

History

Construction of the Bassano Dam began in September, 1910 and was completed in the spring of 1914. The official opening took place on May 2, 1914.



The Bassano Dam was unique because of the dam's composite character, great length, and depth of water which could flow over the crest during flood periods.

In 1935, a group of farmers in the Brooks area acquired the Bassano Dam and the canal system from the CPR, forming the Eastern Irrigation District (EID). The District's boundaries encompass 600,000 ha (1,500,000 Ac) of land, which is over 400 km² (200 mi²) larger than the province of Prince Edward Island.



Bassano Dam

The Bassano Dam was very noteworthy in 1914 for its unusual structure and capacity. The dam is a symbol of the challenges faced by the early pioneers to overcome obstacles and make irrigation farming a viable and prosperous agricultural enterprise in Western Canada.



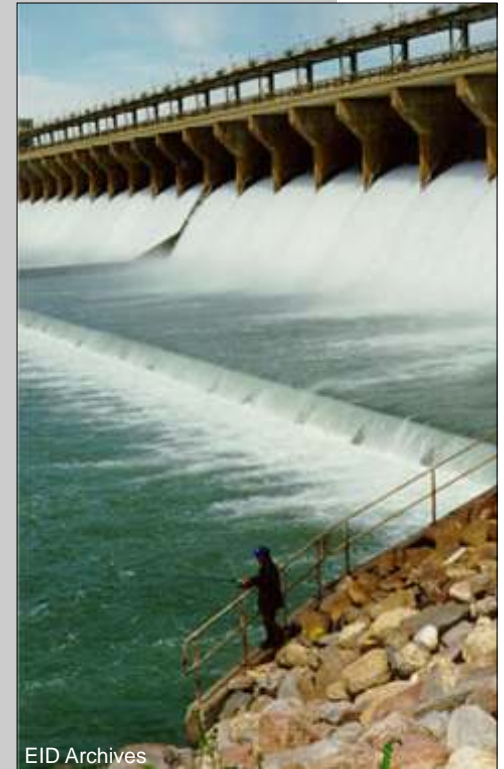
Location

The Bassano Dam is Located on the Bow River, 6 km (4 mi) southwest of the Town of Bassano and provides the life blood of the Eastern Irrigation District (EID).

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Where Water Works Wonders

**Bassano
Dam**

Structure

The concrete spillway runs for 220 m (720 ft) across the bed of the river.

Construction of this segment required 42,000 m³ (55,000 yd³) of concrete (this amount of concrete would make 1400 basements), 1,300,000 kg (3,000,000 lbs) of reinforcing steel and 450,000 kg (1,000,000 lbs) of structural steel. The spillway included 24 sluice gates, which could handle a river flow of up to 3,000 m³/sec (100,000 cfs).



On the north end of the spillway an earthen embankment was constructed to help contain the river. This embankment was 14m (45 ft) high, 2200 m (7,000 ft) long and required 3,000,000 m³ (10,000,000 ft³) of fill material to construct.

The irrigation canal headgates located at the south end of the spillway includes five slide gates. The Bassano Dam raises the water level 14 m (46 ft) above the river bed which enables water to be diverted through these headgates into the irrigation system.

Restructuring the Dam

After 70 years of operation, the original structure was beginning to deteriorate. In 1984 a plan was commenced to rehabilitate the structure under the supervision of the PFRA. Refurbishing work began in January, 1985 with 2.5 years required to complete the project. During this time, the Dam was reinforced, damaged concrete replaced, the earthen embankment upgraded and the gates changed and electrified.



This major facelift cost 14 million dollars with the end result being a very modern dam capable of diverting 100 m³/s (3,500 cfs) into the District's water system.

EID Effect

Virtually all the water found and used within the boundaries of the EID, originates from the Bow River at the Bassano Dam. This includes water to irrigate over 113,000 ha (279,000 Ac) of farmland, water to feed over 12,000 ha (26,000 Ac) of managed wetland habitat, water requirements for local industry and the domestic needs of a population base close to 20,000 people.

