

Minidoka Irrigation District's Annual Newsletter

Water User Update • Water Season 2021-2022

How to Get Your Water

ALL water users must contact their ditch rider the beginning of EVERY water season. You may set your water schedule for the year at that time, if your ditch rider finds that your property qualifies for such. Otherwise, you will need to call your ditchrider between 7:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. to schedule a delivery, with a minimum of a 24-hour notification to receive water or shut off. Calls made during this time period will ensure the proper delivery of water. Ditch riders are in and out of vehicles making adjustments. Please make certain you LEAVE A MESSAGE if you do not reach your ditch rider. Water users may leave messages for their ditch rider outside these calling hours, and will be called back as time allows. If an emergency exists, please state so in your message.

Rules for the Ditch Bank

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 underlying 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.

We remind you 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 the event of an emergency. The District's maintenance program includes burning, spraying, and mowing the vegetation along the easements, and is not responsible for the damage of 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 including the District's rights-of-way, 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 reduce our maintenance costs, lessening the miles we have to cover and helped 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/DITCHES THAN ANY OTHER BODY OF WATER IN IDAHO. Please tell your children to stay away!

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. This includes the disposal of deceased livestock found on or near the waterway. Runoff from livestock operations can also be problematic. 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 are automated and can move without warning, potentially resulting in injury.

District Phone Numbers

Office - 208-436-3188
(M-F, 8-4:30, closed holidays)
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 Rider - 208-431-0790
Watermaster - 208-677-5170
Assist. Watermasters
208-677-5169 or 208-431-5869
Foreman - 208-677-5160
Assist. Foreman - 208-677-5172

District Office Closures

The District office will be closed for the following dates. If you wish to make a payment during these times, it can be mailed to:

Treasurer, 98 W 50 S, Rupert, ID 83350.

Veteran's Day - Thursday, November 11th

Thanksgiving Break - Thursday & Friday,
November 25th-2th

Christmas Break - noon, Wednesday,
December 22nd through Sunday, January
2nd

Idaho Human Rights Day - Monday,
January 17th

Presidents' Day - Monday, February 21st

Memorial Day - Monday, May 30th

Juneteenth Day - Monday, June 20th

Independence Day - Monday, July 4th

Labor Day - Monday, September 5th

Columbus Day - Monday, October 10th

Did you Buy or Sell Property this Year?

Please notify the Office as soon as you have either purchased or sold any real property within the District. If possible, please remind your title company or attorney closing the transaction to send MID a copy of the warranty deed to ensure that your assessment is correct.

2021 Employee of the Year

The Employee of the Year for the District is Bobby Young. Bobby joined the District in 2017 and serves as a heavy equipment operator as well as assistant to the Mechanic. He also works as the backup supervisor for the Assistant Foreman and Foreman. His equipment knowledge, mechanical skills, and operator skills have made him invaluable to the District and the water users we serve.

Years of Service

The following employees will be honored this December for their 5 years of employment with the District: Brandon Clement (Ditchrider - Ride 6) Bill Martsch (Ditchrider - Ride 2) Evan Overson (Operator) David Warr (Assistant Watermaster) (9 years total)

Update on Spillway Costs

The original estimate for MID's share of the cost of the Minidoka Dam spillway rehabilitation that began in 2012 was \$10,037,403.88. To date, MID has paid the Bureau of Reclamation \$9,602,871.75. In order to help pay for this project, MID borrowed money from the USDA. Through this year, the District has paid \$2,733,914.00 toward this loan and the remaining principal balance is \$2,926,499.21. In addition, MID has \$2,819,514.22 held in reserve designated for spillway expenditures.

American Falls Spillway Repair

The Bureau of Reclamation is undertaking the repair of the American Falls Spillway. The estimated total cost over two (2) years to the District is \$222,366.05, which is an increase of \$77,460.57 from previous estimates. The Board of Directors has reserved sufficient funds for this repair.

Manager's Report

Title Transfer: Board Chair Ron Kowitz signed the Title Transfer documents on January 8th. The transfer is now complete. A lot of time and effort was put into this project. I would like to thank the office staff for all of their hard work. We could not have done it without them!

In the past, all water users were required to get approval from both Reclamation and MID for crossings and waterway alterations and removals. Now that it is complete, water users will only need to get approval from MID. We also began wheeling water for soft conversions this spring. The revenue from these conversions is part of the reason that we do not need to raise assessments again this year.

Water Supply: As you all know, this year was long and hot. MID, along with all other storage holders in the Upper Snake reservoir system, used a lot of storage water this year. At its lowest point, the system was only 10% full. We will carry over only about 65,000 AF for next year. While this number is very low, it is higher than most of the other droughts in the past 50 years. Hopefully, we will have a wet winter and spring!

Assessments: Operation and maintenance assessments will remain the same again this year. The next time you talk to your ditch rider or other staff members, please make sure you thank them for all the work they do to run the system as efficiently as possible.

We Expect Respect

MID is committed to providing a safe, non-hostile environment for its water users and employees, supporting and promoting an environment where all community members are treated with common courtesy, compassion, dignity and respect. Even though conflicts may arise, it is important for all involved that issues be addressed in a reasonable, professional manner. One should not speak to or treat someone else in an unprofessional or rude manner, shout or swear, intimidate or bully, make threatening comments, gestures or actions that cause offence, try to humiliate, or cause physical and/or emotional harm. If you, as a water user, receive such treatment from an MID employee, please contact the District so management can take appropriate action. If a water user treats an MID employee in such a manner, corrective action will be taken by management.

Legal Issues

IGWA Settlement: For the first time since the Settlement Agreement was signed, sentinel well levels dropped following the 2020 irrigation season. Because of the poor water conditions, it is anticipated that they will drop further following the 2021 irrigation season, making it difficult for IGWA to achieve the 2023 and 2026 well level goals. The SWC and IGWA will be discussing how to address the situation.

Cities Mitigation Plan: Because of poor water conditions this year, the cities provided slightly less than 5,000 AF of mitigation water directly to the SWC rather than recharge it as in past years.

Ground Water Management Area (GWMA): The creation of an ESPA GWMA has been upheld by the District Court. The Director can now begin formulating a ground water management area plan to sustain the aquifer.

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 was denied a transfer of stacked water rights after protest by the SWC, has appealed the decision to the Idaho Supreme Court and oral argument on the appeal should take place this winter.

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. With the change in administrations, new emphasis is being placed 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

Chair - Ronald Kowitz, District 1
Vice-Chair - Brent Smith, District 5
Director Josh Kowitz, District 4
Director Luke McCall, District 3
Director Terry Short, District 2