**Irrigation and Agriculture Committee Meeting Notes**

12-5-2023

* Currently no known needs for on farm improvements. Randy Davison and Lori Ireland will discuss more with other land owners/grazing lease holders
* Understanding ownership of irrigation facilities.
  + Most canals are owned by individuals with an estimate of around 15-20% jointly owned. NRCS can fund both, but Reclamation funding usually can’t fund individually owned “on farm” facilities
* Irrigators in the watershed get their water from tributaries and not the mainstem SF Boise. There are no large storage reservoirs that supply water to irrigators in the watershed. Improving summer base flows via habitat improvements could benefit water quality and water quantity for farmers, fish and wildlife.
* Off site watering
  + Where facilities already exist there is a need for annual maintenance
  + Potentially useful at habitat restoration sites
* Fencing out cattle
  + Lower Cow Creek and some other areas already fence out cattle
  + BDAs and/or riparian planting areas may require at least temporary fencing to see the most benefit
* Invasive species management
  + Potential win-win as native plants provide better feed for cattle and more robust root systems to stabilize soils
* Beaver Dam Analogs (BDAs)
  + Most diversions are near the upstream end of private property so habitat improvements are better suited on upstream public lands
  + Investigate BDA failure rate and downstream impacts at existing sites in similar habitats
    - Identify potential compensation funding if a failed BDA or other habitat structure negatively impacts private irrigation facilities
  + Investigate alternative structures in areas too steep to expect beaver to take over long term maintenance.
* Next Steps
  + Develop mission statement and/or goals for the group
  + Potentially see if irrigation records or BSU models can estimate any historic changes in dates when natural flows reduce below water rights or reduce to nothing
  + Work with Habitat Committee on potential BDA/riparian planting locations