



WATER INFORMATION NEWSLETTER

BRID ADDRESS & WEBSITE

P.O. Box 140
704 – 7 Avenue North
Vauxhall, AB T0K 2K0
Phone: (403) 654-2111
Fax: (403) 654-4197
Website: www.brid.ca

SPRING RUNOFF

Spring snow melt and runoff has already created havoc within the District but there is still a lot of water for landowners and the BRID to contend with. It is expected that there will be a significant amount of water drained or pumped into BRID canals and drain ditches.

Landowners are reminded that at no time are they to pump or drain low lying areas into District drainage or delivery canals without the consent of the BRID.

There are a few issues with indiscriminately draining into a canal; it does have the potential to cause additional flooding or damage to a landowner downstream on the same canal; there is the potential to cause damage to canal works which the person doing the draining will be responsible for and then there is always the question of what is the quality of water going into the canal system.

Before approvals can be granted by the BRID, staff will check for potential damages downstream. In regards to water quality, any area or ponded water that does have or appears to have polluted water will not be allowed to drain into a BRID canal unless it can be shown through testing that the water does not contain microorganisms typically found in manure. Testing can be done in Lethbridge for a nominal fee and with a 3 to 5 day turnaround.

WATER OUTLOOK

As expected, snow pack in the mountains is looking fairly good with mostly above average amounts at measurement sites. Reservoirs should have no problem being at full levels by the start of the irrigation season. Based on current weather and wet conditions, projected water turn on date is May 2nd at the earliest and maybe as late as May 16th. This all depends on how fast or slow things dry up.

The Board of Directors recently set the annual water allotment at 24 inches per irrigation acre, the same as past years. Once again, an extra 6 inches can be purchased for flood parcels.

CANALS AND CANAL BANKS

The BRID does not restrict the use of canals and canal banks to District use only, but it does expect any damage or rutting of the canal banks to be the responsibility of the person causing them.

Landowners adjacent to canals are advised and asked to please contact the BRID, office or field staff, when performing any activity they may be doing along the canal or within the canal easement/right-of-way. This could save time and money in the event something is located near, on or in the canal which will be required to be moved or replaced at the landowner's expense if not done to any BRID standard or condition that may be in place.

Landowners are encouraged to get any approval in writing to avoid future disagreements on conditions or locations.

IRRIGATION EXPANSION PROGRESS

As reported in the Annual Report, the Board of Directors are still leaning to having another plebiscite with the irrigators on increasing irrigation acres within the BRID. As noted in past newsletters, the last expansion was a 10% increase from 211,000 to 232,000 acres. The studies done in 2004, indicated the BRID could have expand by 20%, but it was felt at that time that 10% was a more conservative, safe increase.

It had been decided that a final decision to proceed or not would be made after Alberta Agriculture and Alberta Environment completed new studies for us on the risk of expansion through their computer modeling. This has been delayed due to fact other irrigation districts had requested similar work from them ahead of us and with limited resources we had to wait until the work was completed for those others. The modeling for the BRID is now on its way and we should have some firm decisions made in late spring or summer.

As to what has happened in some of the other irrigation districts: Lethbridge Northern Irrigation District (LNID) held an expansion plebiscite vote in 2010 and received approval from its irrigators to do a staged expansion from 177,000 irrigation acres to 227,000 irrigation acres, a 28% increase with 25,000 acres in the first stage and the remainder over a number of years. They are charging \$1,250 per acre for new irrigation acres, but \$250 of this is used towards any required infrastructure for the farmer.

In mid-March, 2011, Taber Irrigation District (TID) had their irrigators approve an expansion of 10,000 irrigation acres, from 82,200 acres to 92,200 acres, an increase of 12%. They will charge \$1,000 per acre for new irrigation acres, and farmers will pay all of their infrastructure costs.

St. Mary River Irrigation District (SMRID) held a plebiscite vote on March 29, 2011 and they have been approved for a phased expansion of 40,000 acres which would increase their irrigation area from 372,000 acres to 412,000 acres, approximately a 10% increase. They will charge \$1,800 per acre for new irrigation acres, and farmers will pay all of their infrastructure costs.

It has been recognized that the BRID has by far the best storage and system for handling dry years which was proven to be true in 2001 when the BRID had no water restrictions and most other irrigation districts had limits on water use.

BRID irrigators can expect to hear more in the upcoming months about expansion plans. Before any expansion can happen, public meetings must be held followed by a successful plebiscite vote by the irrigators. An expansion proposal would need more than 50% of the irrigators who actually vote, to vote in favour.

BRID WEB SITE

This is a reminder that we post a lot of information on our web site for general viewing and for providing information to our irrigators and the public. Please visit brid.ca to see information on:

- When Lost Lake pumps are on or off
- BRID Annual Report
- Current and past newsletters
- BRID contacts
- A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section
- Upcoming events
- Links to – other irrigation districts, Alberta Irrigation Projects Association, other agricultural web sites and links to water resource information sites.

BOW RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT VIDEOS

The BRID has partnered with Western and Eastern Irrigation District to create a short series of video episodes concerning the use and management of water resources on the Bow River. Each episode is 2 to 4 minutes in length and in addition to being introduced into schools and used for public education as to the benefits of irrigated agriculture; the entire ten episodes can be viewed on YouTube and accessed on other web sites.

To view go to BRID's web site, brid.ca, and click on the link "The Bow River Water Management Videos" on the home page.

SHARING OF WATER FOR HUMAN NEEDS AND LIVESTOCK SUSTENANCE

Through Alberta Irrigation Projects Association and along with the other 12 irrigation districts, the BRID has signed a declaration that states:

"In the case of water shortages due to drought conditions that can occur in southern Alberta, the member districts of the Alberta Irrigation Projects Association assure, within their right to control, the following:

- i) The member districts will participate in water sharing by temporary assignments with other licence holders with lower priority, in accordance with section 33 of the Water Act, R.S.A. 2000, c. W-3, in good faith, so that sufficient water can be distributed for human needs and livestock sustenance, and
- ii) No fee will be assessed for these temporary assignments of water for meeting human needs and livestock sustenance.

Temporary assignments may specify a proviso for water conservation measures that is reasonable and appropriate given conditions of the drought and water supply at the time.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The District recently held elections for three director areas. Each year, there are elections for directors and which are for three year terms. The terms for the 7 directors are staggered so each area is not up for election in the same year. In 2011, Areas 2 and 4 were up for election, in 2012 it will be Areas 1 and 7 and in 2013 it will be Areas 3, 5 and 6.

In addition to elections for Areas 2 and 4 in 2011, Area 5 had its director resign last October so a by-election was run in that area the same time as the regular elections for Area 2 and 4. The term for Area 5 will be a 2 year term instead of 3 to stay with the same staggered election process.

This year's election results were all by acclamation with Ron Schlaht and John DeVries being returned as directors for Area 2 and 4 respectively and Vic Van Dyk the new director for Area 5.

Following is a complete list of directors with Chairman and Vice-Chairman noted:

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| Area 1 – Headworks | - Glenn Logan |
| Area 2 – Lomond/Travers | - Ron Schlaht (Vice-Chairman) |
| Area 3- Enchant/Stone Lease/East Badger | - Dennis Orsten |
| Area 4 – New West/Circle Hill | - John De Vries |
| Area 5 – Vauxhall/Retlaw | - Vic Van Dyk |
| Area 6 – East Vauxhall/Northwest Hays | - Harold Unruh (Chairman) |
| Area 7 – East and South Hays | - Walter Unruh |

DITCHRIDER AREAS

At the end of 2010, Butch Egeland retired from his position as ditchrider. Butch worked as a ditchrider, mostly in the one area, for 21 water seasons. On behalf of the irrigators, we would like to thank Butch for his years of service and wish him the best in his retirement.

Over the last number of years when a ditchrider has left, it has quite often resulted in combining areas and reducing the number of ditchriders in the District. It did not take too much of a review to tell us that we are about as far as we can go on making the areas larger and having less operations people, so a replacement for Butch has been hired.

However, we are always looking at changes and after discussions with the remaining ditchriders in the west area of the District, it was decided to move the west areas around somewhat, which will result in a number of irrigators in the west part of the District having a different ditchrider in 2011.

Lonnie Volesky's area will pretty well stay the same with the exception of moving her area a little upstream on the Lomond Lateral to include all land up to 6-16-19-W4.

Lonnie Howg will not be doing south Headworks patrols and operations of the south Headworks gates anymore. He will be retaining the same ditchrider area as last year with the exception of the parcels going to Lonnie Volesky, plus he will be taking over all irrigation parcels that Butch Egeland had on the Lateral H system fed from Badger Lake.

Kelly Howg will lose the entire area covered by the new pipelines installed on the Lateral A system south of Travers, as well as any parcels he had that were irrigated from the Main Canal, and all of the pipelines he had off of the Main Canal. He will retain all the area serviced by the Lateral B canal, as well as adding all the parcels from Lateral C that were part of Butch Egeland's area.

The new employee to replace Butch is Leni Howg. Yes, you are reading right, another Howg. Leni will be the ditchrider for all parcels that Butch had off of the Main Canal and Main Canal pipelines as well as all parcels Kelly had off of the Main Canal and Main Canal pipelines and the Lateral A system south of Travers. In addition Leni's duties will include the operations of the south Headworks system and patrols around McGregor, Travers and Little Bow Reservoir, these were Lonnie Howg's duties in 2010.

All other ditchriders will have the same areas as in 2010. In addition to the four ditchriders noted above there are four more in the Vauxhall and Hays area. This totals 8 ditchriders plus the North Headworks Operator whom takes care of all irrigation on the Caresland/Bow Headworks canal. These 9 employees are responsible for close to 234,000 irrigation acres on the BRID's assessment roll.