

# Water Dispatch

Water information and commentary

Winter 2017/2018

## **WID Offers Funding Support for High to Low-Pressure Pivot Conversions**

Do you have high-pressure pivot irrigation systems that you would be interested in converting to low-pressure pivot systems? The time to act is now! The Western Irrigation District has earmarked \$50,000 in their budget to support irrigators in converting their high-pressure pivots to low-pressure.

The WID is offering to supplement up to \$4000 per application for conversion of existing pivots from high-pressure to low-pressure by installing drop tubes and upgrading control panels. Applications for this program will be based on size of the existing system, past irrigation activity and efficiency of delivery to the farm. Producers have the potential to further reduce their costs by applying to the Province for funding

under either the current Growing Forward 2 or upcoming CAP program.

“Our guidelines will be exactly the same as the qualification for Growing Forward 2,” WID Water Master Brian Sander explained. “It should be very straightforward.”

In preparation for this program, the WID completed an inventory of irrigation systems within the District to confirm the location of high pressure pivots. “After confirming in the field, we found we’re at around 65% low pressure pivots, which are more than

three times the number we had in 2001” Sander said.

“We’re really starting to see, especially on a dry year like this, where there’s efficiency – significant efficiency - to be gained by system conversion,” Sander said. “Not just our infrastructure upgrades – there can be significant water savings from modern on-farm systems being used as well.”

Converting from high to low-pressure can save you water, time and energy, and these all add up to saving money. Don’t miss out on these grant opportunities to leave even more cash in your pocket.

**See [www.growingforward.ab.ca](http://www.growingforward.ab.ca) for more information about the Growing Forward 2 Irrigation Efficiency Program. Contact David McAllister at 403-934-3542 ext 235 for more information about the WID’s supplemental grant.**



**Low-pressure pivots save water, time, energy and money. - WID photo**

# **The Western Irrigation District and Wheatland County Team up to Provide Funding to Producers**

**Funding will be available for off-site watering systems and fencing**



**Healthy riparian growth to the left contrasts with the right, which needs recovery after livestock access - Sarah Schumacher photo**

With the aid of Provincial funding, ranchers can protect riparian areas and improve water quality in the Crowfoot Creek Watershed. The Western Irrigation District and Wheatland County are pleased to offer 100% funding to landowners for new installations of fencing and off-site watering systems.

The funding came through the Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program (WRRP) from Alberta Environment and Parks. The project was awarded \$198,500 to be utilized for this program. The primary objective of the WRRP grant is to increase the natural ability of the province's watersheds to reduce the intensity, magnitude, duration and effects of flooding and drought through watershed mitigation measures (AEP 2017). The purpose of the WID-Wheatland program is to improve and restore the riparian function and watershed resiliency of the Crowfoot Creek

Watershed by assisting producers with the costs associated with riparian management.

Moving livestock away from the riparian areas decreases erosion of the banks, decreases nutrients in the water, and improves the health of the vegetation in the area. There are also benefits to livestock health and performance, improving the producers' bottom line.

Wheatland County will be accepting applications in early 2018.

The following criteria must be met to be eligible:

- The site must be adjacent to either the Crowfoot Creek, one of its tributaries, or along a WID canal
- The applicant must have livestock that have direct

access to the Crowfoot Creek, one of its tributaries, or a WID canal

- The riparian fencing must be permanent

Applicants have the option to use a contract fencer or to be reimbursed for the materials if they want to do the work themselves. There will be reasonable caps on the total cost reimbursed, but funding will be provided at 100% under those caps.

"It's great because anything we can do to improve water quality and watershed health is a benefit to everyone," WID Water Master Brian Sander said. "It benefits us, it benefits the Bow River and everyone downstream."

**For more information on the this funding opportunity contact:  
Sarah Schumacher - Wheatland County - 403-361-2027  
David McAllister - Western Irrigation District - 403-934-3542 ext 235**

# ***North Cluny Tailout Project and Rehabilitation of the Standard Lateral Underway***

This winter the WID is rehabilitating a section of the Standard Canal as well as completing the North Cluny Tailout project.

The WID is rehabilitating the Standard lateral on the Secondary B system, starting at the Standard/Glenrose split and continuing east. The District is completing the rehabilitation of 11 km of canal in this area. The canal will be constructed with buried plastic liner and armoured banks to increase water savings and enhance the efficiency of delivery for our irrigators.

The North Cluny Tailout project includes the installation of five kilometres of closed pipeline and a spillway back to the natural channel. The installation of a closed pipeline eliminates evaporation and percolation losses so substantial water savings will be achieved. Additionally, the installation of a closed pipeline at this location will eliminate pass-by water. Water will now be held in the pipeline until it is needed by farmers.

The WID has also determined a 10-year capital plan, ranging from 2017-2026. “This plan is based on optimizing water savings, minimizing operation and maintenance costs and servicing existing and future irrigation,” WID General Manager David McAllister said.



***The North Cluny Tailout improvements will eliminate evaporation and percolation losses.***

## ***Infrastructure Improvements Lead to Improved Efficiency in Dry Summer***

“We have not seen demand for water like we did in 2017 for over a decade” said WID’s General Manager David McAllister. The 2017 water season started out with average demand but with heat and lack of rain quickly led into extremely dry conditions. The WID team worked hard to ensure irrigators’ needs for water were met despite the challenging conditions.

The last year where conditions were as dry occurred in 2001. It is interesting to compare the two years to show how decisions by the WID and our irrigators have improved water efficiency:

- 1) Return flows decreased by 23% due to installation of pipelines and storage.
- 2) Diversion at the Bow River decreased by over 20% due to water efficiency improvements.
- 3) Low pressure-pivots, which are over 80% efficient, cover three times the acres they did in 2001.

The total diversion from the Bow River this year was 131,200 acre-feet. The recent expansion to the Langdon reservoir proved its worth as Water Master Brian Sander explained, “We never went below the old reservoir level, so the expansion has proven its benefits already in terms of water stability.”

The performance in the 2017 water season is once again a testimony to the combined efforts of water users to improve on-farm efficiencies, the WID’s improvements to water delivery systems and programs, and the Province’s financial contributions to both.

# ***Don't Miss This!***

**WID Annual General Meeting  
& Board of Directors Election**

**April 4, 2018**

## ***Important Deadlines:***

|   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| <b>WID Efficiency Program Grant:</b>              | <b>January 12, 2018</b> |
| <b>Distribution of Surplus Acres Application:</b> | <b>February 9, 2018</b> |
| <b>Nominations for WID Board of Directors:</b>    | <b>March 14, 2018</b>   |
| <b>Alternate Parcel Agreement Application:</b>    | <b>March 15, 2018</b>   |

## ***WID Releasing 570 Irrigation Acres***

If you've been hoping to increase your irrigated acreage, this might be your chance. The Western Irrigation District is releasing 570 irrigation acres that have been returned to the WID as part of its ongoing review to encourage active irrigation. You must apply by February 9, 2018 to be considered for this opportunity.

The WID is focused on ensuring their water license is utilized to the maximum potential. As such, it is key that these acres are not only utilized actively, but also efficiently. It is critical that these newly awarded acres will not impede the water available to existing water users.

With these considerations in mind, the WID has determined five factors they will evaluate when prioritizing the allocation of these irrigation acres to prospective purchasers. Applications will be prioritized when:

- The parcel is currently irrigated
- The parcel is serviced by rehabilitated infrastructure
- The parcel has a valid irrigation land classification which supports the addition of acres
- The parcel has a highly efficient (>80%) irrigation system
- The parcel is serviced by infrastructure that has sufficient capacity to deliver water without impacting other irrigators.

These acres will be distributed at a capital asset charge of \$770 per acre which has been determined based on future infrastructure requirements of the District. A limit of 130 acres per farm operation may be purchased during this sale process.

If you have any questions, please contact Charlotte Mandel at (403)-934-3542. The application form is available on the website.

### **WID Board of Directors**

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

### ***Water Supervisor Contacts***

|                         |                               |                     |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Brian Sander</b>     | <b>Water Master</b>           | <b>403-325-0493</b> |
| <b>Joey Mordy</b>       | <b>Assistant Water Master</b> | <b>403-325-0244</b> |
| <b>Derrick McGougan</b> | <b>Chestermere</b>            | <b>403-899-4638</b> |
| <b>Don Brownlee</b>     | <b>Carseland</b>              | <b>403-899-4641</b> |
| <b>Joe Friedman</b>     | <b>Gleichen/Cluny</b>         | <b>403-325-4642</b> |
| <b>Wes Sproule</b>      | <b>Rockyford</b>              | <b>403-325-4640</b> |
| <b>JR Dunbar</b>        | <b>Crowfoot</b>               | <b>403-325-4639</b> |
| <b>Jaye Wegener</b>     | <b>Strathmore</b>             | <b>403-325-4601</b> |