

# Washington Grain Commission passes \$7.3M budget

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**  
Capital Press

Washington Grain Commission board members recently passed a \$7.3 million budget, up from \$6.3 million last year.

The biggest funding increase was in public relations and transportation-related activities, in the commission's own public education spending and through its contract with the Washington Association of Wheat Growers.

"Certainly there is more pressure on the transportation system — primarily the navigation system," said Glen Squires, commission CEO.

The commission expects assessment income for the current year to be approximately \$7.6 million for wheat and barley combined.

Growers are assessed .0075% for wheat and 1% for barley net receipts collected at first point of sale.

COVID-19 pandemic impacts led to reduced travel, conferences, trade teams and consultants, Squires said.

"We have tried to compensate with virtual meetings where feasible," he said.

Research efforts continued with adjustment to account for COVID protocols.

All research projects proposed for funding were supported and most included slight increases due to increased wages. Roughly 67% goes to breeding related projects, Squires said.

"Even the Wheat Week education efforts had to adjust due to lack of classroom in-person teaching," Squires said.

The board voted to add \$400,000 from cash accounts to an assigned reserve fund balance at the beginning of the 2022 fiscal year, bringing the total to \$5.4 million. There is also an assigned marketing reserve fund balance of \$1.35 million, bringing total reserved fund balance accounts of \$6.75 million for the fiscal year.

Fiscal year 2022 programs are funded by assessments collected during the 2021 crop year.

# IDWR sends curtailment notices to water users

Capital Press

The Idaho Department of Water Resources has sent a curtailment notice to about 129 water users representing approximately 136 ground water rights in the Magic Valley and eastern Idaho.

The notice warns water users that IDWR will curtail their water use if they're not members of a water district with an approved mitigation plan.

Water shutoffs were to begin on June 3, according to the notice.

The Upper Snake River Basin, like much of southern Idaho, experienced a dry winter with below-normal snowpack. The Army Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation May 1 coordinated stream-flow runoff forecast predicted a 2.1 million acre-foot runoff volume in the Snake River from May through July, which is approximately 74% of normal.

The curtailment notice affects ground water users whose water rights have a priority date junior to May 30, 1989, and are within the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer area.

The notices are related to a 2011 water delivery call by the Surface Water Coalition. IDWR has approved mitigation plans in relation to this delivery call submitted by the Idaho Ground Water Appropriators, the Southwest and Goose Creek irrigation districts, the Coalition of Cities and the A&B Irrigation District.

Affected ground water users can avoid curtailment as long as the owners of those rights are covered by an approved mitigation plan or are members in "good standing" with an Idaho Ground Water Asso-

ciation ground water district or another party with an approved mitigation plan.

To stay in "good standing" with a ground water district, water users must be current in paying all district assessments, which the districts use to fund their mitigation activities.

IDWR officials encourage junior ground water users receiving curtailment notices to join a ground water district near them to receive the benefit of the approved mitigation plan and avoid curtailment.

Under the curtailment order, water users have 15 days to join a ground water district. Most, but not all, junior ground water users in the region have already joined a district for mitigation purposes.

"If a ground water user receives a notice of curtailment, that means neither IDWR nor the watermaster has received notice from IGWA that an approved mitigation plan covers the user's water rights, or that they're a participant in good standing with a ground water district that has an approved mitigation plan in the ESPA region," said Mat Weaver, deputy director of IDWR.

The curtailment notice warns recipients that IDWR's watermasters will curtail their ground water rights unless the water users send proof of participation in a ground water district and mitigation plan to the watermasters of Water Districts 100, 110, 120, 130 or 140.

Ground water rights for single-family domestic and small stockwater uses are exempt from the curtailment order.

For more information, contact the IDWR water distribution staff at 208-287-4800 or 208-736-3033.

# Silvia Rondon appointed director of Oregon Integrated Pest Management Center

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**  
Capital Press

HERMISTON, Ore. — When Silvia Rondon first arrived in Hermiston, Ore., in 2006, local farmers were struggling with a surge of potato tuber moths damaging their crop.

Rondon, a professor and entomologist at Oregon State University's Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center, was just establishing her program focused on integrated pest management for irrigated row crops in the Columbia Basin.

After studying the pernicious insect, Rondon and her team learned the moth's larvae prefer to feed on the leaves of young potato plants. Rather than spraying up to eight pesticide applications throughout the growing season, farmers could spray once or twice closer to harvest before the foliage shrivels and dies.

"That is the critical time," Rondon said. "Once the foliage, which is the preferred feeding host of the pest, is gone, that's when they start attacking the tubers."



**Silvia Rondon**

Over the years, Rondon has helped growers in northeast Oregon and southeast Washington battle a variety of infestations, including potato psyllid, potato beetle and lygus bugs.

Her experience has led Rondon to a new position as director of OSU's Integrated Pest Management Center, helping farmers across Oregon and the Pacific Northwest improve their production.

The Integrated Pest Management Center — formerly known as the Integrated Plant Protection Center — is based at OSU's main campus in Corvallis, though Rondon said she will remain in Hermiston for the time being and continue to oversee the station's entomology program.

Rondon was selected by an 11-person search committee consisting of members from OSU, the state Department of Agriculture and industry groups. Her appointment is effective July 1.

"I am super excited about this position, and the new challenge ahead of me," Rondon said. "I think my expertise fits really well."

Integrated pest management is about more than pesticides. It takes into account things like crop selection, mechanical controls, biological agents such as harnessing beneficial insects and regular field monitoring. These practices work in tandem to keep pest populations at manageable levels.

The center has four signature projects, including pesticide risk management and safety education and pest and weather modeling. The fourth project is working with researchers and growers to put integrated pest management plans into action. Rondon said she is looking forward to expanding the center's influence, and improving communication within those networks.

"A lot of people do fantastic work within their own niches," she said. "Better communication will really connect the dots."

In an email announcing Rondon's appointment, Alan Sams, dean of the OSU College of Agricultural Sciences, said she

will help to strengthen the center, "enhancing our strategic goal to help our industries compete in their markets, domestically and globally."

Being based in Hermiston has given Rondon a broad grounding. The Columbia Basin, with its loamy soil and climate consisting of hot days and cool nights, grows more than 200 irrigated crops, each of which poses its own challenges and opportunities.

Umatilla County leads the state in production of vegetables, melons and potatoes, according to the most recent USDA Census of Agriculture, with sales topping \$111 million.

"My specific program here in Hermiston will continue to be driven by the needs of local growers," Rondon said. "I am extremely appreciative for all the support they have given me."

While her background is in entomology, Rondon knows she has more to learn in her new role. Integrated pest management involves not only insects, but plant pathology and weed and livestock management, she said.

# Anderson Ranch Dam expansion delayed

By **BRAD CARLSON**  
Capital Press

A plan to increase the capacity of Anderson Ranch Dam will take long than anticipated.

A final environmental impact statement and record of decision initially expected to be released this year will instead come out in 2023, following a detailed design analysis that will outline any reservoir-restriction requirements during construction.

The Idaho Water Resource Board and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, which would share the estimated \$83.3 million cost equally, said the new schedule provides more time for analysis while keeping the project on track to meet Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act requirements. That federal law requires initiation of a final design by Dec. 16, 2021.

Raising the dam, which is on the South Fork Boise River northeast of Mountain Home, would provide southwest Idaho with more water for irrigation and other uses while increasing the flexibility for managing the three



U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

**Anderson Ranch Dam in Elmore County, Idaho.**

Boise River dams.

"This pause on the Environmental Impact Statement allows our subject-matter experts to complete further design on the dam and associated features so we can better identify impacts and corresponding mitigation in the final EIS," said Christine Schuldheisz, a Reclamation public affairs specialist in Boise.

The bureau will work with the Idaho Water Resource Board on mitigation for irrigation districts and other water users, according to Rec-

lamation regional public affairs officer Michael Coffey.

The reservoir can hold 413,000 acre-feet of water. Raising the 456-foot dam by six feet as proposed would add about 29,000 acre-feet of storage capacity.

Treasure Valley Water Users Association Executive Director Roger Batt said he met with Reclamation officials May 25. The association represents irrigation, canal and ditch districts that provide water to about 300,000 acres from Boise to Parma, where the Boise River flows into the Snake River.

"Our folks basically said the sooner we know of the mitigation plan, the better off we're going to be to do our risk-benefit analysis so that we know how much water we can deliver to our patrons," he said. Association members need time to put together their own plans and work with customers.

The maximum shortfall could be as high as 97,000 acre-feet per year over three years as the reservoir is drawn down for construction, which could start in late 2024 or early 2025, Batt said.

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