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Water Dispatch

water information and commentary

Spring 2010

Western Irrigation District Board Of Directors 2010-2011

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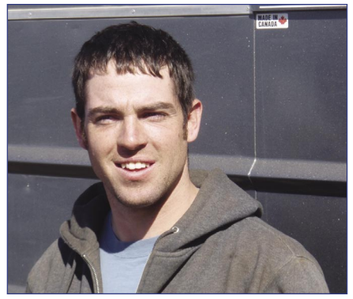


Doug Brown joined the WID in April 2010 as the Gleichen/Crowfoot representative. WID photo

Getting to Know Water Supply

Water users can visit the Alberta Environment website water page and find much information regarding the current condition of the Bow River. For example, the region had a snow storm April 28. The information on the website shows that Crowfoot Creek went from 0.64 cubic meters per second (m3/s) at 3:30 pm on the 27th to 2.32 m3/s by noon on the 28th.

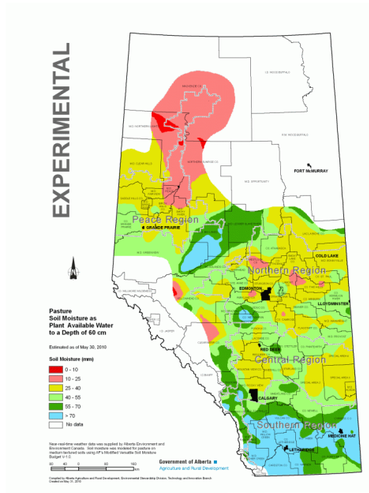
This same storm caused the volume of the Bow River at Carseland to double between the 27th and the 29th and spike on the 28th at the WID headworks, but quickly recede to below where it was on the 27th at that location.

This indicates the variability of river flows WID Operations staff have to work with to deliver water. How much water the WID can divert is directly linked to how much flow is in the river.

For instance, on May 30 the Bow River at Calgary had 90.84 m3/s flowing by and below Bassano Dam the flow was 165.50 m3/s.

This information is constantly updated, so you can watch the river fluctuate as storms affect various parts of the basin. You may think it hasn't rained in weeks, but the river is getting rain from the western headwaters.

Another interesting website to explore is http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca and click on AgroClimatic Information Service under the Weather & Market Reports.



The ACIS maps show precipitation received and moisture conditions around the province. Because they update the maps frequently, you can watch the conditions change before your eyes by clicking on the successive dates shown.

Between May 4 and 30, the pasture soil moisture changed weekly throughout the province. Surprisingly, Calgary is really dry still.

If you look at the Reserves Relative to Normal (long term) you can see that the province is really, really dry this year (in case you hadn't noticed).

I will warn you though you can get lost in the pretty maps changing color, so maybe visit this spot on a rainy day. Between these two information sources, it would be possible to check quickly how your region fares with moisture and how much water you might expect the district to have available. It might take some practice, but it is information you can use.

Big Project in a Busy Place

This fall, the WID Board and Staff could use a different kind of water user support.

It's time to rehabilitate A Canal through Strathmore around the golf course and down Thomas Drive.

There will be some traffic disruption, noise and dust, but, as water users know, the finished product will greatly enhance the look of the canal and its operation efficiency.

Water user support in this case means taking the opportunity if you can to pipe up in conversations about the benefits of this project for the region. WID and the Town of Strathmore will work together to enhance the public park area with proposed paved paths and interpretive/historic signs.

Water Supervisor Contacts

Brian Sander	Water Master	325-0493
Jeff Maude	Chestermere	899-4638
Don Brownlee	Carseland	899-4641
Pat Smith	Gleichen/Cluny	325-4642
Wes Sproule	Rockyford	325-4640
Eric Beingessner	Crowfoot	325-4639
Joey Mordy	Strathmore	325-4601

Wetland Restoration a Perfect Fit

The Alberta government and North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) created the Provincial Wetland Restoration/Compensation Guide and placed it as part of the application process under the Water Act.

It requires that "an approval be obtained before undertaking a construction activity in a wetland. A construction activity includes but is not limited to disturbing, altering, infilling or draining a wetland."

It outlines requirements that land developers must support the creation of wetlands whenever they wish to fill in a wetland. This regulation says that for every acre of wetland they fill, they must create 3 - 10 acres of wetland somewhere else in the same watershed i.e. South Saskatchewan River basin.

C. Lacombe photo

The Alberta WaterPortal website has a link to many of Alberta's water related policies and regulations at http://www.albertawater.com/ go to the drop down menu 'Water Facts & Info,' and choose Alberta Water Legislation.

http://www.environment.alberta.ca/01126.html to download the Provincial Wetland Restoration/Compensation Guide.

There is also an interesting Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) presentation here: http://www.aipa.ca/files/Barry-Bishop.pdf It is where I found the statement, "DUC is currently the primary Wetland Restoration Agent (WRA)."

Jim Webber explains, "We like our DUC partnership and we can combine wetlands into our system easily."

Did You Know?

WID supplies a DUC water license of 7,313 acre feet for wetlands within its boundaries.

New Screens Work Like a Hot Darn

The WID staff found a new type of screen to keep algae from pumps and equipment that works really well.

It blows the weeds off the intake with water pressure created by a rotating drum. You need a water line and a power source to install a First Street screen.

The screen makes it easier for water to flow into the intake, so you don't need as much head in the canal to get the water you need.

Sparky's in Rockyford has a screen set up on display if you want to go see it and NuWay Irrigation sales in Strathmore supplies the First Street products.

"They start around $3,000 and they come in various sizes," says Water Master Brian Sander. Visit http://www.firststreetwelding.com/screen.html for more information about these screens.

Rotating drum screen at work in a canal. WID photo

Western Irrigation District produces this newsletter to keep all users of water informed about water issues and WID efforts to protect and manage the resource in this region. Contact WID, 934-3542.

South Cluny Project Highlights

Main line pipe installed	29.5 km
Sub lateral pipe installed	22.2 km
Highway crossings	3
Farm turnouts	69
Domestic turnouts	33
Road crossings	21
Gas line crossings	44
Power line crossings	10
New pivots installed	9 - ¼ section
	1 full section pivot
Isolation valves	2
Acres of right of way	200
Acres of seepage reclaimed	500
Landowner agreements	120
Number of 6 meter pipe lengths	8500
Man days lost due to injury	0

South Cluny crew takes a break. WID photo

Water Master Report

Shepard Slough

The Shepard Slough diversion to take Calgary stormwater out of the WID system is working well this spring. The city has yet to install its flow and level sensors downstream of the diversion structure and in the wetland itself so total volume of storm water diverted this past spring and so far this operating season is not known.

"But I can tell you that Chestermere Lake elevation did not deviate from where we left it last fall," reports Brian Sander, WID Water Master. He adds the city will have measurement devices in place sometime this operating season.

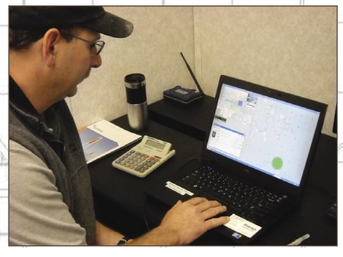
Increase Your Irrigation IQ Workshop

WID along with Alberta Agriculture held an Increase Your Irrigation IQ Workshop in late April at Cluny Hall. Attendance was not as high as hoped with 9 in total, 1 came from east of Brooks because the workshop held there was full, but those in attendance liked what they heard and thought that taking the day to attend was very worthwhile. WID plans to hold one again next year, likely in late February or early March somewhere in the NE of the district, such as Nightingale or Rockyford.

"We would like to see 20 attendees at the workshop, which is the maximum it can handle due to aspects of the day that require hands on work. So in a positive light, we are half way to being full," Sander said.

This is a section of A Canal prior to rehabilitation. WID photo

The first pivot operating on the new South Cluny Pipeline WID photo



WDS Eric Beingessner getting to know the new R.A.M. system. WID photo

This is the same section of A Canal at the end of rehabilitation. Putting in a turnout. WID photo

Real Time Monitoring One Step Closer

WID staff and MPE Engineering are developing a project called R.A.M. (Recording And Monitoring) that will incorporate real-time system numbers from the district. It will incorporate SCADA (Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition) flow numbers with Water Supervisor information about working systems in the district.

Each Water District Supervisor (WDS) has a laptop that displays their service area on it showing each active irrigation system, usage of that system and delivery. The WDS will click on a system when ordered water is at the users delivery point. That information will be sent in real time into the WID network where the water use calculator for that user starts turning.

WID will then have flow values in canals and pipelines, number of systems currently running and return flows from a given system. Operators will also have an alarm system that will call the WDS for pre-set conditions that require attention before they have a wreck; such as an unexpected water level fluctuation or malfunctioning screen cleaner. While not all canals, pipelines and return flow sites have monitor equipment yet, WID will start to see a larger picture of where water is, where it is in use and where it is spilled. While 2010 will be a trial season to work out the bugs and kinks, this new system will give an interesting insight in real time as to exactly what is going on anywhere in the district at any given time regarding water flow and usage.

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