

Water Dispatch

water information and commentary

Spring/Summer 2014



WID Photo

WID Achieves Milestone with the Completion of A Canal Rehabilitation

As of this winter, the Western Irrigation District has rehabilitated all 110km of Secondary A Canal from Chestermere Lake to South Cluny pipeline. Since 2001, 93km of A Canal was rehabilitated, with \$52 million invested into this project by the WID. Other funding came from various sources, including a cost sharing program with the Government of Alberta.

This investment has proven very wise, with water savings evident already. “Secondary A canal services approximately half of the irrigation within the WID, as well as numerous yards and gardens, stock watering agreements and providing water to communities. As a result of this rehabilitation, we have seen increased efficiency in our delivery of the water through this canal. We have reduced seepage losses,” Jeremy Hemsing, WID Manager of Operations and Maintenance said. “We have also added measurement sites which are linked to our SCADA network to better manage the canal flows within our system.” These all result in being able

to expand the irrigated acres in the District, and protect the water available to existing users.

The success of this project depended on long term planning with landowners, consultants and contractors. WID staff ensured plans were in place, necessary materials obtained, and oversaw the entire process. Contractors worked diligently through tough weather, as the bulk of construction had to be completed in harsh winter months to ensure everything was in place for the water to be turned on by May 1 each year. Landowners were extremely cooperative with the WID in allowing access, working space and assisting wherever needed.

Erwin Braun, WID’s General Manager, is pleased with this accomplishment, “This is a milestone achievement in the WID’s rehabilitation plan. The Langdon Reservoir and C Canal are the next projects in this process.”



Before rehabilitation, canals lose water to seepage and plant growth and banks are prone to erosion. Top photo shows after rehabilitation at the same location - WID photo

Ray Kettenbach to Represent Division 5 on the WID's Board of Directors

Ray Kettenbach was recently elected to the Western Irrigation District's Board of Directors, and brings a wealth of education, experience and enthusiasm to this position. Ray was raised on a farm north of Rockyford. After graduation, he completed the Agriculture Business program at Olds College, and then traveled to Australia on an agricultural exchange. When he returned, he studied broadcasting at Mount Royal College and later obtained his Masters of Communications from Royal Roads University.

Ray worked in communications for 13 years, including the Prairie Farm Report and managing the communications for the merger between Alberta Wheat Pool and Alberta Grain Growers. He has also worked in the government, oil & gas, environmental, and non-profit sectors in communications, public relations and marketing, all while continuing to be involved in agriculture.

In the early 1990's, Ray acquired some farm land near Standard, and continues to farm about 2400 acres. In 2004, he installed an irrigation system on his land, and became a rate payer with the WID. He is taking a personal sabbatical from the communications world, and took the opportunity to give back to the irrigation world by serving on the Board of Directors.

Ray knows it's important to be involved in his community. Over the years he has volunteered in various capacities, from minor sports to the Alumni Association at Olds College. He saw that the WID has some interesting challenges with urban growth along and within its borders, as well as storm water control. "It seemed like a good opportunity to be

involved in an agricultural organization that has an interesting future ahead of it. I have experience working with the City of Calgary in wastewater and utilities, I understand agriculture with an urban perspective, and my background in communications positions me well to try to help with the governance of the WID."

Welcome to the Board, Ray!



The WID would like to thank Don Kathol, who recently completed his second term as a Member of the Board for the WID. He chose not to run again, and therefore Ray Kettenbach will represent the Rockyford area, in Division 5. Henry Colpoys was re-elected by acclamation for Division 2.

WID Board of Directors

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

Sheep Camp Pipeline and A Canal Complete, Despite Long Winter

The long, cold winter made for a tough go with this past winter's construction for the WID, but ultimately, all projects were completed as planned. Jeremy Hemsing, WID's Manager of Operations and Maintenance explained, "There were days the contractors just couldn't get as much done as they might like, but everything planned was completed

before the water was turned on. We are now in the cleanup phase."

Two main projects were underway, with the completion of A canal's rehabilitation and the installation of the Sheep Camp pipeline. This year, the WID took on the rehabilitation of 1.5 km of A canal's lining and armour, and the remainder of the construction work was completed by contractors.

The Langdon reservoir expansion project will get going in earnest this summer, with completion before the 2015 water season. The reservoir will be expanded from 6,000 to 12,000 acre/feet. When the bulk of the irrigation season is through, in late August, work will start and there will be a push to get as much done as possible while the weather is good in September and October.

“Thanks to Irrigation” at the Calgary Farmers’ Market All Summer

When people visit the Calgary Farmers’ Market this summer, they will have the opportunity to learn about the origins of the produce they purchase. The Alberta Irrigation Projects Association developed a website, billboards and radio ads over the past 2 years, and the next phase of the Thanks to Irrigation Initiative is an informative display at the Calgary Farmers’ Market.

During most of Alberta’s history, there was a close connection between the agricultural industry and consumers. Most people in the province had a direct link to agriculture through relatives on the farm. This time has passed though, and many people don’t have this connection anymore. While people might not take weekends to visit a relative’s farm, they do enjoy going to the market to purchase fresh produce, and this is a great opportunity for the Alberta Irrigation Projects Association to reach urban residents with the message of the importance of irrigation farming in Alberta.

The display at the Calgary Farmers’ Market delivers messages like this to Albertans. The Western Irrigation District’s General Manager, Erwin Braun emphasized, “Water use



Postcards like the one above are available at the Thanks to Irrigation Calgary Farmers’ Market Display - Rose County Advertising, Image

is a critical issue right now. We need to make sure everyone understands what the impact of irrigation is, so they will support it into the future.”

The Thanks to Irrigation display will change to feature a different product or aspect of irrigation farming in Alberta. Potatoes, beef, corn and specialty crops will each have a month of

focus. Visitors will be able to take a postcard with information as well as the website address for Thanks to Irrigation, encouraging them to learn more from home.

Thanks to Irrigation website visitors will have the opportunity to enter a monthly draw for \$100 Market Bucks.
www.thankstoirrigation.ca

Let Us Know!

Just a reminder 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 Page 4 for contact information.

Wheatland County Conducting Water Survey



The Wheatland County Agriculture Service board is conducting a survey of agricultural producers’ knowledge and opinions of water conservation issues in the County. Please help by completing the survey. It takes about 15-20 minutes to complete, and is anonymous and confidential. The survey can be filled out on a computer, mobile device, or paper copies can be picked up from the County or mailed to you. Results will be posted on the Wheatland County website.

Everyone completing the survey is eligible to enter to win an iPad mini. The final draw will be made on July 15, 2014, and instructions for entry are in the survey.

For more information, please contact Sarah Schumacher at 403-361-2027 or Sarah.Schumacher@wheatlandcounty.ca

CLEAN! DRAIN! DRY! YOU are the Key to Preventing Mussel Invasion!

If quagga or zebra mussels end up in irrigation ways, it would be a disaster. They attach to any hard, smooth surfaces and reproduce at a rapid rate. They would disrupt the mechanisms of irrigation infrastructure, and impede water flow. Neither of these mussel species has taken hold in Alberta at this time, but the threat is real.

In the late 1980's, both species of mussels showed up in the Great Lakes, and in only 2 years zebra mussels had colonized all 5 of the Great Lakes. Over the past four decades, they have spread across the US, and into some Eastern Canada waterways, with recent discovery in

Lake Winnipeg. When people travel for recreation, there's a risk of them spreading these to our waterways, without knowing they have hitchhikers on board. The lifecycle of the mussel includes a free-floating plankton phase when it is no more than a ½ mm in size and can survive in tiny amounts of water. This means it is critical for people to clean their boats and equipment when moving between water bodies, drain everything, and dry it completely.

This has led to the main campaign for the awareness of these invasive mussels. "CLEAN! DRAIN! DRY!" is showing up across North America

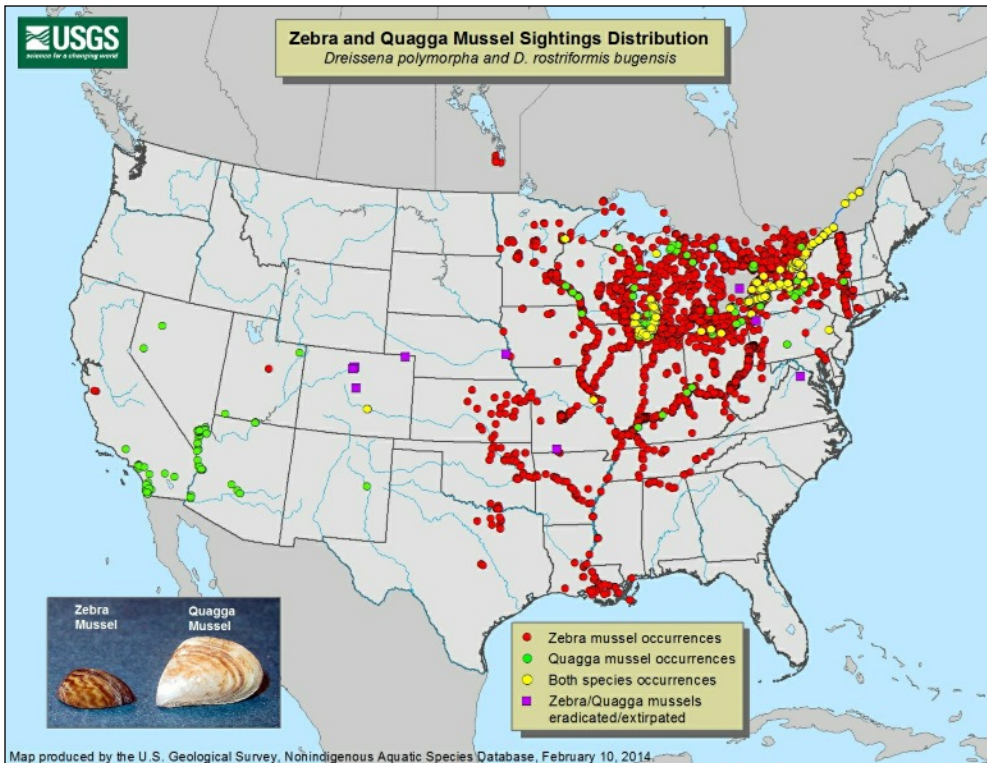


Quagga mussels can take over a pipe like the one above in 6 months or less.
Alberta Government, photo

in hopes of stopping the spread. The Western Irrigation District has partnered with the Town of Chestermere to get signs at every boat launch onto Chestermere Lake. "There is significant recreational use of this lake," WID's General Manager, Erwin Braun points out. "If someone brings a boat here after being in a contaminated lake, there's a good chance it could have mussels in it."

The WID also hosted a symposium in the spring. Braun explained, "The workshop was held in the spring in Chestermere to bring awareness to the threat, and collaborate on how we can mobilize and support the province on what needs to be done."

The Alberta Government is taking this issue very seriously. It has launched a five-pronged prevention program; Education & Outreach, Policy & Legislation, Monitoring, Inspections, and Response.



Map Courtesy of US Geological Survey

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

Alberta's Environment and Sustainable Resource Development estimates that an invasion of zebra or quagga mussels into Alberta could have financial implications of over \$75 million/year.

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