



# Farmers Irrigation District 2020 Newsletter

To All Members of Farmers Irrigation District:

The 2020 irrigation season is complete, we've finished our annual system shutdown for inspection and maintenance, and we're busy winterizing the irrigation portion of the system. November is a good month to drain your own system and get it winterized, including dismantling your filter for the winter.

The crew at FID works hard to keep the water flowing to your sprinklers as well as keeping the hydropower units turning out carbon free, local renewable energy. Our system is complex and covers a large area, bringing water from over 4,000 feet in elevation at the highest point, all the way down to the north side of I-84 at just over 300 feet in elevation. Over the past 30 years, FID has invested over \$50 million to pipe open ditches, install modern fish screens, and pressurize the district. All of this work has allowed us to become very efficient with our water.

## **Kingsley Reservoir Expansion Project Update**

The Kingsley Reservoir Expansion Project will nearly double the volume of the upper Kingsley Reservoir and will help to provide a consistent supply of stored winter water while decreasing demand on live stream flow late in the summer, providing a benefit for water users and aquatic wildlife. Our goal was to complete the reservoir expansion project in 2020, however, we were not able to achieve that goal and will be pushed into 2021 for the final stages of construction. We experienced several delays due to unexpected site conditions, weather, COVID 19, air quality, and fire danger which cost us nearly 6 weeks in construction time. Placement of dam material can only happen during dry weather and with soils within a narrow moisture content band. While we were able to complete the vast majority of the many facets of the expansion project, we were unable to place the material for the final 16 feet of dam height due to the fall rains. We will complete the final stages of construction in the early summer of 2021. The dam will be able to operate next season as it has historically, just without the additional capacity of the expanded design. Please respect the closure of the site until the project has been completed.



## **Rate Increase**

The 2021 billing includes both a \$10 per account fee increase as well as a \$20 per acre assessment increase. Rates have been flat for the past 5 years, however costs of operation have been increasing steadily. A large cost increase for this coming year is in property insurance coverage. FID will incur a 24% increase in rates to insure our infrastructure (with a combined value of almost \$50 million). The rate increase will provide adequate revenue to cover operating expenses as well as replacement of equipment that is well beyond typical life expectancy.

## **Hydropower**

FID owns and operates two Low Impact Hydropower Institute (LIHI) certified powerhouses which produce a combined 20 to 25 million kilowatt hours per year (enough power for about 1,600 to 2,000 all electric homes for a year). In 2020, both plants were re-certified through LIHI for another 10 years. These facilities have been operating for 33 years and fund the vast majority of all system improvements by servicing the project debt

incurred by the District. In recent years, FID has invested in improvements to the hydropower system to reduce O&M costs and increase annual generation. In 2015, the turbine and generator set were replaced at Plant 2 and in 2016 the analog controls at Plant 3 were replaced with digital controls, as well as a new exciter, main unit breaker, and high-pressure unit. The main transformer in the switchyard was also replaced in 2016. Both plants now have matching modern controls with greatly enhanced safety features that will allow FID to continue to provide carbon free local power for generations to come.

### **District Water Right Policies**

The District is reviewing all water right policies for compliance with state law and to meet the best interests of the District and all of its patrons. We would like to remind all patrons that FID water can only be used at or below the flow rate of 5.61 gallons per minute per water right acre. And FID water can not be used 24 hours/day without exceeding each patron's annual limit of 3 acre-feet per acre. State law requires all District water to be beneficially used, without waste. Watering pavement and overwatering to the point of overland flow are both instances of water waste.

### **Staff Changes**

Rick Brock retired in June of 2020 after 32 years of service to FID. Rick held a number of positions within FID including Crew Foreman and ultimately finishing his career as the Water Rights and GIS specialist. Rick's knowledge of water rights and the system will be sorely missed.

Megan Saunders joined the FID team in April of 2019 as the Watershed Project Manager. Megan brings a decade of experience working for the Hood River Watershed Group in a similar role. Megan covers a wide range of duties including: water rights management, GIS management, project permitting, environmental monitoring, data management, IT support, and backup for general office functions.

### **Other Updates**

FID continues to upgrade its **telemetry system** to improve operations and meet requirements from the state. The newly secured water right for the Kingsley Reservoir expansion requires the District to operate six new telemetry sites. In addition, staff members have been working to improve solar power/battery systems, replace or upgrade PLC's, and upgrade communication from all sites to improve reliability and data quality.

FID has been updating its **Water Management and Conservation Plan**, reporting on the progress the District has made over the last decade and outlining the District's plans for the coming decade. The plan will be posted on the website after it is finalized with the Oregon Water Resources Department this winter.

In 2020, Farmers Conservation Alliance installed the largest **Farmers Screen** to date outside of Reno, NV on the Truckee River at Derby Dam. This patented technology, owned by FID and licensed to FCA, is making a real difference in fish protection as well as protecting agricultural water use. For more information go to [www.fcasolutions.org](http://www.fcasolutions.org).

### **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 are meeting the needs of our water users as well as meeting local, state, and federal requirements.

For more information about FID and to get system updates during the irrigation season, go to [www.fidhr.org](http://www.fidhr.org).

Sincerely,

The FID Team