservoir rim to accommodate the increased water surface elevation. The overall project costs are likely to increase from the \$83 million feasibility study cost estimate to approximately \$124.8 million, due in part to increased inflationary costs related to labor and construction materials, officials said.

Reclamation officials stressed that the design team will focus on opportunities to reduce costs during subsequent design activities and update the Board on refined cost estimates in the coming months.

Lanie Paquin, Reclamation’s Snake River Area Office Manager, said the dam raise construction process is expected to take four years. Paquin also stated that the potential restriction on the reservoir pool elevation during construction is expected to be lower than identified in the feasibility study because of the updated design and construction schedule, which will reduce the potential impact to existing Anderson Ranch Reservoir space-holders.

Paquin said the dam raise construction costs increased from earlier estimates from \$44M to \$65M, and reservoir rim projects increased from \$12M to \$39M. The Board has issued payments totaling \$74.1M to Reclamation to cover its non-federal, cost-share obligation for the project. Reclamation officials did not request any additional funds from the Water Board on Friday. Cost estimates will be updated in the coming months with subsequent design stages, she said.

In other action, the Board set new timelines for soliciting applications for the next two rounds of [Aging Infrastructure Grant](#) proposals in fiscal year 2024. The first-round application period is now open for a total of \$12.5 million in projects statewide. Applications are due by Aug. 4. Applications for the second round in fiscal 2024 are due Dec. 1, 2023, for \$12.5 million in projects statewide.

Project applications are limited to a maximum of \$2M per project. More details about the grant criteria can be found on the [Aging Infrastructure Grants web page](#).

The Board also set a process for inviting presentations from entities seeking funding for water projects on the statewide [Regional Water Sustainability List](#), beginning in June. Board staff has ranked projects on the list and will contact the entities invited to give presentations with details on the dates and what applicants are expected to cover in the presentations.

In other action, the Board received an update on the managed recharge program for the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA), noting that 138,653 acre-feet of water was recharged into the ESPA during the 2022-23 winter season. The Board seeks to recharge an annual average of 250,000 acre-feet of water into the ESPA each year, but there was a major shortage of water in the Upper Snake River region this winter due to extremely low reservoir carryover, officials said, limiting water supply for recharge.

The Board also approved spending \$1.3M to develop an ESPA recharge site in partnership with New Sweden Irrigation District. The development of the 10-acre recharge site includes the purchase of the land and construction of the basin having a potential recharge capacity of 40-50 cubic feet per second, officials said. Conducting recharge at this location will benefit the aquifer along with reaches of the Snake River between Idaho Falls and American Falls Reservoir. The project is located about five miles southwest of Idaho Falls.

In other action, the Board:

- Learned that its collaborative cloud-seeding program with Idaho Power resulted in 1.3 million acre-feet of additional snow-water content in the winter of 2022-23 in the Boise, Payette, Big Wood and Upper Snake basins. Snow-making activities added 190,000 acre-feet of snow water content in the Henrys Fork Basin, 400,000 acre-feet in the Upper Snake, 107,000 acre-feet in the Big Wood, 270,000 acre-feet in the Boise basin and 250,000 acre-feet in the Payette basin, officials said.

“This was a great year for cloud-seeding,” said Kresta Davis, senior manager of water resources and policy for Idaho Power.

- Toured Ririe Dam and Reservoir on Thursday along with several canal infrastructure projects in the greater Idaho Falls area. The Board is funding a study in partnership with Mitigation Inc. to investigate the way water is managed in Ririe Reservoir by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Reclamation. The study is evaluating the impacts of changing the Corps’ flood-control rule curve for Ririe Reservoir to potentially increase wintertime storage. Currently, the federal entities release water from the reservoir in the fall to make space for spring flood water before it is known whether flood-control releases are necessary to protect communities below.
- Approved a \$90,000 loan request from the Conant Creek Canal Company to reline sections of the existing canal and install flow meters and automation equipment to help the canal regulate summer flows and help with carryover into subsequent seasons.

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