

## Explanation for Muddy Irrigation Water July 25, 2013

In 1992 the pressurized irrigation system was installed in Hurricane. The original service area was the older part of town south to Gould's wash and west to 700 W.

Before the pressurized system was installed, most of this same area was served by the Hurricane Canal Company through an elaborate system of open ditches. Each resident that had garden shares was able to take the water at certain times.

I grew up on 100 N 300 W. Our water turn was Wednesday from 1:00 pm to 1:30 pm and Saturday from 1:00 pm to 1:30 pm. To take the water, you would go to the neighbor just above you in the ditch and open your head gate and close theirs. If the water wasn't there, you would follow the ditch until you found the water and get it headed your way. Sometimes the water barely showed up at the garden before it was someone else's turn.

If the river was muddy, and you didn't want to take it, you just let it go and it would end up in the wash and back to the river.

Our current irrigation water comes out of the Virgin River, west of Virgin. It flows into the Quail Lake pipe line and we take it out at our pump station on 600 N. From there the water is pumped up to our settling pond east of the cinder knoll by the search and rescue building.

The settling pond holds the water and allows the worst sand and mud to settle to the bottom and the lighter, cleaner water flows out. After the water leaves the pond, it goes through a filter system that filters the water to 200 microns, then out to our residents. This is quite a process.

The water hasn't changed from the day we had open ditches. Any time it rains anywhere on the Virgin River collection area, the river floods and we deal with muddy water. This is normally a few weeks in July or August.

We do shut our pumps off when we know the river is too muddy for the system. A lot of the time, floods come in the middle of the night and we are not aware of the situation. Back in the day when the garden stream was too muddy to use, we would drag a hose and sprinkler around to water the dry spots in the lawn and garden and then wait for our next water turn.

If the irrigation water is too muddy to use, I would encourage residents to shut their pressurized irrigation water off and supplement with culinary water as minimal as possible until the river has cleaned up.

Yes, this muddy water is annoying to all of us! We are working on a system improvement that will automatically shut our pumps down when the river gets too muddy. Hopefully we can minimize your inconvenience and have a more user friendly irrigation system. There have been many changes in our community since the time of the open ditches. The irrigation system has come a long way.

Every time we get muddy water into our pipes we receive a lot of complaints. I hope this brief history will help you to understand what we are dealing with.

Ken Richins, Water Superintendent