

## MANAGER'S REPORT - MAY 2020

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

**OPERATIONS:** The start-up time keeps the crews busy. This year, it was cleaning the laterals, responding to customer calls, issues, and breaks. We used the part-time laborers to clean the laterals once we lost the prison crew. We did quite a bit of clean-up that had been put off. We've had various employees down with illness, so haven't had a full crew very often. We got caught up with the urgent work orders (safety and water delivery) about 10 days ago and started on the housekeeping stuff. We did an herbicide treatment last week as pond weed was already starting to show up. Things look good now. We are starting right-of-way herbicide applications around the pump stations, laterals and canal. There have been several customer-related issues coming up during this time.

**FLOODING:** We've had flooding in Boardman on Lateral 15 (2 times), Lateral 29 (2 times), and Lateral 31 (2 times). The canal was overtopped several times along Philippi Ranches, above 22 and above 25 (Gate malfunction one time).

Lateral 15 – Irrigator did not follow the water and flooded the County Road. We spoke to him several times. We made sure the other irrigators checked the ditch before taking water.

Lateral 29 – Irrigator overwatering onto the Golf Course and a leak in the concrete box flooded onto irrigators property. He had been taking too much water, for too long. District crews worked on the box and sent a letter to the two flooders that this is not a District box or pipeline coming into and from the box. They should keep an eye and do any repairs in the future..

Lateral 31 – Dohertys were flooded when Corpus took the water. Crowell was flooded when Doherty left the water overnight on the Eucon property.

Flooding at 22, not enough boards were pulled and canal overtopped. This happens a few times each season and is an issue we worked with a previous owner to resolve, but were not successful. A berm or build-up on the south side of the canal needs to be done that will help the situation. The canal needs to be checked up for the flooder at 22 and for the irrigation pump upstream.

Flooding above 25. The gate at 25 malfunctions at sudden flow changes. We have it in manual until our vendor can either get here or investigate the issue. We have not had time to turn it over to him yet.

**AGENDA ITEM:** Philippi's have had three floods. They will be at the meeting to talk about these.

**SAND IN CANAL:** The sand areas were removed prior to start up. We found debris and small mint plants in Lateral 18 right before starting that ditch. Philippi cleaned it up as it came from their field. Sand continued to come off the Kerslake property and off Strebins. The sand in the canal off Kerslake and above Philippi pumps is from less than 1 inch to 2 inches deep. From Strebins, there is a sand bar building up in the Relocation canal. It catches the sagebrush and we've spent portions of three days pulling soaked sagebrush from the canal. We contacted

the Cleaver irrigator about this so they can take it over. It will affect the pump stations on the RLC, if not removed.

**WATER PLUGGED UNDER I-84:** This happened right at start-up. It took some trial and error and time to figure out the problem and get the ODOT crews onsite. We had to shut down off and on for a couple days, then for five days. This was a first for Dave of the ODOT crew, who has been here longer than I. I've included several reports from this repair.

Note – we use yellow comment sheets for issues at the District. I have included several that are of interest and around some of the issue mentioned above.

**METERS:** Acock and Payne (87 & 88) installed their meters. I talked with Ryan of Cleaver Farms and Jason of Strebins about meters. They both indicated concerns about how to meter. I really haven't gotten back to these other than they are both considering it. Ryan and Jason did ask to do this for next season as I contacted them right after the March board meeting, but water had already started. Ryan will be rebuilding 90 and would install at that time. He is concerned about the cost of the meter for 86 and we wondered about a weir at the end. Jason thought he would need too many meters, but I think we was considering his pivots. We only need the four deliveries out of the Relocation canal.

**PARTITIONS:** Three partitions have been filed since our last meeting.

- 1) Kern property (formerly Acock off Miller Road). They are breaking into two lots. This is pretty straight forward. They will be on the new pressurized system next year and have an old pump for now.
- 2) Riley property in Irrigon off Oregon Street. She is breaking one 2.5 acre lot into three, but one parcel is only 8000 sq feet. It will be a subdivision before long. This one involves our irrigation line and two private irrigation lines. The city has pushed back on the easements that we need and finally asked their attorney to contact me.
- 3) Marston property (formerly Smith by Laurel Lane). They propose to divide 37.5 acres in to three lots. Ben met with Alan Marston a couple weeks ago and answered his questions. We will protect the federal easement. I have yet to send a findings letter to him. Hope to get to it soon.

**LISA:** Lisa has had the second surgery on her foot. You may recall that the first one over a year ago did not take. She's been waiting to get called in for the "redo" and it happened. She will be out of the office until about June 2. Chris is helping out and we are keeping up, mostly.

**SAFETY:** We've been able to follow safety guidelines. We closed the office shortly after the March board meeting, following the Gov mandates. We aren't ready to open yet, but are thinking about how that will happen.

**IRRIGATOR ISSUES:** For some reason, we've had a number of irrigator issues this year and I've been sending out a lot of letters. The next two pages talk about those irrigating without a water right. This will be on the agenda.

## **IRRIGATION WITHOUT WATER RIGHTS (AGENDA ITEM)**

This year, our ditchriders were more tuned in on irrigation problems. Several areas were found irrigating without a water right. Typically, there is a fine for such use. It is rare enough that I can't really say what the standard would be.

Here are the circumstances in the order discovered:

- 1) **Joe Taylor property in Boardman**, south of canal off Root Lane. Has been irrigating about 5 acres without a water right. He was notified when he purchased the property and irrigated it anyway. We discussed this last year. I think there is almost enough in dry ground on the piece that he can move to cover most of what he is irrigating. He came in to the office in April to see about doing the temporary transfer from the dry to the wet. He may have to lease an acre or two to cover it all.

Issue – we will remedy the situation this year. Is there a fine or penalty for previous years? The ON/OFF will be close to a wash, but likely not completely. Copy of letter sent to him attached.

- 2) **Kiesel property in Irrigon off Magic Garden Lane**. Two acres with a small barn. Sometime last year, the neighbor Doug Daniels started irrigating the property. It was fully irrigated. This year, when start-up occurred, their line blew up and I recognized that they lost their water rights due to forfeiture in 2017. They have been shut-off and tagged out. A letter has been sent to them notifying them of a potential fine. No answer yet.

Issue – Taking irrigation (1.8 acres) of water in 2019 without a water right).

The annual cost of that water right would be \$510 with appropriate power bill.

- 3) **John Wenholtz'** neighbor had installed hand lines on 9 acres south of his house, across the drainage ditch with the intent to take water. John has 2 acres of water right in the area. I got hold of John and we will try to transfer the 2.0 acres south of the drainage ditch near his house OFF this area to the area NORTH of his property. In order for that transfer to work, the flood water coming off the Proctor property to the west has to be controlled so Wenholtz ground can dry up. If this works, Wenholtz will do a permanent transfer of the 2.0 acres.

Un-addressed issues – cost of the temporary transfer (about \$450 with the mapping and admin fees). I am hesitant to do this without knowing the land will dry up. Unless there is an objection, I recommend we try to dry the land up this year, then do the transfer. John will pay for the full 4.0 acres of water rights. If his "old" land remains green, he will need to cease irrigating any extra on the "new" land.

- 4) **Joe McNamee, Depot Lane**. While looking at Wenholtz, I noticed that irrigation on Joes' property is in a place that was dry up to a couple of years ago. Abe had him call me and Joe wants to get the issue settled. He has two acres of water rights and has the land to irrigate 2.6 acres, like his neighbor. We found some areas that he will need to keep dry this year to match the 2.0 acres. If he keeps it dry, no issue for this year.

Recommendation: I send him a map outlining the acres to be kept dry and give him future options about annual leasing of water rights and encourage an application for water rights. It looks like he has irrigated 2.4 or so acres in the past. He has about 2 years of 0.4 acre of water rights used without a right.

- 5) Three areas in **Carielle Addition** (Umatilla area off Powerline Road) where landowners have been irrigating on City property for many decades. This is a private system, not owned or operated by the District. There are problems with a fairly new landowner that keeps digging up the line. Tassie went in as a ditchrider and noticed the problem. They have had several outages so far this season, but the landowners work together to get them fixed. The City was contacted as they are the owners of the property being irrigated (about .60 acres altogether). I am enclosing letters from the City to the landowners.

Recommendation: Waive fine and fees. There is a long history with this property. The developer paid for 19 acres of water rights for many years. The District billed him and he managed the acres. At some point, likely when he moved on, the District started billing each lot. There are about 12 acres of water rights now. These were confirmed through 3111. The mainline is on City property, so the City is looking at that. But, I think we've made it right for us.

- 6) Three properties east of Irrigon along main canal: Two put in some sprinklers for this season on fee title ground and one was discovered with sprinklers on the ROW – not their property and without a water right. This was a new owner. All are apologetic and moving their sprinklers. No issue.

**OVERALL RECOMMENDATION:** I don't think we can ignore Kiesel 1.8 acres of irrigation for a full season. They absolutely knew they lost their water rights. Joe Taylor – when I get the map, if he has been irrigating more than he has, he needs to pay for the difference for at least the last two years. McNamee could be the same. I would have to use aerial photos and calculate the use. It will cost more for the mapper than we would get for the 0.40 potentially additional acres. The others responded quickly and I have no issue with waiving any fine consideration under their circumstances.

## **PUMPS:**

**SUNRISE:** The VFD was installed on the Sunrise pump. It was quite an ordeal as the power base had burned during the winter. We weren't aware of that until a few weeks before start-up. Scheduling the electrician and power took some time as they were both busy. Gary Moore installed the VFD. The crew upsized the input. We got it started April 16, so just a day after target. But it was warm then. It is working very well and folks seem pleased.

**HUKE PUMP:** We had some problems that were quickly identified with the 100 HP. It may be starving or it may need rebuilt. The crews upsized its intake and that helps. Gary Moore gave them sizes to help out the intake and discharge that will be done after the season. So far, no problems. We sent overuse reminders to everyone on the system.

**NEW PUMP & MANIFOLD FOR MILLER:** This is the WaterSmart project for this season. The pump, VFD and manifold are in. These are grant funded.

**GENERAL:** This season, we started having our crews start and stop the pumps. It is working for the most part. Sometimes, especially in Boardman on a weekend, the ditchrider gets held up and the pump doesn't start early enough for some folks. We are working on the schedules, which will need to be changed a bit once we get warmer weather. Overall, it's a good plan and keeps district eyes on the pump stations.

**IPS:** We are having a lot of problems with the IPS large pump cavitating this year. We are trying to tie it to screen cleaning times, flow rates. There just isn't a clear path yet to indicate the issue. We have not checked water levels in the river, so that will be the next step. Sometimes we need to turn a 100 HP on and that helps. Sometimes we turn it off and that helps. Fortunately, the crew as a whole are tuned into this now and watch it closely everyday.

I asked Gary Moore about connecting the 100 HP so it automatically goes on at certain parameters. He said we would need to upgrade the VFD, he thought. We haven't gotten back to it.

**SUNRISE:** No issues. Just a report that we will put a VFD on it for 2021, using the one coming off the Donovan PS when we include those acres on our new Pump Station off Miller Road. So, SUNRISE WILL GET A VFD.

## **CONSTRUCTION IN IRRIGON:**

The construction in Irrigon has affected us. Not only the digging up of most of the streets, but the four broken lines we've experienced (three they fixed). They crossed our RL2 line last week in two days with no issue. That was good. The City is paving 13<sup>th</sup> Street this week. They said they would not pave over our mainline and Reclamation has said they need an agreement if they do. We will see what happens.