Water Supply Update – Pathfinder Irrigation District

Pathfinder Irrigation District provides this information to address questions regarding the current water season. As is widely known, the District is facing a water supply that appears to be significantly below normal. The District hopes that this update will help address concerns and reduce the spread of misinformation regarding the District's available supply.

At the time of this update, the District has approximately 25 days of water available in the reservoirs, which is well below average for this point in the season.

The District has received many inquiries from users wanting to know how many days of water will be available so they can plan accordingly. The District understands the importance of this information and appreciates the professionalism and patience shown by its users.

However, due to the unusual weather patterns experienced this year, there is limited historical data available to provide a reliable estimate. At this time, there are too many variables to accurately determine how much water the District will receive from mountain snowmelt.

Key factors include temperature patterns in the mountains. Warmer temperatures, particularly when accompanied by mild nighttime conditions, typically result in more efficient runoff. In contrast, cooler days with freezing nights can slow the melt and allow moisture to be absorbed into the ground. Spring weather events also play an important role—timely precipitation can improve runoff efficiency, while continued dry conditions can negatively impact it.

Current snowpack levels further illustrate the uncertainty. At the time of this report, the Upper Platte basin is at 61% of normal, the Sweetwater basin is at 86% of normal, and the Lower Platte basin is at 32% of normal. These levels will ultimately depend on spring conditions and how efficiently the snowpack transitions into usable runoff. We get the vast majority of our water from the Upper and Lower North Platte regions.

The District was able to carry over between seven and ten days of water from the previous season. Even with this carryover, the total number of irrigation days remains uncertain due to the variability in projected runoff. For perspective, projections for Upper Platte runoff currently range from approximately 100,000 acre-feet to as much as 620,000 acre-feet, compared to a long-term average of around 705,000 acre-feet.

At the April board meeting, the Bureau of Reclamation will present an updated forecast of the expected water supply based on the most recent data available. Pathfinder Irrigation District will share this updated information with its users as soon as it becomes available.

While the District remains hopeful, current weather patterns have consistently tracked below average. It is important to recognize the possibility that these conditions may persist.

There has also been discussion regarding the potential to borrow water from the Kendrick Project. While this option exists, the amount available is limited and must be shared among all 13 districts. Any borrowed water must be repaid from the very first of next year's runoff and

includes both the return of water and a financial cost associated with lost power generation revenue. The District is actively evaluating the financial implications of this option and exploring available resources to help offset these costs, with the aim of minimizing the burden on District users.

The District's Board of Directors will make a final decision on how the water season will be managed at the May board meeting. While it is recognized that this timing is later than preferred, the number of unknown variables at this point makes it impractical to make a responsible decision any sooner.

The District will continue to monitor conditions closely and provide updates as more reliable information becomes available. In the meantime, Pathfinder Irrigation District remains committed to managing this water supply as effectively and responsibly as possible. Every effort is being made to maximize the water available and to support our users through the challenges of this season. We appreciate your continued patience, cooperation, and understanding as we work through these conditions together.