

STATE OF COLORADO
IRRIGATION DIVISION NO. 4
MONTROSE

FREDERICK W. PADDOCK
IRRIGATION DIVISION ENGINEER
P. O. BOX 15

SUBJECT:

Annual Report, 1961

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

Dear Sir:

We herewith submit our annual report for 1961.

As the years go by, one reaches an inescapable opinion that there is no such thing as an average year, nor are the water problems of any watershed ever settled in any manner more than temporarily. We will say, however, that each year we see some very peculiar things in regard to running of water. In Division Four our year of 1961 certainly fits with the above statements.

Snow on the San Miguel and Gunnison Watersheds fell late in the winter and early in the spring. Water content on all snow or water sheds was low, based on the ten or twenty year records of averages. Run off started rather slowly, but by the time irrigation water was really needed, there was plenty. The early summer growing season was excellent, and rather larger than usual first cuttings of hay were made. All crops grew well.

However, in early July the flow dropped off to meager amounts, leaving only the early water rights with an ample water supply. This condition lasted for about three weeks, and it then commenced to rain. The shortage, taken together with the fact that there had been no precipitation during May and June, made this three-week period pretty bad. The striking thing about the above situation was that, once it commenced to rain, it rained intermittently for about sixty days, causing great losses in the harvest period. Third cutting hay, grain and bean crops in particular were hit by the wet weather. There was heavy financial loss to the farmers and ranchers. Cattle and sheep, however, did well.

Return flows from the irrigation of lands under these reservoirs have immeasurably improved and stabilized the flows in the Razor Creek and Hot Springs Creek Ditches.

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Specifically, by Districts, we report as follows:

District 28

In ~~this district~~ we had our chronic shortages on Tomichi and Cochetopa Creeks. Quartz Creek held up well, as it usually does.

The water commissioner reports one new reservoir dam under construction. The Hot Springs and Vouga Reservoirs were visited by Mr. Hicks and myself and found to appear in good order. We noted new concrete work done to check spillway raveling on the Vouga Dam which appears to have effectively checked trouble for that structure. Seepage appears to have decreased on both the Vouga and Hot Springs as best we can tell from intermittent inspections.

Probably our biggest problem in District 28 is that one of the Reservoir Company's attempts ~~about every other year~~ to force the Water Commissioner to be the Company Superintendant in the distribution of the reservoir water from the Vouga Reservoir. On the house by way of expense, of course.

Razor Creek ditch flows have been immeasurably improved as have the Hot Springs Creek ditches with the operation of these reservoirs, by return flows from the additional water at later dates than when the entire irrigation season for the stream was geared solely to direct flow.

In past years Commissioner Hicks has felt that the expence of keeping records was not justified, and we have concurred with his reasoning in that matter. This year he has prepared and submitted an annual report, which is incorporated in this report in the statistical section.

The start of the Blue Mesa Unit of the Curecanti Project has made it necessary for us to make this change. Mr. Hicks is doing an excellent job, we believe, as he has always done in the past.

Water District 40 contains the most argumentative group of water users in our

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Division. Probably 50% of the rulings of the Commissioner and his deputies are appealed to this office, and about half of our rulings are appealed to your office or end up in the District Court. In the past several years, since the State Engineer's Office has adopted a policy of resisting actions naming the Water Officials, we would like to state with quite a lot of satisfaction, such actions have largely stopped.

A Grand Mesa Water Conservancy District has been formed and a proposal is being explored to build another dam on Muddy Creek some fifteen miles upstream from the Paonia Dam. The proposal is meeting with great interest in two communities, namely, Redlands Mesa and Cedaredge. There are several serious problems to solve and costs will probably be quite great if this proposal reaches the construction ~~project~~ stage.

On Leroux Creek it was necessary for the Commissioner to issue ~~some~~ thirty odd Parshall flume repair or installation orders to the Leroux Creek Water Users Assoc. and four or five other private individual Reservoir owners. We assisted the Commissioner in this task, which required three days of field work and one day of typing. Altogether, Leroux Creek used up ten days of our time in August and September.

The Paonia Reservoir was not completed in time for storage in 1961. In 1962 this reservoir should help greatly in reducing June floods at Paonia and Delta, and alleviate shortage of water for the Fire Mountain Canal in August. If certain exchanges are worked out, there will be flow used above the reservoir. Agreements are not yet completed.

Work on the face of the Beaver Dam Reservoir Dam in 1960 reduced leakage approximately 50% by Parshall Flume measurement. Your detailed reports from Mr. Rees Brooks will cover the slides that have worried us for the past two years. It appears the major leakage at their sites can be stopped.

Three years ago, an injunction suit was brought ^{By} (a) on Oak Creek against his

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neighbor, (b) which neighbor also uses water on an adjoining water shed. The suit was to restrain B from molesting the flow of the Creek up near the rim of Grand Mesa, at which point the creek divides and flows two ways, to Oak and Doughspoon Creeks. The court issued an injunction against both parties, which was appealed by party A to the Supreme Court of Colorado. The District Court was upheld in July of this year. The Commissioner has issued orders for ditch headgates and measuring flumes, and reservoir gage rods and capacity tables. Judging by past experiences, there will be about one week's worth of headaches next May, in regard to Oak and Doughspoon Creeks.

The Overland Ditch and Reservoir Company had to reset ~~a~~ ten-foot Parshall flume this summer which led to a threat of a damage suit against the Division Engineer. When the Company's engineer reported the flumes not in operating order, they were reset as ordered.

An inspection of the Overland Dam showed the riprap ordered by Mr. Rees Brooks of the State Office, about 50% done. A cut was pushed through a soft earthen embankment, leaving a drop of approximately seven to nine feet over a light sandy soil. The situation as now exists will allow approximately 60% of the present storage capacity to drop out of the reservoir basin in a pretty short period of time, should water run through the cut. In our report we are recommending restricted storage. Failure of this reservoir (since the building of the Paonia Dam will not pose the terrible threat to life and limb it once did. However, three ranchers would be most severely damaged, and in reservoir failure there is always a possibility of some loss of life.

We had some trouble with the Cedaredge--Cedar Mesa Pipeline Company, who so far as we know have never complied with our orders for measuring devices that work. We do not believe we will have any further trouble over this situation.

In Water District No. 42, we had difficulty filling reservoirs on Upper Kannah Creek and at the same time supply early flow decreases down stream. Fortunately, the weather gave us a break and we were able to accomplish both in a short time. This year, we entered the season with some holdover storage.

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In District 41, we had a reasonably good season until the August rains set in; and as a result there were many thousands of dollars of damage to malt barley, hay, and bean crops. We had no administrative problems this year.

2 Water District 42 started off with a problem of filling reservoirs on upper Kannah Creek, and the early flow decrees at the lower end of the stream. Fortunately, the weather gave us a break and flow enough for the direct flow decrees and to also fill the reservoirs started up literally in one (actually three) day's time. This year we entered the winter season with some holdover storage.

On Plateau Creek we had the new experience of seeing approximately 25,000 acre feet of storage in the Vega Reservoir. Project and exchange waters were delivered from the Vega Reservoir in the amount of approximately 12,500 acre feet.

Big Creek and Cottonwood Creek are involved in both exchange of Vega storage for Direct flow and storage in reservoirs on their Grand Mesa headwaters.

Project water is sold and delivered to eight creeks tributary to Plateau Creek, as well as Plateau Creek itself.

In 1962, it is planned that the power plants will operate in conjunction with the Vega Dam. The U. S. Bureau of Reclamation is working hard to bring this about, and are starting work, we are informed, on the Sunnyside Irrigation Project in connection with the Collbran Project. The Ute Conservancy District is proceeding with the domestic water project ~~which it is pushing~~, which will operate on the waste water from the Collbran Power Plants.

For as much trouble as we have had in the past two seasons, 1961 was a very good one, with no serious problems on Kannah Creek, and considering the newness and complicated aspects of the Collbran Project, ^{we also encountered} no serious problems there.

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Water District 59 had a dispute on a small creek near Crested Butte break out into a demand for administration. From our viewpoint, at least, a lawsuit resulted from the unreasonable attitude of the senior users on the creek. We believe this will be ironed out with time, headgates, and measuring flumes.

Taylor Park Reservoir stored a total of 94,560 acre feet on July 1, 1961. This is about 12,000 acre feet short of filling. 55,540 acre feet were run to the Uncompahgre Valley Project, leaving 39,020 acre feet on September 5, 1961. On November 1, 1961, storage had reached 59,320 acre feet. This amounts to 56% of capacity, a gain of 20,300 acre feet, which is a good start for next year.

Water District 60 operated with no serious problems this year. The San Miguel watershed appeared to have good supplies of water until the 15th of July. For two weeks it was dry and then they received lots of rain. The Gurley Reservoir has a pretty good sized holdover storage. Some repairs and ^{maintenance} ~~maintenance~~ work are planned and we are told approved by the State Office.

Water District 61 did pretty well on crop production this year. A new pumping plant was installed on the Dolores River above Bedrock, Colorado, and for three ranchers in that area proved most beneficial. They are pumping about 7.5 c f s by Parshall Flume measurement. There was one serious leak which had to be repaired.

Commissioner Garber of this District, along with Commissioner Hicks of District 28 share the honor of being the first two to get their reports in for our Division this year, as both came in on the same day's mail.

District 62 had little trouble this year. We had a demand to close off a domestic 1" pipeline, but the party making the complaint had no decree in the creek involved. No action was taken.

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District 63 has no report of any action from this office. We know of no new reservoirs since 1959 and 1960. Stream flows held up about as usual, which because of reservoirs leakage and return flows from additional water, is better than it used to be. The Commissioner had to shut off a pump on one ranch along with several ditches in July. August rains changed this quite a bit.

District 68 as usual had shortages of water in July, but in August it was wished the water could be turned off for the benefit of all. There were no serious problems this season. There is a great deal of interest in the proposed Ridgway Project, and it will serve several interests if built.

In conclusion, I would like to make some recommendations.

We believe some legislation is needed to stop unjustifiable or false complaints. Possibly this could be done in the new codification of our Colorado Water Law. We believe Colorado's Decree system is better than the permit system of water rights in other states; however, something should be done to stop extravagant and wasteful use and/or fraudulent water filings and claims for decrees. Our wastewater law should, we believe, be enlarged and clarified. Last, if at all possible, the criminal statutes for theft and other unlawful use of water should be rewritten and made easier to enforce, with stiffer penalties.

If at all possible, we would like to see special deputy attorneys of ability, appointed to serve the Attorney General's office, one for each division. We believe that a part-time attorney for each Division would take a load off both your office and the Attorney General's office as well as assist us.

We have added columns of statistics not hereto reported from our division. We find this necessary, as the use of water for purposes other than irrigation is increasing prodigiously. Approximately 25% of the water now run in our division is for purposes

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other than irrigation, out of 3.5 million acre feet. Power and municipal use will increase in Water District 42 by about 25,000 acre feet starting next year with the major portion of this figure.

The eight water commissioners in Division Four are as fine and dedicated a group as one could have to work with, who one and all handle a touchy and difficult job with what I consider great care and integrity. On the behalf of these gentlemen and their deputies, and our office, I wish to extend to you and the members of your office our thanks for your help and cooperation which make it possible for us to solve mutual problems and conclude another successful season. The statistical report is attached.

Very truly yours

Frederick W. Paddock

Frederick W. Paddock
Irrigation Division Engineer #4.

FWP/pep

1961
Annual Tabulation of
Water Commissioner Reports
Division No. 4
State of Colorado
Ditch Report

Water District Number	No. of Ditch Decrees In the Water District	No. of Ditches Administered	Irrigation Water Delivered in Acre Feet	Daily Amount of Water run in Second Feet	No. Days Water was Run	Domestic and Municipal Water Run in Acre Feet	Power for Manufacturing Water Run in Acre Feet	No. of Acres Irrigated in the Water District
28	439	240	137,614	829	85	---	---	41,430
40	1,530	482	303,731	1,419	214	29,536 **	---	182,600
41	228	89	593,029	1,386	214	43,756 **	---	97,594
42	1,434	206	617,923	1,444 ¹⁴⁴⁴	214	26,089 **	855,273 ***	139,711
59	489	60	324,077	758	214	9,315	803	38,596
60	464	24	54,130	126	214	2,578	14,609 ***	41,386
61	89	14	6,740	15.7	214	906 **	---	3,344
62	439	42	368,369	860	214	526 **	---	23,000
63	114	21	5,354	12.5	214	2,037 **	---	2,000
68	432	156	98,342	323	214	10,723	---	10,000
Total for Division No. 4	8,146	2,800	3,468,308	11,073	585	101,417	870,273	611,000

* No report

Water run during the winter months or off irrigation season (151 days)
 of year for the water year (Nov. 1, 1960 to Oct. 31, 1961)
 all the 600,000 A.C. Ft. of water reported in this report was used for power
 in both the Lower Gannett and Colorado Rivers in 1961.

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Annual Tabulation of
Water Commissioner Reports for
Irrigation Division No. 4
STATE OF COLORADO
Reservoir Report

Water District Number	No. of Reservoirs in District	No. of Reservoirs Administered	Amount of Storage on June 15, in Acre Feet	Irrigation Storage delivered during the season in Acre Feet	Domestic and Municipal Storage in Acre Feet, delivered	Manufacturing and Power Storage Acre Feet, Deliv-	Amount of Storage Heldover storage November 1, in Acre Feet
20	5	4	2,775	2,775	-----	-----	None
40	439	154	41,737	36,046	-----	-----	5,691
41	6	3	469	322	147	-----	None
42	470	60	34,919	22,404	-----	-----	12,515
59	35	5	96,599	56,509	-----	803 ***	69,500
60	73	2	10,421	10,421	1,400	-----	1,740
61	-----	1	1,261	1,255	-----	-----	20
62	22	6	4,113	3,360	455 **	-----	300
63	4	5	1,155	1,155	-----	-----	None
68	27	13	842	422	-----	-----	420
Total for Division	1,076	288	184,830	134,248	1,050	803	79,356

* Drawed Guite Reservoir for Municipal water failed during the winter of 1960-1961
 ** Power run from storage during the winter months (151 days)
 *** None for the water year (Nov. 1, 1960 to Oct. 31, 1961)