



# DITCH DIRT

SEPTEMBER 2023 Volume 2023 Issue 2

## A Little Clarification on the Logistics Behind a Successful Water Season

The question is always, “Why did GID run out of water so soon this year”? Since GID’s creation we have had a variety of water seasons, some long, but most are not. If we took the last 8 years and did an average, it would be near the middle of August. One thing that needs to be explained, is the snowpack. The number that really makes a difference in determining what kind of season we can expect, is not the 30-year average percentages, but the water equivalency figure. Ideally, anything over 9 inches would indicate we could expect a longer season, as long as an early run-off does not take place. This year we had decent water equivalency, but with all the rain experienced at the beginning of the season, with not much demand, the extra that would not fit in the already full reservoirs, was lost down the river. There is not much we can do in this situation, as it is the design of our system. We need to fill Gibson basically twice in one year, in order to experience a full season.

There are some things we can do as water users to help. Understand the irrigation project; how, where and when the water is coming and where does it go when it leaves my field. Another misconception is why if the project has all these pivots, are we not saving water? The answer is that ditches that used to run for an average of 8 days, now run for 20 because of the large number of pivots we service, in comparison to the flood irrigation occurring. This creates the need to keep much more water in that ditch to make up for the evaporation, ground loss and spill that occurs. Another big problem that we see, is cancellation of water already ordered and released from Pishkun. There are days this past season, when that cancelled amount across the project reached 60 feet, that’s 120-acre feet that has no where to go but to continue down to the river. When this occurs often, we wind up with multiple days of water being wasted. We continually hear how the wasteways are full, well that is where that excess will end up. Another thing to take note of is unplanned offs. It takes 24 hours to absorb and again it ends up in the wasteways. Remember, it is everyone’s water. So if we try to change some of these less than efficient practices, we can all help to realize a longer season. This is not, obviously an overnight solution, but a start to greater efficiency.

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## HARVEST TRIVIA



- 1) How heavy is the heaviest pumpkin ever recorded in the world?
- 2) What state in the USA is home to the largest corn maze in the world?
- 3) What agricultural machine gets its name from the fact that it merges four different farming techniques; reaping, threshing, gathering and winnowing?
- 4) What method of applying seed, fertilizer or pesticide in a wide pattern shares its name with the method of using public airways to transmit television?
- 5) Sometimes called “going to seed”, what’s the term that describes a plant that’s flowered too early due to too much heat?

(1) The pumpkin currently holding the Guinness World Record for the heaviest is 2,624.6 lbs.  
 (2) California holds the Guinness Record at 60 acres.  
 It is common for people to call 911 because they get lots. 3) Combine, 4) Broadcast, 5) Bolting

## WATER SEASON WRAP-UP

I would like to thank the Ditch Riders for an excellent water season this year. Once again, we had several new employees in training. They all did well, I believe. Thank you to the farmers and their helpers for working with our staff to make it as good as possible. We were disappointed in it being a rather short season, but hopeful that this winter brings us a good snowpack. We are anticipating on filling two new Ditch Rider positions this year, so please help us to spread the word. A reminder about drain season: It is the same as during the regular water season, you must coordinate ons and offs with either your ditch rider or the office. Usage will be calculated and when the season ends, there will be no water taken from drains. Thank you for your cooperation.  
 Steve Lettengarver, GID Water Master

## **UPDATE FROM THE DISTRICT MANAGER, Erling A. Juel, P.E.**

**Thank you all for another successful water season. This was my 9th season as your District Manager and no two seasons have been the same. This year's snowpack was the lowest in the last 7 years and we lost much of that due to any early warming spell in May. Thankfully, May and June brought timely and abundant rain on the Bench. Although we ran out of water earlier than normal, I believe that all the crops looked good.**

**With the end of the water season comes the beginning of numerous infrastructure improvement projects. The headworks for SRS-71 is being replaced with a modern, self-regulating gate, which should improve water deliveries and save water. A Portion of the lower GSC concrete chute is being replaced, in part, with a pipeline. We are pushing to implement the 1st phase of rehabilitation to Tunnel #3 on the PSC. GID will begin the final phase of the Arnold Coulee Drop Replacement and Hydropower project and will soon begin the Pishkun Inlet Drop Replacement and Hydropower project. The majority of this work is being funded by grants, low-interest loans, and in-kind GID labor, equipment and materials. GID is forced to replace infrastructure because they don't fix themselves, they don't get better with time, and we don't want them failing in the middle of the water season.**

**Sadly, your GID commissioners were compelled to raise your annual assessments by \$5 per acre, starting this November. This was due to rising costs. As an example, GID's liability insurance coverage was canceled, and we could not find another carrier due to our history of defending ourselves in various lawsuits. Although we have yet to lose a frivolous lawsuit, the cost to defend GID is enormous. Today, our insurance costs nearly \$200,000 a year. This is more than 3 times greater than what we paid just a couple of years ago. Your way of life, the irrigation district and the future of the local community, are all under constant assault and your commissioners have vowed to fight to protect them. We at GID, apologize in advance, for any hardships our water users endure due to this very necessary decision.**

### **WE'RE HIRING.....**

**CALLING ALL INDIVIDUALS LOOKING FOR A REWARDING CAREER WITH GOOD PAY & GREAT BENEFITS, LOOK NO FURTHER! GID IS HIRING FOR 2 NEW DITCH RIDER/O&M CREW POSITIONS. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN WORKING FOR A GREAT ORGANIZATION THAT HELPS TO KEEP OUR AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY THRIVING, OR MAYBE YOU KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO IS, PLEASE STOP BY THE OFFICE TO PICKUP AN APPLICATION OR CALL US AT 406-467-2533.**



Sun River Watershed Group will hold its Fall Water Management Working Group meeting on Thursday, October 19th and 10 A.M. at the Fairfield Ambulance Training Center. Topics will include a recap of the 2023 irrigation season, review of the off-season weather forecast and operations of the river and reservoir, updates from Sun River water managers, and more. This meeting is open to the public. For more information call Tracy at 406-214-2868.

2023

2nd Edition of "Ditch Dirt"

**GREENFIELDS IRRIGATION DISTRICT**

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