

Water Dispatch

water information and commentary

Spring/Summer 2012

The Bow River is Safer with the New Harvie Passage

The Calgary Weir is an integral part of the Western Irrigation District's water diversion from the Bow River, approximately 3 km east of downtown Calgary. The entire weir has now been redesigned to foster safer recreational use by paddlers, and to improve fish habitat. The development of this newly named "Harvie Passage" was a partnership project between Parks Foundation Calgary, the Calgary Foundation, The City of Calgary and The Government of Alberta. The



Harvie Passage - Klohn Crippen Berger - Photo

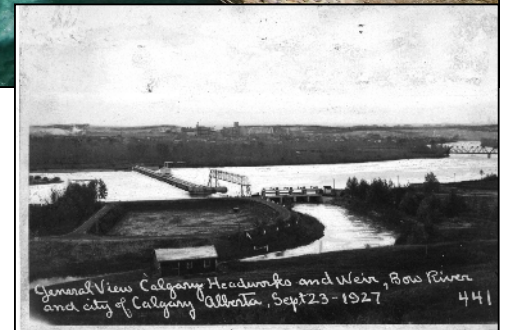
WID was involved in the consultation portion of this project from the start. The WID's General Manager, Erwin Braun explained, "The WID worked with the committee from the beginning on the redesign, and we operated our irrigation systems to enable construction. We are excited to see Harvie Passage now in use."

Historically, the area around the weir was unsafe for canoeing, kayaking and rafting. A strong undertow on the downriver side of the original weir made it almost impossible for anyone who had fallen into the water to navigate their way back out. This undertow also meant that fish had difficulty traveling upriver through this area.

This passage is now comprised of two channels separated by an island. One side offers a Class III rapid, which can be navigated by experienced kayakers and

river rafters. The other side has a less turbulent Class II rapid structure. The elevation drops in this structure are shorter than the previous weir, and each drop is followed by a calm pool, enabling any paddler who might fall in to have a safe location to swim or walk to shore. Inexperienced paddlers are encouraged to portage the rapids, and signage starting far upriver alerts users to its presence. People need to know their limits.

Additionally, slots in the structure allow fish to navigate upriver through the Harvie Passage. Thus, this new design creates a safer paddling experience on the Bow River, as well as improving fish habitat.



Calgary Weir - Glenbow Museum Archives

"The WID's clients were a priority in this process. The Harvey Passage construction project was accomplished with no disruption in services to the WID's water users."
- WID General Manager, Erwin Braun

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Thanks to Irrigation - Thanks to the AIPA

Water is one of our most precious resources, and it is a good thing when people want to know what is being done with the water available in their area. In the fall, 5 cabinet ministers and 15 MLAs took part in an aerial tour of the irrigation system in Southern Alberta. After this tour, Premier Alison Redford met with the group, and challenged the Alberta Irrigation Projects Association (AIPA) to take the message forward to urban Albertans. The AIPA has met that challenge with the launch of the "Thanks to Irrigation" campaign.

While farmers and many rural residents are likely to have a good idea of what irrigation is all about, we can't assume that everyone knows. WID Manager, Erwin Braun



Jim Dau - Prismatic Group Inc - Billboard

explained, "Water is becoming an increasingly significant and sensitive topic of discussion. We hope this campaign will help the public fully understand the importance and benefits of irrigation in Alberta."

Billboards in Calgary provide insight into these functions of diverted water, and display the "Thanks to Irrigation" website address. The website outlines the many functions of irrigation water, and features a

page where visitors can leave comments on their connection to irrigation, including stories and photos. The website can be found at www.thankstoirrigation.ca.

Thanks to irrigation, Albertans can grow crops like corn, potatoes and sugar beets, rather than importing them from abroad. Thanks to irrigation, reservoirs are formed for water storage, and provide many areas for recreational use. Thanks to irrigation, rich areas of wildlife

habitat are available through partnerships with Ducks Unlimited, for example. Thanks to irrigation, many rural communities have a source of drinking water. Thanks to the AIPA, these messages are being heard.



Jim Dau - Prismatic Group Inc - Billboard



Jim Dau - Prismatic Group Inc - Billboard

Canadian Seed Growers Association to Tour Irrigation Works

The Canadian Seed Growers' Association is holding their Annual General Meeting in Calgary from July 10-14. The Western Irrigation District has been invited to participate in guiding a tour for about 50 people visiting from across Canada.

This is a great opportunity for the WID to showcase what is happening in the world of irrigation, and to exchange information with the Canadian Seed Growers. During the 90 minute visit to the District, WID staff will focus on the highlights of their operations, and field any questions that arise. They will visit the Shepard Wetland storm water diversion site, where they will discuss urban effects on irrigation. From there, they will proceed to Chestermere Lake, feed lots and pivots to round out the WID's portion of the tour. The participants will go on to tour other facets of agriculture in the region.

A package of Alberta irrigation information, newsletters, videos and maps were sent ahead of time, to give them a chance to gain some exposure before the tour.

The Winter that Wasn't was Great for Construction

Jeremy Hemsing, the WID's Manager of Operations and Maintenance, is very happy with the results of this past winter's construction and canal rehabilitation. By late March, the crews were close to completing all construction activities. Hemsing explained, "Everyone involved worked hard this winter. The favourable weather helped a lot, and the projects were completed ahead of schedule and within budget."

Water users at the eastern limits of the district will see significant improvements with the addition of 20 km of pressurized pipeline near Redland. Additionally, approximately 12km of Secondary A canal from Highway #1 to Township 234

was rehabbed over the winter. A buried, impermeable liner was added to this stretch, and a measurement weir was added.

Final cleanup will be in process through the spring and summer, reclaiming right of ways, replacing fences and installing gates. The priority is to get crop areas ready before seeding, and the other areas will follow.

Hemsing indicated, "Planning for next year's rehabilitation projects, which will commence after the irrigation season this fall, is well underway." Next winter, the Stoodley pipeline will be installed near Nightingale, and another 12km reach of Secondary A canal rehabilitation is being designed.



Rehabilitated Section of A Canal - WID photo



Redland Pipeline Nearing Completion - WID photo

The WID's construction efforts:

- improve upon water conservation initiatives
- contribute to better water management throughout the district
- enable the WID to do more with their water license

Workshops and Meetings with the WID

On February 29, approximately 25 Western Irrigation District rate payers gathered at the Strathmore Travelodge for the Farmer's Meeting. The WID hosts this event annually as an opportunity to have dialogue between water users and WID staff. At this meeting, the WID discussed their capital and financial plans for the future.



Irrigation IQ Participants at a Soil Texturing Station - WID Photo

18 people attended the Irrigation IQ Workshop on February 24 in Cheadle. The WID holds this workshop to help irrigators learn the effects of over and under watering on crop production, disease and pests. They also gain exposure to the Alberta Irrigation Management Model program, and participate in hands-on sessions.

Get Irrigation Updates Fast!

**Don't get left behind! Send us your e-mail address and:
Be updated on Special Events
Receive notices of Equipment for Sale
Be the first to know about Water Rights Opportunities
Receive Digital Newsletters**

**Contact Brett Huston: bhuston@wid.net or call 403-934-3542
Get electronically connected to the WID**

WID Board of Directors

Doug Brown	Div 1
Henry Colpoys – Vice Chair	Div 2
Rick Page	Div 3
Dan Shute – Chair	Div 4
Don Kathol	Div 5
Grant Klaiber	Appointed

Communication is Key

The Western Irrigation District wants to ensure that water is distributed in a fair and equitable way to all water users. Effective communication between the WID and the water users is critical to ensuring this can happen.

Each water user must give their Water District Supervisor (WDS) at least 48 hours' notice before turning on their system, and 24 hours' notice before shutting off. By knowing exactly how much water is needed at any given time, the WID can better manage the diversion off the Bow River, internal storage, canal flows and spillways. This, in turn, will reduce spillage and decrease stress on infrastructure, optimizing the overall benefit gained from the WID's water licence.

The technology behind this is the district's Recording and Monitoring (RAM) system, which will be going

into full field testing this water season. The RAM system allows the WID to see where water is being used within the district, in near real time, so they can manage flows to each canal. RAM also records crop and system types, which are used to tally water usage on a system. This is a vast improvement over the paper recording system, which was more historical than actual by the time data was reported and input. Ultimately, the WID will be able to provide more timely water delivery to more users.

There have been drought years in the past, and the WID is working on plans for how to manage situations where water is in limited supply. These strategies, communication and the cutting-edge technology



WDS Jeff Maude Using the RAM System - WID Photo

within the RAM system will aid in minimizing the effects of critical shortages.

Water District Supervisors are happy to stop by and show you how the RAM system works. Feel free to call yours to make an appointment, or take a few minutes to discuss it when you bump into each other on the road.

Let Us Know!

**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 WDS know as soon as possible.**

Water Supervisor Contacts

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