

WESTLAND IRRIGATION DISTRICT

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Update on District Water Supply Projects

We've heard loud and clear from District patrons over the past few years that the District needs to focus on enhancing our water supplies, and protecting the water supplies we already have. Your District has been hard at work on these efforts, and we want to provide you with an update.

Westland is working with Farmers Conservation Alliance (FCA) to develop strategies and improvements to benefit the District and increase efficiencies in delivering water 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, and is a requirement for certain federal funding opportunities.

In addition, grant funding has been made available for Westland to work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and FCA to develop a Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment through the 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. 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.

In January 2022, Westland and Umatilla County entered an agreement under which Westland is reserved 35 cfs of irrigation capacity in the Ordnance Pipeline Project. When constructed and fully operational, this pipeline will bring new Columbia River water into the District. In addition, Westland and Umatilla County also entered an agreement to pursue Umatilla River aquifer recharge testing on the Army Depot.

Westland has incurred a little over \$213,000 in expenses over the last 17 months on the above efforts, which includes our work with FCA, services provided by IRZ Consulting, GSI Water Solutions and Cook's Land & Water Consulting, legal fees, and payments to Umatilla County. As Westland board members continue to evaluate options for more reliable water resources for Westland patrons, the District anticipates additional expenses will be incurred over the next few years.

Finally, the District continues to work with the CTUIR on a settlement of the Tribe's reserved water right claims stemming from its Treaty with the U.S. The expenses associated with this work continue to be included in the annual budget.

As you saw in your first half of this year's incurred charges, there was a slight increase in your rates. This increase is due to the increased cost of doing business and does not reflect the incurred expenses of the Ordnance Pipeline Project.

We will continue to update the patrons of the District as we move through these processes. If you have questions, please call the District Office at (541) 667-2030.