

MANAGER'S REPORT - APRIL 2017

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

RICHARD'S LEAVING: As you know, Richard has been accepted into the Carpenters Union and he is very excited about it. He will stay through start-up, which we are targeting as the end of the month, unless he gets called up sooner. Then, he will start looking for a Union job. I've talked with Walt. He is willing to work with me to keep the crews going, oversee their work as needed, and train on the water management. That will buy us some time to see what we have with our crews and be on the lookout for a new supervisor. I will also put an ad out on the usual places by the first of May.

SMALL ACCIDENT: Richard backed into our 2016 Ford on Friday, during start-up. It has damage to the side panel, not much to Richard's truck. We'll get it reported to our insurance on Monday.

CANAL PANELS: We did approximately 181 panels plus floor and patches between Jan. 27 and end of February. Abe asked the cost of panels, and I gave him a number of \$450. That number was typical when we were hiring contractors. Our concrete, supplies and standby costs averages \$110 - \$130 per panel. I will work up a report that compares the past few years for costs including labor. Chris has tracked the figures for us, so I need to review them and put them in a spreadsheet. I'll try to have that for the next meeting.

WATER START-UP: We started the main canal on Tuesday, April 4; the Boardman canal on Tuesday, April 11; Irrigon system is still in start-up, but the main pumps went on Thursday, April 13. Lots of broken pipes on private properties are showing up. Richard plans to be at the Board meeting, so can talk about the start-up and any lingering issues.

BUILDING OF WEED BUCKET: In Jan or early Feb, we decided to have a weed bucket built for the excavator. I didn't want to be hit with a canal full of weeds and have to dip them out with our digging bucket. Abe gave us good advice on this. Richard and Walt met with Ross Machine to design what we needed and we got it in time for our work. Richard can report on it at the Board meeting. He had it built for just under \$5000. I recommend we take this from our equipment reserve funds, and that needs Board approval.

IRRIGON WATER RIGHTS PROJECT: We are down to about 30% of folks who have not contacted us regarding the first letter sent. We will reach out to those. Lisa will have an update at the meeting.

WATER RIGHT TRANSFERS: We continue work on water right transfers. The first round of transfers is almost ready to send in to the State. The alternative point of use request is not quite ready. I'll need more info from Kaizen, which I'll try to get on Tuesday.

SHPO/SECTION 106 REVIEW- WEID: We have our letter and can proceed with our work for Lateral 11.

LATERAL 11: The County is still working on their crossing. I have talked with all the landowners on the project. We won't do our pipe work now. The pipe on the north side could be laid this summer, but the south side work will definitely wait until the water season is over. The landowners have all been invited to the SWCD/NCRS workshop scheduled for April 24.

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION WORK: This is a complicated subject. Oregon wants to approve a plan that will list all federal projects, but they been tasked by their lead agency to work with Reclamation. Reclamation wants to see the Central Oregon and Vale projects get approval so they can use their grant money, but they don't want to agree to a document that will set an unwanted precedent for other federal projects. Oregon is interested in mitigating for changes to "water" features, such as dams, canals, headgates, drains. In fact, this seems common among other states, as I've talked with cohorts. Reclamation is interested in preserving the history of their projects, such as gatehouses, unique structures, camp sites, regional history - according to the lead cultural resource person out of Boise. They are, by federal law, obligated to protect tribal interests. That is the archeological side of a section 106 consultation. A section 106 consultation requires cultural, archeological, environmental and historical surveys.

Thus far, our best bet for WEID is moving forward with a full Section 106 review request to Reclamation. We'll likely submit it this summer whenever I get the Boardman Master Plan updated fully and review our WMCP for updates (also required by the State this year. There is discussion among Reclamation that ALL work done to the canals (including general maintenance) needs to be reviewed for historic purposes as that is the requirement of the federal law. They say it, but know it is a big deal and implementation of that will result in a very loud uproar. I've a small group of irrigation districts so far, and will work through OWRC. We are considering taking this up the ladder to our Congressmen. This is the type of oversight that really does not have its place in a working irrigation project. So, I could go on, but you get the picture. The pressure for compliance will not be at the State level, but at the federal level. Reclamation is aware that this can really blow up and would like to keep it reasonable. We are discussing having some joint meetings on this issue this fall.

BOARDMAN DRAINAGE/COUNTY COMMISSIONERS: Don Russell, Morrow County Commissioner, will be at our meeting on Tuesday to engage in conversation about drainage in Boardman and piping of the laterals. The first area of concern will be the east side where we plan to do the work in the next five years. I discussed this briefly with Burke O'Brien, the County Roadmaster. He pointed out that it will take cooperation from the landowners as well as the District and the County. Bob Mueller wants us to involve the Port of Morrow, which may be a good idea down the road. FYI, there is a three member Board of Commissioners for Morrow County, so we can speak to one commissioner at a time on any issue (otherwise a quorum).

PAT MCNAMEE REQUEST: We are finding permanent water rights in Irrigon for the McNamee properties. He has recently purchased 19.8 water right acres from the Morrow County School District. Now is the time to revisit the decision about the 37-acre half circle that Pat has west of Irrigon. He is currently pumping water from a pond at the end of the Relocation Canal. This is a natural pond and is also fed by the Relocation canal. When Pat first received permission from the Board to irrigate with District water, they told him he could use water out of the pond until Irrigon water rights became available. We have upgraded the pipe since then, planning for the additional acres. We have the capacity to deliver that water. When we apply for a conserved water right next year, I expect to have enough water rights to place on that circle. So, Pat will ask the Board to reconsider the previous direction and let him continue to pump from the pond, using Umatilla River water rights. We have been moving those to him on a temporary transfer and he has purchased about 9 acres. I believe the best for the District is to move him to the Columbia River station and apply for a supplemental right on the pond. That way, if the Relocation canal doesn't have enough spill for him, he can go to the Columbia River system.

USDA GRANT: I have the info on the USDA grant. I have yet had specific conversation with Kacee and will try to call her on Monday. I'll try to have a better idea by the Board meeting how this can help us and if this go around is the one we want.

BOR WATER SMART GRANT: The submittal deadline has been moved to May 17, so that is helpful for us. This is a \$75,000 matching grant. I am going to try to get some funds for the cultural review from this grant as well as piping. We need a resolution, which is on the agenda.

SDAO BOARD TRAINING – MAY 4: Westland Irrigation District is bringing the folks from SDAO in for a Board member/manager training. I have an OWRC meeting that day in Salem, but hope some of you will attend and I am sending Lisa. I think this will be an informative session. Please let me know either way. Here is Mike's e-mail:

George Dunkel with SDAO has confirmed he will travel to Hermiston for a board training session scheduled for Thursday, May 4 from 8:30 a.m. to noon at the Stafford Hansell Government Center, Doherty Conference Room, 915 SE Columbia Drive in Hermiston.