STATE OF IDAHO
DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

444 Hospital Way, #300, Pocatello, ID 83201
(208) 236-6160

Brad Little, Governor
Jess Byrne, Director

December 12, 2022.
By certified mail

Johnathon Owsley
470 22nd St
Heyburn, ID 83336

Subject: Final Section 401 Water Quality Certification for the American Falls Erosion -Northwest of West Boat Ramp Project; NWW-2022-226-I03

Dear Mr. Owsley,

The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has issued a Section § 401 Water Quality Certification for the Army Corps of Engineers permit NWW-2022-226-I03.

DEQ determined that the proposed project activities will comply with Idaho Water Quality Standards (IDAPA 58.01.02) if you comply with all terms of the federal permit, this § 401 certification and any applicable water quality management plans (e.g., total Maximum Daily Loads).

No comments were received during the 21-day public comment period available on DEQ's website. Ensure that all parties performing this work read the document and understand the conditions of this certification prior to beginning work. Notify the DEQ Pocatello Regional Office when work begins.

An electronic copy of this certification was sent to you via email at jowsley@usbr.gov. If you have questions, please contact your name here at 208-236-6160 or via email at Matthew.schenk@deq.idaho.gov.

Sincerely,

Katy Bergholm,
Regional Administrator,
Pocatello Regional Office

Enclosure (1)
Ec:

Jeff Nield, Army Corps of Engineers, *jeffrey.a.nield@usace.army.mil*
Jen Cornell, Idaho DEQ, *jennifer.cornell@deq.idaho.gov*
Tambra Phares, Idaho DEQ, *tambra.phares@deq.idaho.gov*
Matt Schenk, Idaho DEQ, *matthew.schenk@deq.idaho.gov*
Johnathon Owsley, USBOR, *jowsley@usbr.gov*

# Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
# Final Section 401 Water Quality Certification

December 12, 2022

**Project Name:** American Falls Erosion Northwest of West Boat Ramp

**Permit Number (if applicable):** NWW-2022-226-I03

**Applicant/Authorized Agent:** Johnathon Owsley, Civil Engineer, Bureau of Reclamation

**Project Location:** Southwest side of the American Falls Reservoir (42°47'55.50"N, 112°53'16.28"W)

**Receiving Water Body:** Snake River at American Falls Reservoir

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 401(a)(1) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act), as amended; 33 U.S.C. Section 1341(a)(1); and Idaho Code §§ 39-101 et seq. and 39-3601 et seq., the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has authority to review activities receiving federal permits and issue water quality certification decisions.

In accordance with the Clean Water Act §§ 121.4 and 121.5, all project proponents must submit a request for a prefiling meeting at least thirty days in advance of submitting a certification request. A prefiling meeting request was received by DEQ on 9/7/2022. To facilitate early engagement and project coordination, DEQ accepted an opportunity to host two prefiling meetings which were conducted on 9/7/22 and 10/26/2022, to seek clarification as well as to discuss the project and potential information needs.

Based upon its review of the certification request in accordance with the Clean Water Act § 121.5 (b) and (c), received on 10/17/2022, DEQ certifies that if the permittee complies with the terms and conditions imposed by the permit and the conditions set forth in this water quality certification, then it is reasonable for DEQ to conclude that the activity will comply with water quality requirements, including applicable requirements of the Clean Water Act §§ 301, 302, 303, 306, and 307, Idaho's "Water Quality Standards" (IDAPA 58.01.02), and other appropriate water quality requirements of state law.

This certification does not constitute authorization of the permitted activities by any other state or federal agency or private person or entity. This certification does not excuse the permit holder from the obligation to obtain any other necessary approvals, authorizations or permits.

**Accessibility Services**: The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality will provide reasonable language access services and/or disability services for documents at no charge. To request an accommodation under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or Americans with Disabilities Act, contact DEQ's nondiscrimination coordinator at (208) 373-0271 or accessibility@deq.idaho.gov. Para obtener información en español, visite https://www.deq.idaho.gov/about-us/accessibility/.

# 1 Project Description

As part of the American Falls Dam Replacement Act of 1973, "provisions shall be made for the correction and prevention of erosion related to the reservoir or for the full and adequate compensation of adjacent landowners (including owners of land subject to a flowage easement for the reservoir) if erosion cannot be corrected or prevented." The purpose of this project is to provide erosion protection and bank stabilization around the American Falls Reservoir.

Work consists of obtaining 2 to 3-foot diameter boulders to be transported via large trucks and offloaded at the beginning of the erosion pad located on the southwest side of the American Falls Reservoir (latitude 42° 48' 21.94" N, longitude -112° 53' 27.36" W) and terminating south down to the prepared pad. The prepared areas consist of a previously rehabilitated erosion pad that was washed out and needs additional repair. The area consists of high cliffs and an access road to be constructed at the base of the slope. The access road will be installed approximately two to three feet above high-water elevation (pad elevation 4,357 ft). The lower slope from the pad to the water will be covered with erosion control fabric and boulders from the quarry. The boulders will be placed in the designated area on the pad to a depth of approximately three to four feet per linear foot.

# 2 Antidegradation Review

As part of its water quality standards program, Idaho has an antidegradation policy providing three levels of protection to water bodies in Idaho (IDAPA 58.01.02.051). DEQ adopted regulations to implement the antidegradation policy (IDAPA 58.01.02.052).

**Tier I Protection.** The first level of protection applies to all water bodies subject to Clean Water Act jurisdiction and ensures that existing uses of a water body and the level of water quality necessary to protect those existing uses will be maintained and protected (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.01; 58.01.02.052.01). Additionally, a Tier I review is performed for all new or reissued permits or licenses (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.07).

**Tier II Protection**. The second level of protection applies to those water bodies considered high quality and ensures that no lowering of water quality will be allowed unless necessary to accommodate important economic or social development (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.02; 58.01.02.052.08).

**Tier III Protection**. The third level of protection applies to water bodies that have been designated outstanding resource waters and requires that activities do not lower water quality (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.03; 58.01.02.052.09).

DEQ employs a water-body-by-water-body approach to implementing Idaho's antidegradation policy. This approach means that any water body fully supporting its beneficial uses will be considered high quality (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.05.a). Any water body not fully supporting its beneficial uses will be provided Tier I protection for that use, unless specific circumstances warranting Tier II protection are met (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.05.c). The most recent federally

approved DEQ Integrated Report and supporting data are used to determine support status and the tier of protection (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.05).

## 2.1 Pollutants of Concern

The pollutant of concern for this project is sediment. As part of the § 401 water quality certification, DEQ requires the applicant to comply with various conditions to protect water quality and meet Idaho's water quality standards, including the water quality criteria applicable to sediment.

## 2.2 Receiving Water Body Level of Protection

This project is located on the Snake River within the Upper Snake River subbasin assessment unit (AU) ID17040206SK001L_0L (American Falls Reservoir). According to the most recent federally approved DEQ Integrated Report, this AU has the following designated beneficial uses: Cold Water Aquatic Life, Primary Contact Recreation, and Domestic Water Supply. In addition to these uses, all waters of the state are protected for agricultural and industrial water supply, wildlife habitat, and aesthetics (IDAPA 58.01.02.100).

According to DEQ's 2022 Integrated Report, this AU is not fully supporting one or more of its assessed uses. The cold water aquatic life use is not fully supported. Causes of impairment include Dissolved Oxygen, Nutrient/Eutrophication Biological Indicators, Sedimentation/Siltation, and Chlorophyll-a. As such, DEQ will provide Tier I protection (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.01) for the cold water aquatic life beneficial use. The primary contact recreation beneficial use is unassessed. DEQ must provide an appropriate level of protection for the primary contact recreation use using information available at this time (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.05.c).

The only pollutant of concern associated with this project is sediment; however, sediment is not relevant to recreational uses because aquatic life is the more sensitive use. Sediment will be expected to cause impairments to aquatic life at concentrations well below that necessary to cause recreational use impairment, so it is unnecessary for DEQ to conduct a Tier II analysis (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.08).]

## 2.3 Protection and Maintenance of Existing Uses (Tier I Protection)

A Tier I review is performed for all new or reissued permits or licenses, applies to all waters subject to the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act, and requires demonstration that existing uses and the level of water quality necessary to protect existing uses will be maintained and protected. The numeric and narrative criteria in the water quality standards are set at levels that ensure protection of existing and designated beneficial uses.

Water bodies not supporting existing or designated beneficial uses must be identified as water quality limited, and a total maximum daily load (TMDL) must be prepared for those pollutants causing impairment. Once a TMDL is developed, discharges of causative pollutants will be

consistent with the allocations in the TMDL (IDAPA 58.01.02.055.05). Before developing the TMDL, the water quality standards require applying the antidegradation policy and implementation provisions to maintain and protect uses (IDAPA 58.01.02.055.04).

An EPA-approved TMDL has been developed for this AU. The TMDL addresses concerns that were identified in the American Falls Subbasin Total Maximum Daily Load Plan: Subbasin Assessment and Loading Analysis (DEQ 2012). Goals of the TMDL are to reduce sediment and chlorophyll-a.

Throughout the life of the project, the applicant will implement, install, maintain, monitor, and adaptively manage best management practices (BMPs) to reduce erosion and minimize turbidity levels in receiving water bodies downstream of the project. In addition, permanent erosion and sediment controls will be implemented that will minimize or prevent future sediment contributions from the project area.

If the project is conducted according to the provisions of the project plans, federal permit, and conditions of this certification, then it is reasonable for DEQ to conclude that the project will comply with the state's numeric and narrative criteria. These criteria are set at levels that protect and maintain existing and designated beneficial uses.

There is no available information indicating the presence of any existing beneficial uses aside from those that are already designated and discussed above. The permit ensures that the level of water quality necessary to protect both existing and designated uses is maintained and protected in compliance with the Tier I provisions of IDAPA 58.01.02.051.01 and 58.01.02.052.07.

# 3 Conditions Necessary to Ensure Compliance with Water Quality Standards or Other Appropriate Water Quality Requirements of State Law

The following conditions ensure that NWW-2022-383-I03, American Falls Erosion Northwest of West Boat Ramp complies with Idaho's water quality standards and other appropriate water quality requirements of state law applicable to The American Falls Reservoir, located on the Snake River.

## 3.1 General Conditions

This certification is based on the certification request submitted by Johnathon Owsley, on 10/17/2022, and is conditioned upon the requirement that any modification (e.g., change in work windows, etc.) of the permitted activity will first be provided to DEQ for review to determine compliance with Idaho's water quality standards.

Because DEQ is certifying only the activity described in the certification request, this condition ensures that discharges under circumstances that differ from those described in the certification request will comply with 33 U.S.C. § 1341, 40 CFR 121, and other applicable water quality requirements, including without limitation 33 U.S.C. § 1311(a), Idaho Code § 39-108,

IDAPA 58.01.02.051, IDAPA 58.01.02.052, IDAPA 58.01.02.080, IDAPA 58.01.02.200, IDAPA 58.01.02.210, IDAPA 58.01.02.250, IDAPA 58.01.02.251, IDAPA 58.01.02.252, IDAPA 58.01.02.253, and IDAPA 58.01.02.400.

1. DEQ reserves the right to modify, amend, or revoke this certification if DEQ determines that, due to changes in relevant circumstances—including without limitation, changes in project activities, the characteristics of the receiving water bodies, or state water quality standards—there is no longer reasonable assurance of compliance with the water quality standards or other appropriate requirements of state law.

   Because DEQ is certifying only the activity described in the certification request based on information available at the time of certification, this condition ensures that discharges from activities not described in the certification request, or where there has been a change in the characteristics of or water quality standards applicable to the receiving water body, will comply with 33 U.S.C. § 1341, 40 CFR 121, and other applicable water quality requirements, including without limitation 33 U.S.C. § 1311(a), Idaho Code § 39-108, IDAPA 58.01.02.051, IDAPA 58.01.02.052, IDAPA 58.01.02.080, IDAPA 58.01.02.200, IDAPA 58.01.02.210, IDAPA 58.01.02.250, IDAPA 58.01.02.251, IDAPA 58.01.02.252, IDAPA 58.01.02.253, and IDAPA 58.01.02.400.

2. If ownership of the project changes, the certification holder will notify DEQ, in writing, upon transferring this ownership or responsibility for compliance with these conditions to another person or party. The new owner/operator will request, in writing, the transfer of this water quality certification to the new name. This condition ensures that, if ownership changes, DEQ has the minimum information to support ongoing compliance with 33 U.S.C. § 1341, 40 CFR 121, this water quality certification, and other applicable water quality requirements, including without limitation Idaho Code § 39-108, IDAPA 58.01.02.080, and IDAPA 58.01.02.400.

3. A copy of this certification must be kept on the job site and readily available for review by any contractor working on the project and any federal, state, or local government personnel.

   This condition ensures all responsible parties, including on-site contractors, are aware of and comply with this water quality certification and other applicable water quality requirements, including without limitation Idaho Code § 39-108, IDAPA 58.01.02.080, and IDAPA 58.01.02.400.

4. The applicant is responsible for all work done by contractors and must ensure the contractors are informed of and follow all the conditions described in this certification and the federal permit.

   This condition ensures all responsible parties, including on-site contractors, comply with this water quality certification and applicable water quality requirements, including without limitation Idaho Code § 39-108, IDAPA 58.01.02.080, and IDAPA 58.01.02.400.

5. If this project disturbs more than 1-acre and there is potential for discharge of storm water to waters of the state, then coverage under the DEQ Construction General Permit Program may be required.

   This condition ensures that work authorized under the federal permit complies with water quality requirements prohibiting unauthorized storm water discharges, including without limitation 33 U.S.C. § 1311(a), 33 U.S.C. § 1342(p), IDAPA 58.01.02.080, and IDAPA 58.01.02.400.

## 3.2 Fill Material

The following conditions are necessary to protect beneficial uses in accordance with Idaho's water quality standards, including without limitation IDAPA 58.01.02.051, IDAPA 58.01.02.200, IDAPA 58.01.02.210, IDAPA 58.01.02.250, IDAPA 58.01.02.251, IDAPA 58.01.02.252, IDAPA 58.01.02.253, and IDAPA 58.01.02.400.

1. Fill material subject to suspension will be free of easily suspended fine material. Only clean material may be placed as fill.
2. Temporary fills will be removed in their entirety on or before construction completion.
3. Excavated or staged fill material must be placed so it is isolated from the water edge or wetlands and not placed where it could re-enter waters of the state.

## 3.3 Erosion and Sediment Control

The following conditions protect beneficial uses in accordance with Idaho's water quality standards, including without limitation IDAPA 58.01.02.051, IDAPA 58.01.02.200, IDAPA 58.01.02.250, IDAPA 58.01.02.253, and IDAPA 58.01.02.400.

1. BMPs for sediment and erosion control suitable to prevent exceedances of Idaho's water quality standards and TMDLs will be selected and installed before starting construction at the site. One resource to evaluate appropriate BMPs is the *Idaho Catalog of Storm Water Best Management Practices* (DEQ 2020). Other resources may also be used for selecting appropriate BMPs.
2. Permanent erosion and sediment control measures will be installed to provide long-term sediment and erosion control and prevent excess sediment from entering waters of the state.
3. Permanent erosion and sediment control measures will be installed at the earliest practicable time consistent with good construction practices and will be maintained as necessary throughout project operation.
4. Structural fill or bank protection will consist of materials that are placed and maintained to withstand predictable high flows in the waters of the state.
5. All construction debris, scraps, particles, and other associated materials will be captured and properly disposed of so they cannot enter waters of the state or cause water quality degradation.
6. Disturbed areas suitable for vegetation will be seeded or revegetated to prevent subsequent soil erosion (EPA 2000).

7. Maximum fill slopes will be material that is structurally stable once placed and does not slough into the reservoir during construction, during periods before revegetation, or after vegetation is established.
8. Sediment from disturbed areas or sediment that can be tracked by vehicles onto pavement must not leave the site in amounts reasonably expected to enter waters of the state.

## 3.4 Turbidity

The following conditions protect beneficial uses according to Idaho's water quality standards, including without limitation IDAPA 58.01.02.051, IDAPA 58.01.02.200.08, IDAPA 58.01.02.250.02.e, IDAPA 58.01.02.253, and IDAPA 58.01.02.400.

1. Sediment resulting from this activity must be mitigated to prevent violations of the turbidity standards stipulated in Idaho's water quality standards. Any violation of this standard must be reported to the DEQ regional office immediately.
2. Containment measures such as silt curtains, geotextile fabrics, and silt fences must be implemented and properly maintained to minimize instream sediment suspension and resulting turbidity. One resource to evaluate appropriate BMPs is the *Idaho Catalog of Storm Water Best Management Practices* (DEQ 2020). Other resources may also be used for selecting appropriate BMPs.
3. All practical BMPs on disturbed banks and within the waters of the state must be implemented to minimize turbidity. Visual observation is acceptable to determine whether BMPs are functioning properly. If a sediment plume is observed, the project may be causing an exceedance of water quality standards, and the permittee must inspect the condition of the project BMPs. If the BMPs appear to be functioning improperly, then corrective action must be taken, and the permittee must modify the activity or implement additional BMPs (this may also include modifying existing BMPs).

## 3.5 In-Water Work

The following conditions protect beneficial uses according to Idaho's water quality standards, including without limitation IDAPA 58.01.02.051, IDAPA 58.01.02.200, IDAPA 58.01.02.250, IDAPA 58.01.02.253, and IDAPA 58.01.02.400.

1. Work in open water must be kept at a minimum and only when necessary. Equipment must work from an upland site to minimize disturbance of waters of the state. If this is not practicable, take appropriate measures to ensure disturbance to the waters of the state is minimized.
2. Construction affecting the bed or banks must occur only during periods of low flow.
3. Fording the channel is not permitted.
4. Work in waters of the state is restricted to areas specified in the application.
5. To minimize sediment transport, stream channel or streambank stabilization must be completed before returning water to a dewatered segment.

## 3.6 Vegetation Protection and Restoration

The following conditions protect beneficial uses according to Idaho's water quality standards, including without limitation IDAPA 58.01.02.051, IDAPA 58.01.02.200, IDAPA 58.01.02.250, IDAPA 58.01.02.253, and IDAPA 58.01.02.400.

1. To the maximum extent practical, staging areas and access points should be placed in open, upland areas.

## 3.7 Management of Hazardous or Deleterious Materials

The following conditions protect beneficial uses according to Idaho's water quality standards, including without limitation IDAPA 58.01.02.051, IDAPA 58.01.02.080, IDAPA 58.01.02.200, IDAPA 58.01.02.400, IDAPA 58.01.02.800, and IDAPA 58.01.02.850.

1. Petroleum products and hazardous, toxic, and/or deleterious materials must not be stored, disposed of, or accumulated adjacent to or in the immediate vicinity of waters of the state. Adequate measures and controls must ensure that those materials will not enter waters of the state because of high water, precipitation runoff, wind, storage facility failure, accidents in operation, or unauthorized third-party activities.
2. Secondary containment is required for chemical materials.
3. Equipment and machinery must be removed from the vicinity of the waters of the state before refueling, repair, and/or maintenance.
4. If an unauthorized release of hazardous material to state waters or to land occurs and there is a likelihood it will enter state waters, the responsible persons in charge must:
   a. Make every reasonable effort to abate and stop a continuing spill.
   b. Make every reasonable effort to contain spilled material so it will not reach surface or ground waters of the state.
   c. Call 911 if immediate assistance is required to control, contain, or clean up the spill. If no assistance is needed in cleaning up the spill, contact the appropriate DEQ regional office during normal working hours or Idaho State Communications Center after normal working hours (1-800-632-8000). If the spilled volume is above federal reportable quantities, contact the National Response Center (1-800-424-8802).
   d. Contact Pocatello Regional Office: (208) 236-6160
5. Collect, remove, and properly dispose of spill and cleanup materials in a manner approved by DEQ.

## 3.8 Dredge Material Management

Upland disposal of dredged material must prevent the material from reentering waters of the state.

This condition ensures that there is no unauthorized discharge from upland disposal sites according to 33 U.S.C. § 1311(a) and Idaho's water quality requirements, including without limitation Idaho Code § 39-108, IDAPA 58.01.02.080, and IDAPA 58.01.02.400

### 3.9 Pollutants/Toxins

In conformance with IDAPA 58.01.02.200, the use of chemicals such as soil stabilizers, dust palliatives, sterilants, growth inhibitors, fertilizers, and deicing salts during construction and operation should be limited to the best estimate of optimum application rates. All reasonable measures must be taken to avoid excess application and introduction of chemicals into waters of the state.

## 4 Required Notification

The permittee must notify the Pocatello Regional Office when authorized work begins.

## 5 Right to Appeal Final Certification

The final § 401 Water Quality Certification may be appealed by submitting a petition to initiate a contested case, pursuant to Idaho Code § 39-107(5) and the "Rules of Administrative Procedure before the Board of Environmental Quality" (IDAPA 58.01.23), within 35-days of the date of the final certification.

Questions or comments regarding the actions taken in this certification should be directed to Matt Schenk, Pocatello Regional Office at 208-479-3634, or via email at matthew.schenk@deq.idaho.gov.

Katy Bergholm
Regional Administrator
Pocatello Regional Office

# References

DEQ (Idaho Department of Environmental Quality). 2012. *American Falls Subbasin Total Maximum Daily Load Plan: Subbasin Assessment and Loading Analysis.* Boise, ID: DEQ https://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/surface-water/total-maximum-daily-loads/american-falls-subbasin/.

DEQ (Idaho Department of Environmental Quality). 2020. *Idaho Catalog of Storm Water Best Management Practices*. Boise, ID: DEQ. https://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/wastewater/storm-water/

DEQ (Idaho Department of Environmental Quality). 2022. *Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2022 Integrated Report*. Boise, ID: DEQ. https://www2.deq.idaho.gov/admin/LEIA/api/document/download/16619

EPA (US Environmental Protection Agency). 2000. *National Menu of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Stormwater.* https://www.epa.gov/npdes/national-menu-best-management-practices-bmps-stormwater

RSET (Northwest Regional Sediment Evaluation Team). 2018. *Sediment Evaluation Framework for the Pacific Northwest*. Prepared by the RSET Agencies.