

Water supply in SW Idaho so good that focus switches to flood prevention

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

BOISE — Southwestern Idaho irrigators don't have to worry about whether they will have an adequate water supply this year.

Basins in the region received so much snow this winter that water managers are running rivers at maximum levels to prevent flooding.

As a result, the Boise River has been flowing at near-record levels.

That has resulted in minor flooding in areas and even the removal of a bridge. Boise residents are being warned not to get too close to the raging river.

The river is flowing at around 8,000 cubic feet per second at the Glenwood Bridge, an official U.S. Geological Survey measuring



Sean Ellis/Capital Press File

The Boise River flows through Boise, Idaho, last June. Water managers have increased the river's flow this spring to in an attempt to prevent flooding.

site. That's above the median flow of 477 cubic feet per second for this time of the year.

"That river is full, full, full," said Mark Zirschky, manager of Pioneer Irrigation District, which provides

water to 5,800 patrons. "It's probably the worst I've seen it on the river in 20 years."

The river is over-topping PID structures and running over the top of head gates, Zirschky said.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation estimates that runoff from the Boise River Basin will be 153 percent of average this year.

There was enough snow in the basin to fill the system's reservoirs several times, said Greg Curtis, water superintendent for Nampa-Meridian Irrigation District, which supplies irrigation water to 69,000 acres.

The Boise River system's three reservoirs provide water to more than 300,000 irrigated acres.

"We should have a very good water year," said Curtis, who said he has not seen

this type of plentiful water year during his 20 years with the district.

This year's plentiful water supply also bodes well for 2018 because there should be plenty of water left in area reservoirs at the end of the 2017 season, said Brian Sauer, water operations manager for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's middle Snake River field office.

"The carryover should be really good this year," he said.

Irrigators who get their water from the Payette River and Weiser River basins also have a good water supply outlook this year.

"It's looking like one of the best water years we've had in a long time," said Brandi Horton, watermaster for the Weiser River sys-

tem, which provides water for about 55,000 irrigated acres. "I have high hopes of this being a pretty darn good season."

There is also plenty of water in the Payette River system, which provides water for 160,000 irrigated acres. Like their counterparts on the Boise system, Payette water managers are focused on trying to prevent flooding.

The Payette River is at its maximum level, just below flood stage, and there has been some minor flooding in areas.

"We're having a hard time getting water down the river as gracefully as we would like to," said Payette River system watermaster Ron Shurtleff. "It's looking pretty plush for us this year."

Farmer claims processing facility buyout; Simplot calls it a 'sham'

New lawsuit filed in dispute between Frank Tiegs, J.R. Simplot

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

A large-scale Northwest farmer claims in a new lawsuit to have bought out full ownership of a Washington processing facility from his partner, the J.R. Simplot Co.

Simplot, however, characterizes the transaction as "nothing more than a sham" that's part of a deliberate scheme of mismanagement by farmer Frank Tiegs.

The allegations are part of a legal battle between Tiegs and Simplot over the operations of Gem State Processing in Heyburn, Idaho, and Pasco Processing in Pasco, Wash., both of which they own jointly.

Simplot filed a lawsuit last year accusing Tiegs of running the processing facilities into the ground financially to benefit his own farming affiliates.

The complaint claimed that Tiegs' farm companies sold excessive amounts of inferior-quality crops to the processing plants at above-market prices, resulting in millions of dollars in losses.

Simplot has asked a federal judge to appoint a receiver to take over management of the processing companies while Tiegs has requested the case be thrown out.

Tiegs has now filed a lawsuit asking another federal judge to declare that he's purchased Simplot's half of Pasco Processing — including its National Frozen Foods subsidiary — as permitted under an operating agreement between the partners.

The complaint alleges the two companies reached a deadlock about whether to

each infuse the processing plant with \$3 million in capital to ensure it complied with loan covenants.

According to Tiegs, the deadlock triggered "buyout" provisions entitling him to purchase Pasco Processing for a pre-arranged price based on its financial performance.

Because that price was a "negative number," Tiegs was "not required to tender cash or other available funds" for Simplot's shares, the complaint said.

Simplot has alleged this an "attempted conversion" that's "the latest act in a pattern of willful, reckless and grossly negligent misconduct."

The deadlock was manufactured by Tiegs to take over Pasco Processing "at an artificially low price — resulting from a devaluation caused by defendants' bad acts," according to Simplot.

Simplot argues that Tiegs could not actually force the sale in this manner but has nonetheless claimed to be the sole owner of Pasco Processing to its employees and lender.

The company has asked a federal judge to either dismiss Tiegs' lawsuit or merge it with the previous case.

Managers: Some reservoirs filling too fast for comfort

By JOHN O'CONNELL
Capital Press

KETCHUM, Idaho — State water managers admit they're growing uneasy about conditions in a few reservoirs, which have been filling faster than flows can be released.

Ongoing challenges with Magic Reservoir, located on the Big Wood River between Ketchum and Twin Falls, Little Wood Reservoir near Carey and on the main stem of the Snake River in Madison County provide the latest examples of Idaho irrigators receiving too much of a good thing following an exceedingly wet winter.

Magic Reservoir has filled, and water has been flowing uncontrolled over the spillway. Blaine County Sheriff Steve Harkins said flows into the reservoir surged in late March and early April due to rain and hot weather, flooding a 150-yard stretch of Magic Road 3 feet deep in water.

"We had a vehicle swept off the road and the driver had to be rescued," Harkins said, adding water levels have dropped since then due to cooler weather.

But Harkins warns peak runoff from the Wood River



Courtesy of Michael Folo

Water rushes over the spillway at Magic Reservoir near Ketchum on April 1. Water managers in Idaho are becoming concerned about the potential for flooding in rapidly filling runoff in some of the area's reservoirs.

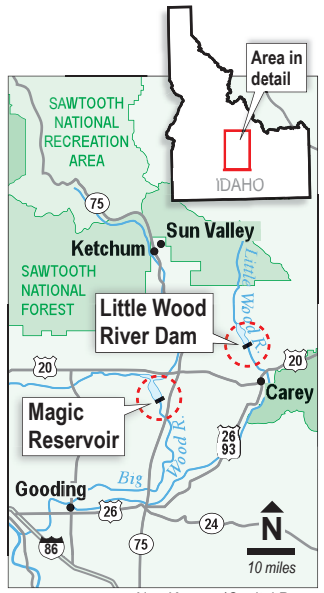
Basin still lies ahead, and the flooding is far from over.

Corey Loveland, Bureau of Reclamation water operations manager, said Little Wood Reservoir, which holds 30,000 acre-feet, was drained until it bottomed out at 3,500 acre-feet on March 15.

"We've been filling up the Little Wood since then, but we've maximized our discharge out of the Little Wood," Loveland said.

Loveland said reservoir gains have been greater than expected, as BOR had anticipated irrigators would be demanding water by now. The agency is still awaiting the start of irrigation demand, Loveland said. He said BOR isn't frantic about the situation and is confident the dam is structurally sound.

"We'll be OK if the snow comes off normally, but if there's a rain-on-snow event or if it really warms up, we could be in trouble there,"



Alan Kenaga/Capital Press

Loveland said. "It's not in the forecast."

Bob Simpson, assistant dam operator with the Little Wood Irrigation District, said the dam has been releasing the maximum amount of water — roughly 950 second-feet — since Feb. 1. Simpson said the surrounding mountains still have 160 percent of their usual snowpack for the date — about 20 percent more than during 2006, which was the most recent wet year in the area.

"It's filling a lot faster than I'd like to see," Simpson said.

Flooding could impact at least 500 acres of crops downstream, he said.

Jim Rindfleisch, general manager of Big Lost River Irrigation District, said Mackay Reservoir is about 44 percent full, and he's been seeking to balance the risk of flooding with the possibility of releasing too much storage.

GOT MILKERS?
Celebrate June Dairy Month in Capital Press' 33RD Annual Dairy Industry SPECIAL SECTION June 2ND, 2017

Our annual Dairy Special Section spotlights dairy operations and operators in California, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. It features an in depth look at the situations and successes - needs and concerns of this dynamic industry.

To reach our print and online readers, contact your sales representative or call 1-800-882-6789.

Ad space reservation is by Friday, May 5th.

Capital Press
The West's Ag Weekly

PO Box 2048 • Salem, OR 97308
(503) 364-4798
(800) 882-6789
Fax: (503) 364-2692 or (503) 370-4383
www.capitalpress.com

ROP-14-4-2/#13

LOW INTEREST LOANS FOR IDAHO SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION

- Sprinkler Irrigation
- No-Till Drills
- Fences
- Livestock Feeding Operations
- Solar Stock Water Pump Systems

2.5%-3.25%
Terms 7-15 Years
Up to \$200,000

IDAHO CONSERVATION LOAN PROGRAM

swc.idaho.gov | 208-332-1790

ROP-10-024/#17

2017 **Wheat College**
Presented by AMMO, a program of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers



R.S.V.P. to the WAWG office by April 12th
509.659.0610
First 100 to R.S.V.P. receive a FREE 2.5 gallon container of RoundUp, sponsored by AgLink, Helena Chemical, Wilbur Ellis and Syngenta. Random prize drawings will be held throughout the day, sponsored by Dow AgroSciences and Albaugh, LLC.

Thursday, April 27
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Three Rivers Convention Center
7016 West Grandridge Blvd.
Kennewick, WA 99336
Lunch is included.
You do not need to be a WAWG member to attend.
Event sponsored by the Washington Grain Commission

Wheat College
With featured speaker: Greg Kruger and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Pesticide Application Technology Lab, equipped with state-of-the-art greenhouse and wind tunnels. In cooperation with Washington State University, additional topics will include:

- Pesticide drift
- Herbicide resistance
- Worker Protection Standards

▷ Pesticide Credits will be offered.
▷ Watch for a full session outline in an upcoming *Wheat Life* edition!

AMMO
Agricultural Marketing & Management Organization

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

14-7/#6

LEGAL
SECRETARY OF STATE NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING
Oregon Department of Agriculture, Food Safety & Animal Health Programs, Administrative Rules Chapter #603, Sue Gooch, Rules Coordinator (503) 986-4583. Amend: OAR 603-052-1320.
RULE SUMMARY: The Monarch butterfly, *Danaus plexippus*, is currently still listed on the approved list, but is not allowed for import and release to allow biogeographical research related to determining why wild monarch populations in Oregon are declining. In order to avoid confusion in the permitting process, we recommend removing the Monarch butterfly from the approved list. Last day for public comment is April 15, 2017.
14-1/#4