

Capital Press

The West's **Ag** Weekly

BACK TO THE

FUTURE



John O'Connell/Capital Press
Driggs, Idaho, rancher Stephen Bagley shows a dry creekbed through his pasture, where he plans to restore flood irrigation. Bagley and other agricultural producers in the area are looking to use flood irrigation to restore declining groundwater levels.

Movement seeks to bring back flood irrigation in some areas

By JOHN O'CONNELL
Capital Press

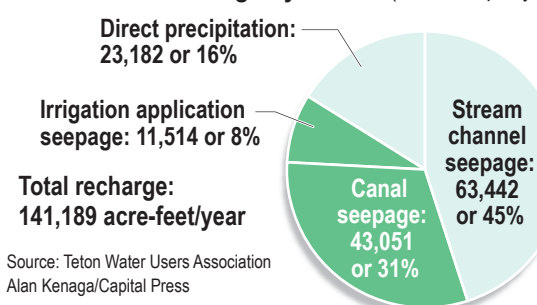
Chris Colson champions an admittedly antiquated and inefficient method of watering crops — flood irrigation. The Boise-based regional biologist for Ducks Unlimited is part of a movement that recognizes the wildlife and water-supply benefits of flood irrigation, and the need to make certain it continues to be used in floodplains and other strategic locations across the West. Ironically, his efforts to preserve flood irrigation often tap the same federal dollars that help farmers install high-efficiency pivots, which threaten to render flood irrigation obsolete. The attraction for Colson and others is that flood irrigation, with its leaky canals and standing water, helps recharge shrinking aquifers and provides migratory birds with a stop-over on their annual pilgrimages between the Arctic and points south.

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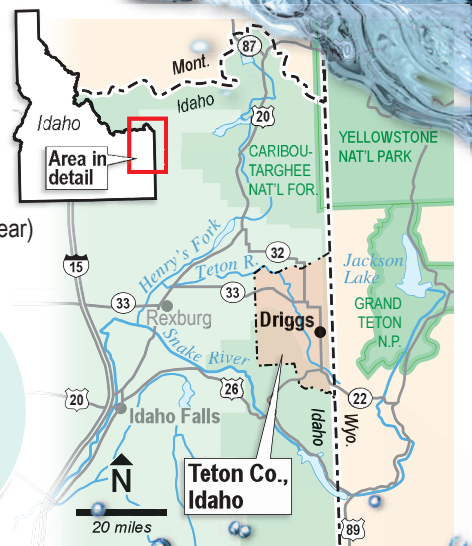
Aquifer recharge on the east side of Teton Valley

More than a third of all annual recharge in the region relies on canal and irrigation application seepage.

Mean annual recharge by source (Acre-feet per year)



Source: Teton Water Users Association
Alan Kenaga/Capital Press



TOP PHOTO: Migrating birds stop over at a flooded field on Joe Villagrana's ranch in Lake County, Ore. Several projects are in the works around the West to restore flood irrigation to benefit waterfowl and wildlife and replenish declining groundwater levels. Courtesy of Ducks Unlimited

State and local GMO bans declared legal

9th Circuit rules federal law doesn't pre-empt state and local prohibitions

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

Federal law does not pre-empt state or local governments from banning genetically engineered crops that have been deregulated by USDA, according to

a federal appeals court. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has reversed an earlier ruling that held Maui County in Hawaii was prohibited from banning commercialized genetically modified organisms in 2014 because the ordinance was pre-empted by fed-

eral rules for biotechnology. Because the USDA lacks jurisdiction over biotech crops once they're deregulated, there is no conflict between local regulations and federal rules and laws, the 9th Circuit said.

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Workers bag tassels of GMO corn to collect pollen in a Syngenta test plot on the island of Kauai in this file photo. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has resolved a lawsuit over a GMO ban in Hawaii's Maui County that has implications for other Western states. Dan Wheat/Capital Press



Courtesy of House Republican Caucus
Former Washington state lawmaker Bill Hinkle will be development director of Save Family Farming, a group formed this year to respond to the What's Upstream advocacy campaign.

Ex-legislator joins fight against What's Upstream

Save Family Farming hires Bill Hinkle

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

Save Family Farming, formed this year to push back against the What's Upstream campaign, has hired former Washington state lawmaker Bill Hinkle as its development

director, hoping he will help the emergent group establish itself as a statewide defender of agriculture in the public arena. Hinkle represented a Central Washington district for 10 years and was on the House Agriculture Committee. He

will strengthen ties with producers across the state, Save Family Farming's only other employee, director Gerald Baron, said. Save Family Farming originated in northwestern Washington, but has sought a statewide reach. Baron, a public relations specialist, has led the group's response to What's Upstream, a lobbying

campaign organized by the Puget Sound-based Swinomish Indian tribe and funded by the Environmental Protection Agency. The group has rebutted claims by What's Upstream that farmers are unregulated polluters of water. Government watchdog agencies are

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