

## Minidoka Dam & Spillway: Rebuilt Structure Spills Spring Flows

[music]

**Ryan:** This year is really unique because this is the first year we get to pass some serious flows. Today, we're passing 14,000 to 15,000 cfs through the structure right here.

[music]

**Ryan:** The dam was originally built in 1907 and the spillway subsequently after that. Once it reached the end of its functional life in the early 2000s, the decision was made to initiate a project whereby we'd replace the existing structure. And so the structure you see right behind us today was constructed between 2012 and 2015 to achieve that.

[music]

**Roland:** The old spillway used to be a manually-operated with what you call stop-logs, wooden stop-logs. They would actually go out and lift those out periodically in different spots in order to control the water flow. I wouldn't want to be the guy that has to go out there and lift that stop log, and believe it or not they did that all the way until about three years ago.

[music]

**Ryan:** And that capacity was replaced with this radial gates that you see behind me where the radial gates would now be used to manage the flows by, as opposed to the stoplogs, which gave us significantly greater operational flexibility.

**Roland:** Now that we can remotely control these gates and monitor them 24 hours a day, seven a week, we're just thinking of the safety benefits of that. I mean, we could control the water at a moment's notice.

[music]

**Roland:** Well this year was probably the biggest in probably 20, 22 years of snowfall.

**Ryan:** You know, did. We had a real wet year. For example, in February, the average amount of precipitation we typically get in a February... in 2017, in the first six days of February, we had already crossed what we typically get in the whole month. Our goal is to fill the system so we have that water for agricultural purposes. But when you have more water than you can hold, you have to

convey it downstream. We go into flood operations for the purpose of making space in anticipation of large runoff so as to not increase flood potential downstream from the structures.

[music]

**Ryan:** The neatest thing to me about this structure is just the sheer fact of how much water it's capable of moving and still control it remotely. That's pretty unique.

**Roland:** Reclamation is proud. If you think about it, we've got brand new irrigation canals, BID and MID canals, so the irrigators are happy. We've got an entirely new spillway that's controllable remotely. We can control all water flows down to a minute amount up to a great amount where years past you couldn't really do that. It was hit or miss. We added all new river gauges downstream so we can really monitor the flow carefully. The wetlands... they're provided water in a certain way that they all get their fair share. We've got a nice Lake Walcott that is maintained at a constant level now. So I think it's really, really been a feather on everybody's cap, I believe.

[music]