

**THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION BOARD ACT
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION BOARD**

IN THE MATTER of a project of
Alberta Public Works, Supply and
Services for approval to construct
a water management project (the Project)
to convey and store water
diverted from the Highwood River

BOARD ORDER NO. 9601-1

WHEREAS the construction of water management facilities proposed to convey and store water diverted from the Highwood River by Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Alberta as represented by Alberta Public Works, Supply and Services (APWSS), consisting of four interrelated components:

1. A canal and diversion works in the Town of High River and in the Municipal District of Foothills No. 31. This proposed \$6.2 million component would triple the capacity of the existing diversion works and canal to allow more water to be diverted from the Highwood River to the Little Bow River during peak flows.

2. Construction of the Little Bow River dam and reservoir in the Municipal District of Willow Creek No. 26 and in the County of Vulcan No. 2, approximately 20 kilometres (km) west of Champion. The proposed \$38.8 million dam would be 25 metres high and create a reservoir that would hold 50,000 acre-feet of water. It would be filled from the natural runoff in the Little Bow River basin and water diverted from the Highwood River.

3. Construction of the proposed \$5.1 million Clear Lake diversion and canal in the Municipal District of Willow Creek, about 15 km east of the Town of Stavely. The 10 km long canal would allow the lake and 12 wetlands along the route to be filled when flows in Mosquito Creek are high; and

4. The proposed \$7.1 million enlargement of the existing Squaw Coulee Reservoir in the Municipal District of Foothills No. 31 from 293 acre-feet to 5,175 acre-feet by constructing upper and lower dams and a return canal to the Highwood River,

is a reviewable project under s.4(d) of the *Natural Resources Conservation Board Act* being chapter N-5.5 of the Statutes of Alberta, 1990; and

WHEREAS the Natural Resources Conservation Board may defer consideration of an application on any terms and conditions that the Board may prescribe or make any other disposition of an application that the Board considers to be appropriate.

WHEREAS the Natural Resources Conservation Board has deferred a decision respecting the Expanded Squaw Coulee component of the application by Alberta Public Works, Supply and Services for the construction and operation of certain water management facilities on the Highwood River and in Squaw Coulee including the Diversion Plans pertaining to proposed diversion works leading to Squaw Coulee and from Squaw Coulee to the Highwood River and to Mosquito Creek; and the Diversion Plans pertaining to the operation during the low flow season of late July and August of certain expanded diversion works in the Town of High River leading to the Little Bow River, subject to the filing and review of certain supplemental information herein specified.

THEREFORE, the Natural Resources Conservation Board hereby orders as follows:

1. The consideration of the operating plan for the expanded works for the diversion of water at High River from the Highwood River to the Little Bow River during the low flow season is deferred pending receipt and review of additional information as described herein.
2. The consideration of the expansion of the Squaw Coulee Reservoir and associated diversion works and return works is deferred.
3. The Operator shall complete its economic, social, and environmental assessment of the effects of the Super Expanded Squaw Coulee project component within twelve months of the date of issuance of this Order.
4. The Operator shall file with the Board for its approval the plans for the completion of the assessment of the economic, social and environmental effects of the Super Expanded Squaw Coulee project component, including a specific plan for public involvement, within three months of the date of issuance of this Order.
5. The Operator shall update the comparative analysis of potential storage sites within the Highwood River Basin. The comparative analysis shall include among other sites, the Super Expanded Squaw Coulee site, Stimson Creek Site 8 and the Tongue Creek Site 4, and shall include comparative data regarding environmental, social and economic effects for each site identified. The comparative analysis should form part of the completed assessment of the Super Expanded Squaw Coulee Reservoir.
6. The Operator shall, to the satisfaction of Alberta Environmental Protection, revise the IFN analysis used in the Application to reflect current fisheries management

- objectives for the Highwood River and to include instream flow needs based on the most recent information regarding the River, and current scientific assessment procedures and file the results thereof in the updated assessment of the economic, social and environmental effects of the Super Expanded Squaw Coulee project component.
7. The Operator shall file with the completed assessment of the economic, social and environmental effects of the Super Expanded Squaw Coulee project component an updated plan for the completion of the Highwood River Basin Water Management Plan based on the advice and consent of Alberta Environmental Protection. This update shall include: the design of an independent mediated/facilitated process; the process to identify all stakeholders and their respective community representation; detailed timelines providing for the completion of the HMP planning process within a period of two years; and cost estimates for consulting services and studies related to both parts (design and implementation) of the HMP.
 8. The Panel requires that the completed assessment of the Super Expanded Squaw Coulee Reservoir project component include a revised Diversion Plan for works leading to and from Squaw Coulee and for diversion works downstream at High River leading to the Little Bow River.

Made at the City of Edmonton, in the Province of Alberta, this day of , 1998.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION BOARD