

1953

STATE OF COLORADO  
IRRIGATION DIVISION NO. 4  
MONTROSE

FREDERICK W. PADDOCK  
IRRIGATION DIVISION ENGINEER  
ROOM 7, COURT HOUSE  
P. O. BOX 15

November 30, 1954

SUBJECT:

Annual Report, 1953

Mr. M. C. Hinderlider,  
State Engineer,  
Denver, Colorado.



Dear Sir:--

I herewith submit my annual report to your office, for 1953

On the whole we had a very good water year, which was contrary to our pre-season predictions.

#### Water District 28

The water commissioner, Mr. J. Roy Hicks, of Sargents, had about double the work in 1953 as compared to 1952 due to the sixty day drouth that occurred on the Western Slope. Mr. Hicks has several trans-mountain diversions, one of which is at the head of Cochetopa Creek or probably better said on one of its tributaries, as usual gave some administrative trouble. All of the streams tributary to Tomichi Creek in Water District 28 are badly over appropriated so far as direct flow is concerned.

#### Water District 40

Water District 40 had fewer serious administrative problems in 1953 than in any previous year since we assumed this office. The principle problems arising now are conflicts over water measurements. Invariably one side or the other in most controversys lack measuring devices meeting legal requirements, whether appellant or respondant. Our policy of course is to require adequate measuring devices.

Settlement of the Overland Reservoir Dam was watched closely in 1953. No shifts in alignment or profile could be observed this season. We recommend that an additional vertical foot of storage be allowed in 1954 andso on until a full head is stored. A French drain placed near the downstream toe has to all appearances dried up most of the seepage thru the embankment and in the area downstream from the embankment on the North side of the Cow Creek flow channel.

Most of the reservoirs on Grand Mesa filled. Surface Creek appropriations, several years ago reached a point at which in a poor water year, many decrees can not be filled, and even in a good year some decrees are inadequately filled for economic production.

At present the District Court is completing a general adjudication of domestic decrees for W. D. 40.

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*Water District 41*

Difficulties at present are being worked out smoothly so far as we know over alleged return flows and flow waters of the Uncompahgre, amongst the various water users. A study of the flows of the small streams was started in the spring of 1953, prior to the running of any Gunnison waters thru the Gunnison Tunnel. This will be resumed in December and continue until next spring. By keeping those studies going we hope to arrive at some definite data to base future decisions on, rather than guess as is the present custom#. Our experience this season as in others past is that guessing is a continual source of controversy. We also add that as soon as is possible year around studies of the flows in the small tributaries of the Uncompahgre will likewise be made.

Water District 42

Quite a bit of improvement was made in 1953 on some of the worst dams on the Mesa Creek watershed. Adequate inspection is needed badly, but under our present statutes dams will continue being built, excellently by those who will, very poorly and haphazardly by others. We find that by watching a reservoir dam until such time as it has deteriorated sufficiently to completely condemn it, is as a rule better than ordering routine repairs.

Stream flow after July 15, was the easiest that it has been in several years for both# the Water Commissioner and myself. The employment of a new deputy water commissioner and the shifting of other personnel has improved the situation immensely. Mr. Stoddart, the Water Commissioner has started a policy of demanding Parshall measuring flumes and headgates where ever needed and protests start coming in to him. We have commended him for this.

Water Districts 59 and 62

Until 1953, W. D. 59 has had no commissioner for several years. Mr. Henry Koch of Bostwick Park was appointed Commissioner for W. D. 62 by Governor Thornton, and the State Engineer followed this action by appointing Mr. Koch Commissioner for Water District 59. The appointments were made effective of July 1, 1953,

It has been the custom of this office to administer the few complaints in the past which came from this district. However in 1951 and 1952, it became apparent that a commissioner was going to be needed permanently. We recommended that one man be used for the two districts, for reasons of economy and practicality as W. D. 62 is composed of the South side of the Gunnison and W. D. 59 is the North side of the Gunnison River. It so happens that the Gunnison River is the dividing boundary between the two districts.

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Mr. Koch made a short written report, but in as much as he had uorked such a short period of time, and after the first of July, had no records compiled. We believe that he is well acquainted with his district. We believe that he will do a very good job as Water Commissioner over these two districts.

In Water District 62, we must report that the Lake San Cristobal Dam failed again.

W. D. 60

Quite a number of administrative problems arose in this district. The principal problem was Maverick Draw. The Water Commissioner had to ask for several haad-gates and Parshall measuring flumes.

Some party or parties unknown broke a hole in the door of the recorder shelter at the measuring device below the Gurley Reservoir Dam. They then removed the counter weight for the float from an F-type recorder. This happened late enough in the season that no great damage was done to the record, however it converts a good record to a poor one from thereon ot for the season. The sabatoge occurred about 6:00 P.M.--September 6, 1953 as nearly as we can tell from the chart, removed from the recorder on September 10, by Commissioner Sullivan. Approximately 38.5 cubic feet per second of time was being delivered according to the chart and gage heights from the reservoir dam, and at the same time there was approximately 1.6 cubic feet of water persecond of time in inflow, from a curve projected down to zero for a 20 foot Parshall flume.

On July 31, 1953 we held a hearing, in Montrose on receiving a written protest from three water users under the Gurley System, alleging the Commissioner was refusing to perform his statutory duties, namely for refusing to turn extra water out of the Gurley Reservoir that the complaintants might have more water than they were then getting. After we explained that reservoirs are private property and that their relief if any, was coming, would properly come from the District Court, we heard no more about it. On the date of the complaint there was an inflow of 23 cubic feet per second into the Gurley reservoir, and an outflow of 68 feet cubic feet per second of time.

W. D. 61

We spent a couple of days with Mr. Chalmer Garber, the Water Commissioner at Paradox, to survey and obtain data requested by your office for a detailed report of the condition of the Buckeye Reservoir Dam.

The Buckeye Reservoir Dam has not to date been enlarged, nor has any other work been done, altho plans submitted to your office were approved some time past, about two years ago we believe. It appears that the Soil Conservation Engineers scared the reservoir company stockholders off by over designing. Under their plans, the completed reservoir would fill according to records in our office, about once, or possibly twice in ten years.

We had no administrative problems in this district in 1953.

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Water District 68

This district is beginning to operate as it should, and is correspondingly becoming easier to administer. However, in the early part of the season we had one protest, alleging the commissioner had no right to close a headgate on the ground that water was being wasted. A field trip by this office revealed approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an acre of bare ground was being irrigated with about .70 cubic feet of water per second of time. The waste water was not being taken care of, and had filled an adjoining parties ditch. He had unknowing sent a D-6 Caterpillar Tractor out to clean the ditch, and it was almost bogged down before it was realized the ditch bottom was soft.

We sustained the Water Commissioner's position, on the grounds that by measurement only 2% of the water run was being put to beneficial use. The case ultimately ended up in the District Court, and the Court took a dim view of the above described type of irrigation. This case need not have occurred had the gentlemen involved stopped to realize that neighbors owe a moral obligation to one another, both men involved being fine men but in the one above named instance both were inclined to be somewhat unreasonable.

The Log Hill Mesa area has provided a bad problem, and is requiring a lot of foot travel to straighten out. We have found several undecreed ditches to be the chief source of trouble, and there are possibly two more that we have not yet found.

As we previously stated, generally speaking we had a good water year in Irrigation Division No. 4. April and May were bad due to no low snow; June, July and the first two weeks of August were good. As the flow dropped off in July it began to rain on the average of once a week in most part of the Division. From the middle of August however, until the third week of October it was desperately dry all over the Division.

It is becoming apparent to most people that the ever increasing area of cultivated land has had more to do with our perpetual drouth than any serious change in weather, climate, and runoff. We realize that we have wet and dry cycles of moisture and runoff. We have however, over appropriated our streams in Irrigation Division No. 4 to the point that storage at the higher elevations is about all we have left to develop and take the pressure off of our irrigated lands in late July, and during all of August and September. We will state this applies to each Water District in our Irrigation Division, notwithstanding, that Water Districts 40 and 42 are fairly well developed as of this date.

In conclusion we report that Commissioner Robinson of Cedaredge, is the only Commissioner in our Division who has as of this date given us a completed report. It has not been checked however and is subject possibly to some small revision before being considered final. At a later date a statistical report will be added to this for your use, when the other commissioners making such reports have done so.

Very truly yours,  
*Frederick W. Paddock*  
Frederick W. Paddock.