



Farmers Irrigation District 2021 Newsletter

To All Members of Farmers Irrigation District:

2021 was a challenging year with very low river flows and high levels of glacial sediment. The Hood River continues to be a highly challenging water source, requiring increasing levels of maintenance by District staff to keep the water flowing and the hydro turbines spinning.

You will find a new **on-line bill pay** option available through our website (www.fidhr.org). This is a quick and convenient way to make your annual payment. All payments are due by April 15 and must be in by January 10 to receive the 3% discount.

Kingsley Reservoir Expansion Project Update

The reservoir expansion project is wrapping up as you read this. Crestline Construction put the finishing touches on the dam in October, finished constructing the wetland, built and rocked all of the roads and staging areas, graded the borrow area, and will be finishing the new campground loop on the SW side of the reservoir as well as finishing the spillway before winter sets in. Schuepbach Concrete recently poured the boat ramp and the base for the new telemetry communications tower. The next phase will include building out the required telemetry system and replacing the fish screens on Gate and Cabin Creeks which supply water to the reservoir through a 5.5 mile long pipeline. The new storage water rights for the expanded reservoir require increased flow monitoring using telemetry as well as the upgrade to the fish screens before those rights can be used. Hood River County expects to open the new SW campground loop in summer of 2022. Expect additional campground improvements to occur in subsequent years as the County secures additional grant funds.



Hydropower

FID owns and operates two Low Impact Hydropower Institute (LIHI) certified powerhouses which produce a combined 20 to 25 million kilowatt hours of very low carbon renewable energy per year (enough power for about 2,000 all electric homes for a year or about 8% of the power demand in Hood River County). The output from the powerhouses is sold to PacifiCorp under a Power Purchase Agreement that expires at the end of 2025. We will begin negotiating a new contract in late 2022 or early 2023. The sale of power currently pays the debt service for improvements like the reservoir expansion. Obtaining a fair contract for sale of this local renewable resource is critical to the financial health of the District.

District Water Right Policies

The District continues to review all water right policies for compliance with state law and to meet the best interests of the District and all of its patrons. The water right limits of 5.61 gallons per minute per water right acre and 3 acre-feet per water right acre are the maximum allowed. If water is properly applied, all common crops, and lawns, grown within District boundaries will thrive with less. State law requires all District water to be beneficially

used, without waste. Watering pavement and overwatering to the point of pooling or overland flow are forms of water waste.

Staff Changes

Doug Adams retired in August of this year after 13 years with the District. Doug worked for years as a private contractor before joining FID. Doug's knowledge and experience in all types of construction and his expert equipment operation was invaluable to FID and helped keep the District running smoothly. We wish Doug all the best in his retirement.

George True joined FID in June of this year. George has extensive experience in construction after owning his own contracting business and then working for Crestline Construction for the last eight years as a Quality Control Manager and Foreman. George has worked on projects for most of the irrigation and water districts in the valley, Hood River Electric Co-Op, NW Natural, as well as many other special districts, utilities, and local governments in the region. George's knowledge of the local infrastructure combined with a great background using all types of equipment and technology has allowed him to quickly become a great asset to FID.

Other Updates

FID continues to work with Farmers Conservation Alliance (FCA) to complete a **Watershed Plan** for the District. A completed Watershed Plan will make FID eligible for up to \$25 million in grant funds through PL 566, an NRCS funding source. Projects included in the Watershed Plan are: piping the remaining 2.45 miles of the Farmers Canal, a sediment management facility near the headgate on the Hood River, full buildout of the SCADA/telemetry system, piping the Rainy Creek ditch, upgrading the lower half of the Stanley Smith Pipeline, expanding Forebay 3, and replacing the South Greenpoint Pipeline. All of these projects have been identified as means to save water, improve efficiencies, and decrease operation and maintenance costs. The Watershed Plan is expected to be completed in 2022. A draft final Watershed Plan will be available for public review and comment in the coming months.

FID will be working with the Hood River SWCD to apply for an **NRCS CIS** grant for on-farm system improvements this winter. This is a great opportunity to upgrade on-farm irrigation systems to save water and labor costs while receiving a 50% cost share. If this funding source is approved, cost-share is likely to be available for 3-5 years, beginning in 2023. Strong interest at this time will help FID secure this funding. If you're interested, or might be interested over the next 5 years, in participating, please email Megan Saunders at megan@fidhr.org.

Again, **sediment loads** in the Hood River continue to be a problem for District operations. Our annual fall shutdown for system maintenance provided an eye-opening look at the impacts of these sediment loads on our operations.

Looking to the Future

FID will continue to make system improvements that increase safety, save water, decrease costs, and improve overall resilience. We are continuing to make investments in technology to allow improved system monitoring to ensure we're meeting the needs of our water users as well as meeting local, state, and federal requirements.



Twin 48 Inch Pipes Half Full of Sand

For more information about FID and to get system updates during the irrigation season, go to www.fidhr.org.

Sincerely,

The FID Team