Modernizing Idaho's Water Infrastructure

An Ongoing Story Series on the Idaho Water Resource Board's Aging Infrastructure Grant Program Issue No. 2

Boise River Water District #63

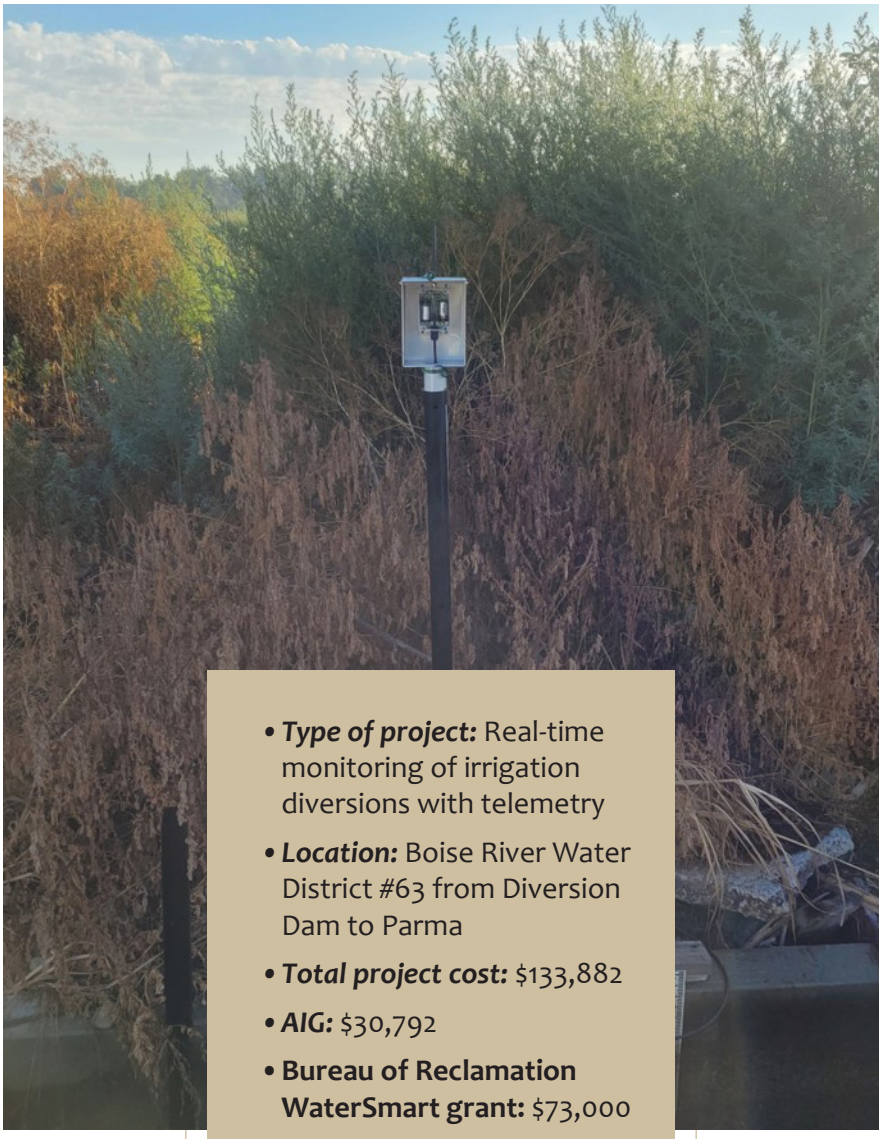
Project description:

Boise River Water District #63 is modernizing the way it monitors irrigation diversions with real-time monitoring on 64 diversions along the Boise River.

The Aging Infrastructure Grant from the Idaho Water Resource Board covers 23 percent of the project costs and Water District #63 is covering the rest.

"We were in the Stone Age with water management and administration," said Mike Meyers, Boise River Waternaster.

"We wanted to bring things into the 21st Century with our water administration."



- ***Type of project:*** Real-time monitoring of irrigation diversions with telemetry
- ***Location:*** Boise River Water District #63 from Diversion Dam to Parma
- ***Total project cost:*** $133,882
- ***AIG:*** $30,792
- **Bureau of Reclamation WaterSmart grant:** $73,000
- ***Local cost-share:*** $30,090
- ***Other funding partners:*** Water District #63
- ***Start date:*** January 2023
- ***End date:*** June 2023

Project benefits:

By installing cable-connected telemetry units on 69 open-channel diversions and 25 irrigation pumps, Water District #63 can monitor irrigation diversion rates hourly, daily in real-time.

Previously, the watermaster had to drive 120 miles once a week to read water diversion rates at irrigation weirs.

"It's a huge time-saver," Meyers said. "It would take us 8-12 hours to visit all of the diversions, depending on traffic. This project saved two days for two people. I find that totally amazing!"

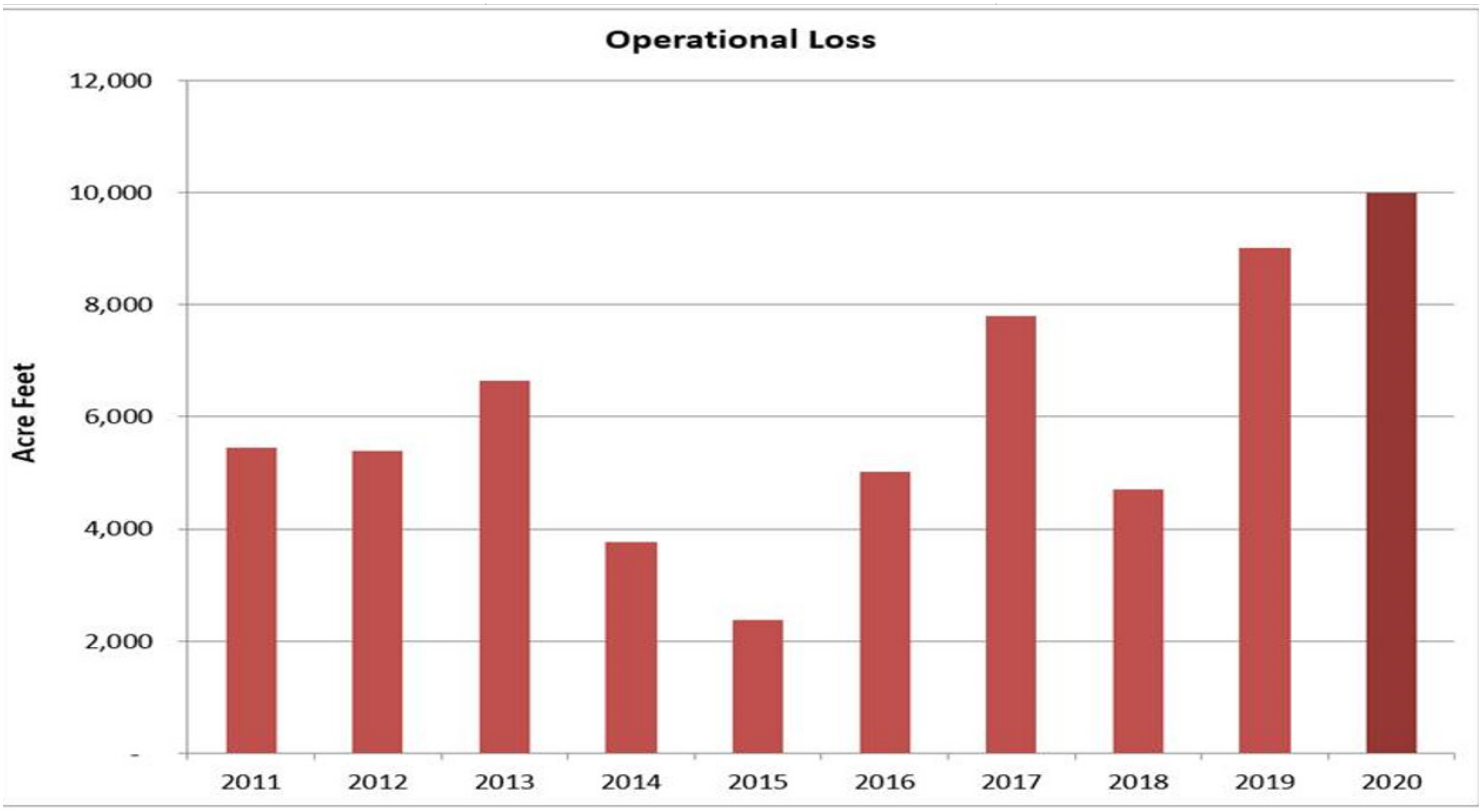
The telemetry project also could save 3,000-5,000 acre-feet of water per year as well, he said.

It costs about $200 - $1,000 per site to install the telemetry equipment. Maintenance costs are $2,000 per year, he said.

The telemetry units transmit water diversion rates to the Water District #63 office via a carrier-grade network operated by Ethos Connected.

A number of irrigation districts across Southern Idaho have been working to install telemetry devices on diversion structures to provide real-time data on water flows. It's considered a good management practice for irrigation entities, IDWR officials say.

Boise River Water District #63 (cont.)



Real-time monitoring of irrigation diversions with telemetry may also save 3,000-5,000 acre-feet of water, officials said.

Far left, telemetry instrumentation from Ethos Connected transmits information on water flow to the Water District #63 computer in real-time. Left, telemetry installed on irrigation pump. (courtesy Water District #63)