

MANAGER'S REPORT - DECEMBER 2020

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

COVID REPORT: There is no question that Covid restrictions, precautions and safety training have affected our crew. We have responded to all restrictions, provided PPE, held numerous safety trainings, added Covid sick time for the crew, adopted procedures and rules required by OSHA, and isolated after exposure. Currently, in addition to masking at all times, crew is one person per vehicle and we have authorized the use of private vehicles with mileage reimbursement to assure that happens. We locked the porta potty early in the process, requiring cleaning each time and allowing folks to stop by their houses for bathroom breaks. The crews have worked in between other projects to get the bathroom installed, including hot water. We are waiting for final inspection so they can start using it. Thus, after over 100 years (the District formed in 1919), we will have a bathroom and hot running water for our employees at the shop. As Lisa has mentioned in her report, we will be requesting CARES funds to reimburse some of this work.

SHOP: The crew is making full use of the new shop now. The old shop has been cleared out and is used for meetings and storage of small parts & materials. The shop desk will remain there along with the equipment manuals and repair records. We still want to close off the old door that faces main street and put in a regular door where the window is that faces the new shop. They have purchased material to put around the welding area.

SHOP FENCING: Ben and Alan have worked up a material cost to purchase what is needed to complete the fence around the shop. The neighbors fences. We recommend fencing around the rest of the area with two rolling gates and a man gate. Ben will have the estimate.

EQUIPMENT: We purchased the used dump trailer and that has made a big difference on the jobs. Thanks Board, for emailing your approval of that purchase. It has saved so much time for the crew. Unfortunately, the rest of the equipment news is not so good. The red dump truck is waiting for parts for a rebuilt fan blade; the backhoe is being worked on by Ken Bailey; the pipe trailer had bearing and brakes replaced by the crew; the excavator has had a series of minor repairs, but is running. Ben will have more detail.

PIPELINE PROJECTS UPDATE: We continue to work on the projects. The pump station for lateral 12 is almost in place. We have the easements for the private properties and will start laying that pipe this week. We have been working with Marstons and Moores along Miller Road and Lateral 12 about moving their fences. You may recall from the Lateral 9 situation that folks don't like having to move their fences.

I have learned that I should send historic information about the federal easement right away and then talk to folks about their fencelines and other encroachments. (thanks Alan Marston and Vern for this needed lesson). Most folks aren't aware of the details of the federal interest on the properties. This will make conversations go a lot easier in the future.

We have all the 6-inch and under pipe in. The 8 and 12-inch should be here before Christmas. Fittings for these sizes are here. We just ordered the 15 and 18-inch pipe and fittings. They are 8 weeks out. We still believe that we can get these two projects completed, not before water start-up, but soon thereafter. Folks are counting on it. We will need to bring in a contractor once the large pipe is here to get this done. Of course, we are waiting on the cultural work before removing any of the old laterals. We are working around that.

EASEMENT STANDARDS: Due to the current scrutiny of our standards, I have worked on them to make them easier to read. I haven't changed any of the specifics, but moved some things around, removed some duplication of wording, and did some housekeeping. I added an opening paragraph as well. None of the requirements or easement standards contained in the document were changed. I have enclosed a copy for your review and a copy of the motion that approved them with the changes requested at that time. I don't believe we ever reviewed the final document, so it is on the agenda for review.

NRCS GRANTS FOR LANDOWNERS: The folks at NRCS have been working with the landowners along Laterals, 12, 13, 15 and 17 to assist them with upgrading their systems. Most of our Hispanic folks were not applying and Ben reached out to them over this last month to explain what is going on and make sure they get their applications in. That was successful and those on 12, 15 and 13 filed their initial request for funding. We have meetings set at our office on Thursday afternoon, 12/17 for them to meet with NRCS and complete the rest of their applications.

NRCS will not spend all their funds on this application period. I understand those funds will move forward to 2021 plus the \$260,000 they already have for 2021. Their funding was a three-year grant and ends in 2021. For this reason, I want to stay on course for our project work as best we can and not lose that funding for our patrons. Once the grants are signed, the folks have two years to use the funds. If we delay Lateral 17 one year, this will work for most folks. Two people on 17, Baldocks and Sayles, received funding this year. We are not sure if they will lose their funding or not if there is a delay. NRCS will find out if they can be extended. I have attached a list of folks that have been or are being funded for your information. This has been a successful joint project for us.

CULTURAL WORK: I have made progress on updating our work and tying it to the document that the State wants. I always have hope that this will get back to Reclamation very soon. I know this is holding us up and it is a priority everyday.

LINER AT PATTERSON FERRY: The crew has prepped for the liner work. We are waiting for the welding machine to be available for us. We have ordered some drainage filter and stabilizing mesh that should help out. Ron McKinnis has given Ben some guidance on this project.

CANAL ROAD WORK: Wise came in at a bid quite lower than Reffet, using less rock. Even if he doubles the rock, he is still lower. So, we signed the contract. We are hoping he will get some work done before the end of the year. Ben and I met with folks off Paul Smith.

Letters will go out this week to other folks. We have also asked Wise to build up the berm along the Philippi property east of their pump station where it has overtopped recently.

IRRIGON SURPLUS PROPERTY: No movement from Reclamation on approving the relocated irrigation line. Our buyer is waiting patiently.

BRIDGE STANDARDS: I have reviewed our bridge standards and they are enclosed for your review. I don't recommend any changes. Any bridge going over our canal will need to be permitted by Reclamation, although in the past, our standards were higher than theirs. I met with the City of Umatilla and they agree that we need to work together to identify an area where a crossing can take place. They would own any bridge and understand it would be a major roadway and a connector back to Powerline. There are two large parcels above the canal that will be developed and a new school will be built, so this will be a part of their planning process for that development.

NPDES FOR AQUATIC HERBICIDE PERMIT: The new NPDES permit has finally been issued by DEQ. This replaces our older permit. It is for our acrolein and copper-based products. Under the new permit, we have to do a time of travel study every five years. Testing is the same as long as we keep the time of travel study current. Monthly reporting is now required. We have a separate permit for the endothall-based products. Total annual permit cost for our aquatics is \$5200. We spend about \$3700 on testing.

RIVERWARE MODEL: I was surprised to receive a notice that the Riverware model for groundwater along the Umatilla River was ready for peer review. I wasn't aware they had continued working on it. I have engaged GSI for this review.

CTUIR UPDATE: I let Joe Ely know that we are on hold while we review the details of the settlement, including viability of hydro. I've asked Adam and Owen from GSI to help with this. They are also working on how to assess the future cost of power for us. The word-smithing is something we can work on when we next revisit the settlement. In the meantime, all is on hold at the CTUIR due to covid.

WATER MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION PLAN (WMCP): While talking to the State WRD on another issue, I learned that we don't need a five-year update on the WMCP, but our ten-year update is in 2021. So, that will be on our plate for summer of 2021.

BUDGET 2021: I will have a document for preliminary discussion ready for the Board meeting.

OFFICE CLOSURE: We would like to close the office on Dec. 22 through 25. Lisa will work short hours the following week and I will be visiting family.