



July 6, 2021

North Unit Board and Patrons:

Today, we are experiencing the worst drought conditions our region has faced in recorded history. Droughts that used to be the worst-case scenario are increasingly becoming the new normal. COID would like to express its sincere sympathy to all water users for the situation that we are all suffering in the Deschutes Basin.

Though the current outlook is grim, we are committed to our partnership with NUID. Together for many years, we have been collaborating on long-term solutions that increase water reliability and restore fish and wildlife habitat while also investing in critical infrastructure. Using various conservation tools, irrigation districts with senior water rights, like COID, can conserve water to help districts with junior water rights, like NUID. Over time our conservation measures will generate a more reliable water supply for the Basin.

All that said, our situation today is bearing down on our agricultural community with relentless force.

COID is committed to finding ways to balance our obligations to our patrons while seeking and implementing ways to help junior users, including advocating for relief funding to support North Unit. As a District, COID is working diligently to help NUID to the best of our ability while still providing water for our 3,600 patrons.

To date, COID has:

- Preserved water in the river for junior water right holders by cutting COID's operational water until the river flows dropped, reducing COID's current patron deliveries to 65-70% of normal.
- Foregone COID's 5000 acre-feet of early-season storage to be left for NUID.
- Made a plea to all of COID patrons to leave their water if they don't need it. Out of 3600 patrons, COID received ten requests to leave their water for others.
- Helped negotiate with US Fish and Wildlife an additional 5000 acre-feet of storage from the Oregon spotted frog water in Craine Prairie for NUID.
- Asked COID ditch riders to work diligently with neighboring water right holders to help farmers suffering from the reduction in water deliveries.

Long-term, COID is working on the following:

- Water marketing that allows for more legal options to move water between districts.
- Large piping projects that create significant water savings that will go to NUID and other junior water right holders.
- On-farm and past the Point of Delivery conservation projects.
- Communication with legislators to provide financial relief for our farmers experiencing drought.

To maintain rural agriculture and way of life, it will be key for irrigation districts, patrons, our elected officials, and our communities to come together to improve drought resistance, increase irrigation efficiency, and mitigate water loss. Now, more than ever, we must work together to face these challenging circumstances.

Regards,

Craig Horrell  
Managing Director