

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Nick Miller, Rob Whitney  
FROM: Patrick Kelly  
DATE: August 18, 2015  
SUBJECT: Indian Valley Visit

I visited Indian Valley on August 14, 2015, in response to some complaints the Department had received regarding the delivery of water in Basin 67A. The valley stores water in the Ben Ross Reservoir (67-2385) which the Little Weiser Irrigation District (LWID) manages. Water users on the Little Weiser River system exchange water rights for the delivery of storage water in late summer months. Water for this reservoir is mainly diverted from the Inlet Ditch and possibly a small amount from the Richardson Ditch. These are the two furthest upstream ditches on the river.

Complaints were received regarding the lack of water delivered to the American Lindsey Ditch. This is the third ditch on the river below the Richardson and Inlet ditch. It is important to note that the American Lindsey Ditch is above the outlet from the reservoir, and does not receive storage water. The American Lindsey Ditch carries water rights senior to the two ditches up river.

Basin 67A Watermaster Joe Steppich stated this had been a trying season and that there were folks unhappy with the LWID board members and users on the Richardson Ditch. Mr. Steppich suggested that support by the Department was very useful and a visit may help resolve some of the basin's issues.

Communication with users on the American Lindsey Ditch was led by Jeff Glemser. Jeff expressed urgency that the Department observes how water was being diverted out of the Little Weiser River before the weekend started when a change in water delivery was to be made.

I spoke with Wayne Burkhardt who is a member of the LWID and being accused of "taking" water. Mr. Burkhardt expressed great displeasure of the short timing of the meeting and felt that more time would be required to gather all of the board members together for such a meeting. Mr. Burkhardt had the opportunity to meet with our group Friday to express his interest in the water although he chose not to do so. Because this was a preliminary visit to observe and assist the Watermaster, I continued on with my visit.

I was met at the LWID building in Indian Valley by Joe Steppich, Jeff Glemser, and Ron Dunham. Our visit started with the Little Weiser River weir. This is a 20' rectangular weir used to measure all water available in the River. We observed 2.25" passing over the weir. According to the Water Measurement Manual, this translates to just under 5.5 cfs. This rate cuts users on the Little Weiser River junior to 5/1/1881.

Next stop was the Richardson Ditch which has a 5' rectangular weir. At the time of the visit, 5" of water was passing over the weir, equivalent to 4.46 cfs. The most senior right on the Richardson ditch is 6/1/1895 priority which includes Mr. Burkhardt. Joe Steppich reduced the headgate flow at this time to 1.37 cfs for the delivery of storage water exchange.

At the time of my visit, water was not being diverted into the Inlet Ditch. The Watermaster was not aware of any measuring device on this ditch. The LWID later stated that there is an inverted weir on the headgate.

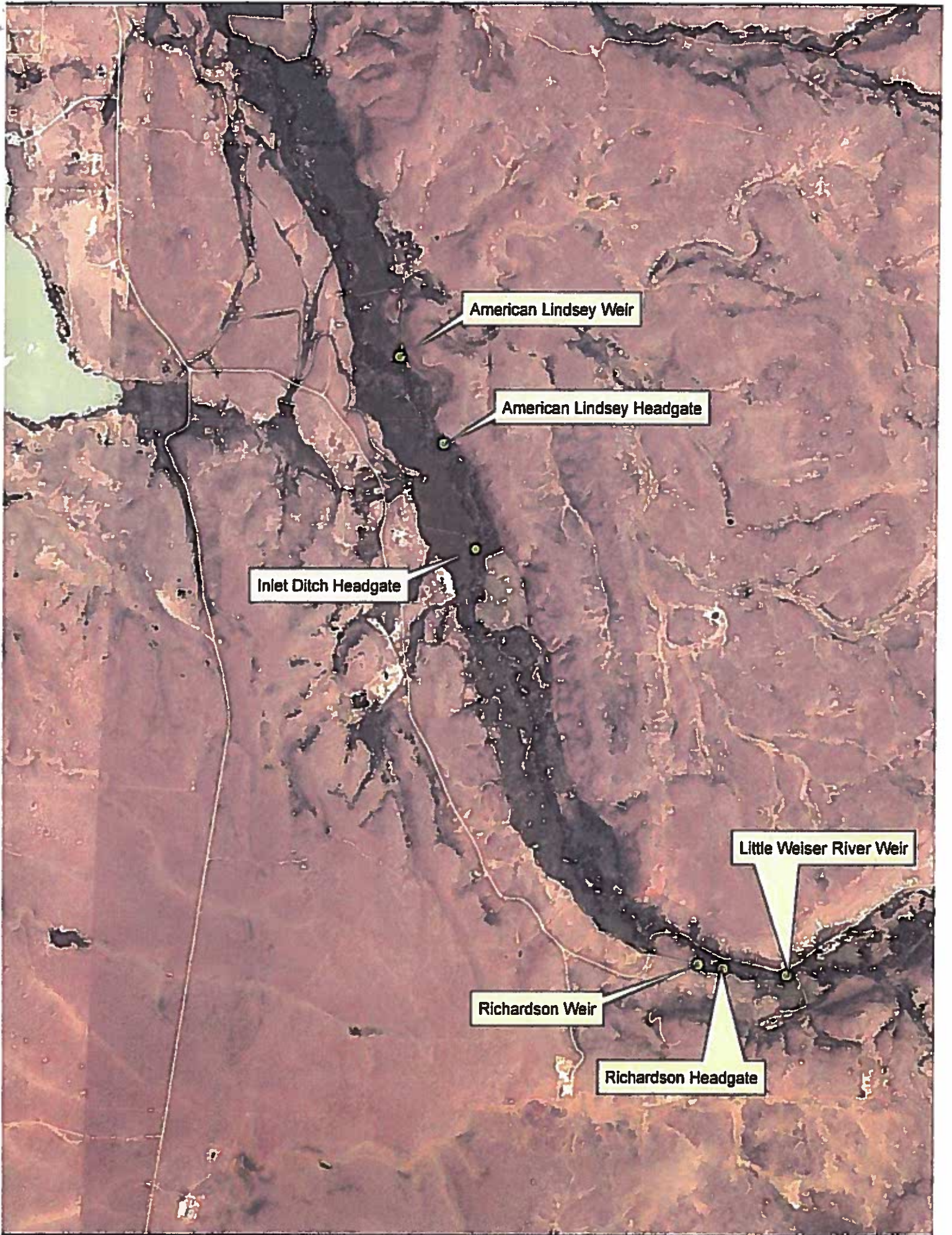
Last stop on the visit was the American Lindsey Ditch. There was 3.25" passing through a 6' weir converting to 2.78 cfs. Mr. Glemser stated that the flow was up from where it was earlier in the morning which he attributed to the reduction made in the Richardson Ditch.

After visiting the measuring devices on these systems, it was found that the out of priority delivery of water rights in the Richardson Ditch was causing injury to senior water users downstream. Mr. Steppich was very grateful for the visit, as it showed him a better way to separate what is being delivered to the water rights in priority and what is being delivered as a storage water exchange.

At the close of our field visit, our group was greeted by board members Jerry Jager and Isaac Ward. These gentlemen passionately expressed their displeasure with the business being conducted on this day and felt that proper notice should have been given to coordinate a more formal meeting. I expressed regret for the short notice and suggested that we move back to the LWID building in an attempt to bring both parties together and come to an understanding.

All parties reconvened back at the LWID building and I explained the findings from the day's visit. The Board members expressed the way that water has been delivered in the past was that when the reservoir opened up, everyone then exchanged water rights for storage water shares until the reservoir went dry. It was explained that the unique situation of exchanging storage water above the reservoir still required the delivery of river water in priority to senior water users above the reservoir outlet. Board members expressed that they were unaware the Little Weiser River flows were down to 1881 priority. Both parties were in agreement that a better list which separated both the adjudicated water rights from the benefited acres for storage was in order to assist the Watermaster deliver the water appropriately.

In conclusion to my visit, I would suggest that the list of water rights within Basin 67A sorted by priority be followed more closely by the Watermaster. The water passing through the Little Weiser River measuring device dictates what is available to pass through the ditches. At the end of our meeting, both parties were in agreement of this and open to communicating with each other better to execute such a practice.



American Lindsey Weir

American Lindsey Headgate

Inlet Ditch Headgate

Little Weiser River Weir

Richardson Weir

Richardson Headgate



Little Weiser  
River measuring  
device  
20' weir



Little Weiser  
River looking  
down  
Richardson  
Ditch. Headgate  
located just  
around bend at  
end of photo.



Richardson  
Ditch  
Headgate

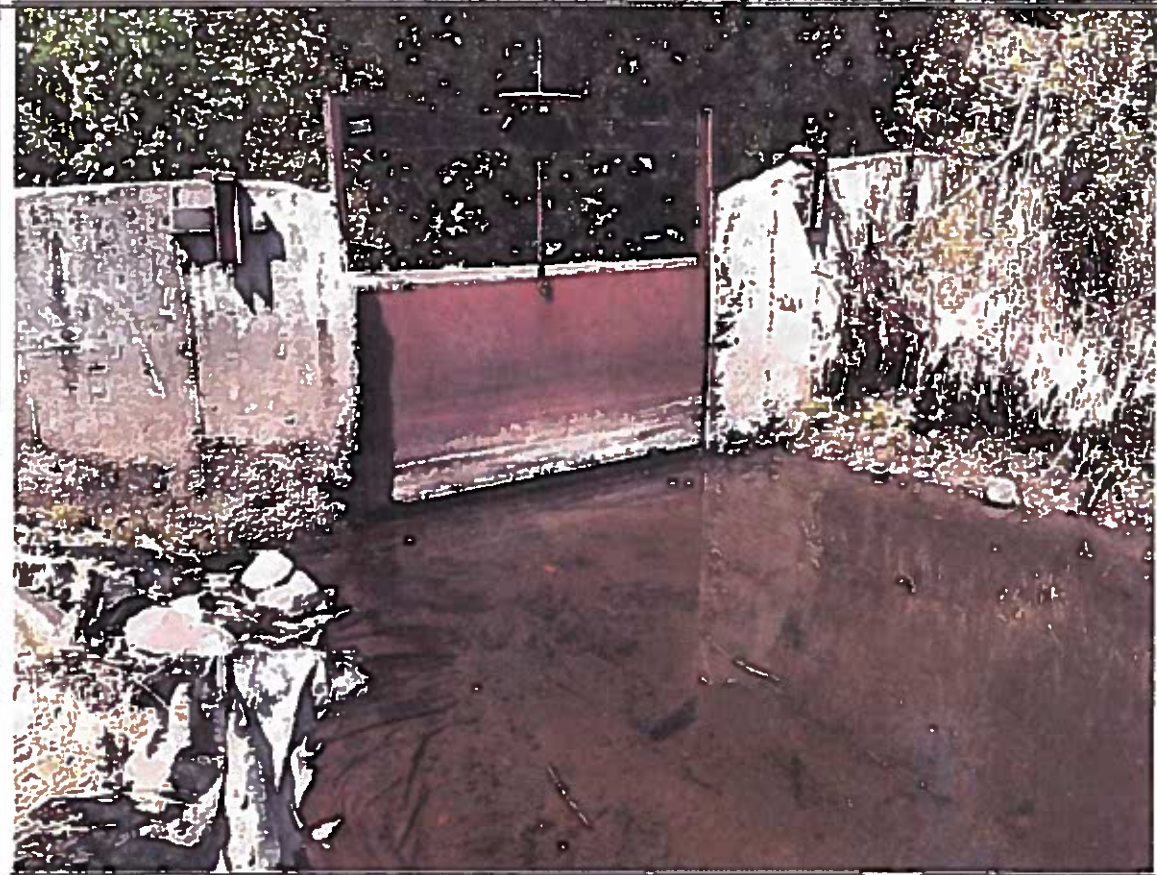


Richardson  
Ditch measuring  
device  
5' weir



**Little Weiser  
River**

**Standing on  
American  
Lindsey  
headgate,  
looking  
upstream. Water  
enters ditch to  
left. River water  
passes to right.**



**American  
Lindsey Ditch**

**Headgate**



American  
Lindsey  
measuring  
device.

6' weir.