

Bassano Dam Emergency Spillway Update

The environmental, historical and geotechnical studies and the engineering design of the emergency spillway project have all been completed. The District has successfully negotiated an easement agreement with Siksika Nation which allows construction of the emergency spillway west of the existing Bassano Dam Structure. We are presently waiting for the Government of Canada to issue the easement, which is expected within the next week.

In July, the design and other required studies were submitted to Alberta Environment for their review. Once this review is complete we are expecting to receive approval for the amendment to our water license to accommodate the spillway.

The first construction contract has been approved and work will start immediately after we receive all approvals from Alberta Environment which we anticipate will be in November 2015.

With no delays, or issues, the spillway should be complete and ready for emergency use in the spring of 2018.



Aquatic Invasive Species Update

Aquatic Invasive species continue to be a threat to the District's irrigation infrastructure. Vegetation such as flowering rush, fish species like Prussian Carp and of course Zebra and Quagga mussels all have the potential to negatively impact irrigation infrastructure. The District is committed to collaborating with other agencies to slow the spread of these species into our areas.

The District partnered with Taber, Bow River, Western, Lethbridge Northern, Raymond and United Irrigation Districts to fund the Alberta Mussel Dog Detection Training Program which will effectively and efficiently inspect watercraft for mussel infestation. Three Mussel Dog Detection Teams have been trained and have been conducting inspections at Alberta Transportation Stations and boat launches across

Alberta since early July. These teams in conjunction with Alberta's regular inspection teams provide a good defense to stop any infested watercraft entering Alberta.

The District is continuing to participate in the formation of rapid response plans both for our own District and industry wide in the event that mussels are found in Southern Alberta irrigation infrastructure. These rapid response plans will be the recipe for treatment and will assist in minimizing the spread of mussels through irrigation systems. In combination with development of a rapid response plan, this fall following water turn off the District will be undertaking an annual program to inspect all structures within our infrastructure for evidence of mussels.

Water Rates and Assessment Billing

During the 2003 and 2004 irrigation seasons the EID Board of Directors waived the water rate for irrigation purposes due to the BSE crisis. During this time the Directors felt that waiving the rates would assist water users through the economic downturn which was being experienced within Alberta's agriculture industry. At the time the water rate was waived the charge for acres assessed as irrigation acres (first water rights) was \$7.50 per acre and the charge for acres subject to a terminable agreement was \$7.50 per acre.

Starting in 2005 and up to and including 2015, the Board of Directors has set the water rate for irrigation acres and acres subject to a terminable agreement at \$0.00 per assessed acre. The Board of Directors believes that using other District revenues to cover this cost allows water users to retain cash reserves which support on-farm irrigation conversions that ultimately increase water use efficiencies within the District. Assessment related to energy rate surcharges and system maintenance surcharges have continued to be charged on acres served by pressurized water conveyance systems. Water users on pressurized water conveyance systems have continued to be billed for this assessment every fall following water shut down.

The last few years the District has calculated and included within the EID Annual

Report the cost per acre to deliver water to the farm gate that is covered using other District revenues. This cost was \$23.00 per acre in 2014, and \$21.00 per acre in 2013.

In order to provide water users with assessment and water usage information for their parcel(s), the Directors have instructed that Assessment Billing Invoices be sent to all irrigation account holders. For most water users this invoice will be received as information as the District's water rate is set at \$0.00. The invoice for each account will include:

- the legal land description of each parcel,
- the acres assessed for each parcel,
- the 2015 water use for each parcel,
- the 2014 calculated cost per acre to deliver water to the farm gate,
- the total cost to deliver water for each parcel (the cost covered by other District revenues)
- the current water rate (as per Bylaw 901(2015)) for irrigation acres and terminable acres the rate is \$0.00
- any other rates or surcharges levied on the parcel(s).

In addition to allowing water users to review the benefit accrued for the season resulting from District revenues covering the water rate, the Assessment Billing Invoice will allow water users the opportunity to review the water rights currently

assessed to their parcel(s) as well as the 2015 water usage for each parcel.

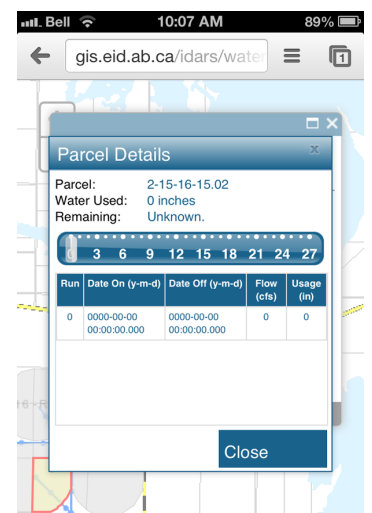
The District asks that each water user take the time to review the information on the invoice, with particular attention being given to the assessed acres for each parcel. If you have completed on farm improvements which increased the irrigated area on your parcel without notifying the District then the District's assessment for the parcel may be less than the area you are irrigating. The District's assessment value determines the amount of acres that are entitled to receive water for irrigation purposes. These are the acres that are allowed to receive up to the maximum amount of water designated by bylaw per irrigation season (under non drought conditions typically 24 inches). If the assessed area of a parcel is less than the area being irrigated, it is possible the parcel may reach the maximum limit of water sooner. Once the maximum limit is reached the parcel may not be able to receive additional water for irrigation purposes.

Assessment Billing Invoices will be mailed out to all water users following water shut down in October 2015. Should you have any concerns regarding the assessment or water usage on your parcel(s) upon reviewing the invoice or at any other time during the year please feel free to contact the main office at 403-362-1400.

Irrigation Data Recording System (IDARs)

The EID is currently using the map based IDARs system to record and track in real time, flow rates and water usage for every parcel assessed with water rights in the District.

The IDARS system also allows Water Users to track the flow rate and water usage of their parcels (owned or rented) in real time as recorded by their Water Operator. A home computer, laptop computer, tablet or smart phone along with an internet connection is all that is required to access the system. The EID encourages all Water Users to sign up for this free service by contacting the main office at 403-362-1400.



Assessment Roll

Under the Province of Alberta Irrigation Districts Act, the District is required to maintain an assessment roll which contains a list of all parcels with irrigation acres (first water rights) and terminable acres (second water rights) within the District's boundaries. For each parcel on the assessment roll information including the legal description, the name and address of the owner, the number of irrigation acres and the number of terminable acres is detailed. Acres assessed as irrigation acres or terminable acres and included on the District's assessment roll are acres that are entitled to receive water for irrigation purposes. Acres that are not included on the assessment roll are not entitled to receive water for irrigation purposes. The maximum limit of irrigation acres and terminable acres that may currently appear on the District's assessment roll is 311,000 acres, which corresponds to our current expansion limit. The District currently has a total of 298,200 acres recorded on the assessment roll leaving just under 13,000 acres available for development

On-farm increases in irrigation acres require authorization from the District and any increase is subject to the District's *Increases in Irrigation Acres Criteria & Guidelines Policy*. If you are planning any on-farm irrigation system improvements which will increase your irrigated area, you are required to notify the District and receive authorization prior to starting the project. If you have completed on-farm irrigation system improvements which have increased your irrigated area without receiving District authorization, your assessment as recorded on the District's assessment roll may be less than the area you are actually irrigating.

Water usage is calculated using the assessment recorded on the District's assessment roll. If this assessment is less than the acres being irrigated the parcel may reach the maximum amount of water entitled to be delivered sooner. Once the maximum is reached the parcel may not be able to receive additional water for irrigation purposes.

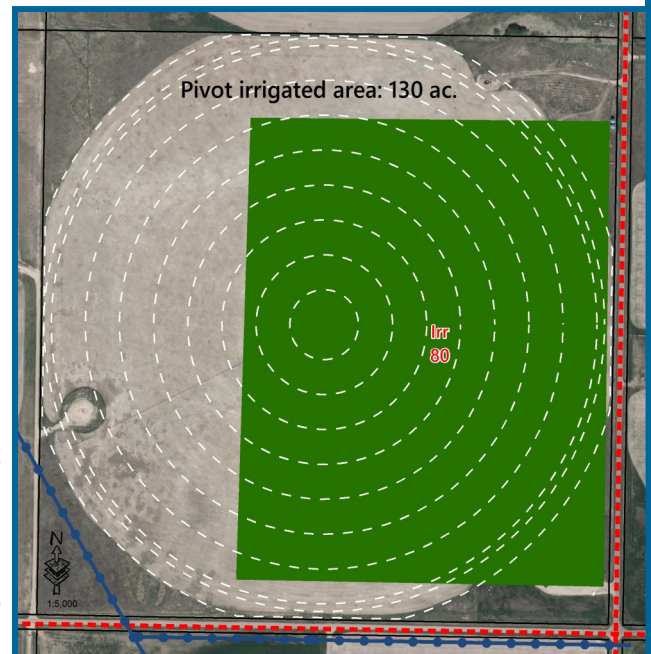
In previous years, the District undertook frequent general assessments to ensure the accuracy of the assessment roll. A general assessment is a process that reviews every irrigated parcel within District boundaries to determine the area currently being irrigated. The irrigated area is determined through review of current aerial photos. Irrigation is delineated quite distinctly from non-irrigated areas on aerial photos. The last general assessment undertaken by the District occurred in 1995.

The District realizes that since 1995 many water users have undertaken substantial on-farm irrigation changes. Some of these changes may have occurred with District authorization but some may have occurred without District authorization. As a result the District believes the current assessment roll may contain inaccuracies therefore in accordance with Provincial Statutes will be taking steps to correct the inaccuracies.

The District will be undertaking a general assessment to verify and correct the assessment roll to reflect the acres actually being irrigated in the District. **The goal of a general assessment is to work towards ensuring assessment is equal to actual irrigated area for all irrigated parcels within the District, thus assuring correct water delivery entitlements for all parcels.** During a general assessment of this type the District does not remove currently assessed irrigation acres (first water rights) from any parcel(s) unless receiving written application from the landowner of the parcel(s). All potential assessment increases identified during the general assessment process will be subject to the District's *Increases in Irrigation Acres, Criteria and Guidelines Policy*.

The District has also recently observed a number of encroachments onto District owned lands by adjacent landowners. These encroachments have included but are not limited to permanent structures, pivots and non-approved cultivation on titled canal and reservoir right of ways. During a general assessment, review and identification of encroachments onto District owned lands may occur. If an encroachment is identified, the District will notify the landowner and work toward resolving the identified encroachment.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding assessment on your parcel(s) do not hesitate to contact the main office at 403-362-1400.



Above: Aerial photo illustrating discrepancy in assessed and irrigated acres. Irrigation acres assessed on the EID's assessment roll of 80 acres shown in green shading. The calculated area of the pivot is 130 acres.

IRRIGATION UPDATE



Eastern Irrigation District

October 2015

County of Newell Rural Water Grant Funding Initiative

The EID is still accepting applications for the County of Newell Rural Water project Funding Initiative. The initiative reimburses 1st or 2nd Water Users that connect to the County of Newell Rural Water Project. The one-time reimbursement of \$2,000 per Water User is available provided the Water User met the conditions of the County of Newell's April 29, 2011 registration deadline and hooks up to the rural water line within 3 years of the line being installed.

Application forms are available from the EID Office or may be downloaded from the EID website (www.eid.ca). Once your property is hooked up to the rural water line, the completed application form can be dropped off or mailed to the EID Office.



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