



Iron County Water Stewards

Recognizing Brent Hunter

Brent Hunter has been in the agriculture industry his entire life and has been involved in water management issues in the community for more than 40 years. Because his livelihood depends on water and the ability to farm, and because he cares deeply about the community, he has worked hard to make sure water is available in Iron County.

Central Iron County Water Conservancy District General Manager Paul Monroe said Hunter has been dedicated to finding the most efficient irrigation solutions. In the 1970s he worked with the Farm Service Agency and helped farmers convert from flood irrigation to sprinklers. In recent years, he has been part of pilot programs that include using low elevation sprinkler nozzles and soil moisture meters, and has worked with the Utah State University Extension in its research.

He currently has five pivots using the new Low Energy Precision Application (or LEPA) bubbling nozzles. He said the fields with those systems use significantly less water than the standard, and his crops are still doing well.

Hunter is always interested in new technologies and ways to be more efficient and effective, and spends time studying new methods and how to adapt them to the Cedar Valley. He said his time with the Farm Service Agency was particularly exciting because they were evolving how farming was done in the Cedar Valley. Through the Water Conservancy District and the Enterprise and Iron Conservation District, he has also been involved in helping farmers get state funding to convert to LEPA nozzles on their pivots. The systems were installed on nearly 2,000 acres in the valley through the Conservation District program.

Tyce Palmer, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food Resource Coordinator, has worked with Hunter for many years through the Enterprise and Iron Conservation District. Palmer said he is a rare type of person who is willing to step up, serve the community, and try new things.

“He’s not afraid to make a change,” Palmer said. “He’s an innovative guy, and an innovative farmer can improve the world. He’s not just looking for the bottom line. He’s looking to help other people.”

Hunter said farmers will have a challenge this year, with less water coming down the mountain in Coal Creek. He said the soil is very dry, with water only in the top three or four inches, and his irrigation schedule this year is going to look different than most years. Where he usually gets about a month of Coal Creek water beginning at the end of April, he is anticipating maybe receiving a week’s worth in mid-April.

For Cedar City residents who are watering landscapes, that low soil moisture may translate to earlier watering this year, but state guidelines found at www.slowtheflow.org recommend still

waiting to water in Iron County. Hunter said temperatures are a big factor in how long plants will stay dormant and when they will start needing water. Watching that website will help people keep their landscapes healthy and avoid overwatering. Hunter works hard to make sure soil moisture is where it should be for optimum plant health without overusing water.

As the chair of the Central Iron County Water Conservancy District Board of Directors since 2008, and a board member since 2005, he has been dedicated to recharge, conservation and import efforts in the Cedar Valley. Monroe said Hunter's problem-solving abilities and determination were major drivers in beginning to use recharge pits for excess Coal Creek runoff. Hunter also serves as chair of the Northwest Field Irrigation Company (since 2000), member of the Coal Creek Irrigation Company board (since 1980), and vice chair of the Enterprise and Iron Conservation District (since 2001).

Palmer said Hunter also supports the arts, his church, Southern Utah University, and just the community at large. Hunter serves on the Board of Directors for State Bank of Southern Utah, participates in the Master Singers, and speaks up for organizations like the Utah Shakespeare Festival.

"He'll stand up for anything that's good for Cedar City and Iron County," Palmer said.



The purpose of the Iron County Water Stewards program is to recognize community members for contributing to the effort to optimize every drop of water in Iron County. The Central Iron County Water Conservancy District (CICWCD) is actively engaged in education, conservation, reuse and import projects to meet the growing demands on local water supply.

For every effort you make to conserve, we consider you a water steward, too.

