



# Pioneer Irrigation District

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MARK ZIRSCHKY  
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Secretary/Treasurer

June 11, 2009

**Subject: Private Irrigation Boxes**

To Whom It May Concern:

We receive many complaints each year about water boxes overflowing and flooding or perhaps not having water at all. If the box is one Pioneer is responsible for, we will readily take care of the problem. However, there are a number of what we call "private boxes" within District boundaries. This letter is intended to provide more information on just what a private box is, why they exist and who is responsible for them.

Private boxes are called this because they are boxes that are beyond our main distribution system. Please understand that Pioneer's purpose and job is to bring water from the Boise River, through our canal system to a delivery point for each property. This delivery point may not be right at your property, but might be up the street or around the corner. Our control of the delivery system ends at that delivery point. Any ditches, pipes, boxes or other distribution methods beyond that delivery point were installed by private property owners and are technically private property that is out of Pioneer's jurisdiction.

Decades ago when the District was originally formed, most of the land was farmland and was not broken up by streets, businesses and neighborhoods. As development has taken place, farmland has been split up for streets, houses, etc.. This made it more difficult to control the water once it left the original delivery points. Because Pioneer's jurisdiction ends at the delivery point, private citizens have installed things like boxes, ditches, pipes, etc. to help them better control their water.

The maintenance and monitoring of private boxes should be done by that group of water users using the box. Most of the private boxes are VERY old. Here's where the problem comes in.....since most of the private boxes are so old, in many cases, the people who had them installed are no longer around, and the information about maintenance and monitoring has not been passed on to whomever has purchased the property since then. That leaves a situation where people may not know they are supposed to be taking care of a private box. When things like floods happen, people

calling Pioneer to report the flood are told things like, "It is a private box. We can turn the water off at the delivery point for 24-48 hours for repairs, but those repairs are up the users because Pioneer doesn't have jurisdiction over it." While frustrating to the caller, those private boxes are private property and Pioneer would be trespassing if we did anything to them.

So what do you do if you are on or near one of these private boxes? Try to educate your neighbors. Because these boxes are private, Pioneer does not have records of who is off of each private box, but we do have records of who is off of each of our delivery points. We can provide you with a list to help you determine who might be off the private box. Talk to the users of the box and explain to them that it is private and up to the users to maintain. You are welcome to copy and distribute this letter, or ask us for assistance in notifying your neighbors. Perhaps, like a homeowner's association, you may consider setting up a fund that everyone using the box contributes to so there are funds available when maintenance needs to be done. It would also be a good idea to get together and assign someone as the "watermaster", whose job it is to monitor the box.

These private boxes were set up as a neighborhood control system and require the entire group using it to participate in its management. That means neighbors need to be talking to each other.

Please feel free to call Pioneer if you have questions we may be able to help you with, like determining if a box is private or Pioneer's. Please also understand that these private boxes are out of Pioneer's jurisdiction and we have no control over or liability for them.

If you have additional questions, please call us at 459-3617.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dawn Fowler".

Dawn Fowler  
Secretary/Treasurer