

2024 Water Sharing Memorandum of Understanding – Southern Tributaries

This Water Sharing Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) applies for the period of April 1 to December 31, 2024; the MOU is no longer in effect after this time period.

A Party’s participation in this MOU is voluntary and this MOU is not legally binding. The MOU is not a regulatory instrument of the *Water Act* and does not amend the terms of any underlying *Water Act* licences.

The Parties recognize that any action or omission by a Party under or pursuant to this Water Sharing MOU is voluntary and does not operate to bind, sever, or limit a Party’s entitlements under its water licences, and nothing in this Water Sharing MOU operates to amend or surrender any water licence or part thereof. Any Party to this MOU may withdraw from the MOU immediately upon written notice to the other Parties hereto, without penalty or further obligation.

The Government of Alberta (GOA) Water Sharing Memorandum of Understanding Operational Support document (March 28, 2024) is intended as a companion document to this MOU.

Amendments to this Water Sharing MOU require written acknowledgement of all the Parties hereto.

No Party will make a public statement naming another Party regarding this MOU without gaining prior consent from the named Party.

Parties Involved

County of Warner

Magrath Irrigation District (“MID”)

Mountain View Irrigation District (“MVID”)

Raymond Irrigation District (“RID”)

Southwest Irrigation District (“SWID”)

St. Mary River Irrigation District (“SMRID”)

United Irrigation District (“UID”)

(collectively, the “Parties” and individually, a “Party”)

Purpose of Water Sharing MOU

- This Water Sharing MOU sets the Parties' commitment to:
 - Continue collaborating voluntarily to manage prolonged drought at a basin level.
 - Continue collaborating, with GOA support, to define criteria and/or basin conditions to consider voluntary activation of water use reductions.

- Where practical, take steps to enact the water restriction commitments outlined in this MOU if and when the agreed criteria and/or basin conditions are met for activation of this MOU.
- Establish a cooperative and voluntary Water Sharing MOU in pursuit of more users having some water by having many users take less water.
- Encourage flexibility between licence holders to balance competing interests and priorities in the event of water shortages.
- Allow large water licence holders to coordinate their approach to water sharing through their voluntary, non-binding commitments to reduce water use, as outlined in this Water Sharing MOU.

Considerations for Activation/Deactivation of Water Sharing MOU

- The Parties will collaboratively decide to activate or deactivate the Water Sharing MOU based on the criteria below assessed at regularly scheduled sub-basin meetings. The Parties and GOA will endeavor to meet at a sub-basin level routinely starting in April 2024 to discuss basin conditions, with the meeting cadence changing as environmental and water management conditions evolve. Criteria to be considered in relation to activation or deactivation of this Water Sharing MOU include:
 - Current reservoir storage, and minimum winter reservoir storage.
 - Observed and forecast river flows, with consideration for instream objectives (IOs).
 - Expected river flow timing (both managed and unmanaged).
 - Water supply and demand, as seen below:

Water Supply Outlook (March to September), released by the River Forecasting Centre	<	Environmental Flows ¹ on the Main Stem + Irrigation District Demands (at assessed acres and limited duty ²) + Private Irrigation Licences (at full licence allocation) + First Nation Licences (at full licence allocation) + Small Municipal Demands (at full licence allocation) + Large Municipal Demands (at net of full allocation) + Industrial Demands (at full licence allocation)
¹ Environmental flows refer to the IOs at the mouths of the Belly River, the St. Mary River, and the Waterton River ² Supplied by Irrigation Districts, discussed as 13”		

2024 Water Sharing MOU Principles

- Regular communication between the GOA and the Parties under this Water Sharing MOU is a key component to the success of this effort.
- **Municipalities.** Municipalities which have been engaged in the collaborative Water Sharing MOU development have committed to implementing drought response measures which are anticipated to result in a reduction in water use of 5-10% compared to expected 2024 summer demands (maximum from May to October) if no measures were actioned.
 - Municipalities which have been engaged in the collaborative Water Sharing MOU development across the South Saskatchewan River Basin (SSRB) will strive for common actions and outcomes, depending on the needs of each basin.

- **Irrigation Districts.** Once other system demands have been accounted for, including municipal use, First Nations use, and industrial use, the Irrigation Districts in any given basin will share the remaining water volume, within their licenced allocation, based primarily on acres.

Commitment of Parties Involved

In the event that the Water Sharing MOU is activated in 2024, based on “Considerations for Activation/Deactivation of Water Sharing MOU”, the Parties agree to the following:

All Parties

Each Party to this Water Sharing MOU commits to not call priority pursuant to the terms of its water licence if the terms of this Water Sharing MOU are met.

County of Warner

The County of Warner will commit to the implementation of the County of Warner drought response measures; this represents an anticipated savings of 10% compared to expected 2024 summer demands (maximum from May to October) if no measures were actioned.

Irrigation Districts (MID, MVID, RID, SWID, SMRID, UID)

Once other system demands have been accounted for, including municipal use, First Nations use, and industrial use, the Irrigation Districts in the Southern Tributaries will share the remaining water volume, within their licenced allocation, primarily based on acres, while considering other water users supplied by Irrigation District systems under their own licences. Based on this principle the Irrigation Districts agree to manage the water available to the districts among themselves; Irrigation District boards will decide on how the volumes will be allocated.