

Bear River Water Conservancy District

General Manager Report & Project Update (Year-to-Date)

January 2026 – May 2026

Board Meeting – May 27, 2026

Prepared by: Chance Baxter, General Manager

Overview

Since the beginning of 2026, the District has made strong progress on major capital projects while continuing to advance long-term planning, policy development, and funding efforts. This period has been focused on transitioning key infrastructure from construction into operation, positioning major projects for implementation, and beginning execution of priorities identified in the County Water Master Plan. We are also seeing continued pressure from growth and development across the County, reinforcing the need for long-term planning, clear policies, and strategic investment in infrastructure.

Major Capital Projects

Three Wells Project (Harper Ward & South Willard)

The Three Wells Project has been the District's primary effort to date in 2026 and is now entering the final stages.

Harper Ward Pump Station and Well:

Construction was completed earlier this year and the system has now gone through startup and commissioning. On May 15, 2026, the District received the operating permit from the State of Utah. That same day, District staff placed the well into operation and began delivering water into the Harper Ward system. Since startup, staff has been actively working through commissioning challenges typical of a new facility, including system calibration, SCADA adjustments, and treatment system optimization.

There is still a punch list of remaining items that needs to be addressed, but the well is fully operational and currently supplying water to the residents of Harper Ward. This project represents a major milestone for the District in providing a long-term, reliable culinary water source to the area.

The District would also like to recognize and thank Brigham City Corporation for supplying water to the Harper Ward system since its initial construction in the early 1990s. Their partnership has been critical in supporting the community until this new source could be brought online.

South Willard Well / Pump Station:

Engineering and permitting were completed late last year, and the project was bid and awarded earlier this year. Construction is now underway, with contractor mobilization occurring this quarter. Submittals and pre-construction work have progressed as planned. This well will provide important redundancy and additional capacity for the South Willard portion of the District.

Bothwell System Improvements

The Bothwell Project continues to be one of the District's most important long-term infrastructure efforts. The District secured a \$2 million EPA grant to support engineering and initial phases of the project, and total project cost is currently estimated between \$15 and \$20 million.

Work continues on identifying and securing a tank site, which remains the primary constraint to moving the project forward. Environmental and NEPA compliance work is ongoing but dependent on final site selection. This project is critical to improving system capacity, fire flow, and long-term service in this portion of the County.

Planning and Policy Initiatives

County Water Master Plan Implementation

The Board formally adopted the County Water Master Plan earlier this year, and implementation has begun. Current efforts are focused on identifying and advancing priority action items, developing a framework to standardize infrastructure project funding, coordinating with the County and local water providers, and beginning development of long-term funding and project prioritization processes. This work will guide the District's direction moving forward.

Secondary Water Initiative

The Secondary Water study has made significant progress during this period. The District has evaluated multiple case study areas and system approaches and has begun developing initial frameworks for standards and specifications, exaction policies, and rate structures. Early findings indicate that these systems can be self-supporting if structured correctly. The District is now in a position to determine its long-term role in regional secondary water development.

Water Conservation Planning

The District has begun updating its Water Conservation Plan. This effort will focus on conservation practices, public education, and long-term compliance with state requirements.

Funding and Legislative Efforts

Grant and Funding Activity

The District has submitted a CIB funding application, with a required public hearing scheduled for this meeting. We have also received a \$2 million EPA grant for the Bothwell–Tremonton project and continue to pursue additional federal and state funding opportunities. Funding is becoming increasingly competitive, which will require more strategic coordination moving forward.

Legislative Coordination

The District continues to monitor state water legislation, including issues related to the Great Salt Lake, and is coordinating with lobbyists and regional partners to ensure District interests are represented.

System Operations and Maintenance

District staff have remained highly active across all systems through the first part of the year. A significant amount of work has been focused on day-to-day operations, maintenance, and system improvements as demands on the system continue to increase.

Routine operations include daily and weekly monitoring of all systems, completion of pumping reports, chlorine residual testing, and water quality sampling across all service areas. Staff continue to complete monthly bacteriological sampling and other regulatory testing requirements, including PFAS sampling and other state-mandated testing programs.

Water quality and treatment systems have required ongoing attention, with staff performing maintenance and troubleshooting on chlorination systems across multiple facilities. This includes replacing injectors and regulators, addressing vacuum leaks, and adjusting chlorine feed systems. System flushing and disinfection efforts have also been ongoing, particularly with bringing the Harper Ward system online and maintaining proper residuals throughout the system.

Maintenance and repair efforts have been extensive, including vault inspections, replacement of valves and air vacs, repair of leaks, and upgrades to meters and communication equipment. Staff have also spent considerable time troubleshooting SCADA issues, alarms, and communication faults, as well as responding to power outages, equipment failures, and damage caused by third-party construction activities.

Significant improvements have been made to District facilities, particularly in the Bothwell system. The Newman well pump house has undergone full rehabilitation, including cleaning, painting, structural improvements, and mechanical work on pumps and associated equipment. These efforts are extending the life of existing infrastructure and improving reliability.

Additional work has been completed at the Flat Canyon site, including expansion and grading of the well pad and installation of perimeter fencing and access gates. These improvements will support long-term operations and maintenance at the site.

Overall, the level of activity required to operate and maintain the system continues to increase as infrastructure expands and system demands grow.

Conclusion and Outlook

The District has made strong progress year-to-date. We have successfully transitioned major infrastructure into operation, advanced long-term planning efforts, and positioned the District for continued growth.

Moving forward, the District's focus will be on finalizing commissioning of the Harper Ward system, advancing construction at South Willard, moving the Bothwell Project toward implementation, continuing development of secondary water standards and policies, and securing funding for future infrastructure.

I appreciate the Board's continued support as we move these efforts forward.