

WESTLAND IRRIGATION DISTRICT NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2021

**P.O. Box 944
Hermiston, OR 97838**

**Phone (541) 667-2030
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Dear Westland patrons,

The 2021 irrigation season for patrons of Westland Irrigation District is winding down. Water from McKay Reservoir is expected to be turned off during the last week of this month – an exact day isn't known just yet – but having irrigation water available until near the end of September seemed hard to imagine during the sweltering, 100+ degree days that roasted our area this summer. Thank you to Westland patrons, who continue to be good stewards of the valuable commodity that is irrigation water, and a big shout-out to the Westland staff of Bobby Bailey, Steven Cleveland, and Dennis Whitaker, who keep the district's canals and infrastructure in top shape to deliver water to patrons, while also being diligent during the season to match stored water releases from McKay with daily demand of water for patrons' crops. Lastly, recognition of a job well done would be incomplete without bringing attention to the level of detail and professionalism which Tina Richardson has brought to the role of office manager since she started at the district just over one year ago. Great job everyone!

On to district news...

SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS & WATERSHED PLAN IN THE WORKS

As has been shared in previous newsletters to patrons, Westland is working together with Farmers Conservation Alliance (FCA) to develop strategies and improvements to benefit the district and increase its efficiencies in making water deliveries to patrons. The resulting System Improvement Plan will identify modernization methods and steps to improve operations and maintenance, district infrastructure, and water conveyance methods. The System Improvement Plan is expected to be ready later this fall.

In addition, grant funding has been made available for Westland to work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farmers Conservation Alliance to develop a Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment through NRCS' Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program (Public Law 83-566). Irrigation districts that complete Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessments can be eligible to receive up to \$25 million in federal funding to support irrigation modernization projects. The Watershed Plan process typically takes 18 months to two years to complete, with public comment opportunities occurring as the Plan is developed. A Scoping Document is currently being drafted and, when it is in final draft form, will be on the agenda for the first public comment meeting. To learn more about the Watershed Plan process and see examples of Plans being developed for other Oregon irrigation districts, please visit: www.oregonwatershedplans.org

Westland and Umatilla County continue to collaborate in shaping the Ordnance Regional Water Supply and Aquifer Restoration Project (Ordnance Project). This joint effort has the potential to increase the reliability of water supplies to irrigated acres in the district, while also providing a source of water for economic and environmental benefits through construction of a new pipeline from the Columbia River to an area near the east boundary of the former Umatilla Army Ordnance Depot. Funding opportunities from federal, state, and other sources will play a key role in driving this project forward. In addition to the Ordnance Project information found on the district's website, www.westlandirrigation.com, the written materials can be accessed directly here: <https://bit.ly/3zuh7Pj> and a short video on the project can be viewed here: <https://bit.ly/2XfxBr6>

NEW MANAGER IS ONBOARD

The Westland Board of Directors selected Curtis Engbretson to replace retiring district manager, Mike Wick. Curtis has lived and worked in the Umatilla Basin for many years and brings a sound knowledge of irrigated agriculture to his new position. Please welcome him to the district when you have an opportunity.

DISTRICT CONTACT INFORMATION

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Telephone: 541-667-2030; Fax: 541-667-2031

Office Hours: 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday

PERSONNEL

District Manager, Curtis Engbretson	541-377-2408
Office Manager, Tina Richardson	541-667-2030
Field Supervisor, Bobby Bailey	541-571-1202
Maintenance, Steven Cleveland	541-571-1203
Ditch Rider, Dennis Whitaker	541-571-1201

DIRECTORS

Jack Bellinger, Chair
Hoss Hodges, Vice-Chair
Jordan Bennett
Patricia Horn
David Prior