



SPECIAL NEWSLETTER

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lori.vanhal@brid.ca

2022 WATER RATES

After much deliberation, the board of directors of the Bow River Irrigation District made the decision to increase the water rate from \$16.00/acre to \$17.50/acre. It was also decided that various other rates and fees would increase by the same factor. Some may question the need to raise water rates when we have significant reserves, but those funds are required for large capital projects over the next few years.

Please see the attached 2022 Rates and Fees Bylaw for details.

The following considerations were made when setting the water rate:

1. Operating costs and the cost of equipment have increased. Below are a few examples of large increases between 2012 and 2021.

	2012	2021	Difference	Annual cost per acre
Magnacide	\$200,000	\$750,000	\$550,000	\$1.90
Maintenance materials	\$290,000	\$550,000	\$260,000	\$0.90
Equipment fuel and repairs	\$540,000	\$640,000	\$100,000	\$0.35
Equipment depreciation	\$360,000	\$525,000	\$165,000	\$0.57

Some examples of equipment costs:

	2012	2021	Difference
Excavator	\$235,000	\$350,000	\$115,000
Dozer	\$280,000	\$600,000	\$320,000

2. Lease revenue has increased substantially since 2012, mainly due to the development of cultivation on BRID land, without which the water rate would have had to be set significantly higher. Further development of cultivation leases and renewable energy leases are underway.

	2012	2021	Difference	Annual savings per acre
Grazing leases	\$120,000	\$140,000	\$20,000	\$0.07
Cultivation leases	\$20,000	\$700,000	\$680,000	\$2.36
Renewable energy leases	\$0	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$0.43

3. The water rate was set at \$16.00/acre in 2012 and it has remained there since. Most of the other irrigation districts have had an increase since then. The rates in the table below are base rates. Five districts have additional charges for acres served by pipelines.

Year	BRID	Average of all other districts	Average excluding EID*
2012	\$16.00	\$11.94	\$13.02
2021	\$16.00	\$16.10	\$17.56
\$ Increase	\$0.00	\$4.16	\$4.54
% Increase	0%	35%	35%

*EID's rate is \$0.00/acre due to substantial lease revenue

COMMUNICATION

Although directors are always happy to receive questions or concerns from irrigators, it is most efficient to contact BRID staff first with any routine matters or concerns.

Nature of concern	Contact
Billing	Anne Cazemier/Jessica Robbins
Water delivery	Your ditch rider/Daryl Brouwers
Maintenance	Bill Skelly
Leases	George Thiessen
Irrigation acres	Evan Blindback/Jessica Robbins
Easements/land issues	Dana Laurence
Weed control	Bill Skelly/Daryl Brouwers
General inquiries	Richard Phillips

WATER UPDATE

Our water demand so far this spring has been far greater than the long-term average. Through May 25 our diversion from Little Bow Reservoir was 56,000 acre feet, compared to the average of 27,000 acre feet.

On May 25th the combined storage in McGregor, Travers and Little Bow Reservoirs was 314,000 acre feet, which is slightly below winter level, and low for this time of year. This is the result of our high water demand and low river flow. There is an excellent mountain snowpack but due to cold temperatures runoff to the river has been low and we have not been able to divert at full capacity yet. Alberta Environment and Parks and TransAlta Utilities have done a great job of releasing extra water from TransAlta's reservoirs this spring to supplement the river to help everyone, and otherwise the reservoirs would be much lower.

Our inability to increase reservoir storage so far makes it unlikely that we will be able to fill them to normal levels this year unless we get enough rain to significantly reduce irrigation demand. We like to have at least 340,000 acre feet stored on June 1 and 380,000 acre feet stored by July 1. We will have enough water this year, but we need to be careful to ensure that the reservoir levels are good this fall for next year.

One of the best ways to improve our water supply is to reduce return flow to the river. Last year we spilled 48,000 acre feet, and our lowest total in recent years was 46,000 acre feet in 2017. If every irrigator consistently ordered their water on and off we could spill much less water. Another practice that increases spill is the frequent shut off of irrigation for one or two days each weekend by some irrigators. It is far easier to manage water efficiently when flows are relatively steady. Please always contact your ditch rider at least 24 hours before you want to irrigate and the day before you plan to stop irrigating.

WATERING ROADS

Irrigators are reminded to adjust their systems to avoid watering roads. This can damage roads, create dangerous conditions, and you may be subject to fines from your municipality. Under the Irrigation Districts Act water delivery can be stopped if an irrigator is using water in a manner that may cause loss or damage to the property of any person.