

**Our Rivers...**

**Our Future**

The Bow River Basin Council, WPACs  
and Agriculture  
AEPA Forum  
March 15, 2011





# Outline

- 1. Set the Stage -The Task?**
- 2. The Bow River Basin Council**
- 3. WPACs & WSGs**
- 4. Member Recognition**
- 5. BBWMP Phase II**
- 6. Acknowledgements**



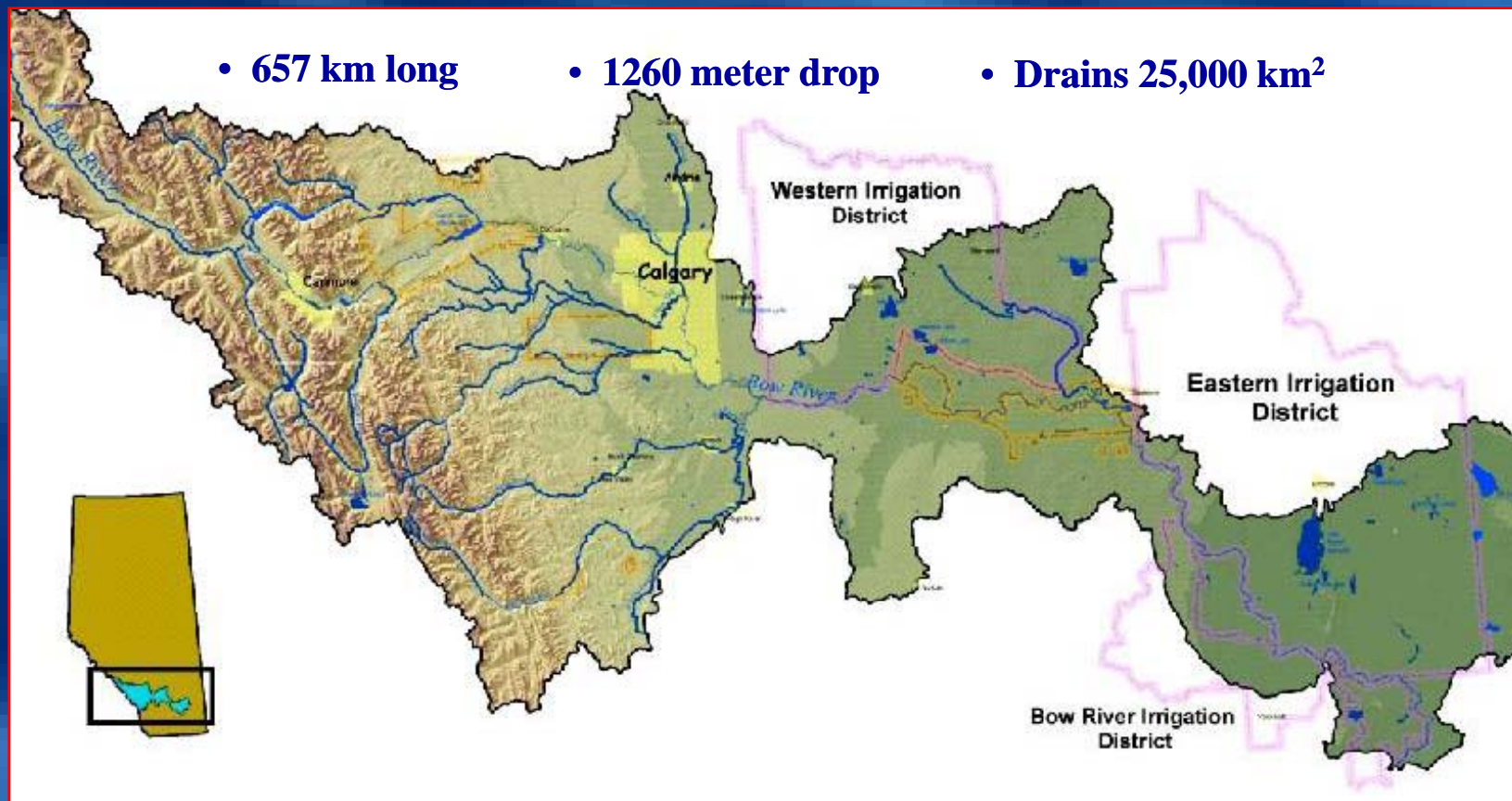
# 1. The Task?

"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."

Teddy Roosevelt



# BOW RIVER BASIN MAP





## Basin Quick Facts

- Basin is 4% of AB's area  
3% of water supply  
33% of population
- Extremely rapid growth
- A very hard working river
- Significantly engineered basin (15 major dams / weirs)
- Largest tributary to the South Saskatchewan
- >45% of AB's irrigated land is served by Basin waters



# Bow River Challenges

- Degradation of water quality in selected reaches particularly nutrients and pesticides
- Occasionally low dissolved oxygen
- Loss of wetlands and Degraded riparian areas
- Specific Headwaters and land use concerns
- Poorly understood groundwater conditions
- Loss of glacier storage
- Heavily engineered system with limited storage capacity
- The Bow River is fully allocated
- SSRB Phase 2 – closed basin
- Risk of both drought and flood
- Increasing global demand of food production
- Lack of single overarching regulatory framework



# Bow Glacier Recession Since 1898

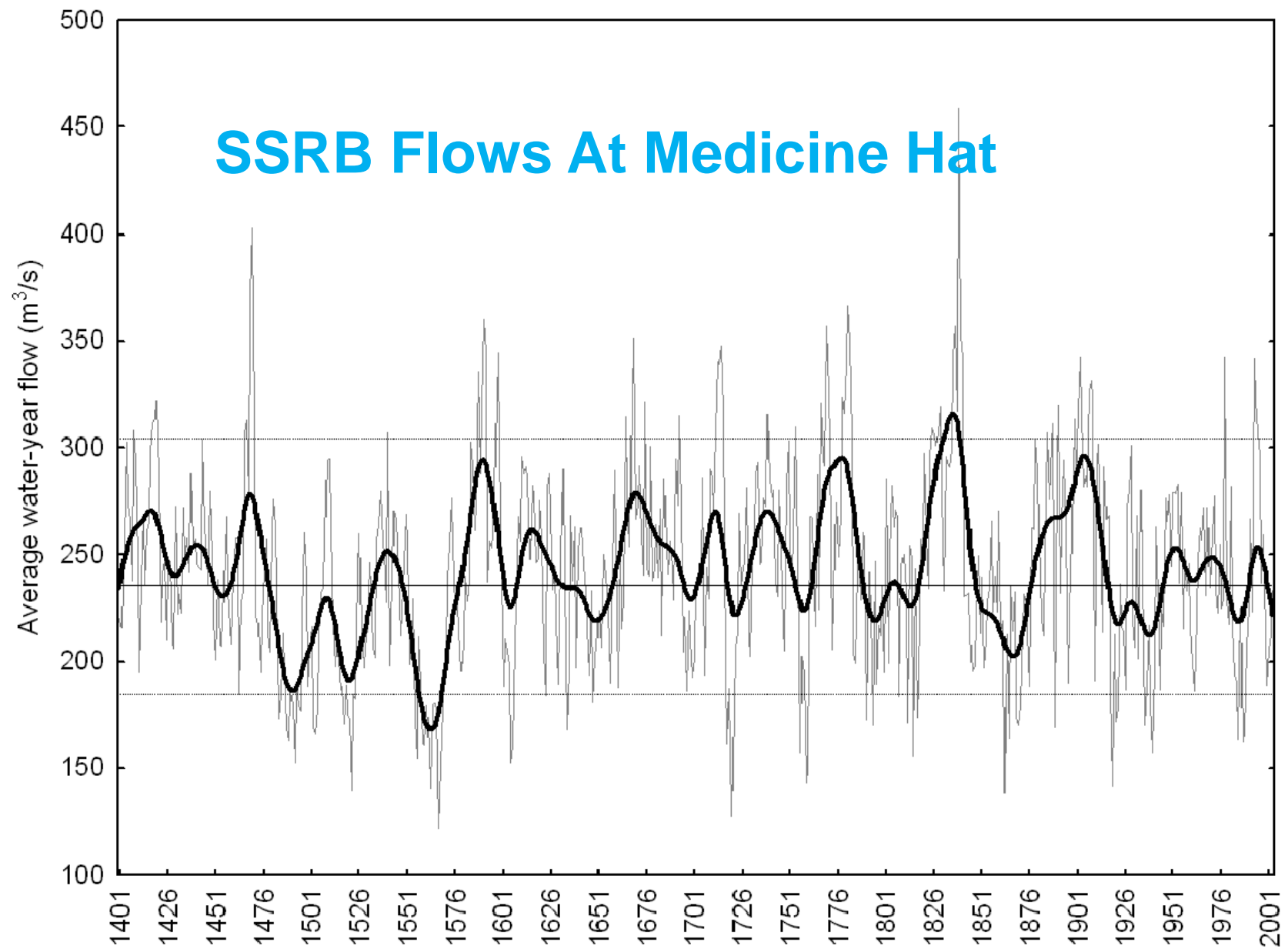


1898



Main Glacier 2002

## SSRB Flows At Medicine Hat





**There is a job to be done**



## 2. The Bow River Basin Council

**“If you fail to plan, then you are planning to fail”**





# MISSION

*Improvement and protection of the Bow River watershed for multiple uses, considering:*

- Riparian zones
- Aquatic ecosystems
- Quality and quantity of water, and
- Effects of land use on water resources.

# ORIGINS OF THE COUNCIL

- Created in 1991 by Environment Minister Ralph Klein
- May 2000 - Environment Minister Gary Mar reaffirmed support
- January 2001 - Charitable Status
- December 2004 – WPAC Designation





# WHAT HAS BEEN DONE



1999 BRBC SWM Workshop & Report

2002 BRBC Guidebook to Water Management

2002 BRBC Protecting Riparian Areas

2005 BRBC State of the Basin Report

2008 BRBC BBWMP Phase I WQOs

2009 BRBC Strategic Watershed Analysis

2010 BRBC Web-based State of Watershed





## 5. WPAC & WSGs

“Plan ahead: It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark! “



# Organizational Roles

- Strategic v.s. Tactical
- “Heads On” v.s. “Hands On”
- Focus on process not projects
- Collaborative approach



# BRBC and WSGs

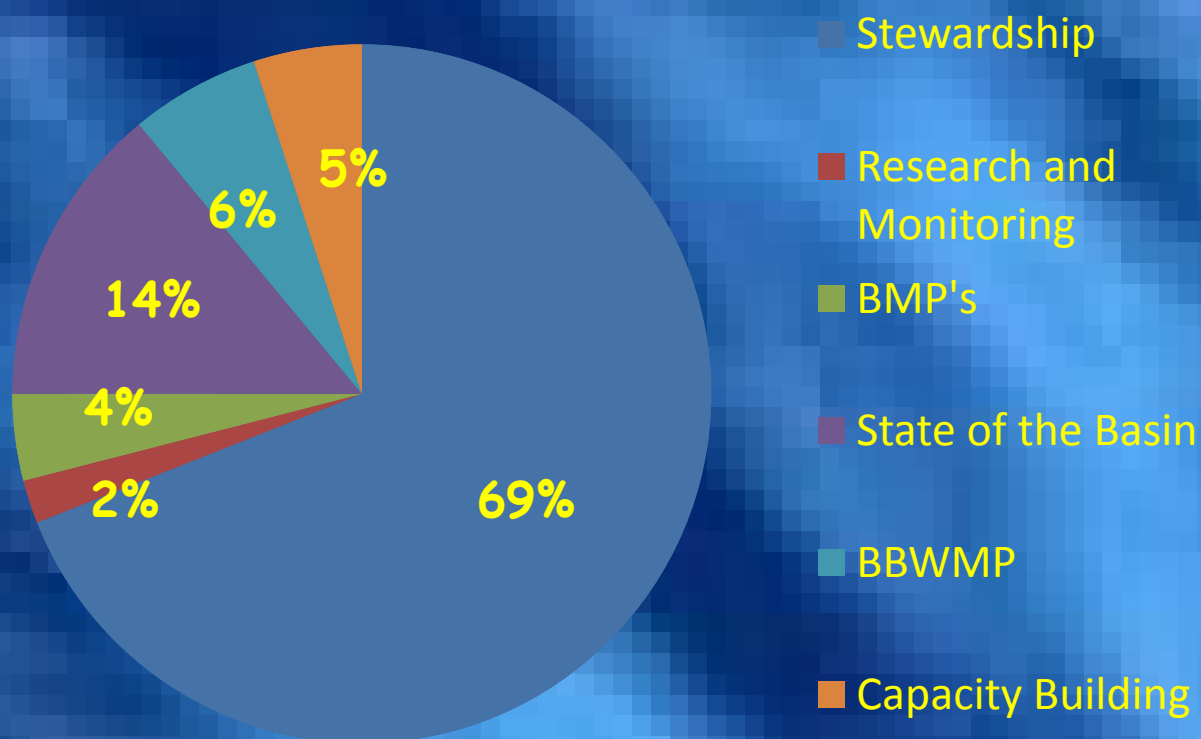
**“The difference between 'involvement' and 'commitment' is like an eggs-and-ham breakfast: the chicken was 'involved' - the pig was 'committed'.”**

**-Unknown**





## BRBC Outreach Summary (Annual Totals)





- **Watershed Stewardship Coordinating Committee**
- **Direct Support and Directed Support**
- **2010 ASN “Grassroots Award”**



## 4. Member Recognition

**“No organization is stronger than the quality of its leadership, or ever extends its constituency far beyond the degree to which its leadership is representative.”**



## **Some BRBC Members are...**

- **Agricultural Leaders in the Basin**
- **Founding members of WSGs**
- **Substantial supporters of WSGs**
- **Important Implementers of Ag –Env Policy**





## 5. BBWMP Phase II





## Bow Basin Watershed Management Plan

- Build political / stakeholder / owner support
- Reflects changing knowledge & practices
- Integrity of process (World-class document)
- Scientifically-based
- Economically feasible
- Latecomers welcome
- Web-enabled and accessible to all



# The Plan

- It is a Decision-support Tool not a Regulatory Instrument
- Remember that “Plan” is also a verb, not just a noun.

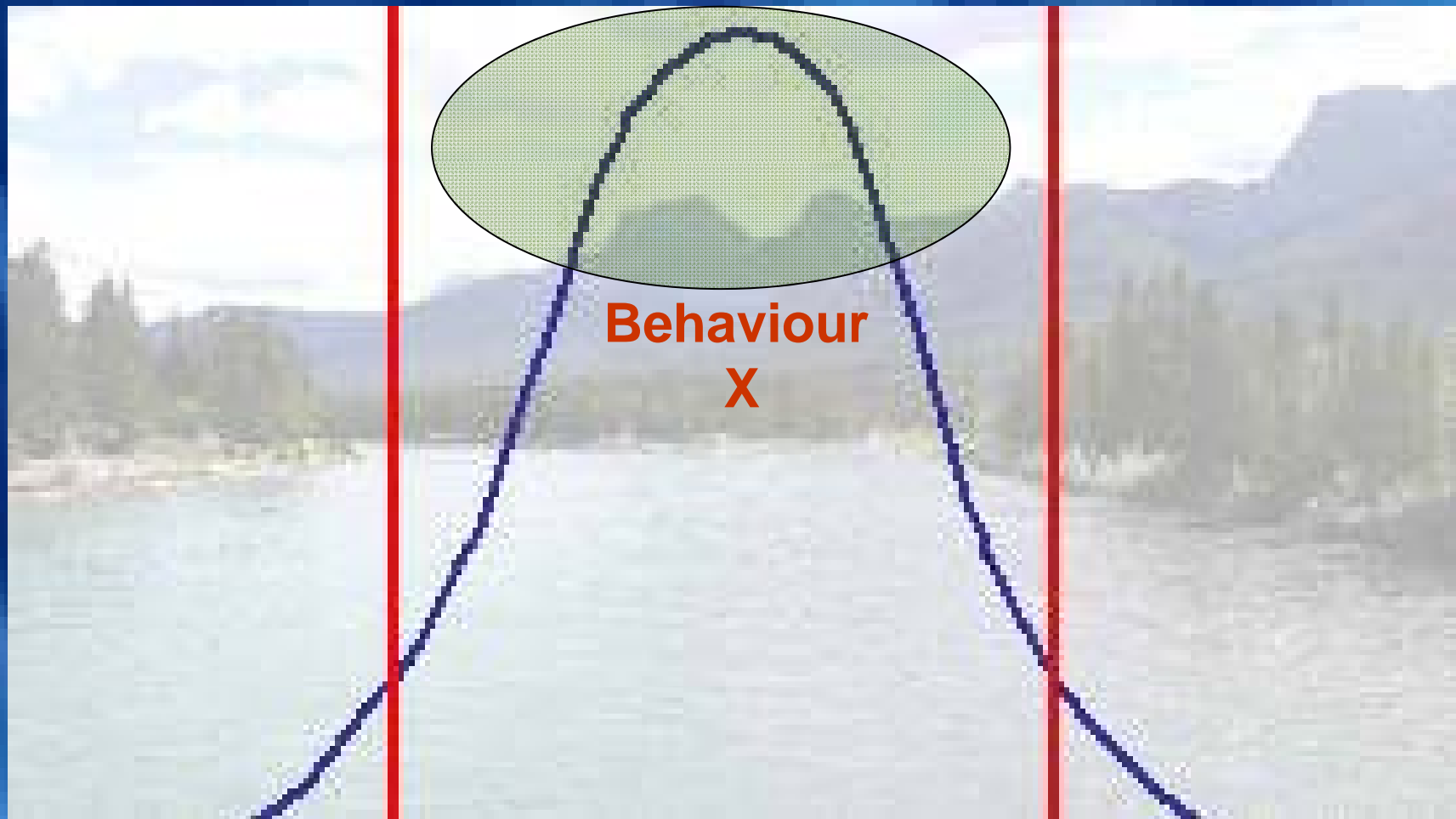


## BBWMP Planning Principles (ToR)

- **Sustainability and Continuous Improvement**
- **Comprehensive**
- **Precautionary Approach**
- **Shared Responsibility and Stewardship**
- **Public Participation and Transparency**
- **Cost Effectiveness and Fairness**
- **Clear Accountability**
- **Coordinated, Integrated (LUF), Inclusive**
- **Pragmatic**
- **Effective Decision-Making**
- **Phased-in, Prioritized, Results-based (desired outcomes)**



# PLAN FOR THE 80%





## 6. Acknowledgements

# What Sort of Water Manager do we want?



# What Sort of Water Manager do we need?





**But this is what you get!**



**Stay Cool**



## **BRBC Members Conducted a project that won...**

- **North American Lake Management Society – Technical Excellence Award (2008)**
- **City of Calgary – Environmental Achievement Award (2008)**
- **Alberta Emerald Award (2010)**



## Conclusions

- Collaborative process can achieve results
- Voluntary and ambitious targets get accepted
- Role of BRBC is to educate, facilitate, support and build on capacity
- Agricultural Partners provide leadership in Watershed Management (please continue)





**Thank you**

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