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NEWSLETTER

# North Unit Irrigation District

## Weeds, Weeds, Weeds

It seems as if the weed problem in our area has been getting worse as the years go by. The process of mowing and spraying continues for months on end. The District's attempts to maintain and control weeds has been a decades-long battle with no current winner, although I'd lean towards the weeds. Many common weeds have become tolerant to current treatment formulas and applications while new varieties of weeds prosper eagerly. The District budgets nearly \$300,000 a year (increasing annually) in the effort to eliminate unwanted weeds both terrestrial and aquatic-based a drop in the proverbial bucket when you consider nearly 600 miles of canals and ditches.

The District is not alone in its efforts to keep up with the weeds. The recently re-established Jefferson County Weed Advisory Committee will be responsible for the administration and enforcement of noxious weed control in Jefferson County.

As a prosperous agricultural county, this is not the place for noxious weeds, especially if we seek to preserve the value of our crop land and legacy. *In response, the Weed Advisory Committee has been revived in Jefferson County to activate and enforce the Jefferson County Weed Control Ordinance.* The committee's primary intention is to identify and eliminate problematic weeds on both private and public lands, through a "gentle to harsh" approach. This includes public education, helpful resources to landowners, spraying, notifications and lastly costly enforcement.

North Unit Irrigation District has been proactive in supporting this effort by spraying and mowing weeds along its easements and service roads. However, for private landowners who request that the easement through their property remain unsprayed, it becomes the landowner's responsibility to find their preferred way to eliminate the noxious weeds. If initial communication and eradication requests from the Weed Advisory Committee are ignored, the Committee can eradicate, levy fees, and place a lien on the property. For more information on the Weed Advisory Committee visit Jefferson County's Website. ([www.jeffco.net/publicworks/page/jefferson-county-weed-control-ordinance](http://www.jeffco.net/publicworks/page/jefferson-county-weed-control-ordinance))

In addition, landowners and waterusers can refer to the North Unit Irrigation District website for more information on the types of treatments applied to manage weeds, and policies and permits surrounding this subject. (<https://northunitid.com/noxious-weed-management/>)



## Introduction of New Employees

The District is pleased to announce that Josh Bailey has been hired to fill the position of Watermaster/Construction Superintendent. This multifaceted role will oversee water operations, supervise operations personnel and district projects. Josh and his family have recently relocated to Madras from a small town in Northern California. Josh has 22 years experience in construction, water and trades industry, and also served 5 years in the military.

The District is also pleased to announce the hiring of Wayne Jakobsen to fill a crew

maintenance position. Wayne and his family currently live in Madras and has extended family in the Madras area. Wayne has a welding and fabrication background that will prove beneficial to the District.

Please join us in welcoming Josh and Wayne to North Unit Irrigation District.

The District is currently recruiting positions for Maintenance and Water Records Clerk. Interested candidates can refer to the District's website at [www.northunitid.com](http://www.northunitid.com) for more information.

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# Hemp Growers—Register Before Growing

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA), State of Oregon (ODA) and NUID all have specific requirements regarding hemp production. Generally, a producer must have a USDA registration number before growing industrial hemp. In order to minimize potential delays in the delivery of water to hemp producers NUID, must also have a copy of the pro-

ducers current registration issued by ODA on file. In addition to this general information please visit the following links for more detailed information and requirements:  
<https://nifa.usda.gov/industrial-hemp>  
<https://www.oregon.gov/oda/programs/nurserychristmastree/pages/hemp.aspx>  
<https://northunitid.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/2018-NUID-Hemp-Policy-July-2018.pdf>

## Chemical Treatments

The District began applying aquatic herbicides to irrigation canals in May and will continue to apply periodically as needed through October of 2019. The aquatic herbicides may include the following products: Copper Sulfate, Dipotassium Salt of Endothall (Cascade), Magnacide H with active ingredient Acrolein. The intended applications will control aquatic weeds and algae growth in District canals.

Waters within the irrigation delivery

system of the District are intended for agricultural purposes. Customers are advised not to use the treated water for recreation, aquaculture, human or animal consumption. Furthermore, irrigation water, whether treated or not, is not potable water and not intended for human consumption.

Call the District office to obtain more information and to request notification in advance of treatment.

### No Parking on Canal Roads

Parked vehicles and equipment on canal roads block Ditchrider access and impedes their ability to do their jobs. It can also prevent District personnel from responding to emergency situations. Your cooperation to not park on canal roads is greatly appreciated.

*please remind kids to stay out of the canals!*



### Help Prevent Meter Damage

The most common and expensive repair on a water flow meter is the replacement of the register. The damage commonly occurs when the wateruser is charging the irrigation system's mainline. If the valve that charges the mainline is fully open it will cause the water flow indicator on top of the register (looks like a speedometer) to go beyond its limits, causing internal damage to the register. To help prevent damage, open the mainline charge valve slowly and check the water flow indicator on the top of the register to be sure the flow stays within the range for which it was designed.

## Drainage

The responsibility of the District for the water delivery ends at the District's point of delivery, measuring weir or headgate. The water, including tail water and run-off, then becomes the responsibility of the water user, or users, on that ditch or drain.

Landowners/waterusers that drain runoff to private drains and ditches have both a right and a responsibility to work with their neighbors to maintain these facilities. When problems occur, the District is able to

assist the waterusers to clarify issues or suggest solutions, but the responsibility ultimately lies with the landowners/waterusers along ditches/drains to resolve these matters. In addition, it is the landowners/waterusers responsibility to ensure these drainage facilities are kept clean and free of debris to prevent damage to neighboring properties, roads, etc.

The District can provide ditch/drain cleaning services for a fee, based upon operator and equipment availability.

### Management:

Mike Britton, Manager  
[mbritton@northunitid.com](mailto:mbritton@northunitid.com)  
Gary Calhoun, Operations Manager  
[gcalhoun@northunitid.com](mailto:gcalhoun@northunitid.com)  
Marlene Lloyd, Office Manager  
[mlloyd@northunitid.com](mailto:mlloyd@northunitid.com)  
Josh Bailey, Watermaster  
[jbailey@northunitid.com](mailto:jbailey@northunitid.com)

### Office Staff:

Pam Watson, Water Rights Specialist  
[pwatson@northunitid.com](mailto:pwatson@northunitid.com)  
Sue Light, Data Entry Specialist  
[slevitt@northunitid.com](mailto:slevitt@northunitid.com)  
Lisa Windom, SP/WOC  
[lwindom@northunitid.com](mailto:lwindom@northunitid.com)

### Board of Directors:

Division 1: Phil Fine  
Vice Chair  
Division 2: Mike Kirsch  
Division 3: Martin Richards  
Chair  
Division 4: Richard Macy  
Division 5: Vern Bare

### Office Hours:

Irrigation Season  
Monday - Friday 8:00 - 5:00  
Saturday 8:00 - 4:00

Phone: (541) 475-3625

(541) 475-3652

Fax: (541) 475-3905

Email: [nuid@northunitid.com](mailto:nuid@northunitid.com)

Website: [www.northunitid.com](http://www.northunitid.com)

### Beehive Safety

Please check with District Management before placing beehives near areas that ditchriders frequent for operation and maintenance purposes, such as headgates. Any activity that impedes or interrupts their ability to work in a safe and timely manner must be taken into consideration.



### Dig Safely

The District has numerous underground facilities throughout the project. Please call before digging, excavating, etc. For free underground utility marking by local companies call 811 or (800) 332-2344 two working days before you plan to dig or enter the information online at: [www.digsafelyoregon.com](http://www.digsafelyoregon.com).

## Maintaining Water Rights

Maintaining irrigation water rights on your property is important to you as a landowner. In short, state law has mandated that if your land has irrigation water rights, you must use those rights in a beneficial manner. For landowners with water rights “beneficial use” is a phrase that should be familiar, but can be confusing even for the most experienced water users. To fully use your water rights, the law requires that the total water right be used on the land, as mapped, at least one year in every five years in a “beneficial” way with any crop (no sagebrush or scrub grass).

Failure to comply with the “Beneficial Use” provision makes all or part of your water rights subject to forfeiture under ORS 540.610. Under this law the Oregon Water Resources Department considers these rights abandoned and can cancel them, which means that the water resource is lost forever to the District and the wateruser for irrigation purposes.

To prove that the water right has been used beneficially landowners can provide one or more affidavits from persons who can attest from personal knowledge or professional expertise that the right was exercised at the authorized location and for the authorized purpose. The affidavits must also include supporting documentation like crop receipts or expenditures, various agency records or dated photos. In a limited number of instances a user can provide documentation that the presumption of forfeiture would be rebutted under ORS 540.610(2).

The landowner can avoid losing all or a portion of their water right by:

1. Using the water beneficially at the current location and be able to provide proof.
2. Permanent or temporary transfer of the water to a new location.
3. Leasing the water right instream.

Maintaining water rights is also important to the District to provide the most efficient and cost effective delivery of water for the benefit of all waterusers within the District. Landowners who would like a copy of their water right map can contact the District office. Knowing where your water rights are located on your property is the first step to protecting them.

## Lien Process for Delinquent Accounts

On May 15, 2019 letters of delinquency were sent to all delinquent accounts. If not paid, a Notice of Intent to Lien will be sent to delinquent account holders on July 15, 2019 or the first business day thereafter. If payment is not received within 30 days of July 15 then a lien will be filed. Fees will be assessed for the filing cost of placing and removing

liens along with an administration fee of \$150. Pursuant to ORS 545.496, the District will withhold delivery of water from a tract of land until the incurred charges for the current year and any prior years are paid in full as well as all interest, lien fees, collection costs and administration fees.

Customers may conveniently pay by credit card or eCheck via a service known as Point & Pay. A processing fee will be charged to you by Point & Pay to process the payment. Visit the District website or office for payment processing information.

## Road Watering Prohibited

The Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) has seen a steady increase in complaints over sprinkler end guns and wheel lines spraying the public roads and creating a public hazard, in addition to wasting water. In Jefferson County, the sheriff’s office is now

responding to the complaints as a violation of ORS 368.256 “Creation of road hazard prohibited”. In addition, OWRD’s view is that water being applied to roads, including canal side roads, even inadvertently, is considered applying water to a location that does not have a water

right or that is not receiving beneficial use—a violation of Oregon water right statute. The District asks that waterusers minimize or eliminate “road watering” not only to reduce a potential hazard but as responsible stewards of a limited resource—water.

## Delivery of Irrigation Water Through Private Ditches

Waterusers who use private ditches to receive irrigation water must maintain delivery easements and/or facilities for water conveyance beyond the District’s headgates. District personnel do not have the right to cross private property that the District does not have an easement for and/or access to private facilities without prior landowners approval. It is the water user’s responsibility to maintain the facilities beyond the District’s point of delivery and it is the waterusers responsibility to coordinate with neighboring waterusers to ensure they are properly receiving irrigation water.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) offers a dispute resolution program for farmers, ranchers and rural landowners. The program known as the Central Oregon Water Dispute Program is a special program created to help resolve issues that come about when property owners have disputes that arise over property boundaries, water distribution, maintenance responsibilities, weeds or right-of-way issues. ODA helps to bring property owners together to resolve disagreements, manage water rotation schedules, facilitate coordination with irrigation districts, address weed problems, property access issues and help foster other beneficial arrangements mutually developed by irrigators, through mediation. Working together can lead to better irrigation efficiency and water quality as well as reduce tension among neighbors. Contact ODA at (503) 986-4558 for more information or fees for this service visit [www.oregon.gov/oda](http://www.oregon.gov/oda). Mediation is also available from the Oregon USDA Certified Agricultural Mediation Program and is free to the agricultural community on many issues. Please call (888) 628-4101 or visit [office@drivers.org](mailto:office@drivers.org) for more details.

## How to Place a Water Request

The District can take more than 250 water requests a day. Those water orders can be processed by numerous District employees before they are relayed to the appropriate Ditchriders. Information on how to place a water request in the most concise fashion is as follows:

1. Call 541-475-3625
2. Give your name and if ordering for someone else, the name of the operator you are ordering for.
3. State if you are turning water ON, CHANGING a current order or turning water all OFF.
4. Give the amount of water you want to turn on, change or turn off.
5. You must know your headgate number.
6. **Water requests will not be taken more than a day in advance. If you are going to run water for only 24 hours, it must be requested.** There are no automatic orders; all orders will run until water is requested off unless specified at the time of the order. Ditchriders do not work on Sunday; therefore, any change on/off water orders requested on Saturday will not be put into effect until the following Monday.

Ditchriders make water changes once per day. Emergency turn offs can be requested in cases of power outages etc. Forgetting to call water off is not an emergency.