

MINIDOKA IRRIGATION DISTRICT

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MANAGER'S REPORT

I want to begin my report this year by thanking everyone for their cooperation this year. We would have a very difficult time managing the water in the canal system without your help. Thank you for calling your ditchrider to order your water on and off each time. This helps us keep the canals at a safe level and helps us to operate as efficiently as possible. Thank you for reporting any problems you have with water deliveries, weeds, algae, and safety hazards! If you do not feel like the problem has been fixed, please call the office so that I can make sure the issue is resolved.

These last few years everyone has experienced a dramatic increase in the cost of everything. We have experienced the same dramatic increases in our operating costs. As I reported last year, Reclamation is in the planning stages of major repairs at the Jackson Dam, and work continues on the radial gate trunnion pins at American Falls Dam. Just the increase in the cost of chemicals and our O&M bill from reclamation is equal to a \$3.00 assessment increase per acre. The board has not had to raise assessments since 2015 because we have been able to generate revenues from water rentals. Going forward, we must make sure that the water supply for our water users is secure, so this year the Board voted to increase the assessment by \$2.00 per acre. As we look forward to future years, MID will need to continue to make upgrades to a system that is almost 125 years old. Some of the concrete structures in the system are original structures from that era. There are approximately 2,000 headgates in the canal system. If each of those headgates lasts approximately 100 years, then we need to replace at least 20 each year to keep up. Each year, MID replaces 30 to 50 headgates. We have a backlog of deferred maintenance that we work on each winter.

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This year we will end the irrigation season with approximately 150,000 acre feet of storage in the reservoir system for next year, roughly three times as much carryover as last year. We are in a great place to start the storage season for next year. Thank you again for calling your ditchrider to order your water on and off.

If you are making changes to your irrigation systems, please contact the office so that we can make sure that you are tying a new system into a sound headgate.

~Dan Davidson~

ONGOING DISTRICT IMPROVEMENTS

Aquifer Recharge

MID has partnered with the Idaho Water Resource Board to increase aquifer recharge in the valley. MID was able to deliver 1500 acre-feet of water to the Goyne Sump location this fall. MID crews will be working to increase the capacity of the B2/1 canal this winter to allow for more efficient recharge.

Grant Projects

System Optimization Review

MID has requested and been granted funding through the Bureau of Reclamation's (BOR) Water Conservation Field Services Program to complete a System Optimization Review. MID has been awarded \$25,000 in funding for this project with a 50/50 cost share. This project will involve detailed analysis of the way water flows through the District to identify problem areas. By compiled detailed studies identifying the issues, MID will be in a better position to apply for federal funding as it becomes available.

This project started in Fall 2022 and be completed by Summer 2024.

FEMA Hazard Mitigation

In partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, MID has been in the process of developing a plan to mitigate flood damages should another flood event happen. MID was awarded **\$898,000** to complete this project with an 80/20 cost share. This project is underway.

Due to the many natural disasters that FEMA has experienced this year, this project is currently on hold.

Lateral 24

MID submitted a grant proposal through the BOR's Small-scale Water Efficiency Program (SWEPE) to pipe Lateral 24. This proposal was selected for funding.

MID was awarded **\$71,971.48** in funding for this project with a 50/50 cost share. This project is scheduled to be completed Fall 2023.



A FEW REMINDERS -

How to Get Your Water

ALL water users must contact their ditchrider at the beginning of EVERY water season.

Water users may set a water schedule for the year at that time if their ditch rider finds that the property meets qualifications for a schedule.

Water users will need to call their ditchrider between 7:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to schedule a delivery. A minimum of a 24-hour notification is required to receive water or to shut off. Calls made during this time period will ensure the proper delivery of water.

Due to the increasing number of spam calls our staff receives daily, **please be sure to LEAVE A VOICEMAIL OR SEND A TEXT MESSAGE.**

Water users may leave messages for their ditchrider outside these hours, and they will be called back as time allows.

If an emergency exists, please state so in the message.

District Waterways are NOT for Livestock

MID's water rights do not have a stock water component. If there is damage to the ditch bank caused by livestock, the cost of repair will be the responsibility of the landowner involved, including the disposal of deceased livestock found on or near our waterway. Runoff from livestock operations can also be a problem. The District is required to adhere to the DEQ's water quality standards. Water samples are taken throughout the District monthly to ensure such. Violations will be reported when discovered.

No Tampering with District Structures

Tampering with a head gate, check structure, ratchet gate or removing or damaging a MID lock without the permission of MID are violations of state law and subject the violator to prosecution and claims for damages caused by the unauthorized act. Water users must obtain permission from their ditch rider PRIOR to diverting or shutting off water or adjusting MID structures. Gates will be locked if this policy is violated. Please remind your children to not tamper with or play around MID structures. Many structures are automated and can move without warning, potentially resulting in injury.

RULES FOR THE DITCH BANK

Communication and Courtesy are Crucial

Please remember that irrigation district rights-of-way (roads) are PRIVATE PROPERTY. Idaho State Code authorizes only the District and water users irrigating property along that waterway access to that property. If you are picking asparagus, walking your dog, or riding your four-wheeler, you could be ticketed for trespass by the property owner. If you are using the canal bank to access your headgate, you need to park by the side of the road to allow District vehicles to pass.

MID reminds all water users to keep the District's rights-of-way along canals, laterals and drains free from handlines, mainlines, chemical tanks or any other personal property. Mainlines and chemical tanks should be placed away from the toe of the bank of ALL water delivery systems. The District is NOT responsible for the damage of personal property located in these areas. Water users sprinkling the District's rights-of-way roads will be billed for the damage. During the water delivery season, no gates or fences are allowed on the main canal systems. Fences on private property should not inhibit access to the canal and drainage systems or MID's ability to maintain it. They can compromise the District's ability to respond in an emergency.

The District's maintenance program includes burning, spraying, and mowing the vegetation along the easements. MID is not responsible for damage to personal property or landscaping located in these areas.

The District would also like to thank the water users who spray and burn weeds on their property as this is a shared responsibility. We do ask that you protect the valuable grasses growing on the canal and lateral banks as they help prevent erosion. Due to the limited number of chemicals we can legally use, your applications have helped cut down on our maintenance costs, lessening the miles we have to cover and helping keep assessments low.

Canal Safety

The District's Board of Directors would like to warn parents that although the water is tempting during the heat of the summer, irrigation canals can be dangerous - especially for children.

***MORE CHILDREN DIE IN IRRIGATION
CANALS AND DITCHES THAN ANY OTHER
BODY OF WATER IN IDAHO.***

Please tell your children to stay away!

DITCHRIDER NUMBERS

ALL water users must contact their ditchrider at the beginning of EVERY water season.

Ride 1 - 208-677-5161

Ride 2 - 208-677-5162

Ride 3 - 208-677-5163

Ride 4 - 208-677-5164

Ride 5 - 208-677-5165

Ride 6 - 208-677-5166

Ride 7 - 208-677-5167

City of Rupert - 208-431-0790

Watermaster 208-677-5170

Asst. Watermaster 208-677-5169

Asst. Watermaster 208-431-5869

Foreman 208-677-5160

Asst. Foreman 208-677-5172

OFFICE CLOSURES

The District's office will be closed on the following dates. The office will reopen at 8 a.m. the following business day.

Veteran's Day 2023

November 10

Thanksgiving 2023

November 23-24

Christmas 2023-2024

December 21 (noon)- January 1

Idaho Human Rights Day 2024

January 15

President's Day 2024

February 19

Memorial Day 2024

May 27

Independence Day 2024

July 4

Labor Day 2024

September 2

Columbus Day 2024

October 14

LEGAL ISSUES FACING THE DISTRICT

Compiled by District Attorney Kent Fletcher

IGWA Settlement: The purpose of the Surface Water Coalition (SWC) Idaho Ground Water Appropriators (IGWA) settlement agreement is to allow junior groundwater users to continue pumping out of priority so long as they meet the mitigation requirements and the goals of the agreement. When IGWA reported its 2021 mitigation actions, it was discovered that its 2021 mitigation efforts were approximately 120,000 acre feet short of the agreement's required 240,000 acre feet annual requirement. After attempts to negotiate a solution, the SWC declared a breach of the agreement and requested that the Director of the Idaho Department of Water Resources take action. Although contested by IGWA, the Director found that IGWA did breach the agreement. Rather than having a massive curtailment, the SWC and IGWA negotiated a settlement of the 2021 breach, which requires IGWA to furnish 30,000 acre-feet (AF) of additional mitigation in 2023 and 15,000 AF in 2024. The Director also found that the minimum reduction mitigation requirement is 240,000 AF annually, which was being contested by IGWA. IGWA furnished the 30,000 AF during 2023 but IGWA appealed the Director's determinations to the District Court and it is set for oral argument. IGWA also failed to comply with the agreement in 2022 and the Director again found that it breached the agreement. The SWC requested that the Director take action and enforce the agreement and a scheduling conference concerning that request is set in November. Sentinel well levels that are used to determine if IGWA meets the goals of the agreement continue to drop and the level that was supposed to be met in 2023 was not achieved. In this case, the agreement requires IGWA to take further action to reach the goals of the agreement, and discussions concerning that will start in November.

Recharge: Because of good water conditions this irrigation season, the SWC is able to recharge most of the mitigation water received from IGWA and other parties. The SWC is working with the Idaho Water Resources Board so that the recharge will take place in locations that are beneficial to the Snake River reach gains that provide natural flow and storage to the SWC.

Groundwater Management Area (GWMA): The Director formed an advisory committee to begin the creation of a Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer Groundwater Management Area Plan. The SWC has 3 representatives on the committee and the committee is meeting monthly. The goal of the committee is to make recommendations to the Director concerning the terms of the Plan.

Moratoriums: Due to continuing declining groundwater levels, the Director issued Moratorium Orders for the Wood River basin and mid and upper Snake River. The Orders state that new applications for consumptive water rights will not be processed without full mitigation. The Cities asked for a hearing on whether municipal rights should be treated as fully consumptive and that issue is scheduled for hearing October 16-19 in Boise.

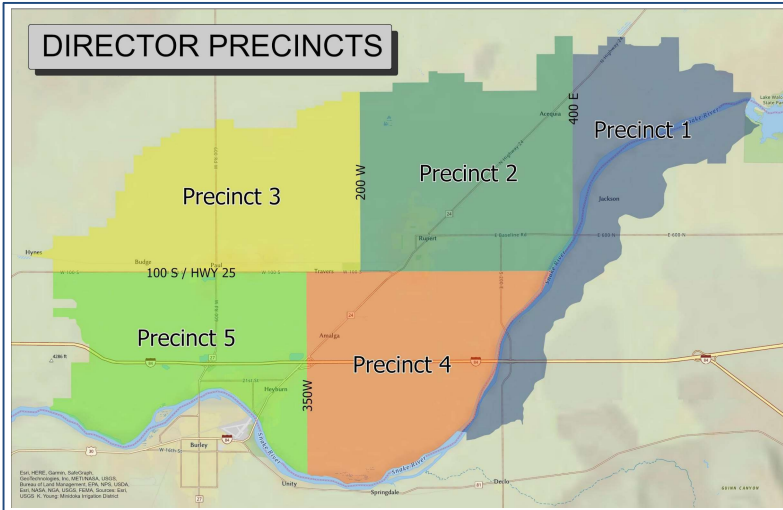
New Director: Gary Spackman retired as the Director of IDWR and Mat Weaver, a long time employee of the department, became the Director on September 1, 2023.

Quagga Mussel: Quagga Mussels were discovered in the Snake River near Centennial Park north of Twin Falls. They move from one body of water to another by attaching to boats, waders or other items that come into contact with them. The mussels are small, reproduce rapidly, and can clog irrigation infrastructure quickly. States in which they are located spend hundreds of millions of dollars attempting to control the infestation. The State of Idaho responded quickly and began treatment to try and eradicate the mussels in the area in which they are located. Idaho water users are monitoring the situation closely.

Other issues: MID continues to monitor other issues that could affect MID's water rights, including federal issues, water quality issues and Water District 1 issues. The current administration places emphasis on issues such as redefining Waters of the United States, which factors into permitting requirements under the Clean Water Act, the definition of pollutants and other issues that impact the operations of the District.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE



Precinct	Director	Re-Election
1	Ronald Kowitz - Chair	2026
2	Terry Short	2024
3	Luke McCall	2026
4	Josh Kowitz	2025
5	Brent Smith - Vice-Chair	2025

Director elections will be held in November.

Being on the MID Board of Directors is a chance to improve the way irrigation happens in *your* community. The process is quite simple, with just a few qualifications that need to be met:

1. Applicant must own (and provide proof of ownership for) property in the District
2. Applicant must meet the qualifications detailed in Idaho Code § 43-111
3. Applicants must be residents of the precinct they hope to represent.
4. They must meet these requirements as of the date of the election.

Applicants will need to sign a Nominee's Oath along with a Nominee Petition that must be returned to the office at the specified date.

YEARS OF SERVICE

The following employees will be honored this December for their length of employment with the District:

- Rodney Denker, Pump Foreman - 15 years
- Kevin Young, GIS Specialist - 5 years

2023 Employees of the Year

Operations

Bill Martsch - Ditchrider, Ride 7

Bill was selected as the Operations Department Employee of the Year due to a multitude of factors. Bill eagerly stepped into a new ride when the situation demanded an experienced head in the game. Over the past year, he has stepped up to train and support new employees to be the very best at their jobs.

Maintenance

Evan Overson - Heavy Equipment Operator

Evan was selected as the Maintenance Department Employee of the Year due to his increased leadership presence on the crew. Evan has worked hard to increase not only his own skill set but encourages other teammates to do the same. Evan has recently stepped into the role of Team Lead and continues to excel as a valuable resource to MID.

Employee Training

Headgate

In the Fall of 2022 Assistant Foreman Bob Young was selected to participate in **Headgate: Idaho's Water Leadership Academy Class 2** hosted by the Idaho Water Users Association.

He successfully completed the program, graduating January 26, 2023

This upcoming winter, Assistant Watermasters Vance Johnson and David Warr will have the opportunity to participate in **Headgate: Idaho's Water Leadership Academy Class 3**.

Through this three month program, they will be able to learn not only about different aspects of leadership but also delivery issues, laws, regulations, and politics relating to water in Idaho. Headgate is the only leadership academy specifically developed for water delivery organizations in Idaho. Headgate was created to provide participants with the tools to gain confidence, build better relationships, and develop the leadership skills necessary to succeed in an ever-changing industry.