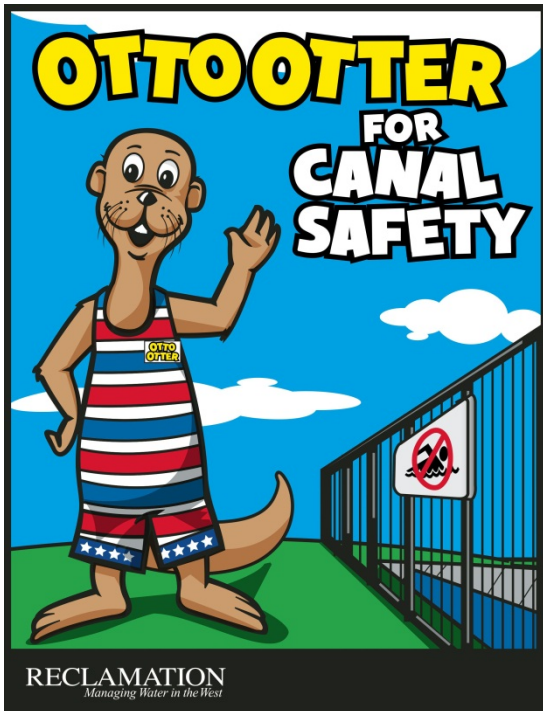


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Canal Safety Program

The Bureau of Reclamation's Otto Otter Canal Safety Program educates the community about the dangers of canals and highlights the importance of staying out and staying away from canals.



Otto Otter

Otto Otter is Reclamation's canal safety mascot. Canal safety presentations are given at schools and community events. Coloring books are available with school presentations and accessible online at <http://www.usbr.gov/pn/about/otto/graphics/coloringbook.pdf>.

Canal Facts

According to the Idaho CareLine, both children and adults drown yearly in Idaho canals and they report that more children drown in canals than any other body of water in Idaho annually.

Canal water is very cold and fast moving. The Nampa & Meridian Irrigation District estimates the water flow at the Ridenbaugh Canal located in Boise to travel about 3 miles per hour at 4.5 feet per second. For their public safety announcement in 2012, a child's shoe was dropped into the canal to provide a visual of how fast the water travels. In two minutes, the shoe traveled 540 feet and within 5 minutes, it was about a quarter mile away from where the shoe was dropped.

Canal waters and roads adjacent to canals are not for public use. The canals in some cases are owned in fee (private property) or have a right of way held by irrigation districts, ditch companies or government entities. It is a trespass or encroachment to recreate within the width of the canal right of way.

Irrigation is the primary purpose of canals. The average depths of canals are between 1 to 10 feet deep and some have very steep vertical banks. Canals deliver irrigation water through all areas in Idaho. The New York Canal is 40 miles long, starting at the Boise River Diversion Dam to Lake Lowell in Nampa.

The best way to be safe from canals is to stay away. It's not only dangerous for children; it's hazardous for everyone, including your pets. Stay out.

Related Links

Otto Otter Canal Safety Program: <http://www.usbr.gov/pn/about/otto/index.html>

Nampa & Meridian Irrigation District: http://www.nmid.org/safety_canalSafetyLaunch.html