

Water Dispatch

Water information and commentary

Spring/Summer 2016

Ensuring High Water Quality a Priority for the WID

The WID provides water for food production, livestock, recreational use, and drinking water for communities within its boundaries. For all of these, it is critical that the water is clean and safe. The Government of Alberta (GoA) recently completed a water quality study across all the Irrigation Districts. The 2014 summary showed that the WID has excellent quality water throughout its system. The WID is working hard to ensure that continues to be the case.

The GoA took samples of water in 2011 through 2015. Water from government owned infrastructure, main canals, secondary canals, and returns was assessed for over 160 different aspects of water quality. Tests included salinity, nutrients, metals, bacteria and pesticides.

The WID is pleased that the quality within our District has been assessed as 'excellent' overall. While this is encouraging, there are continual efforts to ensure that this continues to be the case.

"There's nothing really we can do except monitor and know what's there. If there happens to be a spill then we do have an emergency preparedness plan," WID's General Manager, Erwin Braun said. It's partly about being prepared for things



that can't be controlled. With a number of roads crossing canals, and trains running along the Bow, there is always the potential for a problem.

Storm water is another challenge that the WID is working on through the Co-operative Stormwater Management Initiative. Increasing urbanization and industrialization within the District impacts water quality and quantity. Urban and rural runoff can increase phosphorus, salinity, coliforms and suspended solids. When nutrients are out of balance, weeds can choke out water intakes and reduce canal capacity.

The WID continues to work with the City of Calgary, Rocky View County, Town of Chestermere, Town of Strathmore and Wheatland County to develop a plan for sustainable stormwater management with WaterSMART Solutions facilitating the process.

"Water quality is important to the district and we want to continue to monitor and make sure that we are irrigating with quality water that we can use to produce healthy safe food," Braun summarized.

Government of Alberta Reaches Agreement with TransAlta to Mitigate both Flood and Drought

The WID is pleased that both flood and drought management were part of a recent agreement reached between Transalta and the Alberta Government.

In the aftermath of the 2013 floods in Alberta, there has understandably been a lot of discussion about flood control. While this is an important aspect of water management in Alberta, the WID also wanted to ensure that drought management was considered in the equation.

“There’s been a lot of work done on how we can manage infrastructure on the Bow River to manage flood,” explained WID General Manager, Erwin Braun. “We’ve been at the table to ensure we focus on flood AND drought.”

During prolonged periods of drought in the Bow River basin, the WID would be extremely susceptible to the detrimental effects of river flow being managed only for flood. “We’ve been taking that message forward, and working hard to ensure the stakeholders are aware of the fact that we need to be aware of droughts as well as floods,” Braun said.

In the current five-year agreement, the Ghost Dam levels will be controlled by the Government from mid May to early July for flood management. The Upper Kananaskis, Lower Kananaskis, and Barrier

Reservoirs are designated for drought mitigation. “The district can call for water if we’re short,” Braun said, explaining that this would be within the parameters of their current water license. “The Government has control of these reservoirs for the entire year.”

TransAlta will be paid \$5.5 million per year by the Alberta Government to compensate for lost

hydroelectric revenue due to this agreement.

This agreement spans 2016 through 2020, but the WID is already looking further than that. “There’s also the Bow River Working Group that’s going to be advising the government on large big picture strategies for how to do this long term. We are going to be part of that discussion as well,” Braun explained.



The Ghost, Upper Kananaskis, Lower Kananaskis, and Barrier reservoirs will be used to mitigate both flood and drought over the next 5 years.

TransAlta - photo

Did you know that...

The WID provides municipal water to four communities. This supplies daily household water to approximately 12000 people!

Mussel Detecting Dogs Visit the Legislature

The Alberta Government recently invited two canine conservation workers, their handlers and program partners to the legislature. Shannon Phillips, Minister of Environment and Parks commended them for their part in mussel detection in the province.

The larvae of zebra and quagga mussels are microscopic, and can survive for long periods of time in a small amount of water. This is where sniffer dogs Hilo and Diesel come in. They are trained to detect any trace of the mussels, and signal their handlers. They work at inspection stations, helping their human counterparts ensure that no mussels find their way into our waters.

Zebra and quagga mussels are invaders we cannot afford to let through the Alberta borders. They have rapid reproduction rates and attach to smooth surfaces. If they manage to enter our waterways, it would spell disaster to irrigation, as they could slow water flow and prevent infrastructure mechanisms from working properly.

Thanks to the sniffer-dog program, and other initiatives in Alberta, these invaders have not yet been found in our water. The WID plans to continue doing its part to prevent them from entering our water through its support of this program, education around the issue, and the development of an Invasive Mussels Response Plan.



AEP Minister Phillips, Aquatic Invasive Species Staff and Irrigation District Staff gather with Conservation Canines to celebrate success of the mussel detection program - AEP submitted photo

Two New Staff Members Join the WID



Ricardo Eisenberg (pictured left) is the new GIS Technician at the WID. His background in agronomy and Bachelor's degree in GIS blend perfectly for this position. Ricardo moved from Brazil 2 years ago, and is in the process of moving to Strathmore. Ricardo is enjoying the 4 seasons in Canada, and is very happy here. "Canada is the best country in the world, there is no doubt about that," Ricardo said.

Joe Friedman (pictured right) is the new Water District Supervisor for the Crowfoot District. He worked on a contract basis with the WID through Badger Daylighting for 18 years, and got to know the WID's staff quite well. "The guys seemed happy more than unhappy, so it seemed like an indication that it's a good spot to work and a good family," Joe said.



CLEAN! DRAIN! DRY!

Ideally, invasive mussels will be kept out of Alberta. The challenge is that part of the lifecycle of the mussel includes microscopic larvae. For this reason, the CLEAN! DRAIN! DRY! principle is critical to preventing mussels from entering the province's waterways. Every time any boat is removed from water, it, and all the equipment used with it, should be thoroughly cleaned, completely drained, and allowed to dry before it is put in another body of water.

Anyone finding or suspecting mussel contaminated boats or equipment should call 1-855-336-BOAT to report it.

WID Upgrades Canal and Installs Pipeline Over Winter

Each winter, the WID works to improve its infrastructure. This year was no different, with 13 km of pipeline installed and 9 km of canal rehabilitated.

The pipeline section was installed near Standard, and will provide a great improvement to water delivery in the area. “We had a very favourable winter for construction,” Jeremy Hemsing, Manager of Operations and Maintenance explained, “It was a big



Gravel covered poly liner installed in C Canal decreases seepage - WID photo



WID photo

project, and the water users out there will be very happy with that pipeline up and going.”

The other project this winter was 9 km of C canal rehabilitation near Keoma. The area has very sandy soil, and the addition of a polyethylene liner eliminates seepage loss along this stretch. The WID originally planned to rehabilitate 6 km of canal this year, but they were able to

increase this project by 50% due to favourable price quotes.

The WID is already preparing for the next construction projects. “We completed two very successful projects and are hoping to continue that trend for the next season,” Hemsing said. “We are anticipating competitive pricing on our bids.”

WID Board of Directors Update

Both Dan Shute and Doug Brown will return for another term on the WID’s board of Directors. They were elected by acclamation. Ray Kettenbach has stepped into the position of Chairman of the Board, and Dan Shute will take on the position of Vice Chairman.

The WID is very thankful to all member of the Board of Directors, and appreciates the time and effort they put into their roles.

Let Us Know!
Please remember that all water users must give 48 hours’ notice before turning their system on, and 24 hours’ notice before turning off. Equipment broke down? Needs service? Let your Water District Supervisor know as soon as possible. See below for contact information.

WID Board of Directors

Doug Brown	Div 1
Henry Colpoys	Div 2
Rick Page	Div 3
Dan Shute – Vice Chair	Div 4
Ray Kettenbach - Chair	Div 5

Water Supervisor Contacts

Brian Sander	Water Master	403-325-0493
Derrick McGougan	Chestermere	403-899-4638
Don Brownlee	Carseland	403-899-4641
Joey Mordy	Gleichen/Cluny	403-325-4642
Wes Sproule	Rockyford	403-325-4640
Joe Friedman	Crowfoot	403-325-4639
JR Dunbar	Strathmore	403-325-4601