

# Water Dispatch

water information and commentary

Spring/Summer 2015

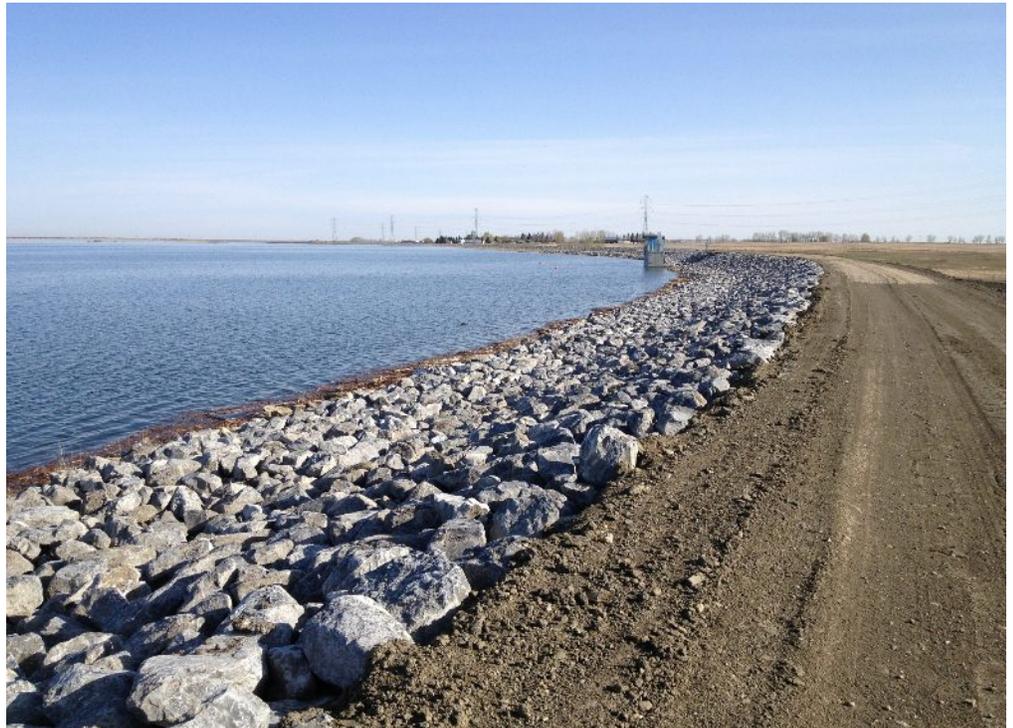
## **Langdon Reservoir Expansion, Pipelines and Canal Rehabilitation are all Part of Water Saving and Security Plan at the WID**

The snow pack was low and the rain isn't falling, but the WID is more prepared than ever, thanks to a successful construction season. The Langdon Reservoir expansion is complete, 9 km of C canal was rehabilitated and a total of 10 km of pipeline was installed in 3 locations.

Expanding the Langdon reservoir was a major undertaking, but doubling the capacity offers greater water security for WID water users. The dike was raised 2 meters, and expanded the capacity from 6000 to 12000 acre-feet. This ensures that in the spring, when the supply is greater than demand, the reservoir can be filled. In later months the WID can utilize the reservoir as a source for A Canal, freeing up further diversion from the Bow to be used for B and C canals.

"With the lower than average snow pack, the timing couldn't have been better to have that reservoir ready," said WID's General Manager, Erwin Braun.

Contractors completed the project, and the WID sourced materials like the required rip rap. "In terms of budget, we did very well," said Jeremy Hemsing, Manager of Operations and Maintenance. "We will come in under what we budgeted for that project, and we finished ahead of schedule."



*The Langdon Reservoir expansion doubles its capacity, offering greater water security for all users. - WID photo*

The reservoir isn't the only project that serves to increase water conservation and supply security for the WID. Canal rehabilitation and pipeline installation both go a long way to ensure reliable water supply.

WID crews and contractors rehabilitated 9 km of C canal to gravel on poly lined canal. "We anticipate that we're going to see significant water savings from this project," Hemsing said. "The soil there is very porous so the installation of a liner should really reduce seepage, and

drastically change how that canal operates."

WID crews installed three smaller sections of closed PVC pipeline, totalling about 10 km, ensuring no evaporation or seepage along those stretches. Pipeline now connects C canal to the existing pipeline north of Rockyford on the Cemetery Hill sublateral. Another segment replaced the A canal sublateral along the east side of Namaka Lake, and the third section was along the North Cluny lateral.

# Multiple Agencies Cooperate to Prevent Invasive Mussels from Entering Alberta

When faced with a complicated problem, sometimes it's best to approach it from multiple angles. This is exactly what's happening with the current programs around potential zebra or quagga mussel invasions in Alberta. The Alberta government put through legislation regarding boat inspections, conservation 'sniffer dogs' are being trained to detect mussels, and irrigation districts are developing proactive emergency response plans in case mussels do show up in Alberta.

With mussels spreading in Canada and the United States, we need both plans and immediate action to ensure they stay out.

## **Alberta Watercraft Inspection Legislation**

On April 2, the Alberta government put through new laws for provincial watercraft inspection stations. When signs indicate a watercraft inspection station is open, anyone with a water-based vessel must report in. Inspectors will look over boats, trailers and associated equipment for invasive species. Bypassing the inspection station is against the law, and carries a fine of up to \$100,000 or 12 months in prison.

If inspectors find mussels, the vessel will be taken in for professional decontamination before it is returned to

the owner. Inspectors found two contaminated boats just before the May long weekend, and Cindy Sawchuk, Aquatic and Invasive Species Operations Lead with Alberta Environment and Parks explained that the owners were fully cooperative, and the decontamination was performed at no cost to the owners. The inspections are designed as prevention and education opportunities.

These stations will be located near border crossings, and inspection crews will also visit high traffic boating areas. Already this year, inspection stations identified two vessels with mussels.

## **WID Helps Fund Mussel Detecting Dogs**

Human inspectors can use their eyes, but dogs have the ability to use their super sensitive sniffers to detect their 'target'. This enables them the ability to sense invaders in hard to see spots, or when they are in microscopic phases of their life cycle.

The Alberta and Montana governments contracted Working Dogs for Conservation last year in a pilot project to test dogs as mussel detectors, and the results were fantastic. Due to this, the AIPA and Alberta government partnered to contract these dogs again this year. "Their trained mussel detecting dogs were at the border for a period of two months from mid-March to early May. They were inspecting watercraft during the busy high-risk season when snowbirds are returning to Canada," Sawchuk said.

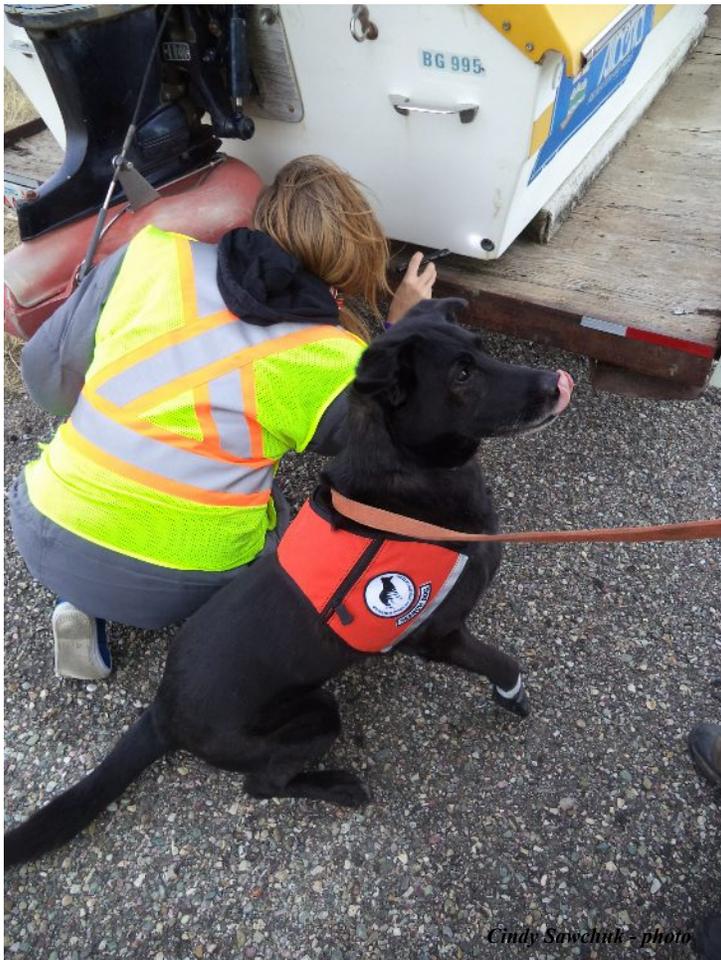
Alberta will soon have their own trained dogs. The AIPA is assisting with funding the training. "The next time you see mussel detecting dogs in Alberta they will be Government of Alberta trained dogs. So then we will have our own program. We're being coached and trained and mentored and certified by Working Dogs for Conservation as well as California Fish and Wildlife," Sawchuk said.

Prevention is key, and stakeholders recognize how critical it is to keep these invasive mussels out of Alberta. Irrigation Districts, including the WID, paid a levy to the AIPA to assist with the cost of training these dogs.

## **WID Developing Emergency Procedures**

While the laws and sniffer dogs work to keep the mussels out, the WID is working to design an Invasive Mussels Response Plan in case the mussels do come into the province. This plan will outline procedures such as potential isolation points, methods for removal of mussels, as well as necessary communication with downstream stakeholders.

"Prevention is the best case scenario, and early detection is right up there. The sooner we know about them, the better chance we will have to react effectively," Jeremy Hemsing, WID's Manager of Operations and Maintenance said.



*Cindy Sawchuk - photo*

**3rd year veteran inspector employee Caitlyn Tracey verifies an alert by Wicket during a training exercise**

## CLEAN! DRAIN! DRY!

Ideally, invasive mussels will be kept out of Alberta. The challenge is that part of the lifecycle of the mussel includes microscopic larvae. For this reason, the CLEAN! DRAIN! DRY! principle is critical to preventing mussels from entering the province's waterways. Every time any boat is removed from water, it, and all the equipment used with it, should be thoroughly cleaned, completely drained, and allowed to dry before it is put in another body of water.

**Anyone finding or suspecting mussel contaminated boats or equipment should call 1-855-336-BOAT to report it.**

## WID Welcomes Two New Staff Members

Two new staff members joined the WID in April. Pat Kobsar is the new Accounts Payable Clerk. She is originally from Calgary, and has lived for the past 16 years on an acreage south of Strathmore. Donna Mitchel came on board as the Payroll and Accounting Clerk.



*Donna Mitchel (l) and Pat Kobsar (r) tour the expanded Langdon Reservoir's outlet to Secondary A Canal - WID photo*

She was born and raised in Strathmore, and grew up on a farm. Both ladies are enjoying their new positions, find the work interesting, and enjoy their colleagues. Welcome, Pat and Donna!

## Aggie Days Display Leaves Lasting Impression on Visitors

Aggie Days is an annual event put on at the Stampede grounds in Calgary. Students and families can come learn about where their food comes from, and various aspects of farming life.

Representatives from the Alberta Irrigation Projects Association and the various Irrigation Districts manned an interactive display at Aggie Days in April. They shared the importance of irrigation with visitors, and handed out 1800 reusable bags.

The event was a huge success. Erwin Braun, General Manager of the WID related a story that exemplifies the lasting connections created by these events. "A fellow

from Alberta Environment came through with his children. One of his kids spent some time looking at the irrigation pivot model that we had set up. A few weeks later they were driving in the country and the child got all excited because he saw a pivot in the field. He made his dad stop and talk about this pivot that he saw."

The opportunity to engage in experiential learning is vital for these young people. In a day and age where some people are removed from the source of their food, it's great to have events like this to draw them in and form connection. The WID was pleased to be part of this event.



*Visitors enjoy learning about irrigation at the interactive AIPA display - WID photos*

## CoCoRaHS Provides Unique Opportunity in Citizen Reported Weather

Have you ever found that the weather reports weren't true for your location? The closest town said they got no snow, but you were shoveling for hours! That wonderful rain they forecast? You watched it cruise past about 5km south of you, but your fields got none. Here's your chance to put *your* weather on the map, and contribute to an important citizen science project.

Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network, or CoCoRaHS, began after a large flood event in Colorado. The concept is that citizens use low-cost equipment to monitor rain, snow and hail, record the data and upload it to the CoCoRaHS website. This gives real-time data to farmers, meteorologists, emergency managers, and aids in a variety of weather-related endeavors such as river forecasting and drought prediction.

Getting involved is as simple as visiting their website, ordering a rain gauge, setting it up and taking readings every morning.

[www.cocorahs.org/Canada.aspx](http://www.cocorahs.org/Canada.aspx)



While participation has increased throughout the US, and is increasing in Eastern Canada, Western Canada is still lacking in reporting stations. The Bow River Basin Council has taken it upon themselves to remedy that. They are actively promoting this program, and have 100 free rain gauges to give to qualifying individuals or groups who want to get involved. Contact them through [www.brbc.ab.ca](http://www.brbc.ab.ca) for more information



*Mike Kelly, Bow River Basin Council Board Chair, with his newly installed CoCoRaHS rain gauge. - BRBC photo*

### ***Rick Page Re-elected to WID's Board of Directors***

There was an election between incumbent Rick Page and nominee Vern Bretin for Division 3 Board of Directors Representative at the WID's annual general meeting. Rick Page won the election and will continue in this role.

The WID would like to thank both gentlemen for running, and all Board members for the time and effort they put forth.

**Let Us Know!**

**Please remember that 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 Water District Supervisor know as soon as possible. See below for contact information.**

#### **WID Board of Directors**

<b>Doug Brown</b>	<b>Div 1</b>
<b>Henry Colpoys – Vice Chair</b>	<b>Div 2</b>
<b>Rick Page</b>	<b>Div 3</b>
<b>Dan Shute – Chair</b>	<b>Div 4</b>
<b>Ray Kettenbach</b>	<b>Div 5</b>

#### **Water Supervisor Contacts**

<b>Brian Sander</b>	<b>Water Master</b>	<b>403-325-0493</b>
<b>Derrick McGougan</b>	<b>Chestermere</b>	<b>403-899-4638</b>
<b>Don Brownlee</b>	<b>Carseland</b>	<b>403-899-4641</b>
<b>Joey Mordy</b>	<b>Gleichen/Cluny</b>	<b>403-325-4642</b>
<b>Wes Sproule</b>	<b>Rockyford</b>	<b>403-325-4640</b>
<b>Eric Beingessner</b>	<b>Crowfoot</b>	<b>403-325-4639</b>
<b>JR Dunbar</b>	<b>Strathmore</b>	<b>403-325-4601</b>