

# MINIDOKA IRRIGATION DISTRICT

98 W 50 S Rupert, Idaho 83318 208-436-3188 [www.minidokairrigationdistrict.org](http://www.minidokairrigationdistrict.org)

## MANAGER'S REPORT

I want to thank everyone for all their conservation efforts this year. The snowpack last winter was below average with low reservoir carryover. We were fortunate to have good rain and cooler temperatures during May and June. If the hot weather that we had in August and September had started earlier, we would have had little, if any carry-over left in the reservoir system. At its lowest point, the system was only 11% full. We will carry over only about 25,000 AF for next year which is about 40,000 AF less than last year. This is the third lowest carryover for MID in the last 30 years. Without a big winter, next year's irrigation year could be short. We all need to watch the snowpack this winter. The weather experts are pointing to a wetter than average winter. I hope they are correct.

MID was developed as part of the Bureau of Reclamation's (BOR) Minidoka Project well over one hundred years ago. MID has storage rights in Jackson, Palisades, American Falls, and Minidoka reservoirs. BOR maintains each of these dams, and MID is assessed its share of the cost annually. We just finished paying off the loans for the Minidoka Spillway, and it is time to prepare for some of the other projects on the horizon. Jackson Dam is a big one. Jackson Dam was completed in 1906 and raised in 1919. More work was completed in the 1980s. This year, Reclamation is taking some core samples of the original concrete placed in 1906 to see how well it is holding up after 116 years. MID owns 22% of the storage water in Jackson, so our share is 22% of the irrigator's portion of the cost. As a comparison, MID owns 63% of the storage at Minidoka, so this bill could be quite large as well.

We also have aging infrastructure issues on our own canal system. Many of our major check structures date back to when the project was created. In the near future, we will have to completely replace many of them. Each year we replace 25-50 headgates throughout the system, refurbish check structures, and clean canals and drains as regular, on-going maintenance. For extraordinary maintenance project, we try to find grant money to help keep assessments from going up. We have been awarded over four million dollars in grants over the last three years for flood control and aquifer recharge projects. We will be busy with them for the next few years in addition to our ongoing maintenance.

**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.**

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## SPILLWAY COSTS UPDATE

The Board of Directors is pleased to announce that MID has paid off the debt incurred for the improvements made on the Minidoka Dam spillway from November 2011 through March 2015. The two Special Assessment Bonds that were obtained by the District from USDA in 2013 and 2014, were paid in full October 17, 2022. At the same time, the Directors reviewed upcoming expenses that will be incurred by the District including repairs at Jackson Dam, additional work on American Falls Dam, and repair/replacement of aging District diversion structures, many of which have been in place for over 100 years. In order to minimize increasing and decreasing assessments in response to these future expenses, the Directors will be levying a "Capital Improvement Fund" assessment as part of the annual bill, and the funds from that portion of the assessment will be designated for maintenance, repair and replacement of structures and will be used to match grant money that may be available to assist with those expenses. The result will be that the O&M assessment will not increase this year, and the total assessment per acre will not change. The assessment per acre has not increased since 2015.

# ONGOING DISTRICT IMPROVEMENTS

## Aquifer Recharge

MID has partnered with the Idaho Water Resource Board to increase aquifer recharge in the valley. MID has been awarded \$3.48 million in funding to complete this project with an estimated \$900,000 in District contributions. This project is scheduled to begin in Fall 2022. The project is scheduled to wrap up by December 2025.

## 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 is scheduled to begin Fall 2022 and be completed by Spring 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 and is scheduled to be completed by Spring 2024.

### Lateral 39

MID submitted a grant proposal through the BOR's WaterSMART program to pipe Lateral 39. This proposal was selected for funding. The rock lined ditch is original to the project, dating back to the early 1900s. It has traditionally proved problematic in that it seeps a significant amount of water on a regular basis. Piping this waterway will assist with water delivery concerns and allow for greater conservation of resources.

MID was awarded \$75,000 in funding for this project with an anticipated 50/50 cost share. Due to the current cost of materials, this project has been postponed until the 2023/2024 Maintenance Season.

# 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 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 2022**

November 11

**Thanksgiving 2022**

November 24-25

**Christmas 2022-2023**

December 22 (noon)- January 2

**Idaho Human Rights Day 2023**

January 16

**President's Day 2023**

February 20

**Memorial Day 2023**

May 29

**Independence Day 2023**

July 4

**Labor Day 2023**

September 4

**Columbus Day 2023**

October 9

# LEGAL ISSUES FACING THE DISTRICT

Compiled by District Attorney Kent Fletcher

**IGWA Settlement:** The purpose of the SWC 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 of additional mitigation in 2023 and 15,000 acre feet in 2024. The Director also found that the minimum mitigation requirement is 240,000 acre feet annually, which was being contested by IGWA. IGWA has asked for reconsideration of the Director's determination. There is concern that IGWA will not meet the 2022 mitigation requirement. In addition, sentinel well levels that are used to determine if IGWA meets the goals of the agreement continue to drop. There is additional concern that IGWA is not reducing its consumptive use as contemplated by the agreement. The SWC and IGWA plan on meeting over the winter and will attempt to clarify terms of the agreement and will address the fact that IGWA will, in all likelihood, not meet the 2023 sentinel well benchmark and the 2026 goal of the agreement. The Director determined that AFRD2 and TFCC were injured by junior groundwater pumping the past two years, and any changes to the agreement will need to protect the SWC senior surface water users' priority rights.

**Cities Mitigation Plan:** Because of poor water conditions this irrigation season, the cities provided slightly more than 6,000 AF of mitigation water directly to the SWC rather than recharge it as in past years.

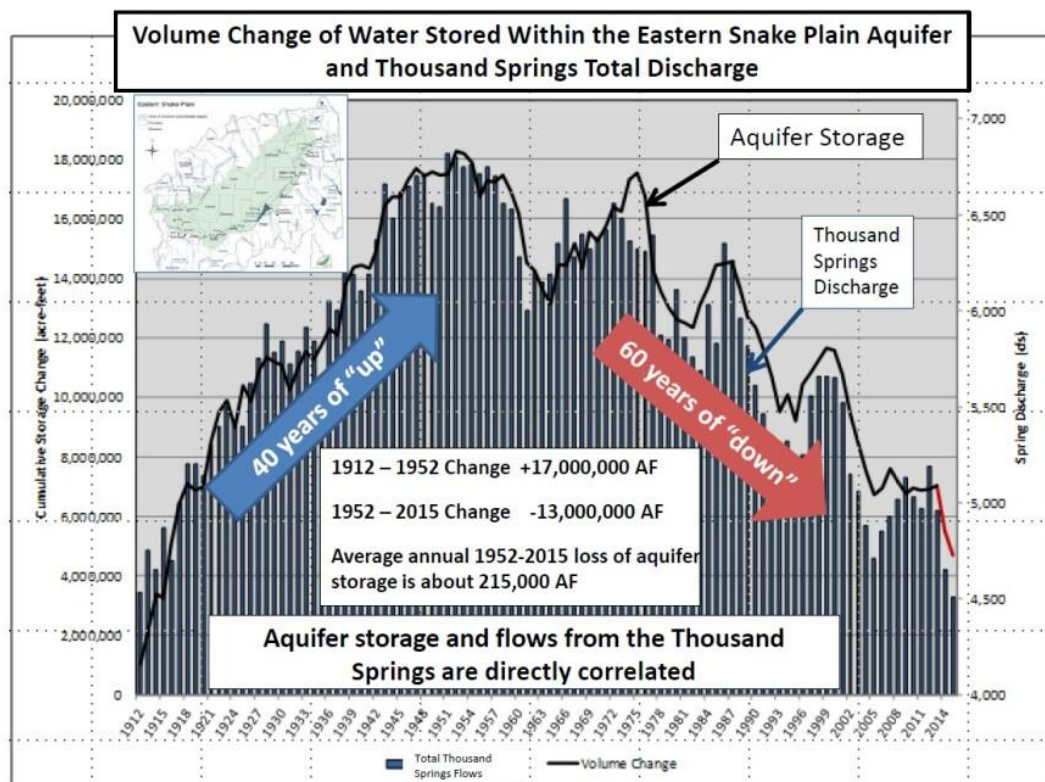
## Groundwater Management

**Area (GWMA):** The creation of an ESPA GWMA was upheld by the District Court. It is hoped that the Director will form an advisory committee to begin the creation of a groundwater management area plan.

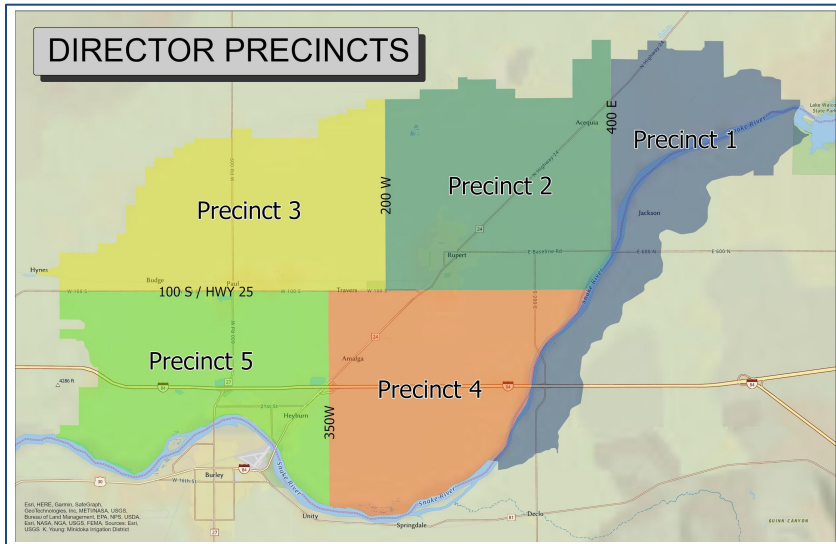
**Protests:** The SWC continues to monitor applications for new water rights and transfers that could affect water supplies. As a result, several applications have been denied, several other applications were withdrawn, and many were resolved by the

applicant offering adequate mitigation. One applicant, who, after a protest by the SWC, was denied a transfer of junior groundwater rights off of ground stacked with senior surface water rights, appealed the decision to the Idaho Supreme Court. The Idaho Supreme Court upheld the position taken by IDWR and the SWC that allowing the transfer would result in an enlargement and the transfer was denied.

**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



<u>Precinct</u>	<u>Director</u>	<u>Re-Election</u>
1	Ronald Kowitz - Chair	2023
2	Terry Short	2024
3	Luke McCall	2023
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:

- Jared Bingham - Watermaster - 20 years
- Dan Davidson - Manager - 10 years
- Bill Hance - Spray Crew Lead - 25 years
- Vance Johnson - Assistant Foreman - 15 years
- Bob Young - Assistant Foreman - 5 years

# OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

## 2022 Employees of the Year

### Water Delivery

#### Brandon Clement - Ditchrider, Ride 5

Brandon Clement was selected because of his willingness to adapt to an ever-changing environment, and not only manage, but thrive. Brandon willingly took on a new ride this year with the intent of expanding his working knowledge of the District. Brandon often takes charge of a project without being told and successfully accomplishes the project's goals. If he makes a mistake, he doesn't pass the blame, he takes responsibility for the errors. Brandon excels at recognizing an issue and addressing it before it becomes a problem.

### Maintenance

#### Wayne Sherbeck - Heavy Equipment Operator

Wayne Sherbeck was selected as the Maintenance Crew Employee of the Year due to his overwhelming desire to improve the District. Wayne possesses a drive to improve on standard processes that is unmatched. He continuously looks for ways to improve; not only systems but his teammates and himself. Wayne is a natural-born problem solver that the District is lucky to have.

## Employee Training

### Headgate

In the winter of 2021/2022, GIS Specialist Kevin Young and Watermaster Jared Bingham participated in **Headgate: Idaho's Water Leadership Academy** hosted by the Idaho Water Users Association. Through this seven month program they were able to learn not only about different aspects of leadership but also delivery, laws, regulations, and politics relating to water in Idaho.

### Leadership Idaho Agriculture

Project Management Specialist Shawna Adams was selected for Class 43 of **Leadership Idaho Agriculture (LIA)**. LIA is recognized as a premier leadership development program in the state of Idaho. LIA is the only leadership organization in Idaho that works to directly cultivate leaders in agriculture - the state's biggest and most influential industry. This winter she will have the opportunity to work closely with individuals all over the state through concentrated, hands-on learning experiences to enhance and build leadership qualities.