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Brad Carlson/Capital Press

Paul Arrington, Idaho Water Users Association executive director and general counsel.

KEEPING THE WATER FLOWING

Idaho's irrigators, other users depend on Paul Arrington

By **BRAD CARLSON**
Capital Press

Paul Arrington lasted one day as a farmhand. “We picked rock out of a field,” the Idaho Water Users Association executive director and general counsel said, referring to his introduction to farming as a 12-year-old near Twin Falls in 1989. The farmer “called Mom and said it’s not going to work out.”

But the memorably tough day helped confirm Arrington enjoys being around other people — a key to his success advocating for farmers and other water users for the past 18 years and counting.

“I enjoy interacting with folks,” he said. “I really enjoy learning what makes peo-



Garth Taylor

ple tick and learning about how people view the world from different perspectives. I enjoy learning about and hearing different things.”

Arrington’s people skills and enthusiasm help him keep water a top-of-mind issue in the quickly growing state as he leads the 300-member association.

“This job is 99 percent about building and developing relationships,” he said.

Association members include surface water and groundwater users, and support providers such as engineers and attorneys, equipment providers, chemical companies, and headgate and pipeline manufacturers.

Arrington, 45, said members and others in the sector can be negotiating or litigating

one day and fraternizing the next. “It’s pretty amazing to watch.”

Water is key

Water is the linchpin of Idaho’s agricultural economy.

“There would be virtually no agriculture in southern and eastern Idaho without irrigation,” said Garth Taylor, a University of Idaho agricultural economist. Those regions would have some range cattle and sheep as well as some forage and cereal crops, but otherwise “would look a lot like Wyoming.”

“All agriculture as we know it in southern and eastern Idaho is created by irrigation,” he said. Beneficiaries include the state’s large dairy, potato and sugar beet industries.

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PAUL ARRINGTON

Title: Executive director and general counsel, Idaho Water Users Association

Age: 45

Hometown: Twin Falls. Lives in northwest Boise.

Education: Twin Falls High School, 1995; associate degree in business administration and management, Brigham Young University-Idaho, 2000; bachelor’s degree in business and human resources management, Boise State University, 2002; Gonzaga University School of Law, 2005.

Family: Wife, Michelle; four children.

Suit invites federal judges to change wolf control in Washington

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

A lawsuit pending in the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals could upend for the worse how wolves are managed on federal land in Eastern Washington, according to the Washington Cattlemen’s Association.

The suit claims the Forest Service dodges its duty to prevent wolf-live-stock conflicts in the Colville National Forest, leading state wildlife managers to kill wolves.

In a court filing, environmental groups offer a formula for breaking the cycle: “No cattle = no cattle dep-

redations = no lethal wolf removal.”

The stakes are high, according to the cattlemen’s association. If the suit succeeds, environmental groups can sue federal agencies for the actions of Washington wildlife managers.

“Consequently, this case threatens to have significant precedential impact on the management of wildlife on federal lands, including grazing allotments,” according to an amicus brief filed by the cattlemen.

WildEarth Guardians, Western Watersheds Project and Kettle Range Conservation Group filed the suit against the Forest Service. The Diamond M ranch, which grazes cattle in

national forest, intervened.

A U.S. district court judge in Spokane last year dismissed the lawsuit, ruling she didn’t have jurisdiction to address the wrongs alleged by wolf advocates. Wolves in Eastern Washington are not federally protected.

The environmental groups appealed, and the 9th Circuit may hear the case this fall, giving the court its first chance to rule on how Washington balances wolf recovery and ranching.

Wolf advocates have sued in state courts to stop Fish and Wildlife from



ODFW

See Wolf, Page 13 **A gray wolf.**

Study calls for smarter land use planning to curb farmland loss



Sierra Dawn McClain/Capital Press File

Barns on farmland with Mount Adams in the background.

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**
Capital Press

BELLINGHAM, Wash. — The Pacific Northwest stands to lose more than half a million acres of farmland to urban sprawl by 2040 unless cities make smarter development choices, according to a new report by the American Farmland Trust.

The report, “Farms Under Threat 2040: Choosing an Abundant Future,” also highlights threats to farmland by rising sea levels due to climate change, and the accelerated expansion of solar projects needed to meet zero-carbon energy mandates.

Addie Candib, Northwest regional director for the American Farmland Trust

in Oregon, Washington and Idaho, said the findings are part of a multi-year effort to come up with solutions for preserving farmland nationwide.

“In order to be effective, we needed to have good data about what was happening to farmland,” Candib said.

Other partners in the “Farms Under Threat” program include the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Conservation Science Partners and the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment.

The initiative, Candib said, is “really an effort to quantify and map where

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