

Ditch Doings May 18, 2019

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I've been keeping the flow right up near normal season max flows. This is a departure from previous canal management practices where the water wasn't turned up until it was needed. Keeping the canal full is now being considered worth the effort, whenever it's possible, due to the opportunity it provides to replenish the aquifer.

The traditional flood irrigation practiced for years along the canal helped keep the aquifer full. Recent irrigation practices, made possible by carefully metered sprinklers, allowed for much less water being adequate for irrigation on the surface. Cutting off all excess water, and then using deep-water wells for later season irrigation, was depleting the underground, stored water.

It's a universal problem. Locally, the connection between surface water and the aquifer is now understood to be very close, due to the aquifer's small size and exceptionally porous surface material, throughout the Valley. Keeping the canal high will help.



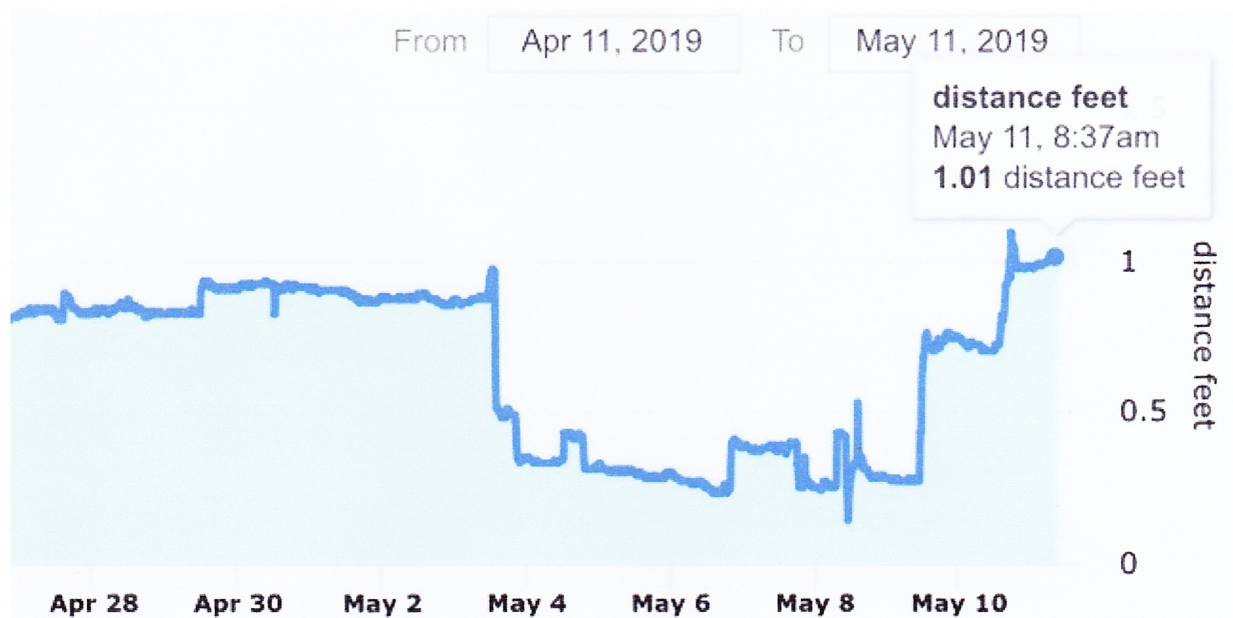
Film crew Justin and I were interviewed for a TV ad campaign regarding Idaho canals and canal safety. Kids, dogs, summer heat, and water, can be a fun combination, but fast deep canals can be deadly.



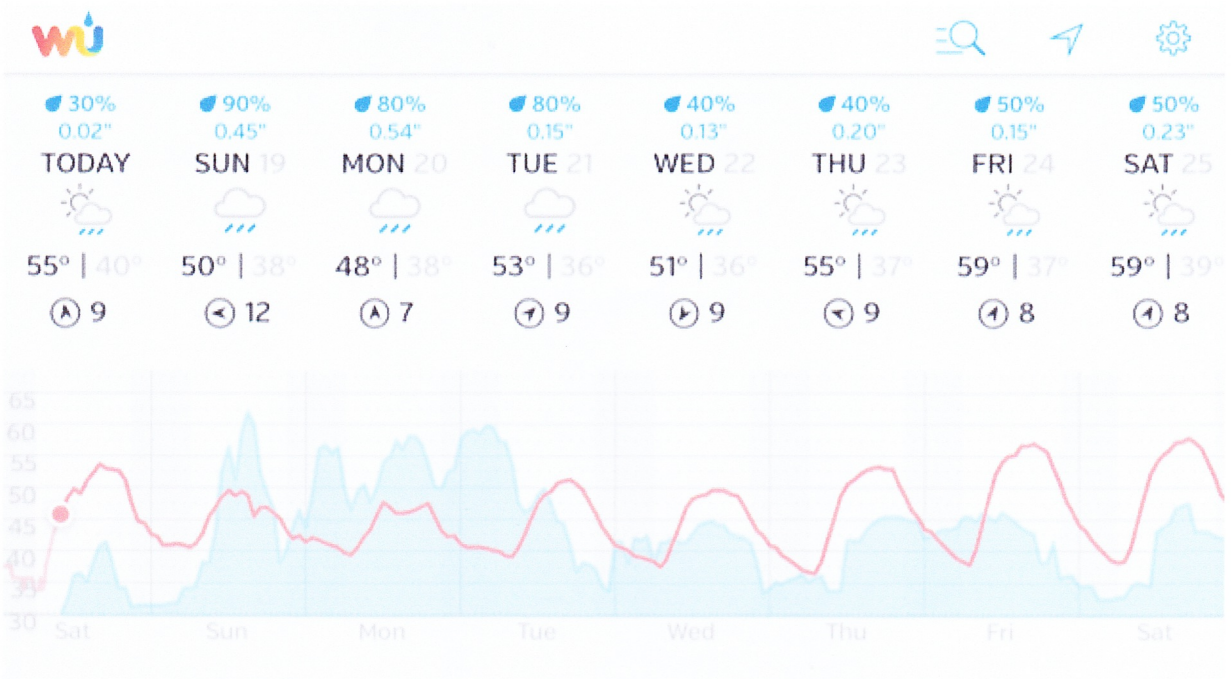
Old slash piles We're making a little progress with these. I burned 25 of them over a 7 day session between rains. It's especially exciting when working in a narrow space between fire and fast semis!



Big Extraction I think this water-logged log weighed more than my pickup, which we often use to drag out the bigger intruders. Thanks for your help, Doug.



Wild Goose chase : when one user, 5 miles down the ditch, says "...shut it off! We've got a problem!" and his angry neighbor, only 3 miles down calls and says, "...MORE watah!!" and we try to get a little to the closer point, but not too much...



Next week's forecast This is how May should be.

Some users will call to let us know they're shutting down due to the forecast rain and cool temps. Others quietly shut sown and let us figure it out, afterwards. There are a few who are very sophisticated: they text. 😊



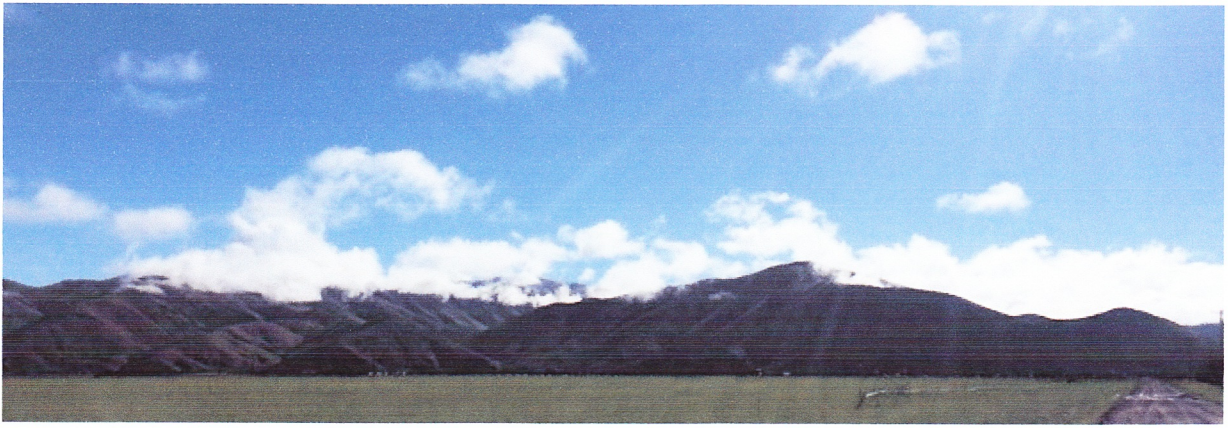
Eastside Lateral Keith cleaning out the old tree remnants that have made any travel along the ditch bank impossible for years...



Almost done This will be seeded with grass, and then once the grass is established, this bank will be mowable, alleviating much of the need for burning or spraying in the future.

And like I said when I first started this job, 4 years ago:

I can't get over the sky...



Playing in water, is nice, too.



I made a recent quick trip, home to Nevada. This is where I learned about water and irrigation. Springtime flows kind of do what they want, down there.

We would put effort into trying to spread it evenly, but in many instances, we had to step back and watch. Even the ends of our little airstrip, in the upper right corner, are under water.

When it all recedes, the river will become a tiny trickle, but it will grow wild grass over an area larger than our Bellevue Triangle.

And the sky is incredible, down there, as well.

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For more photos and info: www.wrvid45.com