

Water Dispatch

water information and commentary

Fall 2011



Jim Dau - Prismatic Group Inc Photo.

Alberta Government Representatives go up for the Big Picture!

On November 9, five cabinet ministers and fifteen MLAs participated in an aerial irrigation tour of Southern Alberta. Strathmore-Brooks MLA Arno Doerksen is an irrigator himself, and had a pivotal role in both encouraging the MLAs to attend, and in promoting the importance of irrigation.

The tour departed from the airport in Calgary, and representatives from each of the irrigation districts were on board to explain the infrastructure in their region. Erwin Braun, General Manager, and Board Chairman Dan Shute represented the WID.

“This was a great opportunity to showcase the impact of irrigation in

Southern Alberta. Many of the communities in this area exist because of irrigation,” reported Braun. “It was good for urban MLAs to see what happens in rural Alberta; what we’re doing to conserve and manage water, and the importance of being good water managers. We are very thankful to Minister of Transportation, Ray Danyluk, for organizing this tour.”

One of the ministers on board was Minister of Environment and Water, Diana McQueen. This cabinet posting was recently renamed to address the increasingly important issue of the use, quality and sustainability of water in Alberta.

This event was timely, as the Alberta government is currently reviewing water legislation, and the irrigation districts want to participate in this process. After the aerial tour, Premier Alison Redford met with the group, and stated that she wants to engage rural people in this discussion. Braun felt this was indicative that the tour was a success.

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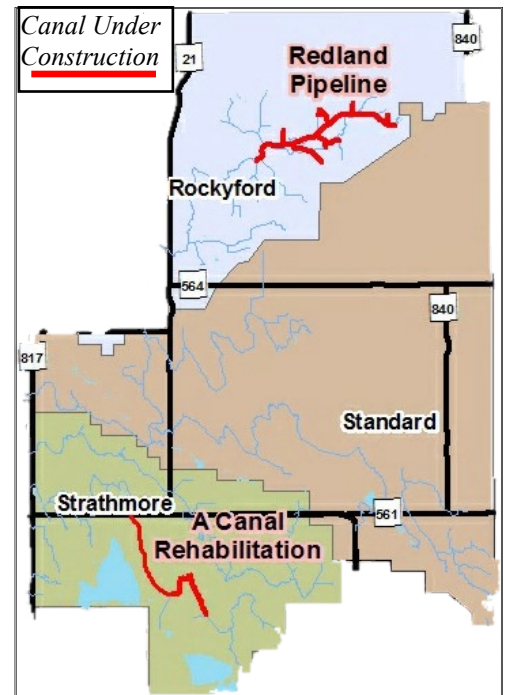
Winter Construction is Underway

This fall finds the WID hard at work with two major construction projects southeast of Strathmore and in the Redland area, near Rockyford.

In Redland, approximately 20 km of pipeline is being installed to serve the water users in the eastern limits of the District. This project will add an impressive length of pressurized pipeline to the WID's infrastructure and will be a significant improvement over the open channel system it replaces. This is another advance in water savings within the District, reducing losses from seepage, evaporation and conveyance. "It's a large project," said Jeremy Hemsing, Manager, Operations and Maintenance, "and I think the water

users in that area will really enjoy the benefits of this pipeline when it is completed."

The other main project is the ongoing Secondary A canal rehabilitation. This winter's rehab program consists of approximately 12 km of canal from Highway #1 to Township 234. The canal is being rehabbed with a plastic liner to increase the canal capacity and reduce seepage losses from the canal. This year's construction benefits from a significant source of earthen borrow material which is placed on the plastic liner to protect the liner from deterioration. Gravel armour is then placed along the side slopes to provide erosion and scour protection



Locations of Winter 2011-12 Construction



Pipe lays ready to be installed near Redland. -WID Photo

for the canal. Both measures promote water savings and longevity for the canal.

"A gravel buried liner was installed in last winter's canal rehab around the town of Strathmore because a sufficient source of borrow material was not available," explained Hemsing. "Earth buried liners are easier to install, which leads to more efficient construction."

Both projects should be completed in March. Hemsing pointed out, "Work in the winter is always challenging. As long as the weather cooperates, we should make the projected deadlines on these projects."



Brett Huston

Brett Huston joined the WID team at the beginning of June as the Systems Administrator and GIS Coordinator. Brett grew up on a farm in Oyen,

New Staff at the WID

Alberta, and graduated from the GIS program at Olds College in 2005. Brett is focusing on pulling valuable data from the RAM (recording and monitoring) system.

The WID's newest staff member is Ellen Christensen, who joined the team at the beginning of October. Ellen brings her 5 years of Accounts Payable experience to the job, along with her SAIT diploma in Accounting.



Ellen Christensen

Ellen has lived in Strathmore for the past 6 years, and is enjoying the pleasant atmosphere at the WID.

Low Pressure Pivots Can Save You...

... Energy, Water, Time AND Money!

Energy: These systems run at pressures as low as 10 psi, meaning they require a much lower RPM to drive them. With today's high energy costs, this can result in huge savings! Francis Praeker, a long-time irrigator east of Strathmore, converted to low pressure pivots about 5 years ago. "We're using about half the fuel now, with diesel pumps running at about 25psi," Praeker reported.

Water: With water application efficiency between 85 and 98%, you will hardly miss a drop! "We get much less wasted water, especially on a hot windy day, because the system drops the water below the crop canopy," stated Praeker. This results in decreased evaporation and runoff, and makes it easier to know exactly how

much water your crop is getting.

Time: New low pressure pivot systems can be controlled remotely, meaning that you may not have to go out to the location to make adjustments. They can also be set to apply chemicals and fertilizers, which would not only save the time needed to apply, but also the wear and tear on the machinery.

Praeker is so happy with this system that he plans on converting more of his pivots to low pressure over the next few years.



Low Pressure Pivot System - WID Photo

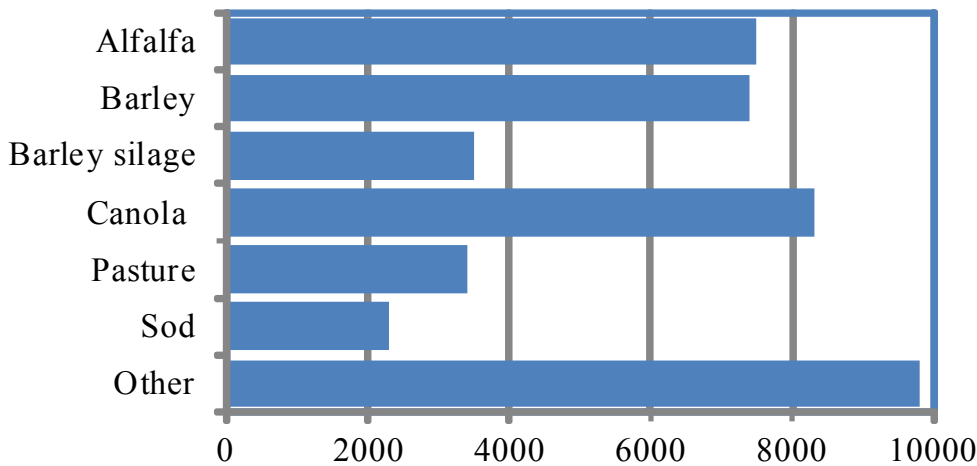
Money: Ultimately, saving energy, water and time is the same as saving money - and that is priceless!

Go To - http://www.extension.org/mediawiki/files/0/02/Center_pivot_irrigation.pdf
For more information. See your preferred local dealer for pricing

2011 Water Use at a Glance

Diversion - 85985 Acre-feet
Approximately 40% Return Flow
Irrigated Acres - 42270 acres

Acres of Irrigated Crops



2011 Water Use

2011 was an average year for water usage in the WID, with just under 85,000 acre-feet diverted from the Bow River. 60% of the diversion was consumed by irrigation, municipal uses, Ducks Unlimited, private license holders, household uses and system losses. Return flows to the river accounted for the other 40% of diversion.

The wet spring delayed planting, and resulted in more water usage later in the year than usual. "This spring was really hard on infrastructure," said Water Master Brian Sander. "There was a great deal of flooding, and a lot of canal and infrastructure damage that set us behind."



Flood Damage Along North A Canal - WID Photo

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

Teachers Come for a Tour

In July, the WID hosted a group of teachers for the 2011 Watershed Education Tour with Inside Education. The teachers spent a half day with Erwin Braun and Brian Sander, touring Chestermere Lake, the canal infrastructure and a livestock feeding operation. They learned about the processes and issues associated with irrigation in Alberta, and were enthusiastic to take this information back and integrate it with their curriculum.



*Water Master Brian Sander with the Teachers
Inside Education Photo*

“I would like to thank you for the outstanding opportunity to broaden my perspective on how water in managed in Southern Alberta. I have been provided with key information that I can apply to my local teaching area,” wrote Michael Pierce, one of the participants.

This tour was organized by Inside Education, which is a charitable organization that provides teachers and students with educational programs focusing on balance between the environment and use of our natural resources.

WID was honoured to be a part of this program. Many of the teachers hadn't seen irrigation works before. “It was great to just have them see what we do,” said Braun.

Visit www.insideeducation.ca for more information on their programs.

Make Your Voice Heard!

You have the opportunity to make your voice heard regarding the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan. Now in Phase 2 of developing this plan, the Government of Alberta has developed a workbook and survey to gather feedback before December 19, 2011. The workbook can be completed online at www.landuse.alberta.ca, or you can print a copy and submit it by mail.

“We encourage farmers to fill this out because this is a case where they have influence on how the agricultural industry can be supported in the region,” Erwin Braun emphasized. “There are specific questions in the survey regarding irrigation, and we think it's a great opportunity to provide input.”

In 2008, Alberta's Land-use Framework was released, and established three desired outcomes for the province:

- A healthy economy supported by our land and natural resources
- Healthy ecosystems and environment
- People-friendly communities with ample recreational and cultural opportunities

Subsequently, the Alberta Land Stewardship Act, proclaimed in October 2009, provided for development of a regional plan for each of Alberta's seven regions. A regional plan is designed to look at the next 50 years of overall objectives for the region. Municipal governments are responsible for local land use planning.

In May 2009, the Alberta government established a Regional Advisory Council to provide advice in five key areas:

- Vision
- Healthy Economy
- Healthy ecosystems & environments
- Healthy community
- Land-use classification

The Alberta Government now wants feedback on the Regional Advisory Council's advice so they can move forward drafting the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan.

Go To

www.landuse.alberta.ca
to complete the survey

WID Sponsors Lake Management Conference

The WID sponsored a very important conference on the management of urban lakes in Alberta, hosted by the Alberta Lake Management Society. This society works to promote understanding and management of lakes, reservoirs and watersheds. The conference was held in Chestermere on September 30 and October 1.

Approximately one hundred participants had the opportunity to take part in sessions and tours, and enjoyed the dinner and social on Friday night. Erwin Braun, WID General Manager, gave a presentation on the Story of Chestermere Lake as one of many speakers over the 2 day conference. His speaker notes, and others from

the conference, are available by visiting alms.ca and clicking the Workshops link.



*Erwin Braun, WID General Manager
Speaks at the ALMS Conference
Claudette Lacombe Photo*