

MANAGER'S REPORT - SEPTEMBER 2017

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

MONTHLY BOARD ACTION: Since we did not have a quorum at the July meeting and no meeting in August, we have some monthly business to do. The bills payable from June, July and August are in the packet as well as the June and July minutes.

FIELD SUPERVISOR: Ben de los Santos has accepted the position of Field Supervisor. A job description will need to be reviewed and accepted by the Board.

CREW TRAINING: The crew completed three six-week rotations in areas around the District. This will help their overall training, but was definitely challenging as they each learned a new area. All employees can run any part of the irrigation system now including basic pump oversight, meter readings, and customer interactions. We have three employees that can run the backhoe, three on the mower and two that can run the excavator. One other is learning on each piece, as time allows. Our newest employee, Cougar Kroske, is likely leaving this fall to move to Portland and pursue his training for a union job.

OPERATIONS: Ben will be at the meeting to discuss any operational issues. The past two months have been fighting weeds, both in and along the canal and laterals. The weed that has been bothering us quite a bit is called beggars tick. We have cut, pulled and sprayed it and still it persists. We plan to mow the main canal again before shutdown and will let irrigators know of the mowing days so they can shut down, should they wish.

The crew is getting the spray program going. It's been a slow start due to needing to finish and redo the spray truck. But, it's done now. Quite a bit of hand spraying has been done this season.

The crew rebuilt a delivery off Lateral 31, one that was left at the end of winter due to time constraints. This was done in that heat wave of consecutive 105 degree days, so kudos to the crew for getting it done. We discovered that an old ditch existed below the current one, so really two ditches and the turnout needed to be addressed. Ben will have pictures at the meeting.

Annual maintenance work has been completed on the mower, backhoe and is being done on the excavator. Though we have not received a quote from Pape Machinery, we've spoken with them several times following their review. There are notes about this in your Board packet so you can review the work with Ben.

WATER RIGHTS & TRANSFERS: This year, we've spent a lot of time on the water rights and assuring they are being used. We contacted owners where five-year non-use has occurred in Irrigon and in subdivisions along the main canal. The project is about protecting their water rights and assuring they are being used. This is a large project and very time consuming as

customers do not all respond to letters and phone calls. Lisa has taken the lead on the Irrigon part of this project. She and Walt completed a review recently of those who said they would irrigate and several other letters went out. We should have a list of those where action will be taken at the end of the season to move the water right off. These will mainly be for houses, buildings and driveways where the owner has not signed off the rights or responded to the letters. Kudos to Lisa for taking this on, including discussions and meetings with the landowners to further explain the issue and resolve any concerns they have.

FINANCES: You have an updated financial report in the Board packet through August 31 and a proforma budget. These are on the agenda for review and discussion.

GRANTS: We have three grants in progress:

- 1) **STORAGE FEASIBILITY:** The feasibility grant is complete. Final report being readied for submission. A 90% fund request has been sent in. The final will be requested when we send the final report and the actual study for State review.
- 2) **LATERAL 11:** The grant for Lateral 11 is due for completion by December 31. We plan to complete it after the irrigation season. We have requested \$10,000 of the \$25,000 in grant funds and will request the remaining \$15,000 by the end of the year.
- 3) **RIPPEE ROAD E & W PIPE PROJECT:** This is a grant way of saying Laterals 5 and 9. We received an award of \$70,000 federal funds for this \$148,000 project. \$110,000 of the project covers materials, engineering and environmental work. The rest is in-kind. Preparation of the grant document is on-hold from Reclamation due to a back-log. I anticipate we will have a contract in place early February. This is common. In the meantime, we have approval to begin the environmental permitting process and engineering as allowable costs. This project will be scheduled for completion March 2019. We hope to get the Lateral 5 portion done by water start-up this coming season.

FUTURE PROJECTS & PLANS: Upon recommendation from Reclamation, we will do the environmental work for all projects we plan within the next 7 – 10 years. We have \$16,000 in the Rippee Rd E W grant for this purpose. The work will include not only Laterals 5 and 9, but 12, 13, 15, 17 and 18. That leaves 21, 24, 28, 29, 30 and 31. Two major reviews are still in progress in order to fully complete this work. One is the Boardman Master Plan review, which I have not completed. This is our in-house plan and one that we want to have the general meeting about. The second is the five year review of the WEID Water Management and Conservation Plan. This needs to be submitted to the State by the end of the year.

VEHICLES/DUMP TRUCK: We need to replace one of our ditchrider trucks for next year as we've put it off for quite some time. That truck (2004 Chev ¾ ton 4x4), will be used as a shop truck. I'm hoping to find a used truck at one of the state or federal auction sites if possible. I'm also looking for another dump truck. We have piping projects coming up that require fill and removal. Plus, we have ongoing work on the canal roads to address the liner erosion and canal road issues. This work can be done quicker with two trucks than with one.

OFFICE: Past due statements have gone out. Lien notices will go out the end of September. Water right transfer process will continue through the end of the season with two permanent transfers filed after the season – Irrigon system and main canal.

PARTITION REVIEWS: There have been five partition reviews the past few months. In Umatilla there is Herkamp and Reich both partitioning to three lots. In Irrigon, one potential subdivision off 8th Road (Svatonsky). In Boardman, Pacheco partition was approved by Planning, and they may change to a subdivision. Tobin partition off Lateral 15 is in process of approval. There are two federal easements on his property.

UTILITY WORK: Zayo is doing underground utility work in the District from Tower Road to Umatilla. Reclamation is working on the crossing agreements. They will be crossing the main canal in two places.

WALT STEAGALL: Walt has been doing the water management for the past two to three weeks. He has been helping out with the water right review in Irrigon as well. He owes us 94 hours through August (for half his health insurance) and is currently coming in about 16 hours a week. He is also helping on the water right review process, which will take about 30 more hours. I expect him to be even by the end of October.

CTUIR: The CTUIR held a meeting on August 30 in Pendleton. This was for folks to catch up on where they are in working towards their water right settlement. Report attached.

STATE HISTORIC REVIEW FOR IRRIGATION DISTRICTS: The irrigation project document for nomination of irrigation districts to the National Register of Historic Properties has been adopted by the federal Historian. I am in the process of reviewing the document. We will use this in our upcoming report and consultation with Reclamation for our piping.

AWARD: WEID and the City of Hermiston will receive the Tyler Hansell Agricultural Efficiency Award for our reclaimed water project. Director Tom Byler will present the award, likely at a Water Resources Commission meeting and perhaps November 16 or 17 in Salem.

LEGAL: The District continues pressing Water Resources Department on the groundwater issues in the Umatilla Basin. They have not followed up from our meeting held March 15, 2016 in Hermiston. There is an e-mail string in your Board packet showing contact between our attorney and the State. WRD continues to approve groundwater pumping permits and we continue to protest. This is the second protest and a copy of that is in the Board packet. Legal issues for the remainder of the year will be focused on letters to Reclamation and WRD regarding our McKay certificate and continuing to press the groundwater problems.

BEV'S PTO TIME: I continue to be well above the "limit" for PTO of 280 hours. The Board approved this last year and I still find it difficult to take much time off. My PTO is at 461 hours. I started the year with 363, have taken about 130 hours this year, and will try to get down to 380 by the end of the year. I'll do this by taking a week off near the end of each month and longer over Christmas.