

Water Dispatch

water information and commentary

Fall 2012/Winter 2013

WID Planning Ahead for Storm Water Management

Population growth is inevitable, and it presents many challenges. The Western Irrigation District helps address one of these challenges through increased food production on irrigated land. However, that same increased population brings increased storm water volume. The increase in nutrients that come with the storm water can cause algae and weed growth in the canals, potentially plugging pumps and challenging the WID's overall ability to provide the volume of water required.

Population in the Calgary region is increasing rapidly. "We know there will be a lot of population growth in the west end of the district," WID General Manager Erwin Braun stated. "The WID wants to ensure that we can provide good quality water for all of our irrigators. One of the ways we can do that is to help municipalities decrease the impact of storm water."

The WID has taken the initiative to approach several groups to work together to ensure that there will be a management plan for the storm water in the region. The District contracted



Storm Water Pond "Duck Pond" at 61 Avenue in Calgary - Kristi Cox - photo

WaterSMART, a not-for-profit consulting company specializing in water issues, to identify a process for moving forward, and to help identify both the challenges to come, and solutions for them.

Many municipalities and groups have been invited to participate in the initiative. Currently, The City of Calgary, Calgary Regional Partnership, Rockyview County, Wheatland County and the Town of Strathmore have committed to participate.

Representatives from each of these groups are meeting on a regular basis. "This will be an ongoing process to address both short term needs and long term solutions," Erwin Braun, WID General Manager explained. "It's a collaborative solution that the WID is promoting to improve water quality."

Storm Water Defined

During rainfall or snow melt, *storm water* runs off water resistant areas such as saturated or frozen land, paved streets, parking lots and rooftops. This water often picks up pollutants in amounts that result in decreased water quality.



Lucie Montford Celebrates 35 Years with the WID

Thirty-five years ago, Lucie Montford moved to Strathmore with her young family and decided to apply for a job. There were two ads in the paper she responded to at the time, and she landed a job with the WID.

When she entered the organization, there were three tiny offices and no computers. Lucie had a clerical position, and was responsible for accounts payable, accounts receivable, typing up reports and anything else that needed to be done. She did all the billing by hand, and cranked out the annual reports on a mimeograph machine.

“There were only three of us in the office when I started,” Lucie recalls, “a general manager, an assistant manager and me.” She went on to explain that she didn’t even meet any of the ditch riders until the first Christmas party. “I ended up seeing someone I went to school with in Calgary! I didn’t even know they worked here!”

Technology helped people keep in closer contact, first through radios, and then things progressed quickly. There was great excitement when the first computer was purchased. Lucie laughed, “We all had to take turns with it!” Things are certainly different today. Everyone has their own computer, and smart phones keep us connected 24/7 with technology in a hand-held device that laps what that first computer could do.

While many people move frequently between companies they work with over the years, Lucie remained with the WID through the ups and downs as the organization grew. “It wasn’t always easy,” she admits, “but the WID’s growth allowed me to move up and take on different tasks. It’s been good!”

Lucie appreciates that there isn’t a revolving door of employees at the WID. Generally, people stick with the District for a long time. Good people



Lucie Montford, WID Administration Manager
Kristi Cox - Photo

make a good business, and a good business can hold good people. It looks like the WID has the best of both those worlds.

Busy Winter Ahead for WID Construction



Canal liner install in secondary A canal - WID photo

The Western Irrigation District has entered its biggest construction year to date. WID crews will install a pipeline, and a contract crew will continue the rehabilitation of secondary A canal. Both projects will increase the efficiency of water delivery to water users.

An 18.5 km stretch of PVC pipeline is being installed. It will extend northwest from Nightingale,

up to the intersections of Township 264 and Range Road 251. Up until now the entire 1065km of canal structure within the WID has been gravity fed, from the Bow River to its far reaches. For the first time in the history of the WID, a pump station will be

situated on this line. This pump station will aid in the efficient delivery of water along this line, as well as future lines to be placed in this region.

“This replaces the existing Stoodley ditch,” reported Jeremy Hemsing, Manager of Operations and Maintenance. “This area has experienced a great deal of seepage loss in the past, and this pipeline will

result in significant water savings for the WID.”

In addition, contractors have been brought in to install a plastic earth buried liner along 12km of secondary A canal, from TWP 234 to Hammerhill Road, north of Namaka Lake. Gravel armour will be placed along the banks to prevent erosion. This rehabilitation will increase the water savings along this stretch, and the longevity of the canal.

Construction should wrap up in the spring, in time for our water users to enjoy the benefits of these improvements. “Summer students did a great deal of flow metering for us this past summer,” Water Master Brian Sander explained. “It’s going to be very interesting to get out and measure the difference next year. We will see in tangible numbers, the effect these projects are having.”

Steady Flow of Water Through the Summer of 2012

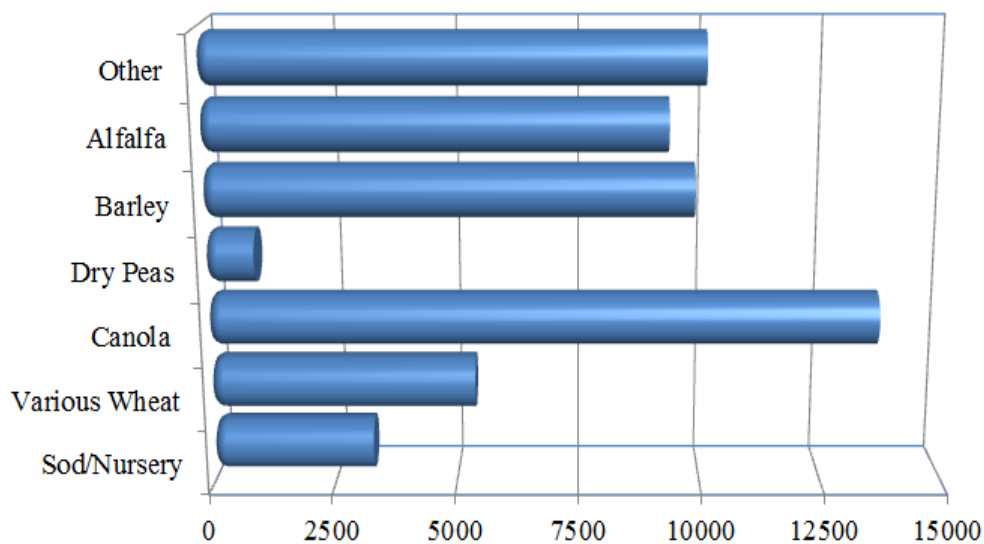
There was a change in the pattern of water needs within the Western Irrigation District in 2012. In a typical irrigation year, there are peaks in water usage around seeding, in early summer, and finally just before harvest. This past year, there was a slow start due to the wet spring, followed by a steady flow of water usage throughout the entire irrigation season within the WID. “We diverted approximately 104,000 acre-feet,” reported Water Master Brian Sander. “It was well below our diversion allowance.”

The District’s water Recording and Monitoring system was field tested this summer. The time invested in it over the winter paid off, and there were few problems overall. A few minor adjustments will be made to the crop reporting portion of the program, and then the program will be ready to go into full use in the District.

2012 Water Use at a Glance

Diversion - 103,862 Acre-feet
 Approximately 40% Return Flow
 Irrigated Acres - 52,483 acres

Irrigated Acres by Crop Type



Alberta Government Officials Tour Irrigation Works

The Western Irrigation District is continuing to build on strong relationships with the Alberta Government. WID board of director chair Dan Shute and General manager Erwin Braun had the opportunity to showcase the importance of irrigation in Alberta on a combined aerial and bus tour this past summer. This event was organized by the Alberta Irrigation Projects Association.

Environment and Sustainable Resource Development Minister Diana McQueen, and newly elected MLAs Dave Dorwood, Maureen Kubinec, Linda Johnson and Rick Fraser boarded a plane in Calgary with several irrigation representatives. They toured from the headworks of

the WID, over the WID and over the Bow River Irrigation District. The plane landed in Lethbridge, where more irrigation representatives and MLAs Greg Weadick and Bridget Pastoor joined the group on a bus.



Government officials and irrigation representatives gather for the aerial portion of the tour - AIPA - Photo

“The bus tour portion allowed us to see irrigation in process first-hand, as well as the results of irrigation. It was a powerful part of the experience,” reported Erwin Braun. The group went through irrigated farm land, and visited the McCain processing plant and Roger’s Sugar plant near Taber. Finally, they visited the Bayer CropScience Lab where they looked at hybrid canola seed and its applications. The tour wrapped up

in Coaldale where they were joined by more board members and elected officials from various municipalities.

Minister Diana McQueen reinforced how impressed she is with the social and economic benefits generated by irrigation in the region. Braun emphasized, “This was a great opportunity for the new MLAs to gain some understanding of irrigation and water management in Southern Alberta.”

The day included lunch in Taber, and supper in Coaldale. The meals showcased products of irrigation, including Alberta beef, Taber corn and French fries.

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WID Board of Directors

Doug Brown	Div 1
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If Only it Could Talk!

This summer, a 1934 Chev Truck was found in Mossleigh. The words “WID No 3 Strathmore” are still visible on its faded doors. WID General Manager Erwin Braun was struck by the significance of this find. “It makes you think,” Braun commented. “How many structures and gravel loads did it haul? Who were the people who were working for the district at the time?”

Investigating the history of this truck and the work it might have done has raised more questions than answers at this point, but the process has just begun. The WID is looking forward to sharing its discoveries with you as they come to light.

This truck has been purchased by the WID, and needs to be restored!
Do you have skills, equipment or money you would like to donate to this project?
Contact Erwin Braun
403-934-3542

Above
1934 Chev WID truck awaits restoration
Sarah Clark's Photography photo

Right
The WID's claim on its history fights through the rust
WID photo



Glenbow Archives NB-39-530
Gravel being unloaded at Strathmore Headquarters in 1936
The same truck in a different era? We hope to find out!

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