

News Release

Pioneer Irrigation District

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PIONEER'S STORM WATER RUNOFF, ENCROACHMENT ISSUES **CENTRAL FOCUS OF PREMIER NATURAL RESOURCES SEMINAR**

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Water law and natural resource officials from around Idaho and the Northwest will hear first hand about urban runoff and encroachment issues faced by Pioneer Irrigation District at the Idaho Water Users Association annual summer seminar on Tuesday in Sun Valley.

State-wide importance of the issues faced by Pioneer led IWUA to dedicate an entire morning the second day of the seminar to the topic. Pioneer had asked the Association to include urban runoff and encroachment in the seminar to help educate other water delivery entities about its struggle to deal with urban encroachment, including unauthorized dumping of urban storm water runoff into its canals and drains.

Pioneer recently filed suit against the City of Caldwell to stop developers from building municipal storm water sewers dumping urban runoff directly into the District's canals and drains. Caldwell's revised storm water management manual gives developers a mandate to build municipal storm water drains that dump directly into Pioneer's canals and irrigation drains without permission of the District. Idaho law expressly prohibits encroachment into private property of irrigation entities.

The three-part session titled "Encroachment & Discharges Into Canals" begins at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday. Two panels in succession will focus on the "Dos and Don'ts" involved in the issue. The first panel will be irrigation managers who must deal with the issue. They will be followed by a panel of top water law attorneys who will focus on legal aspects.

The third panel will feature Pioneer Attorney Scott Campbell, who will concentrate on the legal exposure faced by irrigation entities because of the urban encroachment and runoff discharge practices being advanced by many municipalities and other organizations.

"Unless irrigation entities can get this growing problem under control, their liability exposure for flooding damages, environmental litigation, and health related claims will grossly expand the financial impacts upon their districts, canal companies, their directors, and their employees." Campbell will tell officials during the session.

The IWUA Summer Water Law and Natural Resources Seminar is considered the premier event of its kind in the state. It annually attracts the top water law and resource management officials from across the Pacific Northwest.

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Urban encroachment and runoff discharge issues are widely expected to receive intense interest at the seminar because many other Idaho irrigation entities, faced with the same problems, are looking for answers.

Campbell has repeatedly told officials that Pioneer Irrigation District knows urban development will not stop, but warns that storm water impacts of such illegal discharges to canals and drains creates unacceptable problems for irrigation districts and canal companies if not prevented.

“These are all consequences of urban development improperly shifting the burden of the problems of urban storm water onto existing agricultural irrigation delivery organizations,” Campbell added.

For more information on the seminar, contact IWUA at (208) 344-6690 or visit its web site at www.iwua.org.

Pioneer Irrigation District has provided irrigation and agricultural drainage services to Ada and Canyon County land owners for more than a century. The District currently maintains about 7,000 accounts providing irrigation water to 34,000 acres of residential and farmland in Canyon and Ada Counties.

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