



DITCH DIRT

March 2026 Volume 2026, Issue 1

HOW IS THE 2026 WATER SEASON SHAPING UP?

As you are all aware, this year we have seen a reduced amount of precipitation again; however, reservoir levels are much greater than they were at this time last year. That being said, you are probably all wondering what that means for our approaching water season. Here are some things that you can expect to see:

- A reduced water allotment of 1.5 acre-foot/acre is likely to be expected, to start the season, with a potential to increase it if circumstances improve.
- 1/2 price water may be available, but too early to tell.
- Availability of excess water is not likely.
- A start-up date has not yet been determined.
- It is still too early to predict the length of the season.

*** Snowpack as of March 17th: 99% of normal**

Office Hours: 7:30 A.M. to 3:30 P.M., 7 days a week.

GID Employee Directory

Wyatt Awtrey: Division #6 Cell #: 435-243-9338
Division 5 is currently not filled.

Mark Dale: Dam Tender Cell #: 406-450-0879
Matt Genger: Division #1 Cell #: 406-410-2523
Jenny Gulick: Office Mgr. Cell #: 406-590-7901
Dan Prewitt: Division 7 Cell #: 406-249-3451
Erling Juel: District Mgr. Cell #: 406-799-4416
Chaz Keller: Division #8 Cell #: 406-231-5456
Ernest Kietzman: Division #3 Cell #: 406-788-2753
Tony May: Water Master Cell#: 406-750-3274
Eric Mayer: O&M Foreman Cell#: 406-590-3254
Scott Neckstad: Division #9 Cell#: 406-459-8320
Drew Quencer: Division #2 Cell#: 406-781-3388
Operators: Travis Schenk & Cory Copenhaver
Canal Maintenance: Tony Melander & Ryan Peace
Nancy Fry: GIS Mapping Spec. Ph#: 406-467-2533

Board Commissioners:

Tony Clark: Precinct #1 Cell #: 406-231-8673
Pat Brosten: Precinct #2 Cell #: 406-590-3158
Tim Brunner: Precinct #3 Cell #: 406-788-3458
Chase Brady: Precinct #4 Cell #: 406-868-3693
Chris Ostberg: Precinct #5 Cell #: 406-590-1688

105 Central Avenue West, Fairfield, MT 59436
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WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS ISSUE

Important Reminders:	1
Expectations for Water Season:	1
Employee Directory:	1
Facts about GID's Reservoirs:	2
Manager's Column:	2
SRWG Happenings:	2

GID's Annual Meeting & Dinner

Due to the remodeling taking place at the Fairfield Community Hall, the GID Board has decided to postpone its Annual Meeting & Dinner until later this Fall. No definite date has been chosen, as of now, but watch for a postcard to arrive in the mail sometime in September. At that time everyone can expect to enjoy the same fantastic food, great door prizes and raffle items, as well as valuable updates and pertinent information provided by GID's District Manager. Here's wishing you all a 2026 water season that flows smoothly and plentiful and we will see you this Fall!

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

As you all know, the 2026 water season is just upon us. There are a few things that you should keep in mind to ensure that you are ready and able to receive water this Spring.

- Make sure that you have completed your Irrigation Plan, as well as your 960-acre limitation certification, if you were asked to do so.
- Make sure that you have removed all fences and obstructions from GID's easement so that ditch riders are able to access your ditches, turnouts, etc. by May 1st.
- If you have any delinquent real estate taxes or outstanding invoices owed to GID, you will not be able to receive project water until those are paid in full.
- 48 hour advance notice for on orders and 24 hour notice for off orders. Cut off time is 3 P.M. for orders.
- Policy Regarding installation of new irrigation equipment in GID boundaries: We require a full layout of the irrigation plan, including acres covered, if a new delivery point is required, or there is a change in the existing one prior to purchase, one month advance notice is preferred.

WHAT HAS THE GID CREW BEEN BUSY WORKING ON THIS WINTER

As a result of the tremendous efforts of Congressman Troy Downing and his team, there was recent passage of H.R. 7148 which is an act that included a Federal award for the Mary Taylor Main Canal Hydropower Project. This structure is critically important for GID in the delivery of our irrigation water. The current facility is antiquated, and a modern replacement structure will improve water management practices, while increasing efficiency and conservation efforts, which will help to extend the irrigation season each year. The site overhaul will also include provisions to incorporate hydropower generation into the new configuration. The power energy will have a site capacity of 1.55 MW, and the electricity sales will help GID stave off rising District costs while funding other much needed infrastructure replacement projects.

To the right the crew works on Arnold Coulee, GID's initial efforts to generate hydropower electricity. The site is being buttoned up in preparation for the upcoming water season, but work will resume this Fall with power generation expected in the Spring of 2027.



SPRING TRIVIA

- 1) Which state gets the most rain in Spring?
- 2) How many eyes do bees have?
- 3) The world's deadliest insect appears every Spring, what is it?
- 4) According to the saying, "March comes in like a lion and out like a?"
- 5) Is Spring considered the first, second, third or fourth season?
- 6) For Australians, in what month does Spring begin?
- 7) In what country do cherry blossom trees mean Spring begins?

1) Hawaii, 2) Five, 3) Mosquito, 4) Lamb, 5) First, 6) September, 7) Japan



NEWS FROM GID'S DISTRICT MANAGER



Well, it looks like we may be heading into this year's water season short two ditch riders. If you know of anybody with a good work ethic who is looking for a great place to work, offering great pay and benefits, please send them our way.

Dave Gulick, Precinct 1 Commissioner, is stepping down from the GID Board after serving for 26 years, since March 2000. We all want to thank Dave for his service to the District. He will be missed. Beginning in May, Tony Clark will represent Precinct 1. Welcome aboard, Tony!

The staff and management continue to look for creative ways to replace aging infrastructure and modernize District operations without relying on the membership for its financial backing.



The Sun River Watershed Group will host an open meeting on April 14th at 10 A.M. until noon at the Fairfield Ambulance Training barn. Topics include: water quality, erosion, drought, floods from Gibson Dam to Great Falls, Freezeout Lake to Adobe Creek. We need to hear from you what issues we should focus on. Please stop in and let us know what matters to you.

2026



1st Edition of "Ditch Dirt"



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