



DITCH DIRT

October 2018 Volume 2018, Issue 2

WHEN IT RAINS, IT POURS!



Diversion Dam



Beaver Creek



Norwegian Gulch

June 19th, 2018



Glory Hole @ Gibson

MANAGER'S COLUMN

The longer I'm here at GID, the more I appreciate what was accomplished in a relatively short time over 100 years ago when our infrastructure was first built. Over the last couple of years we have experienced failure of several components of this infrastructure. Your hard-working GID commissioners wrestle with two major concerns:



1) Replacing the 100-year old system with a modern one, that is consistent with our current demands and mode of operation while addressing changes not relevant 100 years ago.

2) How to pay for this overhaul.

Presently, GID management is identifying what the finished product should look like and the logical path to get us there. Besides you, the GID water user, the only other funding sources include state and federal grants and low interest loans. Another funding source is developing hydropower potential associated with our infrastructure. GID has only 10% ownership of the two Turnbull sites which have generated GID on average about \$171,000 per year since 2011. Our initial investment in that project has been fully recovered as of a couple of years ago. (Imagine if we owned 100% of the facility, i.e. \$1.7 M/yr). There are several other potential hydropower sites, albeit smaller, which can be developed. The goal would be to make a short-term investment that would produce a long-term revenue stream. That would help fund major infrastructure replacement projects and keep your annual irrigation assessment the lowest in the state. Your GID commissioners are exploring these opportunities.



WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS ISSUE

GID News:	1
Manager's Column:	1
GID Projects for the Fall:	1
Halloween History:	1
Off-Season Hours:	1
Montana Water Rights:	2
NRCS Funding Deadline:	2

GID PROJECTS FOR THE FALL

By O&M Foreman, Charlie Clement

GID has a lot on their plate this Fall. We will start with Johnson Drop Headworks and Mill Coulee check. We also, have drained Pishkun as low as we can get it, and will begin building the new trash rack for the outlet. The crew will also need to replace 4 or 5 culverts on the project before next water season, as all of the original culverts are beginning to show their age. We hope to start replacing 4 to 5 each year before they end of collapsing on us. GID hopes to continue cleaning our canals and ditches, and will plan to do some each Fall and Spring. I believe this helps us to conserve and deliver the water more efficiently. We will also be working with the Teton County Road Department to put in culverts and take out the bridge on 2nd Road NE, between 1st and 2nd Lane. Then there is the NEVERENDING job of trimming trees. All in all, it will be a busy Fall and Spring for us! Here's to hoping that Mother Nature is not too hard on us in the up-coming months!

OFF-SEASON HOURS

Monday-Thursday: 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Friday: Morning hours only



Did you know that the first jack-o-lanterns were carved from turnips, beets and potatoes, not pumpkins?



MONTANA WATER RIGHTS HISTORY

Let's start at the beginning on Montana water rights. If you have a water right it does not mean you own the water. The state of Montana owns all water whether it comes from surface, underground, flood, or atmospheric sources. This is spelled out in the Constitution of Montana under Article IX. However, what you do get with a water right is the right to use the water.

Montana water rights are based on the prior appropriation doctrine, which states that first in time is first in right. This means the first person to use the water in a beneficial way has established that water right and has the first chance to use it in the future. This doesn't mean you can hold water above what you need for your beneficial use. Beneficial use means that the water must be used in a way that benefits the appropriator, other persons, or the public. The uses include but are not limited to, agriculture, stock water, domestic, fish and wildlife, industrial, irrigation, mining, municipal, power and recreational uses.


In 1972, the Montana Constitutional Convention recognized that the regulation and record keeping of water rights were broken and needed to be resolved. They started by acknowledging all existing rights that originated before July 1, 1973. You can bet there was a rush to establish existing rights before July 1, 1973! Use rights, decreed water rights, and filed rights were all made equally valid, which upheld the prior appropriation doctrine and over 100 years of precedence. Next, the convention charged the Montana Legislature with providing administration, control and regulation of water rights and establishing a centralized record system. Legislature enacted the Montana Water Use Act. The Act changed future water rights administration in five ways:

- 1) Water rights existing before July 1, 1973 were to go through the adjudication process and be finalized through the state courts.
- 2) A permit system for new or additional water rights was established.
- 3) Changes in water rights were now to go through a system that had to be authorized and validated.
- 4) Instead of county recordings of water rights a new statewide centralized system was established for continuity and access to the rights.
- 5) Future use and instream water flows were established to ensure water quality and to protect wildlife and fisheries. This system was to protect a water reserve for future consumptive, fishery and wildlife use.

In conclusion, Montana water rights are changing. The old days of multi-generational ranches with decades of knowledge of water uses and strong neighbor relationships is changing to new owners that don't live year-round on the property and don't know their neighbors well. New owners must rely on water consultants and lawyers who specialize in water rights. We encourage anyone with issues or questions on water rights to call the DNRC or go into their office.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) deadline for farmers to apply for 2019 conservation program funding through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program was October 19th. If you did not already do so, please contact your local office to make arrangements to. NRCS provides funding and technical assistance to help farmers and ranchers start conservation practices that provide environmental benefits to help sustain farming and ranching. For additional information, visit the NRCS website at www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov or call 466-5722 Ext 3.

2018

 **2nd Edition of "Ditch Dirt"** 

GREENFIELDS IRRIGATION DISTRICT

[Type the recipient address]

[Type the recipient company name]

[Type the recipient name]

PRSRT STD
U.S. Postage Paid
Fairfield, MT
Permit No. 3

Fairfield, MT 59436

P.O. Box 157

GID