



News Release

Nampa & Meridian Irrigation District

www.nmid.org

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Serving The Treasure Valley Since 1904

Trespassing, Illegal Plantings on Canal Banks **Pose Dangers, Headaches for Irrigation District**

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The current Covid-19 “stay at home order” is causing major headaches for the valley’s largest irrigation district with a sharp spike in the numbers of incidents of people trespassing on canal banks and even illegal gardens being planted in the easement areas crews use to maintain the canals, officials with the Nampa & Meridian Irrigation advised today.

“I’ve had a ton of calls from people wanting to know if they can walk along canals, should their neighbors be, and about walking along the gravel maintenance roads. I’ve also had several land owners call and ask us to install gates to prevent people from trespassing on their land. We are even having people walk right past locked gates with “No Trespassing” signs on them.” said Greg Curtis, NMID Water Superintendent.

Another new issue popping up is gardens that are being planted in the easement area that the canal maintenance crews use.

“It may help homeowners break the monotony of the ‘stay at home’ restrictions but it creates serious access problems for NMID workers if they need to get to a problem spot. It is also illegal as Idaho law requires written permission from the Irrigation District before any objects, including gardens, can be placed in the easement areas.” Curtis added.

If a resident does not have the written permission, Idaho law allows the irrigation district to remove the object and charge the costs to the entity or person who placed it there.

“We truly can appreciate everyone wanting to plant a garden but in the canal easement area behind their back fence is not the place to do it. Residents may think it’s okay because our crews can drive around it. But it’s not okay because if their neighbors do the same in an emergency, we won’t be able to get past without driving over the garden area, Curtis cautioned.

Gates to stop the trespassing problem are not a solution. NMID officials say if they installed all the gates being requested by landowners, their ditchriders would get nothing done but unlocking gates all day.

Curtis feels the trespassing issue is coming in part from the flood of newcomers who are not familiar with Idaho water law,



An illegal garden planted in the official easement area that covers the piped, underground Stokesberry Lateral Canal in Meridian. The garden was planted on the far side of a NMID water delivery control point. Idaho water prohibits objects being placed in easement areas without written permission from the water delivery entity. (NMID Photo)

“We want to be good neighbors with the residents who live around our canals. But we also want them to know that they are breaking the law by trespassing plus it is very dangerous because many of the canals are rising rapidly in water levels every day to meet the high demand this spring. We should never forget that people, including children, die in irrigation canals every year,” he said.

NMID delivers irrigation water to approximately 69,000 acres of Treasure Valley agricultural and residential lands in Ada and Canyon Counties. 2020 marks the 116th consecutive year of water deliveries to the Treasure Valley by the irrigation district.

For more information about the District call (208) 466-7861. Information is also available on its Internet website: www.nmid.org.

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