

# THE HEAD GATE

Newsletter for the St. Mary River Irrigation District

May 2010 Volume 22

**The Head Gate Newsletter is produced to keep our water users informed and up-to-date on the district's events, schedules, water issues and policies.**

## **Board Elects New Chairman**

LeRon Torrie has been elected as the fourth Chairman in the Districts history. LeRon and his wife Colleen live and farm north of Grassy Lake. Leron replaces Jim Csabay who served as chairman for thirteen years. Jim Csabay, Jack Brewin and Peter Langemann are the only men to have served as chairman. Bob Dykstra was elected as vice-chair. Bob and his wife Lorraine live and farm south of Burdett. Bob says "Board members are just an extension of the waterusers" and wants you to share your ideas and concerns with Board members.

## **Message from the New Chairman**

I greet you as the new Chairman of SMRID. I appreciate the Board's confidence in me and I will do my best to serve in the best interest of SMRID and all of you. My main goal is move the district forward working together to forge One Team of Board, Staff and Irrigators with One Common Vision. I wish to express gratitude and appreciation to all our staff. Each of them, both in the offices and out in the field, are unsung heroes who play critical roles in making sure the water gets to us when we need it. I did not fully realize this until I joined the Board. I encourage all of us to express appreciation to the staff that we interact with. They will surely appreciate it.

One of the upcoming "Vision" issues that I want to thoroughly investigate and bring before the Board and hopefully on to you Irrigators is the issue of a small, staged, District Expansion of 5-10%. As you may be aware, Lethbridge Northern Irrigation District recently held an expansion plebiscite which passed by a vote of 86%. Other Districts in our area are considering expansion. Some reasons to consider expansion are that SMRID has unused water licenses and the District continues to make efficiency gains. Our staff are gathering the pertinent information for the Board to consider. When that information is compiled, we as a board will carefully study it. If the Board decides to conduct a plebiscite, we will provide that same information to each irrigator so that you can make an informed vote. Expansion can only occur if a plebiscite passes by at least 51% of the votes cast. Such a plebiscite would not occur until late fall or winter at the earliest.

In the meantime, I wish you all the best in this wet and late spring as we all are working against the calendar to get our crops seeded. I am confident our staff will have water when we finally need it!

## **Mountain Snow Pillow Information**

The Current mountain snow pillow or environment water data information is available at:  
<http://environment.alberta.ca/apps/basins/default.aspx>

## **Current Water Supply**

Total reservoir storage including Alberta Environment headworks and SMRID internal reservoirs is 92% of full supply volume or 711,000 acre feet as of May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010 .

The allocation cap has been set at 16" district wide, based on the May water supply outlook.

Recent snow fall has delayed start-up. Canals and Pipelines are being flushed and primed on a priority bases. Please call your Water Supervisor to find out when water will be available on your system.

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## Weed Control Costs

SMRID along with all other Districts are facing huge increases in the cost of chemical for both non-aquatic and aquatic weed control. In 2010, the budget for non aquatic weed control accounts for \$362,000 or \$0.97/acre as opposed to \$0.66/acre in 2007. The 2010 budget for aquatic weed control is \$650,000 or \$1.75/acre as opposed to \$0.60 an acre in 2007. From 2008 to 2010 we have incurred cost increases of 20% to 40% annually on aquatic weed control product, **Magnicide H**. SMRID in conjunction with AIPA have been re-searching possible substitutes for Magnicide H. There are some chemicals in the U.S. which may serve as an alternative, however, until these products are licensed in Canada, Magnicide H is the only product licensed for aquatic weed control.

While many other Districts have other sources of revenue to supplement rates by up to \$12/acre or in the case of EID eliminate rates, SMRID is 95% reliant on rates to cover operating expenses. For that reason alone, when SMRID has cost increases such as \$1.46/acre for chemical, unfortunately these cost increases have to be reflected in SMRID's rates. SMRID hopes to have Irrican supplement rates in the future, however Irrican's debt will not be paid for another nine years.

In the interim, the SMRID's Board and management are looking for new sources of revenue to be cultivated and are open to suggestions from its users.

## Aquatic Weed & Algae Control Structures

The prevalence of aquatic weeds and algae is an ongoing problem in the district. The rapid accumulation in canals and pipeline inlets requires frequent maintenance. Treatment with **Magnicide H** is increasingly expensive and automated screen systems, also expensive, require regular maintenance.

With the goal of reducing the risk of sudden failure on a wide variety of lateral and pipeline inlet structures, the SMRID has been developing the designs of relatively low cost aquatic weed and algae exclusion systems to be installed and tested over the next few years. Gabion walls, (rock-filled grid-wire baskets) installed in front of inlet structures are designed to maximize the surface area, decreasing the infiltration velocity and allowing high volumes of weeds and algae to accumulate in front of the wall without plugging. A floating Netboom is being installed across the West Medicine Hat Lateral 6 settling pond. Infiltration galleries (similar to tile drain pipes) will be installed on two pipelines and will bypass the trash racks with water filtered thru the riprap. Other solutions are being investigated.

| Western Water Supervisors         |                                     |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| #2/10 Dave Selman 403-332-2202    | #5 Glen Olson 403-332-2205          |
| #3 Brad Wiebe 403-332-2203        | #6 Len Young 403-332-2206           |
| #4 Garry Miller 403-332-2204      | #7 Garry Sindlinger 403-332-2207    |
| #9 Scott Marose 403-332-2209      |                                     |
| Eastern Water Supervisors         |                                     |
| #21 Kevin Kraemer 403-332-2221    | #26 Dallas Beierbach 403-581-6926   |
| #22 Richard Mitchell 403-581-6922 | #27 Gordon McCormick 403-581-6927   |
| #23 Walter Krysiak 403-581-6923   | #30 Miles Kallenberger 403-581-6930 |
| #24 Tim Smith 403-581-6924        | #31 Mike Curran 403-581-6931        |
| #25 Roy Becker 403-581-6925       | #32 Rodney Seitz 403-581-6932       |
| #33 Alan Sackman 403-581-6933     |                                     |

# THE HEAD GATE

## Notice of Weed Control Treatments

The St. Mary River Irrigation District will be controlling broadleaf weeds along its right of ways for the 2010 irrigation season. The chemicals used will be Vanquish, 2,4-D amine 600 and Oracle herbicides. Glyphosate will also be used for weed control on gravelled driving banks and for reed canary grass control. This Spray program will be starting in May of 2010 and will continue to the end of the irrigation season.

Also included in this weed control program will be the treatments for aquatic weeds. **To control these aquatic weeds, the St. Mary River Irrigation District may be treating the Canals, as required, as noted below on a regular two week interval for the 2010 irrigation season.** The Canals will be treated with Magnacide H (Acrolein, Inhibited) to control the growth of aquatic weeds and algae.

### Year 2010 Aquatic treatment locations and dates.

#### Grassy Lake / Burdett Area.

North Grassy Main TP 10/11 RGE 13  
North Burdett Main TP 10/11 RGE 12/13  
South Bow Island Lat 2B TP 9 RGE 11  
Bow Island Lat 22 TP 11 RGE 10  
South Grassy Main TP 9/10 RGE 14  
Bow Island Lat 13 TP 8/9 RGE 12  
Bow Island Lat 26 TP 11 RGE 1

May 4, 18 June 1, 15, 29 July 13, 27 Aug 10, 24 Sept 7, 21

#### Seven Persons / South Medicine Hat / Grassy Lake / Burdett Area

Main Canal Below Murray TP 10/11 RGE 6/7  
South Med. Hateral Lateral #3 TP 11/12 RGE 5/6  
N. Grassy/N. Burdett Lat. TP 10/11 RGE 12/13  
South Med. Hat Lateral #2 TP 11 RGE 6/7

May 12, 26 June 9, 23 July 7, 21 Aug. 4, 18 Sept 1, 15, 29

#### Lethbridge and Area

Chin Lateral # 10 TP 7/8 RGE 18/17  
Chin Lateral # 2 TP 8 RGE 20 RGE 19/20  
Verdigris TP 4 RGE 16/17

May 11, 25 June 8, 22 July 6, 20 Aug 3, 17, 31 Sept. 14, 28

#### Seven Persons / North Seven Persons Area.

Main Canal Below Murray TP 10/11 RGE 6/7  
WwestMed. Hat Lateral #2 TP12 RGE 6/7  
Med. Hat Laterals #10 & #13 TP 11/12 RGE 6/7  
Bow Island Lateral 34 TP 12 RGE 8

May 5, 19 June 2, 16, 30 July 14, 28 Aug 11, 25 Sept 8, 22

#### Main canal Treatments.

Main Canal Sauder Res. to Murray Res.  
TP 10/11/12 RGE 7/8

June 3, 17 July 1, 15, 29 Aug 12, 26 Sept 9, 23

#### Main Canal Stafford Res. to Sauder Res.

TP 8/9/10/11/12 RGE 10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19  
June 25 & 26 All laterals will be affected.

#### Lethbridge and Area

East Lateral TP 9 RGE 20/19  
Cameron Extension TP 10 RGE 20/19  
Cameron Lateral TP 9 RGE 19/20  
Northeast Lateral TP 9/10 RGE 20  
North Lateral TP 9/10 RGE 20/21

May 13, 27 June 10, 24 July 8, 22 Aug 5, 19 Sept. 2, 16

All sub laterals that take water from the above noted laterals may / will be affected by these treatments. Information material will be supplied, upon request if you have land affected by these treatments. This weed control program is administered by licensed applicators who are under the approval from Alberta Environmental Protection.

Manager of Operations

SMRID Lethbridge Office Telephone 403-328-4401

Hours Monday to Friday 8:15am - 12:00am 1:00pm - 4:30pm

SMRID Bow Island Office Telephone 403-545-6866

Hours Monday to Thursday 8:15am -12:00am 1:00pm - 4:30pm

Check out our website at [www.smid.ab.ca](http://www.smid.ab.ca) Email [smrid@smrid.ab.ca](mailto:smrid@smrid.ab.ca)