

MVID Instream Flow Improvement Project
Frequently Asked Questions
June 25th, 2014

1. **How much will the project cost?** The total cost is currently approximately \$9.9 million. This includes all project management and design costs, contingency funding and infrastructure costs.
2. **Can we get funding to replace the Twisp head gate instead of doing this project?** Probably not. In exploring this possibility with funding and regulatory agencies, TU and MVID determined that any solution that keeps MVID in the Twisp River is very unlikely to be funded. State and Federal agencies have told MVID directors that this project is probably the last opportunity for MVID to obtain public support for infrastructure improvements.
3. **What are the benefits of the project for MVID?** Direct benefits to MVID members include improved infrastructure and consistent water delivery, including repair and/or replacement of lateral lines in need of repair, reduced liability of operating an open canal, increased reliability of water delivery (especially on the lower west side and lower East side), trash-free water, the ability to meet court-ordered requirements for system operations, eliminating the District's ESA issues associated with the Twisp River diversion and allow the Irrigation season to start on April 15 instead of May 1 (the Districts water right is for April 15 to October 15 but for operational reasons the season has been from May 1 to October 1).
4. **Doesn't MVID come close to meeting the 11 cfs limit now?** Yes & No MVID has been getting closer to meeting the instantaneous diversion limit of 11 cfs, but this year has not been as efficient as last year. MVID is also subject to an annual quantity limit of 2,716 acre-feet. If MVID reaches the annual quantity prior to the end of the season we would have to shut the canal down early. This annual limit averages to about 9 cfs, and this is the requirement that actually limits MVID's current water delivery capacity. Currently the MVID members on the lower west side do not consistently receive their share of water due to this limit and the leaks in inefficiencies in the existing system.
5. **Can we meet the 11 cfs requirement without doing this project? Maybe, but only if the District paid for** significant infrastructure improvements, removed cottonwoods that are soaking up a lot of water, regulated individual members water use, and probably having to use scheduled water deliveries to ensure that members at the bottom of the West canal received as much water as members at the top. If the District can not deliver water to the bottom users, those user could sue to be excluded which would trigger a Tentative Determination which would result in the 11 CFS being lowered.
6. **Why is MVID considering transferring its water rights to the State Trust Water Rights Program? Can't we keep our existing water rights and do this project?** The MVID directors chose the State Trust Water Right program because it will allow MVID to deliver more water to its members, create a water right for the District that has **built in legal protection from relinquishment**, allow for increasing the on farm duty from 2.83 acre feet per acre to 4 acre feet per acre, and allow for West side to East side transfers of water rights. The Directors feel that they would be negligent if they did not pursue the Water Banking permitting path.

- 7. Can MVID let new members into the District?** Yes, if the MVID directors deem this to be in the best interest of the District, and the District has water rights in excess of the current members irrigable land; or the new members agrees to an interruptible water right junior to that of all other current members.
- 8. What is going to happen to the trees growing in or near the canal?** In sections where the canal will be piped, trees will be removed where they impede pipeline installation, up to 8' from the centerline of the canal. In sections where the canal will be abandoned, only trees that MVID identifies as hazardous will be removed. Landowners will have the option to keep felled trees, or have them removed. Regardless of whether the canal is piped or abandoned, all landowners with a MVID easement or right-of-way will be allowed a one-time chance to indicate which trees they wish to retain. Landowners will be required to sign a liability release from any future damages for the trees they wish to retain.
- 9. What happens if the pump on the Shultz orchard starts sucking sand?** If this occurs within the one-year project warranty window, the project partners will pay to drill a deeper well or address the problem. If this occurs after project completion, MVID will need to pay to fix the problem through member assessments. The Directors have chosen to use multiple wells instead of one large well to reduce the possibility of this happening.
- 10. Will there be a \$500,000 endowment to pay for future power costs to the District?** No. This was discussed earlier in the project, but it is no longer an option because of expanding the project to pay for East Canal improvements. The directors feel that the tradeoff between increased reliability, reduced liability and reduced maintenance is worth the increase in power costs to the District.
- 11. Really, this is a 10 million dollar project and our assessments may go up?** The District is currently not able to deliver water to some members and is providing unreliable service to other members on both canals. The District has aging infrastructure that needs to be upgraded to ensure that the members who are currently receiving water continue to do so. The District also has ESA issues associated with the diversion on the Twisp River. MVID needs an upgraded system to deliver reliable water to its members. The reality is that if we want public money for an upgraded system it is going to require the District to end its surface diversion on the Twisp River. Last year we said that to keep the current system the District would have to raise assessment significantly and that there would be no guarantee of success. Assessments would have to go up to pay for: efficiency improvements to meet the Court ordered waste limits, build laterals to provide service to all members, rebuild the E-1 lateral, pipe around Mill Hill on the East side, build a new head gate on the Twisp River, pipe or lining portions of the East Canal if the Barkley Ditch company goes to a pipe system, and deal with the concrete lined section above Poorman Creek Rd. The Directors are working to keep assessments as low as possible, while also using public funds to help address the backlog of issues affecting the system.