

1954

STATE OF COLORADO
IRRIGATION DIVISION NO. 4
MONTROSE

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

November 27, 1954

SUBJECT:

Annual Report

Mr. J.E. Whitten
State Engineer
Denver, Colorado

Dear Mr. Whitten:

Pursuant to our annual custom we herewith submit our annual report.

General remarks for Irrigation Division No. 4:

In general we have had a poor water year from the standpoint of water supply. We entered the season with fair soil moisture conditions but with an extremely short amount of snow on the sheds. No appreciable rain fell until about the first of August, at which time hay harvest was in progress, and from then on until the 1st of October quite a bit of precipitation occurred.

Damage occurred in Water Districts 59, 60, 62, and 68 due to drouth, especially on the small streams tributary to the Gunnison and lower Dolores rivers. Rainfall damaged crpps during the harvest season thruout the entire Division Four.

By the middle of October it turned dry again, and as this report is written, unless conditions change for the better we shall no doubt have another poor water year in 1955. We are entering the winter season with dry top and subsoils. It does not necessarily follow that dry soil means a poor water year, but usually dry soils demand a higher amount or supply of water

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at a time when there is only a low supply.

Specific remarks about the individual water districts:

In Water District 28, we had an extremely poor year and in a section from above Quartz Creek to about Sargents much hardship had to be endured for the lack of irrigation supply. The side streams tributary to Cochetopa Creek were practically dry by June 1, of 1954.

On Pass Creek it was necessary to give some extra assistance to the Water Commissioner. He had in one instance to file a complaint alleging molesting a headgate under control of the Water Commissioner. The party so complained against by Commissioner Hicks was convicted and fined \$100.00. and costs. We appeared as Mr. Hicks' witness.

Numerous complaints were made against Mr. Hicks and the manner he administered his district. In each case examined we found neither the appellant nor his neighbor had any sort of headgate, spillgate, or measuring device. Most of them had six to eight feet high diversion dams, which Mr. Hicks opened up to let a portion or all of the available supply of water pass in order to fill senior decrees. Under the conditions he worked, we felt Mr. Hicks did an excellent job and we commended him, as well as sustaining him in his administration in writing. To date there is no report from this district. We do not consider it

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practical to make a written one.

In Water District 40, the question of administration comes to our attention. The problem arose from the filling of reservoirs by owners of Junior reservoir decrees at the expense of senior decree owners. In times past the junior owners would release the unlawfully stored waters on orders from the water commissioner, but in 1954 they refused to do so. Also other owners claimed the use of the illegally stored waters who may or may not ^{have} had an interest in them. The commissioner decided to refuse to run such such illegal storage until in such time as it became legal storage. He was upheld by this office and the State Engineer in turn as it was appealed to each of us.

There ^{are} special problems arising again on Leroux Creek which we will have to take up with you for the coming season. Each problem of course must be considered on its individual merits. The problems consist of repair of reservoirs and administration of exchange waters.

During this month Deputy Water Commissioner Harry Graham passed away. Commissioner Robinson is presented with the problem of finding a man to replace Mr. Graham. This will be a tough spot to fill as Mr. Graham was a better than average deputy and was extremely well acquainted with his area topographically.

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He also had the ability to get along with people, even when making adverse rulings. We will miss Harry Graham in 1955.

In Water District 40 it has become necessary to insist on strict compliance in regard to Section 130, Chapter 90, C.A.S. 1935, in regard to capacity tables, gage rods and measuring devices on Grand Mesa in the Tongue Creek Water Shed. We are making fairly good progress in getting this done.

Water District 40 ran a total of 26,647 acre feet of storage so far reported and has a carry over storage of 1932 acre feet for next season. They have decreed storage capacity of 58,700 acre feet. Report on flow is not available at this date, but will be expected ^{to show up} quite short as compared to an average year.

We find that the 1954 adjudication is going to make quite an additional burden on the water commissioner, as water will be run on all of the streams all the year around instead of a few small amounts in isolated places.

In Water District 41 there were no particular problems, other than regular routine ones. The Buckeye Reservoirs were repaired in 1953 and gave no trouble in 1954.

The Colorado Fish and Game Sweitzer Reservoir Dam was completed in the spring of 1954 and on the date of our last trip there (August of 1954) had filled to 15.5 feet on the gage rod. There

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are one or two small priorities below this dam site but to date there has been no conflict as the senior appropriators have always had their waters as needed. The contractor called me to inspect the foundation when he completed excavation and started backfill. He did a nice job, and to date there is no appreciable seepage. The job as completed appears well done in all respects so far as we can tell. To date we have no statistics to report.

In Water District 42, the late Roy I. Stoddart did an excellent job in 1954, and during this year found the points that needed special attention. With the cooperation of this office he had started getting capacity surveys and gage rods installed on Bull and Cottonwood Creeks.

Due to a shortage of deputies he found that the reservoir companies and owners had gotten into the habit of using flow waters originating above their reservoirs as storage. The flow users without storage are becoming very bitter about this situation. The new man replacing Mr. Stoddart will have an easier job than did Mr. Stoddart at the time he became commissioner.

On Mesa Creek an agreement we are told was consummated between the Mesa Lake Reservoir Co. and the Colorado Game and Fish Department whereby the Game and Fish Department took over the Resort

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Reservoir and a bid was let by the Game Department to rehabilitate and enlarge the Sunset Reservoir Dam as well as the Resort. Work on rehabilitation of the Resort was completed in 1952 in time for the 1953 storage season.

The Sunset Reservoir work has been in progress for two years but is not yet complete. The spillway was left unfinished in an extremely dangerous condition. We therefor recommend heavy restriction of or no allowance of storage at all in the interest of public safety.

On Bull Creek it was necessary to send word to an owner or owners of several reservoirs that even though Mr. Stoddart was dead, his written orders in regard to capacity tables, gages and measuring devices would be complied with or no water would be delivered in 1955.

On Plateau Creek Deputy W.C. Verne Gibson very ably took over the administration of an area vacated by Mr. Barge Hiskey, the deputy who preceded him in office. Mr. Gibson reports that there will be reservoir and flow users conflicting this next season unless we get more gage rods and measuring devices installed ^{or} ~~at~~ the reservoir^s. We also find that a part time deputy is needed to ^{or deputies} check on natural flows and reservoir releases on Big Creek, Cottonwood, Bull, Mesa, and Kahnah creeks.

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Deputy Woodrow Saunders is serving as acting Water Commissioner to complete the records for the 1954 season.

The figures available for our annual report at this date show 581 cfs appropriated in the Collbran area; that water is now run 365 days per year; the average daily run is approximately 202 cfs during the irrigation season and 42,818 acre feet are reported as used for the 1954 season to date. ^{There was a total of 9467 Ac.Ft. of Res. storage stored and used.} This does not include the Colorado River, Gunnison River or Cottonwood Creek diversions. 1635 acre feet were taken from this district via Leon Lake to Water District 40. I might add that due to a shortage of help two or three other areas likewise are not reported.

Mr. Henry Koch is water commissioner for the double district of 59 and 62 and is doing a good job. There was an acute shortage of flow in his two districts and there was a noticeable difference in the amount of hay grown this year on all of the small tributaries of the Gunnison.

Measuring devices on Willow Creek in Water District 59 straightened out a fifty year ~~feud~~ ^{feud} between two users plus the knowledge that each man would get what he should and no more or less. Mr. Koch did a commendable job in this instance and one other in Water District 62.

On Elk Creek in Water District 62, Mr. Koch ordered headgates installed and also Parshall Flumes in all of the ditches; he

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set the gates and padlocked them for the first time, so we are told, in 50 years there was peace. We do not allege happiness was enjoyed by all.

The Spring Creek Transmountain Diversion was closed off at an early date in June. It should never have been opened this season as it is an undecreed diversion and there were several users downstream who did not receive their full decree.

Mr. Koch reports 16 Parshall Flumes installed under his supervision in 1954. He recommends automatic gaging stations on Taylor River, Willow Creek and Texas Creek above Taylor Reservoir. We will have to issue written orders for this and request assistance from your office in 1955 in locating the station sites.

Mr. Koch reports a financial loss each month on mileage.

In Water District 60 Commissioner J.A. Sullivan only had one serious problem come up. In July the town of Norwood was diverting double their water right into their pipeline. They refused him a key, or to cooperate in any manner. Mr. Sullivan broke the lock and almost shut the town pipeline dry and put on his own lock. There was no decree of record. He demanded a decree or no water. He received a decree two or three days later. The town had never filed their decree with the water officials.

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The mining companies at Uravan and Naturita are trying to maneuver them selves into a lawsuit and take water from some of the farmer companies in Water District 60.

In Water District 61 Commissioner Garber distributed the small amount of water they received from the La Sal mountains of Utah, and peculiar as it may seem, bountiful crops were raised by all in this community which is annually short of water. We found this true in Water District 63 at the lower end of the Dolores River at Gateway. To date we have no statistical report for these districts.

In Water District 68 we made several trips with different parties to prove there was really no water in several of the tributaries of the Uncompahgre. Our experience proves that the least administrative problems arise on dry streams, once the fact is established.

All reservoirs filled and were used, although they are small and few in this district they help on the smaller streams. Due to the August and September rains, hay crops did better than first expected. With the exception of the best water rights on the larger streams June and July were very poor water months in this District.

The above gives a partial account of our field work this year. We find that the commissioners in Water Districts 28 (at times), 40, 41, 42, 59, 62, and at times 68 run short of mileage. We find

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that as we get more headgates and Parshall measuring flumes installed our problems decrease. We wish to thank your office for the splendid cooperation we received in 1954, both for the commissioners in Irrigation Division Number 4 and myself.

Very truly yours,

Frederick W. Paddock

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Irrigation Division Engineer