



Modernizing Idaho's Water Infrastructure

An Ongoing Story Series on the Idaho Water Resource Board's Aging Infrastructure Grant Program **ISSUE NO. 5**

Solenberger Ditch Company

Project description:

Solenberger Ditch Company applied for an Aging Infrastructure Grant to replace an old, washed-out headgate with a new headgate in the Bingham County area near Blackfoot.

The Solenberger Ditch is a small lateral canal served by the Blackfoot Irrigation Canal, north of Blackfoot. The old headgate is about 80-90 years old.

The Solenberger Ditch serves about 340 acres of farmland and 22 residential properties. At the end of the 2022 irrigation season, the main headgate, which was used to split the water flow between ag water users and residential water users, completely washed out. Hence, time was of the essence to replace it in time for the 2023 irrigation season.

The Idaho Water Resource Board's new Aging Infrastructure Grant program offered a timely opportunity for Solenberger Ditch Co. to apply for a \$3,000 AIG grant to replace the washed-out main headgate. Total cost was estimated at \$9,000. The



New headgate installed with 45-degree angles to divert flow to ag lands (left) and residential water users (right). Photo courtesy Dennis Hone.

Water Board awarded the AIG grant to Solenberger Ditch in January 2023.

Solenberger Ditch hired Skip Yancey Construction of Blackfoot to do the construction work. The project was completed in time for the 2023 irrigation

season.

Solenberger relocated the new headgate to a point 20 feet upstream to a better location. The new headgate splits the water at a 45-degree angle to separate the water flow to ag lands and residential lands. It's about a 83-17 percent split, with most of the water going to ag lands, said Dennis Hone, Secretary of Solenberger Ditch Co.

The channel carrying water to ag lands is wider than the one carrying water to residential properties.

"It turned out really well," Hone said. "We're happy to have it in place for the 2023 irrigation season."

Solenberger Ditch President John

- **Type of project:** New headgate
- **Location:** Blackfoot, Idaho
- **Total project cost:** \$9,000
- **AIG:** \$3,000
- **Bridge loan:** Solenberger Ditch Co. President John Olson provided a bridge loan so the project could be completed quickly.
- **Other partners:** Solenberger Ditch Co. water users
- **Start date:** Winter 2022
- **End date:** May 2023



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Solenberger Ditch new headgate (cont.)

Olson provided a loan to carry the project. Water users will repay the loan with annual water assessments.

The previous headgate made it difficult to manage water flows because it was falling into disrepair and boards had to be used to regulate flows, Hone said.

"This replacement will allow us to have more positive control

The main headgate blew out at the end of the 2022 irrigation season, so time was of the essence to get a new headgate installed prior to the 2023 irrigation season.

and the ability to lock the headgate, if it comes to that," Hone said.

"Over the years, folks have been mostly cooperative, but there have been a few ugly times. This improvement should eliminate or at least minimize disagreements and un-neighborly rearranging of the water flow."

For more information about the Solenberger Canal headgate project, contact Dennis Hone, 208-243-1524.



Top, the old headgate. The structure completely failed after the 2022 irrigation season. Below, another view of the new headgate. (courtesy Dennis Hone)

