

## Managers Byline

### Spring 2019

Let's get right to my water supply forecast. I don't need my crystal ball this year because we currently have a 115% snowpack in the Upper Snake Drainages, and judging from the late start you farmers are getting there must be abundant moisture in our soils. I am anticipating that we will be delivering  $\frac{3}{4}$  water to you again for the entire season.

In addition to the abundant snowpack, and full reservoirs, the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer is also showing a very good response to the efforts by Ground Water Pumpers to reduce their withdrawals by 13% and to the Idaho Water Resource Board's managed recharge program. The recharge program has exceeded its goals each of the past 3 years and the aquifer has gained over 1.6 million acre feet from 2015 levels. Recharge is again going full blast this spring at sites all along the Snake River and at sites on the Big and Little Wood Rivers. Spring flows returning to the River are increasing in response to these efforts, resulting in better natural flow supplies for TFCC and faster reservoir fill in the winter months which is good for all Snake River waterusers.

TFCC crews have had a very busy winter installing over 100 concrete structures, cleaning ditches, reclaiming coulees from Russian Olive infestation and of course cleaning mud from our dozens of water quality ponds. One lesson we learned very clearly from the February 2017 floods is that our canals and coulees become raging rivers when more rain and/or snow falls than the landscape can absorb. The best way to control this flooding and to prevent damage to downstream property owners is to do what TFCC crews do better than anybody else: build ponds and wetlands. The Idaho Water Resource Board recognizes the increasing need to manage floodwaters and they awarded TFCC with an \$85,000 flood management grant in October of 2018 to build a pond/wetland project on the East Perrine Coulee. (Article and pictures of this will be in our TFCC Spring Newsletter that we will mail out in late April.

So; now that I have told you about our fabulous canal system and that we have abundant water this summer, I still have to ask you to manage water as carefully as you can, and conserve water whenever you can, so that we can carry-over a good storage supply for insurance against a future dry winter. If it is another wet winter next year that carry-over storage can go into recharge which in turn will help us all in future years. Maintain your irrigation systems, treat your soil kindly, treat your ditch rider kindly, treat your neighbor kindly, heck just treat everybody kindly! I'm bringing a tear to my eye... Happy Irrigating!