

DATA SHEET PH0283185

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

|                  |              |
|------------------|--------------|
| STATE:           | Idaho        |
| COUNTY:          | Ada & Canyon |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY |              |
| ENTRY DATE       | MAR 15 1976  |

## 1. NAME

COMMON:

Diversion Dam and Deer Flat Embankments, Boise Project

AND/OR HISTORIC:

## 2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

SE of Boise on Boise River  
Section 3, T2N, R3E, and sections 19-20, 25-26, 35-36, T3N, R3W

CITY OR TOWN:

Boise river

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:

Districts #1 &amp; #2

STATE

Idaho

CODE

16

COUNTY:

Ada &amp; Canyon

CODE

## 3. CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY<br>(Check One)                                                                                                                                                   | OWNERSHIP                                                                                                                                                                | STATUS                                                                                                                                                   | ACCESSIBLE<br>TO THE PUBLIC                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District<br><input type="checkbox"/> Site<br><input type="checkbox"/> Object                                                          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public<br><input type="checkbox"/> Private<br><input type="checkbox"/> Both                                                          | Public Acquisition:<br><input type="checkbox"/> In Process<br><input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Occupied<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied<br><input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work<br>in progress                               |
| PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural<br><input type="checkbox"/> Commercial<br><input type="checkbox"/> Educational<br><input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industrial<br><input type="checkbox"/> Military<br><input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Park<br><input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence<br><input type="checkbox"/> Religious<br><input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br><input type="checkbox"/> Comments<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____ |

## 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:

Bureau of Reclamation

STREET AND NUMBER:

Federal Building

CITY OR TOWN:

Boise

STATE:

Idaho

CODE

16

## 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

Ada County Courthouse

Canyon County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

Caldwell, Idaho

CITY OR TOWN:

Boise

STATE:

Idaho

CODE

16

## 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

Idaho State Historic Sites Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1972

☐ Federal☒ State☐ County ☐ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

Idaho State Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER:

610 North Julia Davis Drive

CITY OR TOWN:

Boise

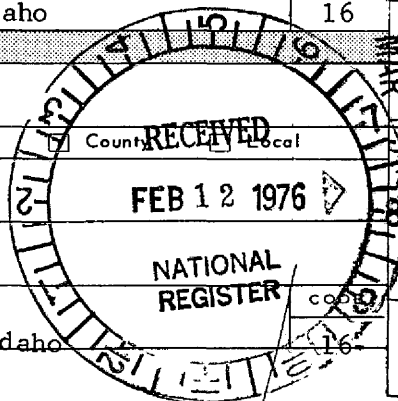
STATE:

Idaho

CODE

16

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

# 7. DESCRIPTION

|           |                                    |                                               |                                |                                                   |                                |                                    |
|-----------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| CONDITION | (Check One)                        |                                               |                                |                                                   |                                |                                    |
|           | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair  | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated             | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed |
|           | (Check One)                        |                                               |                                | (Check One)                                       |                                |                                    |
|           | <input type="checkbox"/> Altered   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered | <input type="checkbox"/> Moved | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site |                                |                                    |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Embankments at Deer Flat Reservoir were constructed to form a large storage and reregulating area for water from the New York Canal. Both dams are of earthfill construction, the upper one being 4000 feet long and the lower one 7200 feet long. Approximately one million cubic yards of earth and gravel were used in the upper embankment which stands 68 feet high.

Deer Flat reservoir actually consists of two basins separated by a low ridge. They were connected by an equalization trench in the spring of 1908, and the ridge has been underwater since 1909 when the reservoir is full.

This 177,000 acre foot reservoir, now known as Lake Lowell, has remained essentially unchanged, and continues in use as an important example of a successful system for reclamation in a large western project.

Diversion Dam still has its original appearance, and the 60-year old power plant still has its original units, complete with their wooden bearings. This is an interesting surviving example of an older kind of generating plant.

The original horse-power of 2500 to 3000 has increased substantially over the years. The three alternating current generators, each connected to its turbine, have an output of 2300 volts, which, when transmitted from the station, is 22,000 volts. With the current energy crisis, this museum-like plant has been in constant use since the summer of 1973.

The dam itself is a concrete and masonry structure standing 68 feet high. The height of the water behind the dam is 39 feet.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

this is correct

## 8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Pre-Columbian☐ 16th Century☐ 18th Century☒ 20th Century☐ 15th Century☐ 17th Century☐ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1906-1912

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Aboriginal☐ Education☐ Political☐ Urban Planning☐ Prehistoric☒ Engineering☐ Religion/Phi-☒ Other (Specify)☐ Historic☒ Industry☐ PhilosophyReclamation-☒ Agriculture☐ Invention☐ Scienceirrigation☐ Architecture☐ Landscape☐ Sculpture☐ Art☐ Architecture☐ Social/Human-☐ Commerce☐ Literature☐ itarian☐ Communications☐ Military☐ Theater☒ Conservation☐ Music☐ Transportation

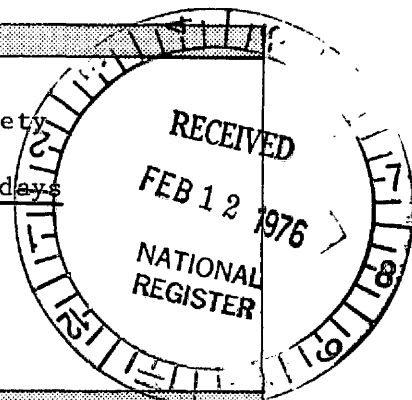
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Irrigated farming started on a substantial scale in the Boise valley the season after the gold discoveries of August 1862 brought a rush of miners to the Boise Basin and the surrounding region. By 1864, farmers occupied all the land near the river that could be irrigated by direct diversion. Canals to water more desert land gradually were dug farther out into the valley, but two decades went by before construction of the major Boise valley canal got underway in 1883.

The New York Canal was conceived on a grand scale by A. D. Foote who expected it to handle 4500 second feet of water, eventually irrigating 500,000 acres. Progress on the canal, however, was painfully slow, held up by lack of funding and legal disputes. When the canal was finally opened in 1900, the results were disappointing as the canal was able to carry only 200-300 second feet of water. By 1905, with only 10,000 acres under irrigation, it was obvious that provision for storage and permanent diversion had to be made before the canal could be much of a success. This was accomplished by developing the Boise project under the United States Reclamation Service. Along with enlargement of the New York Canal, provision was made for an intermediate storage reservoir at Deer Flat when the Payette-Boise Project was approved March 25, 1905, with \$1,300,000 allocated for completion of these facilities. Construction of the three embankments for Deer Flat reservoir began in 1906. Because construction bids were too high, the United States Reclamation Service undertook to build the upper embankment with its own staff. This was the earliest large Idaho project the Service undertook in that manner, and the million cubic yard upper embankment was not completed until September 1, 1908. In 1908, the New York Canal was enlarged to handle the project that Foote had originally planned. A substantial diversion dam was constructed below the canyon so that this difficult canyon stretch could be omitted from the canal. Diversion Dam was built high enough to run water into the canal at that point, and on February 22, 1909, some three thousand people lined the canal below the dam for a mile or two to watch when the water was finally diverted into the large canal. Water filled the \$325,700 reservoir (eventually known as Lake Lowell) in 1909, after which additional construction was necessary to eliminate seepage and erosion problems. In January 1912, these additions were completed. This reservoir provided the original storage for a major early western United States Reclamation Service project: without it

## 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Reference series 171, 190, 182 Idaho State Historical Society  
 John J. Peebles, "The Atlantic Steam Shovel", Idaho Yesterdays  
 (Summer, 1969), 13/2:16-31.



## 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY |                         |                         | O<br>R | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY<br>OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES |                         |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| CORNER                                                                           | LATITUDE                | LONGITUDE               |        | LATITUDE                                                                                                | LONGITUDE               |  |
|                                                                                  | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds |        | Degrees Minutes Seconds                                                                                 | Degrees Minutes Seconds |  |
| NW                                                                               | ° ' "                   | ° ' "                   |        | ° ' "                                                                                                   | ° ' "                   |  |
| NE                                                                               | ° ' "                   | ° ' "                   |        | ° ' "                                                                                                   | ° ' "                   |  |
| SE                                                                               | ° ' "                   | ° ' "                   |        | ° ' "                                                                                                   | ° ' "                   |  |
| SW                                                                               | ° ' "                   | ° ' "                   |        | ° ' "                                                                                                   | ° ' "                   |  |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: app. 65 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|--------|------|--------|------|
| Idaho  | 16   | Ada    | 001  |
| Idaho  | 16   | Canyon | 027  |
|        |      |        |      |
|        |      |        |      |

## 11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
Merle Wells, Director

ORGANIZATION: Idaho State Historical Society DATE: 6 February 1976

STREET AND NUMBER:  
610 North Julia Davis Drive

CITY OR TOWN: Boise STATE: Idaho CODE: 16

## 12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐

Name Merle W. Wells

Title State Historic Preservation Officer

Date 6 February 76

## NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Acting [Signature]  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 3/15/76

ATTEST:

Robert B. Rettig  
 Acting Keeper of The National Register

Date 3-12-76

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

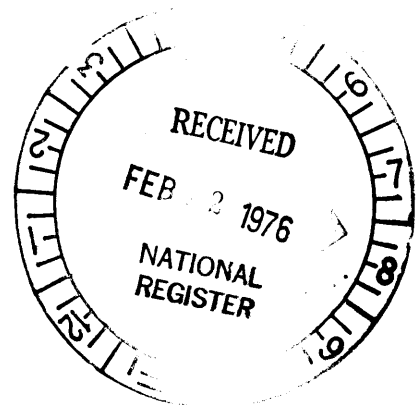
|                        |                     |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| STATE<br>Idaho         |                     |
| COUNTY<br>Ada & Canyon |                     |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY       |                     |
| ENTRY NUMBER           | DATE<br>MAR 15 1976 |

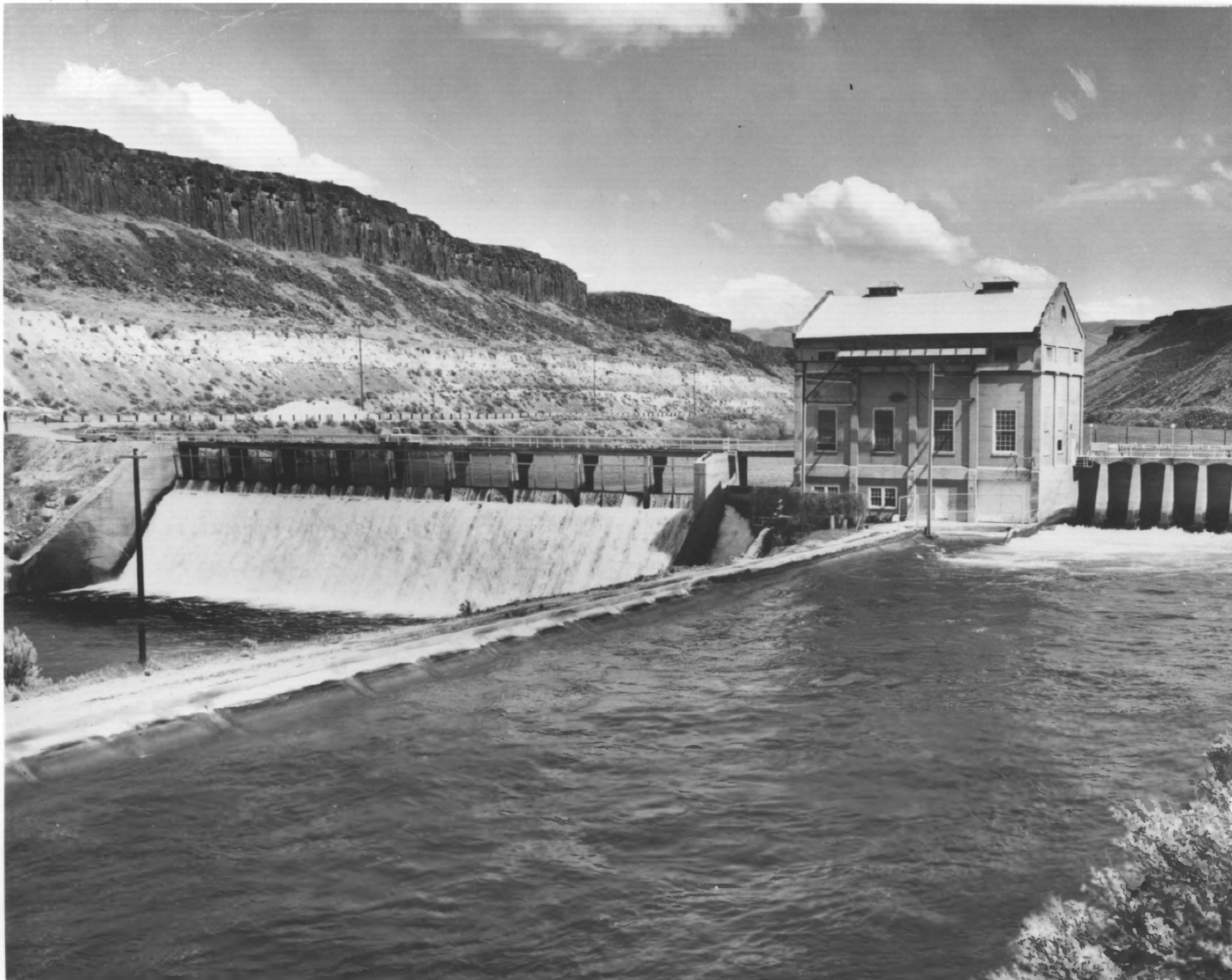
(Number all entries)

8.

the Boise project could not have begun to provide adequate water for the arid lands served by an elaborate canal system engineered by A. D. Foote.

In May 1912, a 1500 KW power plant was completed at Diversion Dam to provide power for the construction of Arrowrock Dam further up the Boise River. After Arrowrock was completed, the three generator electric plant was used for supplemental power in the Boise Valley. It was connected with the Barber power plant of the Idaho-Oregon Light and Power Company (Idaho Power after 1916) and is still available for reserve use. The power plant is one of the earliest built by the Bureau of Reclamation. Deer Flat reservoir still serves Boise Valley's irrigated farms, although supplemental water for dry years has been added from other sources. The reservoir also offers a home for millions of ducks and geese, and has become an important national wildlife refuge.





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED FEB 12 1976

DATE ENTERED MAR 15 1976

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Diversion Dam and Deer Flat Embankments, Boise Project

**2 LOCATION**

CITY, TOWN Section 3, T2N, R3E — VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Ada & Canyon

STATE

Idaho

**3 PHOTO REFERENCE**

PHOTO CREDIT

U. S. Dept. Of the Interior, Bureau of  
Reclamation, Region 1

DATE OF PHOTO 1968

NEGATIVE FILED AT

Bureau of Reclamation, Region, 1 Box 043, Boise ID 83702

**4 IDENTIFICATION**

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO. 143

Looking upstream (southeast) across the New York Canal at the Boise Diversion  
Dam and Powerplant.



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED FEB 12 1976

DATE ENTERED MAR 15 1976

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Diversion Dam and Deer Flat Embankments, Boise Project

**2 LOCATION**

CITY, TOWN Section 3, T2N, R3E

VICINITY OF

COUNTY

STATE

Ada &amp; Canyon

Idaho

**3 PHOTO REFERENCE**

PHOTO CREDIT

Bureau of Reclamation

DATE OF PHOTO

3-24-72

NEGATIVE FILED AT

Bureau of Reclamation

**4 IDENTIFICATION**

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME &amp; STREET

An interior view of the Generator Room at the Boise River Diversion Dam Power Plant. The power plant consists of three units, 500 kilowatts each, which are not operated at the present time but are kept in standby status.

PHOTO NO.

2 of 3

(1d3)



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**

|                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY |             |
| RECEIVED         | FEB 12 1976 |
| DATE ENTERED     | MAR 15 1976 |

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES    ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Diversion Dam and Deer Flat Embankments, Boise Project

**2 LOCATION**

CITY, TOWN    Sections 19, 20, 25, 26, — VICINITY OF  
35, 36, T3N, R3W

COUNTY  
Ada & Canyon

STATE  
Idaho

**3 PHOTO REFERENCE**

PHOTO CREDIT    Bureau of Reclamation

DATE OF PHOTO    Sept. 22, 1967

NEGATIVE FILED AT    Bureau of Reclamation

**4 IDENTIFICATION**

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO.    343

Aerial view of one end of the lower embankment, looking northeast. Paved road runs along top of embankment for its entire length. Part of Lake Lowell at right. The embankment is in the lower right portion of the picture, next to the water.