



# North Unit Irrigation District

## Solar Eclipse Operational Information

On August 21, 2017 and the days preceding this small community will become the epicenter of a “once in a life time opportunity” known as the Solar Eclipse of 2017. On that day a total solar eclipse will travel across the United States. The most visible area for this event is a 70 mile wide “Path of Totality” extending from the Oregon Coast through the United States. Madras has been designated as one of the best places in the United States to view the eclipse based on its elevation, open spaces and percentage of sunny days. As a result people from all over the world will converge on Central Oregon and Madras to be a part of this celestial event. This event and the mass of people that will follow will without question be disruptive to our normal lives and daily routines. The event will also undoubtedly have an effect on NUID’s operations given the enormity of the event and the amount of people that are expected to descend upon Madras and the surrounding area. That said the district will be implementing various measures to secure and protect district facilities as well as modifying district operations in light of the anticipated convergence.

The district has been asked about blocking service/ditch/canal roads. The district is anticipating placing impassable barricades on district service/ditch/canal roads at strategic locations throughout the district to deter folks from using them as viewing sites, camp sites, thoroughfares, short cuts, etc. Prior to the event the district will have a list and/or map on its website that will identify where barricades may be placed. Landowners may also place temporary deterrents on service/ditch/canal roads as necessary but in doing so please contact the district to let us know where these deterrents might be located so that district staff, ditchriders, and emergency response personnel (police/sheriff/fire) can navigate around them in the case of an emergency.

The district will also be placing signs (No Swimming, Trespassing, Parking, Littering) along sections and entrances of service/ditch/canal roads as well as other areas to deter all of the above. Landowners can also place signs to the same affect if they choose to do so.

Please keep in mind you may need the permission of neighboring landowners to place deterrents and signage near or along district canals, ditches, and facilities.

Given the uncertainty of the ability to move around the region in the days before, during, and after the event a modified operations schedule for water users has been developed and is as follows:

### Water Operations:

**Saturday, August 19:** Normal deliveries for ditchriders.

**Sunday, August 20:** Normal off day for ditchriders. Check rides as access allows.

**Monday, August 21:** No deliveries or changes for ditchriders. Check rides as access allows.

**Tuesday, August 22:** Normal delivery resumes for all rides.

### Office Operations:

**Saturday, August 19:** Normal work day.

**Sunday, August 20:** Office closed (emergency calls & orders for Tuesday delivery will be taken).

**Monday, August 21:** Normal work day.

**Tuesday, August 22:** Normal work day.

As the infamous day approaches the district will be providing additional information via the district website, emails, and newspaper. In the meantime feel free to contact the district office should you have any questions on the event and district operations.

One word of advice—please do not wait to the last minute to prepare yourself, your family and your operations for this event!

### Inside this Issue:

Maintaining Water Rights	2	Dig Safely	3
Irrigation Delivery-Private Ditches	2	Chemical Treatments	3
Personnel & Office Hours	2	Drainage	3
Canal Safety	2	Road Watering	3
Lien Process	3	Help Prevent Meter Damage	3
No Parking on Canal Roads	3	Ownership Question	4

## Maintaining Water Rights

Maintaining irrigation water rights on your property is important to you as the 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 water user 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 affidavit 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 water users 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.

### Delivery of Irrigation Water Through Private Ditches

Water users 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 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 water user’s responsibility to coordinate with neighboring water users 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 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 to negotiate a solution 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 visit [www.oregon.gov/oda](http://www.oregon.gov/oda). “If you have a water issue” brochure is available at: <https://www.oregon.gov/ODA/shared/Documents/Publications/Administration/WaterDisputeResolution.pdf>.

### Management:

Mike Britton, Manager  
mbritton@northunitid.com  
Kirk Holcomb, Assn’t Manager  
kholcomb@northunitid.com  
Vicki McKelvy, Office Manager  
vmckelvy@northunitid.com  
Gary Calhoun, Watermaster  
gcalhoun@northunitid.com

### Office Staff:

Pam Watson  
pwatson@northunitid.com  
Sue Light  
slevitt@northunitid.com  
Carla Bridges  
cbridges@northunitid.com

### Board of Directors:

Division 1: Phil Fine  
Vice Chairman  
Division 2: Mike Kirsch  
Division 3: Martin Richards  
Chairman  
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)

### Canal Safety

North Unit personnel have been visiting local schools to provide canal safety presentations which focus on the hidden dangers within and around the canal system. Students are provided a video of “Otto the Otters Scary Rescue” and coloring books which further stress the importance of staying out of the canals. Ditches, canals and ponds can be very dangerous.

Communicate the dangers of any waterway to children. Close supervision of children near canals is an absolute must. Turning your back even for a moment can be disastrous. Visit our website to download the color book.

## Lien Process for Delinquent Accounts

Letters were sent May 15, 2017 to all delinquent accounts. A Notice of Intent to Lien will be sent to delinquent account holders on July 15, or the first business day thereafter, if payment is not received within 30 days 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.

For your convenience you can 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 to complete the payment process.

### No Parking on Canal Roads

Parked vehicles and equipment block ditch-rider access and impedes their ability to do their jobs. It can also prevent district personnel from responding to emergency situations. Thank you for your cooperation.

### 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).

## Chemical Treatments

The district began applying aquatic herbicides to its irrigation canals in May and will continue to apply periodically as needed through October 2017. The aquatic herbicides may include the following products: Copper Sulfate, Dipotassium Salt of Endothall (Cascade), Magnacide H with

active ingredient Acrolien. 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 or human and animal consumption. Furthermore irrigation water, 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 treatments.

## 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/water users 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 water users to clarify issues or suggest solutions, but the responsibility ultimately lies with the landowners/water users along ditches/drains to resolve these matters. In addition, it is the

landowners/water users 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.

## Road Watering

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 water users minimize or eliminate "road watering" not only to reduce a potential hazard but as responsible stewards of a limited resource—water.

### 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 water user is charging the irrigation system mainline. If the valve that charges the main line 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.

**Have you put your property in a trust?**

**Have you purchased property?**

**Have you sold property?**

**If the answer to any of the above questions is**

**“Yes” please contact the district office.**