



Water & Environment

New UI Water of the West (WoW) program aims for sustainability

With Idaho facing water resource challenges in many areas including the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer, Rathdrum Prairie, and Palouse Basin, six colleges at the University of Idaho including the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences are starting a new graduate education, research, and outreach program to bring an interdisciplinary focus to water challenges. Called Water of the West (WoW), the program is unprecedented in the West.

WoW will offer masters and doctorate degrees in water resources, plus an optional concurrent Jurist Doctorate in water resources law. Its first course—Law, Water, and Management—begins in fall 2007. Funding the program's launch is a five-year \$1.6 million grant, part of UI President Tim White's reinvestment strategy to help faculty start new programs to address top Idaho issues.

Graduates of the multi-disciplinary program will be groomed to become leaders in addressing water resource management issues in Idaho and beyond.

UI faculty specializing in engineering, physical and natural resources, social sciences, and law—a total of more than 50 faculty members from 14 departments—is led by Jan Boll, professor in UI CALS Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering. This group will provide science, information, and analysis to support decision-making processes in water resources.

With links to Coeur d'Alene, Moscow, Boise, Idaho Falls, and Twin Falls/Kimberly, WoW will maintain strong links to the Idaho Water Resources Research Institute (IWRRI), which draws on all Idaho universities and resources to solve Idaho's water issues.

Contact Jan Boll at jboll@uidaho.edu.

Water needs of Idaho crops available on UI Web site; data comes from 123 stations

Idahoans can find out how much water their agricultural crops or native plant systems need year-round by clicking on www.kimberly.uidaho.edu/ETIdaho, a UI Web site recently updated by researchers Richard Allen and Clarence Robison of the Kimberly Research and Extension Center.

The new information offers several advantages over Allen's 1983 consumptive-use report, which has helped Idahoans establish their crops' water needs for more than

two decades: it includes winter-time periods, and its evapotranspiration figures are available on a daily basis rather than just monthly.

Compiled with localized information from 123 Idaho weather stations, the data can be used in designing and managing irrigation systems, calculating full-year water balances, conducting hydrologic studies, and managing land application of wastes.

Contact Richard Allen at rallen@kimberly.uidaho.edu.

DID YOU KNOW?

12.3 MILLION ACRE FEET
Water stored in Idaho reservoirs, enough to cover 1/4th of the state with one foot of water.

*Source: Idaho Department of Water Resources, 2007

Partnerships, barriers aid milfoil battles

University of Idaho research into the use of bottom barrier fabric panels to combat Eurasian watermilfoil infestations shows promise. Already in use in Idaho and Washington lakes, the barriers use may also expand to California.

The real progress, though, is effective partnerships among the statewide Milfoil Task Force participants created to stop the spread of the invasive weed in Idaho, said Tim Prather, UI weed scientist at Moscow.

The Coeur d'Alene Tribe, Kootenai County Weed Program, ISDA, ACE Diving, and the university are studying use of the panels in southern Lake Coeur d'Alene. Previous research saw collaboration with county weed programs in Valley, Gem, and Ada counties and with Idaho Fish and Game.

"The barriers are very useful for controlling small infestations as part of an overall early detection and rapid response program and for use around boat docks," Prather said.

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