

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation

Minidoka Spillway Completion Ceremony

Roland Springer: I would like to invite the commissioner back up to the podium and he will throw the giant switch and we will see if we can actually open these spillway gates as promised. So I will give a countdown and I'd like you all to help me and he will throw the switch and then you should see some gates open there where the flags are. You ready, commissioner?

Estévan López: I'm ready.

Roland Springer: Okay, so five, four, three, two, one.

[throws switch]

[Music]

Roland: If these walls could talk, they would speak of days where a shout would freeze in midair in subzero temperatures, where one's hardhat would disappear in winds reaching 90 miles per hour, where the scorching triple digit heat seared the brows of crews working up to 16 hours today to complete a placement of concrete, and where clouds of insects visited the site like a biblical pestilence. The bedrock would testify of the care taken to clean and strengthen it to ensure the structure would stand up on a sure foundation for another hundred years. I want to thank everyone that participated in constructing this dam and putting it together.

Dan Darrington: The dam had been here for 100 years. We figured it would just continue on. But after we saw those core samples, it was evident action needed to be taken. Because of this structure, the entire area is living, thriving as a progressive community that expands from agriculture to additional commerce and industry.

Wally Hedrick: We should all be working together to improve rural opportunity in all of our states, rural lifestyle, and keep folks in rural Idaho and the rural West. This is an award of excellence presented to the Burley Irrigation District in recognition of your dedicated service and commitment to excellence in providing for irrigation water needs of your community, presented by the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development. Gentlemen.

[Applause]

And an award of excellence presented to the Minidoka Irrigation District in recognition of your dedicated service and commitment to excellence in providing for irrigation water needs of your community, presented by the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development. Gentlemen.

[Applause]

Samantha Marshall: With increasing pressures on our water resources, the efficient and sustainable delivery of water is ever more critical to Southern Idaho. Water infrastructure improvements such as this that develop a more efficient and safer water delivery system are essential to help ensure that this finite resource is well-managed and continues to reach those who need it. Thank you for your hard work and effective partnership in ensuring the sound delivery of water to the area. We wish you all the best. Mike Crapo, United States Senator, Jim Risch, United States Senator, and Mike Simpson, United States Representative.

Lorri Lee: As I have grown up in Reclamation over the last 33 years, it's probably been at least the last 15, 20 years I've heard about the aging infrastructure out at Minidoka. I would like to take a minute to thank a whole lot of people. This is about 15 years of work. A lot of people, a lot of teams, and I want to start with the irrigation districts and the irrigators. You are our partners and have been good partners to Reclamation for many years and we want that to continue into the future. To the contractor, RSCI, their great leadership and the staff that was out here day in and day out, and then for reclamation staff, Roland is here, Jerry is here, but I saw Chris Ketchum . A lot of credit goes to Chris. He worked on this in the early days to get us to where we are. Eduardo Lopez [assumed spelling], who is our facility or our project engineer. Eduardo, thanks for your great work. John Tiedeman, who is our activity manager. He knows who's doing what at what point. And Susie Kramer. She did all of the acquisition work, which was a pretty big deal. And then for -- and I certainly can't name everybody because it's a long list -- but all of our construction staff, the construction control and testing folks. We brought them in from all over the country. Our designers, the staff at Heyburn, making sure that everybody had what they needed out here. Last, but not least, our maintenance staff. Those folks that dealt with the weather and dealt with these stop logs. And to the public. Your patience when we restricted activity so that we could complete these facilities. And we would hope that everybody will return and enjoy the wonderful fishing out here. I see a couple heads nodding. That's great.

Estévan López: It's an honor to be here with you today to celebrate this, the completion of this Minidoka Spillway Restoration Project. As Lorri mentioned, from day one, and even before day one, as I was preparing for confirmation hearings, I heard from senators, I heard from our own staff, the issue of aging infrastructure and what a big challenge that was going to be for reclamation. But here we have a beautiful example of how working with our partners, working with folks like Minidoka and Burley and Department of Ag, you know, all the players, where we can come together, put a plan together to make something work and function the way it should, we've been able to complete this and make sure that the 125,000 acres or so that rely on this water will continue to get that water.

Roland Springer: We have prepared a few plaques commemorating this event. And the plaques are actually mounted on some of these old, these stop logs that were used to control the flow through the old structure. It says, "Reclamation, managing water in the West. Minidoka's Dam Spillway Completion Ceremony, May 27th, 2015." This plaque is mounted on wood from stop logs used with the original 1906 spillway. And so, first of all, I'd like to invite representatives of Burley Irrigation District and Minidoka Irrigation District.

[Music]

All right. Okay, Salverella from RSCI.

[Applause]

And then also we have a plaque for each of our speakers and I also have one for the commissioner. Thank you so much.

[Applause]

[Music]