



WATER INFORMATION NEWSLETTER

BRID ADDRESS & WEBSITE

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SPRING WATER REPORT



Water was turned into the Carseland Main Canal from the Bow River on April 9th, 2010 to get a head start on filling the reservoirs for summer demand. Spring snow and rains delayed the water turn on from Little Bow Reservoir into the BRID Main Canal until May 14, 2010. The average water delivery turnout date from Little Bow Reservoir is May 8th, so this year was about one week past normal.

Storage in the reservoirs is excellent which means we will see a plentiful supply of water for 2010.

The directors have set the 2010 water allotment for irrigators at 24 acre inches per irrigated acre, the same as past years.

PUBLIC SAFETY AROUND WATER CONTROL STRUCTURES AND OPEN CANALS

It cannot be stressed enough the importance of safety around irrigation reservoirs, water control structures and open canals. People, especially young children, fail to recognize how even little depths of water and/or currents can create a large hazard.

- Know if you live/do activities near irrigation works.
- Always respect the power of water and exercise extreme caution around it.
- Always have an adult or friend present when walking or playing near irrigation works.
- Be aware that the water levels can change daily and that the water depth in the canal yesterday may not be the depth today.
- Be aware of and respect posted warning signs, stay well away from control structures.
- Do not attempt to walk across the tops of structures as these may be slippery, wet or icy.

IRRIGATION EXPANSION

The BRID has now officially completed the irrigation expansion approved by the irrigators back in 2004 with the District now being just shy of 232,000 irrigation acres in size. This last expansion was a 10% increase from 211,000 to 232,000 acres.

The studies done in 2004 indicated the BRID could have expanded by 20%, but it was felt that a 10% was a more conservative, safe increase.

In addition to the extra 10% not increased in 2004, with all the closed pipelines installed by the BRID

since 2004 and the rapid increase in pivot numbers, it is felt by the District that another expansion could easily happen in the very near future.

In 2004, 68% of the wetted acres (138,500 acres) was done with pivots with 80% (172,000 acres) being wetted by pivots in 2009.

Over the summer and fall, the Board of Directors have asked management, with assistance from Alberta Agriculture, to review expansion potential and to come up with an irrigation expansion number that the BRID could expand to without creating undue hardship on existing irrigators through potential water shortages.

Irrigators can expect to hear more about expansion plans by late fall. 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.

INCENTIVE TO CHANGE FROM FLOOD TO SPRINKLER

There has been an adjustment to the Board's policy on compensation to landowners changing from flood to sprinkler.

The District had a policy which stated that if the District is replacing a delivery canal with a pipeline, the District would compensate any flood irrigator on that canal \$60⁰⁰ per irrigation acre to convert from flood to sprinkler. The reasons being that due to the lower flows designed for sprinkler irrigation versus flood irrigation, the District would save this amount and maybe more in reduced pipe sizing.

Until recently the delivery canal had to be on the District's current three-year plan for canal rehabilitation before a parcel qualified for this compensation.

Effective as of the January 27, 2010 Board meeting, the directors have added the following revision to the policy: "When an irrigator replaces a flood system with a sprinkler system that is served by a delivery system that is not on the three-year rehabilitation plan, that parcel will be eligible for the \$60⁰⁰ per irrigation acre incentive at the time the pipeline serving that parcel is constructed." The conversion from flood irrigation to sprinkler irrigation must occur after January 27, 2010, and this only applies to parcels where the delivery canal is eventually serviced by a pipeline and at that time, the same landowner is present.

WATER LICENCE AMENDMENT

The Government of Alberta placed a moratorium on all new requests for water licences from the Bow River in 2006. This includes any new non-irrigation user wishing to withdraw water from any of the works of the Bow River Irrigation District or the BRID Headworks system.

The BRID holds its own water licence that allows it to deliver water to its irrigators for irrigation use and to other users for domestic use. Any water the BRID delivers to non-irrigation or non-domestic users, can only happen if that user holds their own water licence from Alberta Environment. Examples of this are the towns of Lomond, Enchant, Hays and Vauxhall who all hold a municipal licence. The BRID delivers water to oil companies for water injection, to Agristar (Vauxhall Foods) for food processing and numerous feedlots, all whom hold their own water licence. Water is also delivered to Ducks Unlimited under their water licence.

With the moratorium being placed on the Bow River, any new non-irrigation or non-domestic operation, business, municipality or expansion of existing identities cannot take place unless that identity is able to purchase a water licence from another licence holder.

Anyone looking to purchase a licence will confirm that it is difficult to find another licence for sale and if so it is very expensive. This has placed a real road block in front of any new business or development that wished to build in the area of the BRID.

The Board of Directors have decided to assist new development in the area, whether it be feedlots, municipalities, Hutterite colonies, food processors by amending a small portion of its water licence to include other uses besides irrigation and domestic.

Alberta Environment regulations for water licence amendments allows irrigation districts to amend a limited amount of their irrigation licence to allow water delivery to other uses that do not hold their own water licence.

The BRID holds two water licences, one for 380,000 acre feet of water and a second for 70,000 acre feet

of water. It was decided to make application to Alberta Environment to amend the 70,000 acre foot licence and based on the regulations, the maximum amount able to be amended is 2,380 acre feet

Based on allowing irrigators to use 24 inches per acre, that is the amount of water that could be used to irrigate 1190 acres.

This application is not without difficulties. Alberta Environment itself presents some challenges as the department is having trouble finding defined boundaries or how far away from the canal system can an operation be. The BRID feels that as long as an operator is willing to pump the water from the canal to their operation, we should be able to provide them with water. Alberta Environment is not specific, but it is felt that they would like to see new operations limited to adjacent to or very near the actual canal.

Part of the amendment process will be public advertisement allowing the public to express any concerns they may have. Based on responses other irrigation districts have received that are going through the same process, we can expect comments such as: "This amendment would open the door to the commercialization of the water, allowing the BRID to profit from its sale", "Giving an irrigation district the power to control and broker water for other uses sets a dangerous precedent for all water licensing in Alberta".

When the application was first made, we were very optimistic that it could be done in a timely manner; we are not so optimistic anymore.

2010 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Elections were scheduled in two areas with both being returned by acclamation. Following is the current list of directors:

- Harold Unruh- Chairman- Area #6
- Ron Schlaht-Vice Chair-Area #2

- Glenn Logan- Area #1
- John DeVries-Area #4
- Walter Unruh-Area #7
- Dennis Orsten-Area #3
- Art Lanser- Area #5

PUBLIC NOTICES:

WEED CONTROL PROGRAM

The Bow River Irrigation will be applying herbicides to control vegetation in or within 30 horizontal meters of open bodies of water owned by the district. Applications began in May and continue until September. Affected water users will be notified before the aquatic applications begin.

<u>Herbicide Used</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Herbicide Used</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
Magnacide H PCP# 10948	Control of submerged aquatic vegetation and algae.	Vantage (Glyphosate)	Control of cattail & reed canary grass.
2, 4-D Amine 600 Vanquish (Dicamba) Vantage (Glyphosate)	} Control of broadleaf weeds, willow, brush, and poplar.		

The district has a No Spray Zone agreement for any organic growers or water users who do not wish the BRID to use chemicals on the right of way adjacent to their land. For any questions regarding this activity please call David Cholka at the Bow River Irrigation District Office at (403) 654-2111.