

Moab Irrigation Company

Through the Years

Moab Irrigation company was formed in 1891 to make sure that all interested parties got their fair share of the limited water in the Moab Valley. The company started out with a wooden dam and open ditches that ran though the town. There were many challenges with the open ditches. Eventually most of the ditch lines had culverts installed to carry the water. A lot of this culvert system is still in the ground, however in the 1990s plastic pipelines were pushed though the culverts to carry the water. The following is a few items of interest related to the company over the years.



Early Irrigation Dam

In the early days of the Moab Irrigation Company, it was seen that Moab needed a good culinary water system. The Company step forward and installed a pipeline from a spring up Mill Creek Canyon to supply culinary water to the town. The line was improved over time and for while the Company provided all culinary water to the town of Moab. Eventually though as Moab grew, the town felt it was time to have a public water system and this was installed in parts of Moab. The two water systems competed with each other for several years until eventually Moab City bought out the Irrigation Company's system.

Notice.

Special meeting of stockholders, Moab Irrigation Company, principal office at Moab, Grand County, Utah.

Notice is hereby given that a special meeting of the stockholders of the Moab Irrigation Company will be held at the Town Hall at Moab, Grand County, Utah, at 10 o'clock a. m., August 11th, 1906 for the purpose of considering a proposition to pipe water into Moab for domestic purposes.

By order of the Board of Directors. Dated this 28th day of July A. D. 1906.

A. P. Sorensen,
Secretary.

Open ditches are a challenge for any Irrigation Company. Ditch lines would break causing small floods. Citizens who were not shareholders would sneak water out of the ditch. On hot summer days, kids loved to play in the ditches. On the north end of town there are numerous springs and between the springs and the irrigation ditches, the area was becoming a swamp.

WOULD RESTRAIN COMPANY FROM USING DITCHES

Nine Moab citizens this week filed a complaint with the district clerk asking that the Moab Irrigation company be restrained from turning water into its irrigation ditch running along the north side of the valley, until the ditch is properly flumed or cemented for a distance of 3500 feet. Those who entered the complaint were Don Taylor, Max B. Taylor, Mrs. Lydia A. Taylor, Dr. J. W. Williams, Wilson Allred, R. J. Thomson, Knox Patterson, Andrew A. Taylor and J. E. Snyder.

The complaint sets out that the irrigation ditch allows a leakage of water to such an extent that the land belonging to plaintiffs is becoming water-logged, and that unless the repairs are made the land will become practically worthless. The portion of the ditch which the plaintiffs seek to have cemented or flumed commences near the Brig Spencer place and extends to the farm owned by J. E. Snyder.

It is understood that the irrigation company will not contest the action, but will commence at once to flume the ditch.

NOTICE

During the past several weeks some damage and a great deal of annoyance has been caused by children damming off the irrigation ditches in order to provide swimming holes. The practice has become so common that it is necessary to prohibit all swimming by children in the irrigation canals. Parents are requested to keep their children away from the ditches. Other wise, the Moab Irrigation company will have to take proper steps to protect its property.

MOAB IRRIGATION CO.,
J. P. MILLER, Secretary

WATER! WATER! WATER!

THAT PRECIOUS LIFE GIVING FLUID, WHAT A TEMPTATION TO TAKE IT, TO USE IT, REGARDLESS OF THE FACT THAT BY SO DOING WE ARE TAKING FROM OTHERS (WHO NEED IT JUST AS MUCH AS WE DO) PROPERTY THAT BELONGS TO THEM AND NOT TO US, IN FACT WE ARE BEING DISHONEST. IT HAS BEEN TRULY SAID THAT MEN WHO CAN BE TRUSTED TO SAFELY KEEP AND GUARD UNCOUNTED GOLD AND PRICELESS JEWELS, WILL DELIBERATELY STEAL WATER THAT IS THEIR NEIGHBORS.

NEVER SINCE MOAB WAS FIRST SETTLED HAS HAS WATER BEEN AS LOW AS NOW. ALL CROPS ARE SERIOUSLY SUFFERING. THE FARMERS CROPS ARE JUST AS VALUABLE AND NECESSARY AS YOUR GARDEN. UNDER THESE CONDITIONS WE ARE FORCED TO INAUGURATE MORE DRASTIC MEASURES AND PROSECUTE ALL OFFENDERS. A STIFF FINE AND EXPOSURE FOR THEFT WON'T PAY YOUR NEIGHBOR FOR HIS LOSS BUT IT MAY LEARN YOU A MUCH NEEDED LESSON.

SO DON'T TAKE WATER UNLESS YOU HAVE A TICKET SHOWING IT IS YOURS BY RIGHT.

MOAB IRRIGATION COMPANY,

By JOHN PETERSON, Secretary.

For many years the open ditches allowed for shareholders to take water as needed based on the number of shares they had. But as water supplies became short in the 1930s due to a drought it was finally time to better schedule water usage. The decision was made to create Town Days for all the small garden water users. They could get water every five days. Their turn would come on days of the month that either had a Zero or a Five in it. Town days were used for many years and worked well with the open ditch system. When water was finally placed into pipelines, it was found that "zoning" was a better way to distribute the water.

NOTICE TO MOAB IRRIGATION USERS

Moab Irrigation Company water has been placed on turns. Except as listed below, town users will be prohibited from using water from company ditches:

TOWN TURN WATERING DAYS

JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
25	5	5
30	10	10
	15	15
	20	20
	25	25
	30	30

The above restrictions for town turn users includes those pumping from ditch for use on lawns and shrubs.

Only persons owning shares in Moab Irrigation Company can use ditch water, and violators will be prosecuted.

MOAB IRRIGATION COMPANY
H. B. Evans
Watermaster

Keeping the open ditches flowing each summer was quite the challenge. Weeds, trash, trees, etc. would clog the ditches. Every spring a major cleaning operation was taken to open up the ditches for the summer. A shareholder could earn money against their assessment if they helped clean the ditches.

DITCH CLEANING NOTICE

The spring cleaning of the Moab Irrigation Company ditches will commence Monday morning, March 27, at 8 o'clock. Those wanting to work are instructed to be on hand promptly. Wages of 40 cents per hour for a man and 30 cents per hour for a team will be paid, all wages to apply on assessments. No cash will be paid.

Work on the No. 3 ditch will start at the George Newell ranch. On No. 4 ditch, work will start at the lower end near the Miller ranch, and on No. 2, work will start at the upper end of ditch. Foremen will be on hand at all three ditches to direct the work.

JOHN PETERSON, Secretary,
24-M23 **Moab Irrigation Co.**

Looking at water in Mill Creek you would think it runs crystal clear all the time. Surprisingly there is a fair amount of sand in the water especially during May/June spring runoff where a lot of sand can be in the creek. To alleviate the problem of all this sand, Sand Boxes were constructed at the head of each ditch line as it leaves the creek. Water comes from the creek and flows first into this cement box where it is slowed briefly to allow the sand to drop out. These sand boxes continue in use to this day.

PLAN ADVANCED TO RID WATER OF SAND

The construction of a large sand box at the head of the Moab Irrigation company's canal to eliminate the sand, which for several years has been coming down Mill creek in ever increasing quantities, has been advocated the past week by Mayor J. T. Leaming and members of the town board. A meeting will be held this evening by stockholders of the Irrigation company and other interested citizens to discuss the matter and take definite action.

The constantly increasing amount of sand in the irrigation water has become a problem of major importance to the town as well as to local farms. Ditches soon fill up, allowing water to overflow into the streets, causing heavy damage. Moreover, the accumulating sand along ditch banks and heads of fields threatens to ruin farm land, unless steps are taken to eliminate the nuisance.

Those who have had experience with similar situations state that practically all of the sand can be eliminated by construction of a large settling flume at the head of the canal. The sand, it is argued, will accumulate in the bottom of the flume and can be sluiced out at regular intervals, say once a day if necessary.

The R. F. C. relief committee has agreed to furnish labor for construction of the improvement, if the irrigation company will furnish the lumber needed. At tonight's meeting definite decision will be made as to whether or not to proceed with the matter.

As the years went by improvements were made to the system. The original dams had been washed out by floods on more than one occasion. A better dam needed to be built. In the early 1940s this was done.

New Diversion Dam Completed

The Moab Irrigation company has just completed the installation of a new diversion dam in Mill creek which it is believed will withstand the floods which have played havoc with dams constructed in the past. The new structure designed by soil conservation service engineers is anchored on steel piling and was constructed of masonry concrete and rock revetments.

Equipment including tractor pump piledriver and trucks was loaned to the company by the Grand soil conservation district the work being done by the irrigation company. The work involved 214 man days of labor and the tractor was used 16 hours pile driver 64 hours pump 29 hours cement mixer 16 hours team 36 days and truck 419 miles.

The dam is the most substantial ever constructed on Mill creek and should prove of great benefit to Moab farmers.

By the late 1950s the residents of Moab had had enough of the open ditches. The town was expanding and something needed to be done. Officials from Moab City, Grand County, and the Irrigation Company met to form a plan. An engineer's estimate showed that it would take about one hundred twenty thousand dollars to put all the ditch lines into culverts. In 1963 a \$60,000 interest free loan was obtained from the Utah Water and Power board to pay for part of the costs. It was agreed that each of the three parties would contribute an additional \$20,000 to the project to cover the remainder of the cost. The main ditch line though the middle of town was used as collateral for the loan.

A Problem to be Considered

A problem which is becoming increasingly annoying to property owners in Moab is that of untamed irrigation water which can be seen at many points throughout the town where it has overflowed its ditch banks covering roads, and flooding residential property in Moab. At the base of the problem is the fact that extremely high water has kept the canals at a high point all spring.

The Moab Irrigation company has done considerable work on their ditch system this year, but these improvements have not put a stop to the continual overflows. It is becoming apparent that something is going to have to be done to curb this waste and damage.

Moab Irrigation Gets \$60,000 Building Loan

A \$60,000 interest free loan was granted to the Moab Irrigation Company Friday at a meeting of the Utah Water and Power Board in Salt Lake City. The loan is for the purpose of enclosing in culverts the waters of the two major irrigation ditches coursing through Moab City.

The irrigation project loan was the first ever granted in Grand county, which to date was the only county in the State to which such a loan had not been granted.

The application for the loan was entered two months ago by the Moab Irrigation Company, after Moab City agreed at a meeting to assist in a project if open ditches could be covered.

The two major ditches include one which travels past the Southeast elementary school through 3rd South and 1st West; the other parallels Hillside Drive and across Moab's north boundary.

Both have been potential hazards to children in summer months.

Estimated overall cost of the project will be over \$120 thousand. The \$60 thousand loan will cover cost of materials for the project.

The extent of monetary aid to be furnished by Moab City will be determined in a future meeting of councilmen, city spokesmen said this week. Representing Moab City at the Salt Lake City meeting was city engineer, Dick Cozens.

SPORTS

by
DON
ROBINSON



SPOT

LIGHT

With the close of the calendar year it is a pleasure to look back at the highlights of the local sports scene. It's been a good year, especially for the athletic teams of Grand County High

For years and years, the water of the Moab Irrigation company all flowed to shareholders in the lower valley. Construction continued in Moab and farm land was turned into subdivisions. Homes and farms were now being constructed up the valley, and there was a need to use irrigation water higher in the valley. The Moab Irrigation company had also long competed with water users on the front of the LaSals. Though the company had "First" water rights, there was always difficulty dividing the water between the mtn users and the town users. Property owners on the mtn wanted to end this conflict by using irrigation shares on the mountain. The construction of an irrigation lake was proposed at the top end of the valley. Water would come from Mill creek though a tunnel cut though the rock. This proposal was not without a lot of discussion and gnashing of teeth. An agreement had to be worked out with the Irrigation Company. This was finally done and signed and the dam was constructed in the 1970s. Though the dam is not owned by the Irrigation Company, most of the water in the dam comes from Irrigation Company shares. Company water was also finally allowed to be used by mountain farmers.

Lack of agreement may be jeopardizing Mill Creek Project start

The lack of an agreement between the Grand County Water Conservancy District and Moab Irrigation Company is jeopardizing the future of the long-awaited Mill Creek Water Project, members of the Grand County Economic Development Committee were told Monday.

Key to the start of construction of the major valley-wide water project is an agreement between the two agencies. Moab Irrigation Company, a publicly owned corporation, has historic entitlements of water from Mill Creek, as do a handful of other valley water users. The Water Conservancy District, in its initial planning, made provisions for guaranteeing the existing water rights, and utilizing all other waters from the stream for supplemental irrigation, culinary and industrial use throughout Spanish Valley and Moab City.

The agreement, which still has not been inked by the two boards, was to spell out in detailed form, just how the downstream water rights were to be protected. A number of drafts prepared by attorney for the Grand County Water District, Michael M. Quealy of the firm of Clyde & Pratt, Salt Lake City; and Luke Pappas, Price, attorney for Moab Irrigation Company, have been reviewed by both boards and to date rejected by the Moab Irrigation Company board. An additional draft is now being prepared by the two attorneys and will be reviewed soon.

"We have made a number of concessions in our months of negotiations," stated District board member, D. L. Taylor, "but each time we've come back with those concessions incorporated into an agreement, Irrigation Company directors have come up with more," he said. The Director went on to say that the agreement

between the two boards had been reached, in verbal terms, a number of times. But each time the terms were reduced to writing, they were unsatisfactory to the Moab Irrigation Company.

Ev Schumaker, executive director of the Water Conservancy District, told the committee Monday that all of the agreements drawn up to date guaranteed 4600 acre feet of water to Moab Irrigation Company on an annual basis. "That, he said, is more than adequate for irrigation of lands currently owned by shareholders of Moab Irrigation, and is undoubtedly more water than company owners have been using annually for many years."

Could the lack of an agreement

scuttle the Mill Creek Project? The possibilities seemed quite real Monday, according to those who reported at the breakfast meeting. "We've been told by the State Water Resources Board during the past week that unless we get this problem cleared up and an agreement signed in the next week or two, we can forget about the \$3.5 million in state funding that was recently made available to Grand County from the State Water Resources Revolving Fund," Taylor said. Schumaker stated that the State agency now has requests for three times the \$25 million in bonding that was approved by the recent legislative session. "If we can't use the money there are lots

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City Council lets contract on tent caterpillar spray

The Moab City Council on Tuesday evening approved a \$2,995 bid from Wasatch Exterminators to spray the city and Spanish Valley for tent caterpillars this spring.

The same chemical, Thuricide, as used last year will be used again this year. It is a selective spray which affects only the tent caterpillars.

Architect Jack Ehlers, Salt Lake City, was present to discuss proposed plans for an olympic-size indoor-outdoor swimming pool. The council voted to make application for Bureau of Outdoor Recreation funds and to investigate other sources of funding for the project.

The Council also agreed to make application for funding for a community center through Housing and Urban Development block grant small cities program.

Prize money totaling \$300 was

approved for the city clean-up campaign, to be held April 1. City crews will be available to pick up heavy pieces of trash, but such items must be on curbs early Saturday morning, with prior notification given as to location.

Two beer licenses were approved: one to Frank Yama and one to La Hacienda Restaurant.

A parcel of property owned by C. L. Felkins on 4th North west of River Sands Trailer Court was annexed into Moab City. Felkins wished to have city water, and because of the moratorium on water connections outside city limits, he agreed to have his land annexed into the city in order to have city water.

The Council agreed to allow Jim Foy to construct a 5-foot sidewalk at 358 E. 3rd South. He will also be allowed to construct a 4-foot open fence behind the sidewalk.

By the end of the 1980s the culvert system was paid off. Improvements though were still needed to the irrigation system. Parts of the system over the years had been installed in PVC plastic pipe, but board members became aware that the whole ditch system could be put into pipelines by using heat welded HDPE pipe and pushing it through the culvert system. This would save considerable costs of not having to tear open streets and yards to install a pipeline. The shareholders approved the company to apply for another loan. A loan was obtained in 1995 to fund this project. This loan was finally paid off in 2017.

Moab Irrigation secures project funding from Water Resources Board

Six water projects received a total of \$1,230,000 in funding authorizations or commitments from the Utah Division of Water Resources Jan. 20. Included was Moab Irrigation Co., with a total of \$210,000.

The Moab Irrigation Co. proposal is in cooperation with Moab City. The project will eliminate a dual irrigation/storm drain system and install a pressurized irrigation system in Moab.

The estimated project cost is \$262,000, with the irrigation company paying for the project with annual payments over approximately 25 years.

Other approvals included the Town of Alta for \$235,000 to help pay for improvements in

its culinary water system and Fountain Green Irrigation Co. with \$23,000 to help pay for improvements in its Birch Creek sprinkle irrigation system.

Carbonville Ditch Co. was authorized \$462,000 for a \$597,000 project to construct a pressurized irrigation system for homes and farmland in and around Carbonville.

Mona Irrigation Co. was authorized \$85,000 to help pay for replacing about a half mile of open ditch with pipeline. Line Creek Irrigation Co., in Morgan County, was authorized \$280,000 install a pressurized sprinkle irrigation system for lots and farmland in and around Milton.