Santa Cruz Irrigation Ditch Water Release Procedure

Warning: this procedure begins from the complete shut down status of the ditch. Flush gates #1, #2 and the gauge gate must be fully closed Flush gate #3 and #4 must be fully opened before you begin. This allows for some flushing of the ditch during the release procedure.

Warning: when going to the river at the ditch head-gate in La Puebla Make sure you call someone before you go in and again when you make it out. Be aware that there is not any cell service at the river.

Step #1 Check weather if rain is expected or if it has rained a lot recently. Do not go to the river and do not release water in the ditch if the water is muddy or if the arroyos are running. Do not release water during Freezing temperatures. Typical watering season is from the beginning of March 15 and end of October 15 give or take 15 days at the beginning of the season or at the end of the season. All water releases are weather dependent and dependent on the availability of water. (Mother Nature)

Step #2 drive to the first La Puebla Bridge at county Road 91? Inspect the condition of the water (look for color or debris). If the water is muddy or not semi-transparent. Do not proceed to the ditch head gate at the river. If the water is clean and transparent enough to use for gardening and there is enough water for several parciantes (water users). Then Proceed to the ditch head-gate at the river through the gate at the La Puebla Arroyo (Maggoo Arroyo). Always close the gate behind you and take adequate safety and security measures or precautions.
WARNING: Do not allow dirty water (Arroyo or muddy water) in the ditch always allow the river to thoroughly flush before releasing water in the ditch.

Step #3 Only if water is clean enough to garden with and enough to serve several parciantes (water Users) needs begin the flush and release process. Open Head-gate #1 as much as needed to operate the ditch at the capacity of water that will be used. Do not open head-gate #1 or #2 anymore than 50 threads above the Nut or (Chuck the operation nut on top of head-gate). Never open more than one head-gate #1 or #2 at the same time unless flushing. Be aware that the capacity of the culvert at Flush Gate #3 and the Sand box have a limited capacity. Only open one head-gate at the river wide enough to accommodate the amount of water available maintaining the water level in the river at a minimum flush with the weir or flowing over.
WARNING: do not exceed 50 threads above the nut (chuck) on either head-gate during normal operation. Never operate the ditch with more than one head-gate open at a time.

Step #4 with the gauge gate closed completely and Flush gate #3 completely open. Allow sand sediment and debris to flush out and return to the river. Flush until clean enough for maximum capacity or until the water is clean enough to release in the ditch.

Step #5 Before you begin be aware that someone may have closed the Sand trap flush gate #4 So Quickly close Flush gate #3 at least ¾ of the way and quickly open the gauge gate to the safe operating level for max ditch or wide enough to accommodate the amount of water available. Make sure the Gage gate stays within the safe operating level indicated by green paint on the gauge gate. Red paint on the gauge gate indicates hazardous operating level only allow to operate within the hazardous zone if there is a coordinated high demand for water and the ditches downstream are receiving some water. Make sure the water level in the debris and sediment pond is at or below the safe operating level as indicated by green paint on Flush gate #3.

Step #6 Quickly Drive to flush gate #4 and the sand trap make sure it is fully open to allow any sand debris and sediment to return to the river. Inspect the sand trap and allow it to flush as needed to maintain maximum capacity. To release water in the ditch close flush gate #4 completely and continuously monitor the sand trap water level. Make sure the water level stays within the safe operating level as indicated on flush gate #4 with green paint. When the water level has stabilized and stopped rising in the sand trap. Drive back to the Gage Gate and the head-gate at the river.

Step#7 Drive back to the gauge gate and head-gate at the river and verify the water levels are safe as indicated by green paint. Make any necessary adjustments, lock the head-gate and drive to Flush gate #5 Maguine desague. Lock the gate at state road 76 upon departure.

Step#8 Check the Maguine Desague park at the gate out of the way on County Road (from County Road walk along the Maguine desague to flush gate #5) make sure there are no obstructions and that the water can flow to the river. When you arrive at flush gate #5 allow the ditch to flush as needed. When water is clean Close flush gate #5 completely allowing the water to pass downstream. Next verify if the Cuarteles ditch is draining into the Santa Cruz ditch. If there is a lot of water draining into the Santa Cruz ditch make a note of it and consider it when verifying the safe operation level at flush gate #6. It may be necessary to go back to the river and reduce flow to accommodate the drainage. Ultimately be aware that the Cuarteles ditch drains into the Santa Cruz ditch at this location. It is important that all flush gates be completely closed during operation. (Some leakage is acceptable.) Next drive to head-gate #6 at the flumes located at Camino de Paz.

Step#9 At flush gate #6 flush if needed otherwise this Flush Gate must remain completely closed at all times. This flush gate only needs to be flushed if the sand box is full or if there is debris caught in the flumes. Remain here until the water level stabilizes at the safe operating level (at least 15 minutes) as indicated by green paint on head-gate #6. Next drive to the divider at Camino

Step#10 Once at the divider wait until the water passes. Verify that the Gage gates are set at safe operating level as indicated by green paint on the gauge gates for the Santa Cruz and El Llano ditches. If the El Llano ditch gauge gate is set above the safe operating level notify the El Llano Mayordomo and get permission to adjust. Otherwise make a note of it and leave as set.

Make sure all water passes the divider and remove all debris from gauge gates. Next Drive to the Bridge at State Road 291 near holy cross church.

Step#11 Once at the bridge on SR 291 quickly verify the bridge is clear and clean of debris underneath. Wait for the water to pass and remove any debris that may pass by. Follow water by walking along the ditch to next culvert (at the landscaping drive way) and make sure it is clear of obstructions. Next drive to the Santa Fe County Housing.

Step#12 Once at the ditch crossing within the housing authority open gates and remove any debris on both sides of the culvert at road crossing of the ditch within the housing authority. Walk along the ditch in this area a short distance and remove any debris from within the ditch easement. Next drive to the Brown Street desague Flush gate #7.

Step#13 once at the Brown Street flush gate#7 Only flush at this flush gate as needed but at minimum fully operate this flush gate completely once a month to maintain full operation. The ditch to road crossing of SR 583 and to the La lomita ditch has been filled with dirt. The Culvert crossing State Road 583 has been removed by the city of Espanola for a sewer project. This culvert and ditch need to be replaced.

Step#14 Follow the water in the ditch to the end at Ranchitos. Make sure the water passes all culverts example (Tesuque Drive, Fairview Lane, Birch Street, Simmons Lane, tucker bridge, Camino Sin Nombre, North McCurdy,) Remove trash and debris as needed to insure flow of water all the way to the crossing at State Road 68 (Taos HWY) in Ranchitos.

Step#15 MONITOR! Monitor! Monitor! Watch for storms Shut down immediately if Flash Flood conditions exist. Periodically check all problem spots culverts and bridges. Also be aware that during windy conditions branches and weeds make their way into the ditch so be alert to the wind. Keep a list of who is using the water.