

## MANAGER'S REPORT - APRIL 2021

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

**OPERATIONS:** The crew is still in start-up mode. All portions of the District started on the target day, but problems throughout left areas OFF. As of April 10, there are two areas in Irrigon and one in Boardman without water. Ben will have a report.

### **BOARD AGENDA:**

The next few items are on the Agenda for the Board meeting.

**CHECKBOARDS IN CANAL:** One of the issues that came up is the checkboards in the main canal. We have a clear understanding in Boardman which property owners take care of the checkboards, but not so clear on the main canal. It has been a long time since an issue has come up. Typically, the District puts the checks in at the start of the season and they stay all season. During this last storm, the McNamee check below their pump station at Taggs came apart with the pressure put on it by a weed jam. One of the rails actually tore off from the concrete. Abe put some concrete blocks in the canal that will temporarily solve for the season. The structure can be rebuilt in the offseason.

During the time that I have been here, I know of two check structures that were worked on for private pump stations – Engbretson and Orchard. These are clear to me that they are the landowners responsibility and the District billed back materials on these. Strebins takes care of his own check structures, including the Relocation canal. So, that leaves the lower ones. I believe they are the responsibility of the landowner for repair and maintenance, but it has not been an issue for many years. When Logan owned several properties, his crew took care of his checks; I just don't think there has been an issue with the "newer" landowners where we've needed to discuss the ownership of the checks.

During the last windstorm several weeks ago, we had five workers out, Randy was out from Strebins, and we could not keep up with the problems. Thus, one structure (McNamee) was lost and we had to shut down at the siphon. I think we need the landowners with check structures in the canal to assist with assuring their checks are OK. I would like to modify the SOP attached, as outlined in Blue. Then we will work with the landowners to let them know the situation. I know you will want to discuss this.

**SIPHON TRASHRACK at I-84:** I think this is the time to seriously consider a travelling screen of some sort at the siphon. We will need power at the site and I've contacted UEC to see about it. If the Board agrees, we will work on ideas and costs for presentation at the 2022 Budget time.

**REQUEST FROM DOHERTYS:** Doherty has again requested that the District rebuild her outlet off Lateral 31. I have not authorized it in the past as it is a private structure. I am ready to send a letter to her, but wouldn't mind a Board review.

**TELEMETRY UPDATE:** Vern set up a meeting with Cecil Rock a few weeks ago. We discussed the District's goal to get our current system working. We have communications problems and there has not been maintenance for two years now. We also discussed where we want to go in the future with site communications and operations. Cecil has taken a look at our system. I understand from Vern that he has some recommendations for our telemetry system that we can review at the Board meeting. There is \$13,500 in the budget for the new tower and repairs.

**KROSKE:** He has filed an unemployment claim and it was approved. Lisa is working with Mike Snyder trying to find a way to dispute the claim.

**HUWE/DOLLAR GENERAL UPDATE:** We have moved along. You will see the letter of agreement sent to the Dollar General store. They accepted this in theory. We put in the valves necessary for this work prior to start-up. We are all waiting for the ODOT permit now, then we will enter into a contract with Dollar General to get the work done.

**UEC REQUEST FOR CROSSING MAIN CANAL:** This is the crossing request from UEC for the main canal at I-84. I would like the Board to review this and authorize acceptance.

**RESOLUTION NO. 21-008:** Our attorney stated this is fine to adopt. The 1/3 acre is what is allowed under State statutes. He recommends we send it to the Cities of Irrigon, Boardman, Umatilla and the two counties. I would if we should do that before adopting. I have set this Resolution to be considered for this Board meeting and adopted in May.

**OTHER ITEMS:**

**MARTINEZ FORECLOSURE:** Linda Martinez signed off her water rights and the sale of those rights will be used to pay her bill. She will still owe the District funds from the bankruptcy.

**PLATS/PARTITIONS:** It appears the City of Irrigon has some plans for more subdivisions as two plats have come through. They are outside our service area. UEC is purchasing a parcel that will be partitioned from the Port of Morrow. Plans are in the Board packet. Access seems to be an issue right now, so we will see what is worked out. I have met with a landowner planning to develop 13 acres along Hwy 730 into 2-acre lots. We won't have any issues there.

**FEDERAL RIGHTS:** We continue to do research on the federal rights. Right now, it is to be able to discuss with developers and the City or County. Two areas in Boardman came to our attention by the County where they decided to make the federal canal an easement, showing as such to several landowners. The landowners aren't happy because they think the County will

start assessing them for ground they can't use. We discussed this possibility several years ago. The County has quietly started taking some action – mainly with two developments. The Suter partition and the Baker partition brought these two areas to light. This is just another way of saying that we need to protect the rights of the system at all levels.

What are we doing:

- We are gathering historic information as we have time. The goal is to put together a right-of-way book.
- We are working with Reclamation to identify the ditches in Irrigon that are no longer used and will enter into a process with them to abandon the federal ditches. Wendy (BOR) has talked with her superiors and they want to do one ditch at a time. This will take owner notification, gathering deeds and some map preparation.
- We have a meeting set with the County on April 20 – Reclamation, ourselves and the County. We hope to give them a better understanding of the federal rights and find out their concerns. We will see how that goes.
- The 1914 decree. We will try to map the rights given under that decree as it is a guiding document for much of what we have.
- We found many maps showing the work that Reclamation did and those claims will fall under the Act of 1890 for the federal easements that are not under the Decree.

This is a big undertaking for sure. The process will take time, but we need to get started on it. We are having too many challenges and it will just continue. Landowners really want to know what the federal right is and how it got there.

**FARMERS CONSERVATION ALLIANCE:** We have been taken off “hold” and are approved again for the Modernization project. Ben and I have a phone conference with the FCA folks on Wed, April 22.