

Ditch Doings: Fall 2019

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Fri 11/8/2019 5:54 PM

Shutting down the canal in Fall is more than closing the gates at the top of the system and waiting for Spring. It's always with a heightened sense of anticipation that we go out and see what seven months of racing water has changed, hidden, or in some cases, damaged. It also provides an opportunity to do work that has been long set aside due to it not being "the immediate priority."



Take-out gate at the top of the Walker Lateral This wood may be 40 years old. Replacing it with steel.



This photo stirs up the debate: where does the District's responsibility stop and the user's responsibility start? Just to clarify: the cement structure is owned and maintained by the user. But who is responsible for the dirt underneath and the banks immediately surrounding the structure, which are being effected by a combination of the structure and the water? It seems trivial....until it isn't...



The stories we will never know....(note the dive mask..). ...and this photo wasn't taken in Newport Beach..



Getting down to the dirt in the back of my pickup This became the priority when I found myself buying things I knew I already had in there somewhere. This hadn't been done for a couple of years and amongst the cool rocks and hunks of drift wood were gloves, toys, tools, and even antiques...



My little mower has 7 disks each harboring 2 rapidly flinging blades. It allows for a reach out over the bank, and it handles the grass and lighter shrubs very well....



...encounters with rocks are very unusual...

I didn't like the windshield anyway, but I do wear gloves, goggles and a batter's helmet, now.



Other notes of progress:



Long-missing hand wheels replaced Over the years, these levers have been either lost or damaged. Trying to move them between gates is not easy as they are unwieldy, being 30" across, heavy, and the screws, at some settings, require us to lift them up and over 4 feet in height. My arms are neither long enough nor strong enough. Existing replacements can only be found in museums. I had new ones made from scratch.

Each year, Idaho water users divert millions of gallons of water from Idaho rivers, reservoirs and aquifers. This water is delivered to farms, neighborhoods, parks and schools throughout the state through thousands of miles of canals, laterals, ditches and other facilities.

In our area, the Diversion 45 on the Big Wood River, delivers river water for irrigation purposes, to the north half of the Bellevue Triangle and adjacent areas, crossing directly over or along the edge of more than 150 different privately owned properties.

It is important for all these property owners to understand the rights and obligations associated with a ditch and attendant right-of-way, referred to collectively as a "ditch easement."

What is a ditch easement?

A ditch easement includes the irrigation facility and enough land along both banks to allow access for operation, cleaning, maintenance and repair. The width of the easement will vary depending on the facility.



Access allows operators to remove sediment and debris, mow, spray, burn, refurbish facilities, and to perform other maintenance activities.

The ditch easement includes the right to deposit any removed debris or other material onto the banks of that facility.

Ditch easements are not public property and are not open to public use. Unauthorized third-party use of this land is a trespass.

Is there a ditch easement on my property?

It is not required for a ditch easement to be recorded or notated on property deeds. Mere existence of the facility constitutes notice of the ditch easement.

If your land is crossed by, or adjacent to, a water delivery facility, there is a ditch easement on your land.

You may use the easement area. However, you cannot interfere with access for operation, cleaning, maintenance or repair activities.

What are the irrigation entity's duties?

Irrigation management entities must operate and maintain the facilities to minimize the risk of over-flowing the banks, from either bank failure or blockage. This includes regular monitoring of water flows, ditch banks and irrigation structures.

Ditch easements are necessary to perform these duties. Access must not be blocked. Encroachments onto ditch easements interfere with access for operation, cleaning, maintenance and repair activities.



What happens if I encroach on a ditch easement?

Idaho statute (42-109) prohibits the placement of any encroachment within a ditch easement.

Encroachments may include buildings, parking areas, fences, landscaping and other structures or activities within the ditch easement.

Contact your local irrigation entity before you begin any construction, landscaping or other activity within a ditch easement.

Any unauthorized encroachments will be removed at your expense, in accordance with Idaho law.

Can I relocate and/or pipe the irrigation facility on my property?

Yes. But you must first obtain written permission from the entity operating the irrigation facility.

To obtain permission, contact your local irrigation entity to determine what information they will need to review your request. They will also advise you of any standards and/or

specifications relating to moving or piping an irrigation facility.

Generally, canals and lateral ditches may only be relocated or piped during the non-irrigation season, after water is out of the delivery system.

Will the irrigation entity work with me to address my questions?

Yes. Contact your local irrigation entity if you have questions about the ditch easement on your property.

The irrigation entity can give you information about the irrigation facility in question. This may include:

- The scope of the ditch easement, including the access necessary to operate, clean, maintain and repair the facility; and
- Any policies and/or procedures regarding encroachments and/or modifications.

We appreciate your cooperation in working to protect our irrigation facilities. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

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WRVD45 & Triangle Irrigation Districts

What do you need to Know About Irrigation Easements and Rights-of-Way?

In Partnership With
IDAHO
WATER
USERS
ASSOCIATION

New educational Right Of Way brochure featuring my photos, editing, and handiwork at the computer, which is still woefully inadequate, but improving....

And Fall is always the best time to start something new:



Replacing this dilapidated remnant from the past is underway

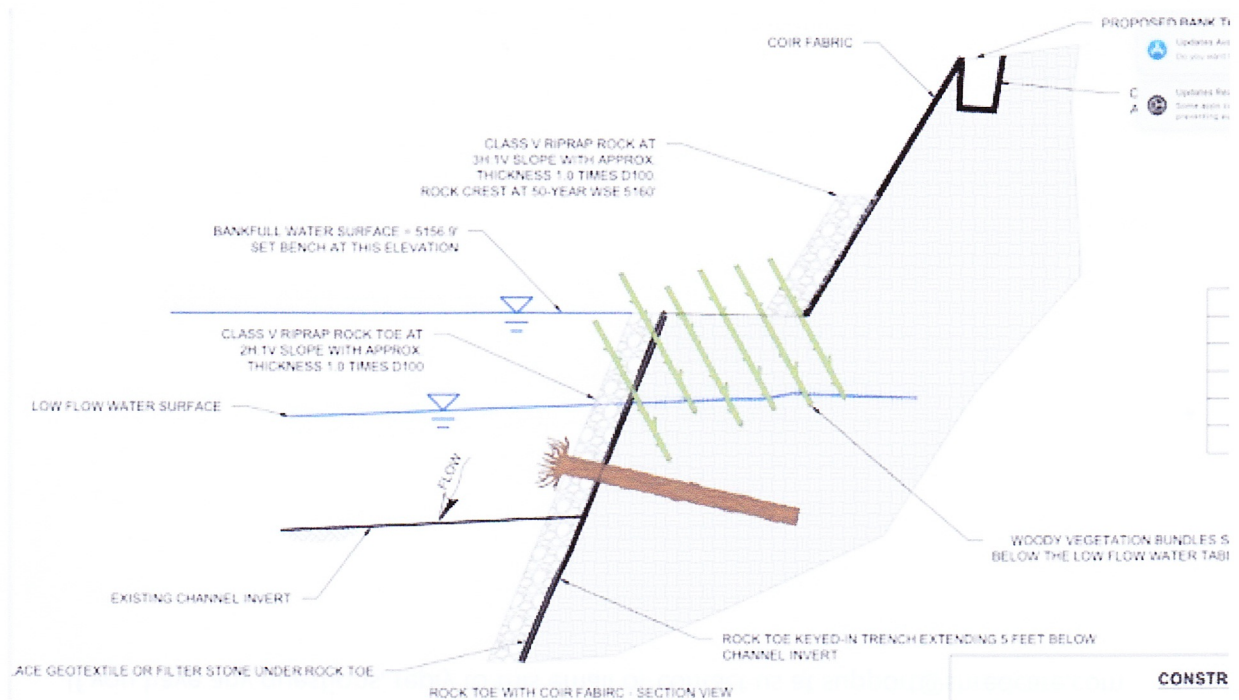


Numerous meetings to combine the necessary forces, knowledge, etc. It's a big deal when you're working right in the Bigwood. We have all the permitting done and the funds lined up. We have met with almost no resistance at any step along the way.

A big thanks to Trout Unlimited, the City of Bellevue, and the Friends of Howard Preserve, among others.



Keith breaking ground November 4



Cross section of the end result a 200 foot long sloped bank, armored with a combination of old log structures, various sized rocks, stabilizing geo-textile fabric, and rapidly rooting willow cuttings. The combination of all these will serve to reduce the speed of the current, thereby reducing the erosion and the sediment and gravel load of our water as it enters into the canal. In addition, the bank will continue to provide the long term protection to the Main Headgate and upper banks of the canal itself, from the damaging force of high run-offs.

Stay tuned.

I have more info for anyone interested.

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