



WEST EXTENSION IRRIGATION DISTRICT NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2013

IRRIGATION WATER OUTLOOK

"Just about anything can happen in this type of climate" reports the NW River forecasters. And much has already happened. The water year (starts Oct 1) began with three very wet and mostly warmer than average months. Snow fell in higher areas creating snowpacks that are above historical averages in terms of snow/water equivalences. Forecasts aren't much help as they are mixed with an equal chance of above or below average precipitation across the Basin. El Nino signals are down and remain in the neutral range.

What we can say is that McKay Reservoir is 40% full and Cold Springs will fill. That is always good for WEID as we rely on the return flows from the upstream irrigation.

The next three months will tell us much more as far as weather. By June, we'll have an idea as to how quickly the run-off from the mountain snows went by us and when we will need to turn our pumps on to meet our irrigation demand. By late August, we'll know how much water we will have pumped and can safely predict whether it was a wet, dry or average irrigation season. We would leave predictions to the forecasters, but for 2013, they are not much help so far.

**ANSWERING MACHINE/OFFICE
541-922-3814**

**EMERGENCY CELL PHONE
541-314-0005**

**WATER ORDER LINE
541-922-9372**

Usually, you will call the office number where you can reach someone or leave a message on the answering machine. The answering machine is checked twice daily, even on weekends although calls may not be returned until the next business day.

Please use the emergency cell phone for after hour and weekend emergencies where property or life is at risk. Since response to these calls involves overtime pay, be sure that you have an actual water emergency.

Please post these numbers in an accessible area for your use.

WATER START-UP

Note that start-up may be delayed due to wet weather conditions

Main Canal
Umatilla/South Irrigon
March 18—21

Boardman
March 25—29

DISTRICT PUMPS &
IRRIGATION SYSTEM
APRIL 8—10

OFFICE HOURS
Monday - Friday
7:30 a.m. to
4:00 p.m.

Please remember that the district has a small office. If there are meetings, errands, or illnesses, the office simply is closed. Patrons can drop their payment through the slot in the front door at any time.

2013 ANNUAL CHARGES

The Board found it necessary to increase costs of both the base charge and the per acre charge. The last increase for these charges was in 2007.

**All landowners pay an ACCOUNT CHARGE of \$300.
Each acre in the district is charged \$49 per acre or portion of an acre.**

Those with District-supplied pressurized water have a \$25 per acre fee.
The District has a legal fee of \$7 per acre to assist with legal costs.
The improvement fees vary from system to system.

SPECIAL ASSESSEMENT— 2012

There was a \$2 per acre special assessment charged in December 2012. This was due to the 2012 pumping costs, which were well over the budgeted amount for that year. Most of you received the billing in late December. We mailed to everyone with a charge over \$10.. If the amount was under that or you have not paid, you will see it on the billing you are receiving now. There is no interest accruing on the amount until April 1.

Questions, call Lisa at the district office. 541-922-3814.

WEID DISTRICT PERSONNEL

ADMINISTRATIVE/OFFICE:

Bev Bridgewater, District Manager
Lisa Baum, Office Manager
Chris DaVault, Office Assistant (part-time)

IRRIGATION SYSTEM:

Ray Akers, Operations Mgr
Saul Ochoa, Irrigation System
Walt Steagall, Irrigation System
Verlyn Penry, Irrigation System

FEDERAL FACILITIES:

Jim Ball, Fish Passage Technician
Sue Kiele, Fish Facility Maintenance

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Division 1, Bill Cline, Umatilla
Division 2, Doug Strebin, South Irrigon
Division 3, Max Hellberg, North Irrigon
Division 4, Vern Frederickson, E Boardman
Division 5, Dalarie Philippi, W Boardman

WEID MAIN CANAL REPAIRS

District crews are readying the main canal for the irrigation season. The canal was built 1914—1916. We see deterioration in areas of the canal and panel sloughing due to pressure from groundwater movement pushing against the liner.

The District increased the work done on the main canal ten years ago with an increase that invested \$100,000 annually (material, equipment and labor) into canal repair and replacement for a total of \$1 million 2003—2012.

In 2013, we added more funds in our canal budget so we can increase work on the canal and easement area. Replacement decisions are prioritized by management and reviewed by the Board of Directors. They are based on patron safety, canal integrity and available funds.

While this is a considerable annual investment, total renovation may be necessary for stretches of canal in the future. Renovation is estimated at \$1 million per mile for the 27-mile long canal.

COLLECTION OF ANNUAL INCURRED CHARGES

The due date for the District's annual charges have moved up two weeks starting 2013. Here is information about the bill you are receiving and collections.

- ◆ Due dates for annual charges are: ½ due April 1 and ½ due July 1.
- ◆ Accounts will be considered delinquent if not paid by the due date. Interest will be charged at 1-1/3% per month or fraction thereof, with a \$1.50 per month minimum. This is set by the State legislature
- ◆ Payment plans are available for current accounts. (See the article below for details).

LIENS AND FORECLOSURES: Oregon law empowers irrigation districts with the ability to collect past due charges. This is how it works if you are delinquent on your bill and do not have a current payment plan in place.

- ◆ August 1: Late payment notice with Intent to Lien may be sent by certified mail to all delinquent accounts. There will be a Lien notice fee of \$15.
- ◆ September 1: Liens will be filed on the delinquent accounts. A lien filing and administrative fee of \$200 will be added to each account. Notice of Foreclosure Intent will be mailed by certified mailed and a \$15 notice fee will be added to each account.
- ◆ October 1: The Board may act on delinquent accounts for collection and foreclosure proceedings, based on non-response to the notice sent above. There is a collection fee of \$300 added to each account and the account will be sent to legal counsel for action.

Any payments received will be applied in the following order:

1. Accrued interest charges
2. Other fees, paid in the order accrued
3. Annual incurred charges—oldest amount paid first.

The district does the following mailings:

Full billing mailed in late January or early February

Second notice in mid to late May to those who have amounts remaining on their account

Power billings in late November or December

Monthly statements are not mailed even though an account may accrue interest or fees.

PAYMENT PLANS FOR 2013

Many landowners are taking advantage of the payment plans offered by the District. They need to be made with the office and must be in writing prior to April 1. If you start later than April 1, you must arrange to catch up the 1st payment. Here are the payment plans:

1. **SIX MONTH PLAN:** Six (6) monthly payments, March—August. If your account also has a power bill charged in November, this can be added on to the payment arrangements.
2. **TWELVE MONTH PLAN:** Twelve (12) monthly payments, to include annual charges and an estimate of the annual power bill if applicable, available to landowners on a fixed income.

Interest does not accrue on these accounts, if payments are made on time per the plan.

RRA FORMS—A reminder that RRA forms are due prior to taking water. This affects land-owners owning or farmers farming over 240 acres in any Reclamation project and public entities owning over 40 acres. If you have questions, contact Lisa at the office.

AQUATIC HERBICIDE APPLICATION— OFFICIAL NOTICE

West Extension Irrigation District uses the aquatic herbicides ACROLIEN (Magnicide-H) and COPPER SULFATE in its main canal to treat pond weed and algae. The district has a NPDES permit from Oregon DEQ that allows it to apply the product.

Each product is applied four to five times during the season, starting in mid-May and continuing to mid-September. A notice of treatment will be posted on the door of the district office 48 hours prior to each treatment.

If you have dairy animals, you are required to close your headgate during the treatment times. If you have livestock and are using irrigation water as stock water, you may want to close your headgate during treatment times.

If you would like further information on this notice or the aquatic herbicide products, please contact the district office at 541-922-3814.

If you would like to be notified prior to any application, please contact the district in writing providing a telephone number with an answering machine or an e-mail address. We will contact you 24 hours prior to the canal application.

CLASS A RECYCLED WATER—CITY OF HERMISTON

The District is expected to begin receiving Class A recycled water from the City of Hermiston in 2015. The City has awarded the construction contract on its new \$17 million plant. It will install a membrane barrier filtration system to produce the Class A water that will be distributed either to the Umatilla River or the WEID canal. Reclamation has issued its permit and contract; DEQ has approved the application to the irrigation canal. The main criteria for WEID to receive this water is 1) it has to be safe for food products and meet organic food requirements and 2) there is no impact to the agricultural exemption for return flows. The District has held four public meetings about the project.

FACTS ABOUT CLASS A RECYCLED WATER:

Incidental and direct contact with Recycled Class A water is safe.

It is produced according to strict standards.

Strict monitoring of the treatment assures that standards are continuously met.

Agriculture is the main use of recycled water

Class A Recycled water meets food product safety standards

For questions or comments, please contact Bev at the District office.