



## INFORMATION NEWSLETTER

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### BRID WEBSITE

Visit our website for more information on BRID at: [brid.ca](http://brid.ca)

## PROVINCIAL WATER AVAILABILITY ENGAGEMENT

Alberta Environment and Protected Areas (EPA) has launched an engagement to consider ways to increase water availability in Alberta which could include changes to legislation and policy. This is primarily an issue in the South Saskatchewan River basin, including the Bow River basin, since AEPA is still issuing new water licences in other basins further north. Other than the Red Deer River basin, the South Saskatchewan basin is closed to new water licence applications, so parties that want a licence must attempt to reach an agreement with an existing licence holder to transfer all or a portion of an existing water licence to them. Irrigation districts are collectively the largest licence holders and several districts, including the BRID, have participated in licence transfers.

Details of the engagement process can be found at <https://www.alberta.ca/water-availability-engagement>, where there are several information sheets providing background on various water issues, access to on-line



surveys, and information on upcoming virtual and in-person open houses. The Alberta Irrigation Districts Association (AIDA) has reviewed the information sheets and has concerns with some potential ideas suggested in them. The single most concerning one is that the Water Act could be amended to allow licence allocations to be reduced if the full allocation appears to be larger than required. Some individuals might see irrigation districts as an example of this situation, since our average diversions are well below the full allocations and in severe droughts, when the full allocations may be needed, there is usually insufficient water in the rivers to divert the full allocations. However, we do not think irrigation or other agriculture licences should be subject to potential downsizing and have raised our concerns with the Ministers and senior officials of EPA and Agriculture and Irrigation.

We have been assured that there are no predetermined changes that will be made by the government, and they are open to ideas on how to improve access to water. The AIDA has provided them with a list of suggestions on ways to improve water availability which include policy changes, improved water management using existing infrastructure, and new infrastructure. Policy suggestions focus on retaining and improving water license transfers as a preferred alternative to EPA unilaterally reducing allocations which they believe are too large. We encourage you to be involved in the engagement to express the importance of preserving access to water for irrigation. Please contact your director if you want further information on this important topic.

### **EXPANSION**

The board of directors is considering another expansion of the district and intends to hold a plebiscite in this regard in early spring of 2025. Prior to the plebiscite, public meetings will be held across the district in early 2025 to present information on the proposed expansion. Pipelines which we have completed since our 2018 expansion plebiscite and which will be completed over the next few years will save enough water to irrigate several thousand acres, and the proposed Deadhorse Coulee Reservoir will provide enough water for several thousand additional acres, for a total expansion of up to 25,000 acres. Notice of the public meetings will be provided once dates and locations are confirmed.

The district still has some irrigation acres available for the intensification of existing irrigated parcels. They are available on a first come first served basis and some conditions apply. The cost is \$3,000 per acre.

Please contact Evan Blindback at (403)654-2111, or email [Evan.Bindback@brid.ca](mailto:Evan.Bindback@brid.ca) if you wish to apply for, or have questions concerning irrigation acres.

### **2024 WATER OPERATIONS SUMMARY**

Good rains through most of the growing season resulted in much lower water use than we have had in recent years. The total diversion from Little Bow this year was 224,000 acre feet, which is 84% of the 25-year average, and the lowest total since 2011. The total monthly diversion was below average every month from April through October this year, which is unusual. The total diversion from the Bow River for all licensees using the Carseland system was 339,000 acre feet, which is 62.4% of the total licensed allocation, and 11% above average. The primary reason the river diversion was above average is that reservoir storage was 29,000 acre feet higher at the end of the season than at the beginning.

At shut-off the storage in the headworks reservoirs was 322,000 acre feet, with reservoir levels at the targets for this winter. McGregor is 0.55 meters below normal to allow for erosion repairs on the NE shore, and Travers/Little Bow are 0.7 meters above normal to compensate.

### **WINTER CONSTRUCTION**

This winter we will complete construction of the BK-2-2 pipeline and most of the BK-2 pipeline. These are two of the four pipelines required to replace the entire Lateral B/K (Vauxhall Block) system. The warm weather this fall has allowed us to get a good start on construction.



The BK-3 pipeline was completed last spring and work on the BK-1 pipeline will begin in 2025. We expect to complete the entire project by the spring of 2027. Replacement of this system with pipelines will eliminate over 10,000 acre feet of return flow.

### **DEADHORSE RESERVOIR**

We are proceeding with engineering, regulatory requirements, and discussions for land acquisition. If regulatory approvals and land acquisition proceed smoothly, construction could begin in the fall of 2025 and be completed in 2027. Construction of the project will likely be dependent on approval of expansion in the plebiscite to be held next spring, to ensure that we are able to cover our costs while maintaining reasonable water rates.

### **WATER RATES PAYMENT DEADLINE**

Please note that the deadline for payment of 2024 water rates is December 31, 2024. Any payments arriving in the mail after this date will be considered late.

An online payment must be in the BRID's bank account on or before the deadline or it will be considered late. This means initiating the payment with your bank several days before the deadline to ensure it is posted to our account on time.

Payments (cash, cheque or online only) can be made in the following manner:

- Payment posted to our account online on or before December 31, 2024.
- Payment at the office on or before 4:30 P.M. on December 31, 2024, during office hours (see holiday hours below).
- Mailed cheques must be received no later than December 31, 2024.

Penalties on arrears will be applied January 2, 2025.

If you are sending in a cheque from someone other than the owner named on the invoice, please specify on the cheque: the owner name, account number and land location being paid for. This is to ensure that payment is applied to the correct account. If someone other than the landowner is responsible for paying the water rates, it is the landowner's responsibility to forward the bill to the responsible party.

Receipts will no longer be mailed for online or mailed payments. Please contact the office to request a receipt.

### **STAFF CHANGES**

Cory Bougie, Xavier Hull and Jake Penner replaced Neil Redecop and Miguel Hiebert as labourers. Conrad Cazemier retired from being a ditchrider.

### **BOARD MEETING SUBMISSIONS**

To ensure that requests or concerns are received in time to be included on the agenda of the upcoming board meeting, and to allow staff and directors sufficient time to complete any research on the issues, submissions must be received at the office no later than 4:30 P.M. on the Wednesday prior to the board meeting. Board meetings are normally held on the fourth Wednesday of every month. A submission received after that time will be considered for the agenda of the next month's meeting.

Submissions to the office should be addressed to either the board of directors, Richard Phillips-General Manager, or Jessica Robbins-Assistant General Manager-Finance & HR. They can be sent by mail, fax (403-654-4197), or email to [Richard.Phillips@brid.ca](mailto:Richard.Phillips@brid.ca) or [Jessica.Robbins@brid.ca](mailto:Jessica.Robbins@brid.ca).



## **HISTORY BOOK**

The BRID now has updated history books. A chapter was added to the original book, which is a history of the district from the early concept in 1903 through 1995. The final chapter updates the history through 2019. Any irrigator interested in a copy of the book needs only to make a request to the BRID and a free copy will be sent to you.

## **IRRIGATION DISTRICT WATER QUALITY DATA TOOL**

This website provides access to water quality data collected throughout Alberta's irrigation districts as part of the Irrigation District Water Quality Project. This project assesses the quality of water in Alberta's irrigation districts.

To access this website, enter [www.idwq.ca/](http://www.idwq.ca/)

## **MASS TEXT/UPDATED CELL NUMBERS**

If you are an irrigator wishing to receive text message updates, please provide a current cell number.

## **HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS**

**Closed** - December 25, 26 and 27

**Open** - December 30 and 31

**Closed** - January 1, 2025

**Open** - January 2, 2025