

MANAGER'S REPORT - JUNE 2016

This report provides an overview of District issues and projects that we have been working on since the last board meeting.

OPERATIONS: The crew has kept very busy with ditchriding, repairs, herbicide treatments, water regulation, meter reading, and so forth. They are learning every day. Richard and I have discussed how they (the crew) are each different and bring a variety of skills to the job. They remain enthused about their work, wanting to learn, and are forming a good team.

Two major problems occurred on the Irrigon system this past ten days – a leak on the “new” 24-inch line and failure of the small pump on the Columbia Station. Fortunately, the weather cooperated as did the farmers off the mainline and we got through both with little downtime. Actually, the new pump/motor replacing the worn one will be installed Friday.

Richard has worked on equipment maintenance as well as pumps and screens. There is some backhoe hydraulic work to be done and he will take it to McNamees to use their shop. Also, I've heard him talk about welding on the dump truck bed. He wants to wait until after we pick up the concrete. He is really getting a handle on the tremendous amount of work to be done in taking care of the District. He hasn't run off yet. In fact, I see the crew taking on a broad range of work and results daily from what they are doing.

EASEMENT WORK: We met with the Bureau earlier this week to go over the outstanding recommendations from previous inspections. Ray did a lot of road maintenance and canal fill, but there is plenty more to do. We will pick two areas for this summer (Relocation canal lower end and Toms Camp to endspill) and will work with BOR to identify the specific areas to be addressed over the next few years. One thing I have noticed in driving the canal, and Ray complained about many times, is that the condition of the canal road suffers when sprinklers come onto the road. It is really evident. Our current ditchriders have noticed too. Other than calling the irrigator, there's not much else we can do. We adopted a resolution years ago to bill repairs to the roads due to excess water back to the irrigators. Is that something we should pursue. How will we follow up on this procedure?

One long outstanding recommendation has been the removal of shrubs and small trees in and along our canal from I-82 to Three Mile Dam. We will try to address that as well. We have been planning for the past three years to replace those panels at Three Mile headwork and reinstate the drainage there – winter work. Also, the ditchriders have taken on a task to remove at least four plants or shrubs along the canal each day. We will see results from this soon.

CREW TRAINING: We started crosstraining about three weeks ago so they are learning other systems than the one they started on. Holding the canal during the copper treatment was a good learning experience for Ben D, Richard and Frank. Our weekend folks will be getting some time off over the 4th, so we are starting Ben S on water orders. We also started sharing the on call time with each employee taking five days over a three week period.

HERBICIDE: We have done two aquatic herbicide treatments (copper and endothall). We have a third scheduled for Tues, June 21m which will be copper. We also want to use product in the “slack water” between Ramp Weir One and Three Mile – planning to do that within the next two weeks. We are using Lisa and her license for all this work. Thus far, none of the crew has taken the required tests.

SHUTOFFS: We got through the shutoffs and most folks have paid by now and are back on. There were some upset customers, but staff stayed positive.

IPS: The system seems to have settled down. We have questions about meter and think it hasn’t been working correctly. The lids for the two vaults were put in last week and we had a local vendor go through the meter again. We notified the State of irregularities and are keeping any eye on this.

BOARDMAN FLOODING: We have had plenty of flooding issues in Boardman since startup- mainly due to landowner error including not following water. There is an issue in Boardman that is not our direct concern, but we have been called in. It’s about tailwater ditches and the County changing some drainage 6-8 years ago. I have included pictures and maps in your board packet as several of you have asked my about this. Folks keep trying to draw us in, but I believe we are spectators and advisors on this issue.

WRD/IWRS MEETING: Dalarie and I met with Tom Byler, Director of Water Resources Department, a few weeks ago in our office. We discussed our groundwater concerns and the McKay permit. Interestingly, I attended a public workshop where WRD wanted input from stakeholders on their Integrated Water Resource Strategy as they will do an update in 2017 (copy of the agenda enclosed). Drought was the focus, but folks started talking about groundwater – the State isn’t protecting existing rights; the State isn’t recognizing GW interaction with surface water[the State should put a moratorium on groundwater withdrawals until the complete interaction is understood; the State should attach a fee to all water users to help cover the work to be done. It was a very interactive discussion and caught WRD off-guard. Byler was there. This was the first around the State and I’ll be interested to know how the others went. I will provide comments to the State at some point, supporting what we told Byler here and stated at that meeting – a broad approach is needed for sure. I will also update them on the Recycled water project and offer suggestions to expedite that program.

UMATILLA WATER MASTERS: Information on this issue is enclosed. You will see the letter that we send and the resolution adopted by the Umatilla County BOC.

GRANTS:

STORAGE STUDY: We received official notice of the grant. No contract yet. Ben has done some investigation for us. Very preliminary at this time.

LATERAL 11 GRANT: I am working on updating the budget for this grant. I have met with the County and Reclamation on redesign of the County’s portion of the project now that we will pipe it. I have also contacted our vendor to do the Historical Preservation work.

ANNUAL AUDIT: The in-office part of the audit was completed three weeks ago. I suspect the auditors will ask for a 30-day extension to file and complete the report that is due June 30.

SAFETY DATA SHEETS: We have completed and implemented the Global Harmonizing System for safety that went into effect June 1. It was quite a job and we don't realize how many different products we use until we fill two binders full of safety sheets.

WATER RIGHT TRANSFERS: Our 2016 temporaries have been filed. I started a small project for Irrigon, now in the 4th year of its certificate, where we will notify 50 or so users that their rights are in jeopardy due to non-use. We'll prepare official non-use notices for the 2017 season. Also, I will get to the pending subdivision transfers that we've protected under temporary transfers – including Jeff Sak's – over the next month. Transfers remain an ongoing project for which there is not enough time to stay up on them.

DISTRICT BUSINESS:

These items are for District business:

LATERAL 7 POWER BILL: We received our first power bill for Lateral 7. I would like to discuss this. We have never paid a power bill for screening laterals and Boardman is presenting us with this new challenge. Usually, we have a screen with a pump station involved and the water users benefitting from that screened water pay the cost of pumping. Precedent would involve sending a year-end power bill to the users on the system, based on their metered water use, but that has involved a pressurized system in the past. What to do?

WID CONTRACT AMENDMENT REVIEW: A copy of that contract amendment is enclosed for your review. We really don't have any action here.

DEQ/City of Hermiston: Hearings on the City of Hermiston permit were held and the comment period closed. No comments were sent in. We believe we will get the Hermiston water in the next 30-45 days. We are preparing the canal for it (thus the treatment to the slack water stated above). I am also preparing a handout for interested parties. Copies are in the board packet for your review and approval.

PROJECT FINANCIAL UPDATES: I will have financials for the IPS and the Lateral 7 project for the Board meeting.

This item is for executive session.

NPDES PERMIT: DEQ has put out a public notice for Permit 2300A which will combine the irrigation districts' original permit for acrolien, xylene, and copper into the permit for all other herbicides. In 2016, we will pay \$557 for our 2300A and \$4063 for our individual permit that covers acrolien and copper. I have enclosed a copy of information from our attorney on this issue and the proposed permit. This will need to be discussed in executive session.