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Bostwick Park Water Conservancy District Finds Grants are Key to Funding Water Projects

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[Bostwick Park Water Conservancy District](#) (“the District”) near Montrose continually works to improve the diversion and delivery of irrigation water to shareholders.

The namesake of the District – Bostwick Park – is located about twelve miles northeast of Montrose and encompasses about 4,000 acres, but the District’s coverage area comprises about 150 square miles in two counties. Within the District’s boundaries, the Cimarron Canal and Reservoir Company delivers water to a total of 6,100 acres of farm and rangeland by accessing diversions on the Cimarron River and tributaries to Cedar Creek.

Storage rights in Silver Jack Reservoir - located on the Cimarron River about twenty miles above the confluence with the Gunnison River - provide for sport fishing and recreational benefits, as well as late season irrigation water for farmland. The reservoir, completed in 1971, is a Bureau of Reclamation (BoR) project unit within the Colorado River Storage Project (CRSP).

District President Allen Distel has been overseeing improvements to the District’s water control and delivery systems since 2011. Distel is also president of Cimarron Canal and Reservoir Company and a life-long agricultural producer in the valley.

The District has a small mill levy to support basic operations, but Distel relies heavily on grants to help implement a broad range of capital improvements to the District’s infrastructure.

The District’s headgate on Cimarron River is four miles below Silver Jack Reservoir. Until recently, it was a three hour round trip to adjust the headgate. In 2018, the District installed towers and a fiber optic network to



Flume with automated level sensor.
Photo: Allen Distel

enable SCADA control of the headgate, so the height of the headgate can now be adjusted from the office or a mobile phone.

A level sensor was also installed at the flume below the headgate, enabling ditch flow monitoring in real time. In 2019, an automated wastegate with a SCADA-controlled actuator was installed. The headgate, flow level sensor and wastegate are managed in unison to keep ditch levels steady.

Funding for the SCADA equipment at the headgate along with a previous project which piped 2,900 feet of open ditch came primarily from NRCS [Resource Conservation Partnership Program](#) (RCP) funds (83%) with the balance coming from the Colorado Water Conservation Board and the District. The total cost was about \$618,000.

The automated wastegate and water level sensor cost (\$31,449) was partially covered by a grant from the [BoR WaterSMART Water and Energy Efficiency grant](#) fund. The District has utilized BoR Water and Energy Efficiency grants to help pay for several flow control and monitoring systems. The District is also using a [BoR Water Conservation Field Services](#) grant to re-write their operations manual.

The District is currently working to convert nearly 7.75 miles of open earthen ditch into enclosed pipe. The piping project is being done in an area called the Shinn Park / Waterdog and will eliminate an estimated 200 acre-feet of seepage loss and deliver pressurized irrigation water to 1,500 acres of farm and rangeland. With pressurized water, irrigators can upgrade to more efficient sprinkler irrigation systems, further eliminating seepage losses. The project will also remove 3,304 tons of salt annually. Funding is being provided by the Bureau of Reclamation's (BoR) [Salinity and Selenium Control Program](#).

The District also recently received approval for a [PL-566 Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention](#) grant through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The project is currently in the public scoping phase, which invites public comments on the improvements that are planned.

The PL-566 grant will help pipe approximately eight miles of the District's east and west lateral ditches and stabilize and line approximately one and half miles of open canal operated by the Uncompahgre Valley Water Users Association.



Waste gate with SCADA controlled motorized actuator. Photo: Allen Distel

The grant will also help replace a section of existing pipeline with new high-density polyethylene (HDPE) pipe, fix two ditch slide areas, and install an electronic fish screen and temperature monitors in the Cimarron River.

A proposed part of the grant includes replacing the existing diversion structure on the Cimarron River with a radial gate. The SCADA system will allow the radial gate to be managed in concert with the water level sensor in the ditch below the headgate and the actuator controlling the wastegate.

Once installed, the system will adjust the radial gate and the wastegate automatically to maintain the ditch level and river flow. Ultimately, this system will also be tied into the outlet gates on Silver Jack Reservoir which will help minimize reservoir releases beyond the amount needed by irrigators and maintain more optimal flow levels in the Cimarron River.

Total PL-566 grant funding being sought is \$18 million. The project is being sponsored by the District and co-sponsored by Uncompahgre Valley Water Users Association (UVWUA), Cimarron Canal and Reservoir Company and Trout Unlimited.

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