

Public Comments Sought for Farmers Irrigation District Infrastructure Modernization Project

In-person public meeting Wednesday, November 8, 2023

Virtual public meeting Wednesday, November 15, 2023

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Hood River, OR – (October 25, 2023) – Farmers Irrigation District (FID), in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Oregon, proposes to modernize FID infrastructure to conserve water, improve operational efficiency, increase delivery reliability to District patrons, and increase drought resiliency. NRCS reviewed the potential impacts of the FID Infrastructure Modernization Project and released a Draft Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment (Draft Plan-EA) on October 25, 2023.

FID proposes to pipe 3.0 miles of open canals (Farmers Canal and Rainy Ditch); install six Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems; deepen the existing attenuation bay; and expand Forebay 3. By modernizing infrastructure, the proposed project would reduce water loss from seepage, evaporation, and operational spills. Water saved from the proposed project would improve streamflow in the Hood River and its tributaries and augment water supplies for District patrons, helping to fulfill existing water rights during droughts. The proposed project would also reduce sediment in irrigation water and increase drought resilience for the local agricultural community.

Members of the public are invited to learn about the proposed project, participate in a question-and-answer session, and provide feedback during two public meetings. One meeting will be in-person on November 8, 2023 and another virtual meeting will be held online November 15, 2023. Meeting details are as follows:

In-Person FID Public Meeting

November 8, 2023

6 – 7 p.m.

Hood River Fire Department, 1785 Meyer Pkwy, Hood River, OR, 97031

Virtual FID Public Meeting

November 15, 2023

6 – 7 p.m.

Register for the online virtual meeting at oregonwatershedplans.org/farmers-id

The Draft Plan-EA can be viewed online at oregonwatershedplans.org/farmers-id or a printed copy of the Draft Plan-EA is available at the Farmers Conservation Alliance office (102 State Street, Hood River, OR, 97031).

Public comments on the Draft Plan-EA may be submitted from **October 25, 2023 through November 29, 2023**. Comments may be emailed to farmers.id.comments@gmail.com; submitted online at oregonwatershedplans.org/farmers-id; left as a voice message at the Farmers Conservation Alliance office at (541) 716-6085; or mailed to: Farmers Conservation Alliance, Attn: FID Plan, 102 State Street, Hood River, OR, 97031.

After the public comment period, NRCS will evaluate the comments and incorporate relevant comments into a Final Plan-EA. If NRCS issues a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the project and authorizes the Final Plan-EA, FID would be able to apply for funding to construct infrastructure improvements through the NRCS Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention program, authorized by Public Law 83-566. Through this program, NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to local organizations (project sponsors) for planning and carrying out watershed projects for the purpose of watershed protection, flood prevention, erosion and sediment control, water supply, water quality, and fish and wildlife habitat enhancement. Additional information is available online at oregonwatershedplans.org/farmers-id or the NRCS Oregon web page at nrcs.usda.gov/oregon.

The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. A request for an interpreter for the hearing impaired or for other accommodations for persons with disabilities should be made at least 48 hours before the meeting to Kate Hart at (541) 716-6085 or kate.hart@fcasolutions.org.

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