
Monthly E-Newsletter

DRUMHELLER
FLOOD OFFICE

◆
January 2025



Exciting News for Nacmine, Rosedale, and West Rosedale Communities!

At the recent open council meeting on February 3rd, a major step forward was taken to complete flood protection in the Valley. Council has approved the construction of Nacmine, East Rosedale, and West Rosedale berms to protect the residents in these communities. Work is set to begin this construction season. The motion has passed, and the flood office, regulatory team & consultant teams are now coordinating with the awarded contractor, Pidherney's Inc., to get things underway. Stay in the loop! Follow us on social media and upcoming newsletters for real-time updates on the construction schedule and progress. Together, we're building a safer future!

2024 Highlights: Reflecting on a Year of Progress and Innovation

As we wrap up another year of construction and step into 2025, let's take a moment to reflect on the program's success. 2024 was a year of significant achievements, and we're excited to share some of the standout moments and accomplishments from the past year. From collaboration and community input to innovative solutions and thoughtful environmental solutions, it's been a year to remember!

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you can expect:

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Updates

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Event

2024 Highlights

Stories of Impact

Educational
Stories

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Information



Wildlife Surveys: Protecting Our Local Wildlife During Construction

Before any construction begins, biologists carry out thorough wildlife sweeps of the site and its surroundings. The goal is to identify important wildlife features – such as nests, dens, and shelters where animals may be hibernating that must be protected throughout the project. This process ensures that birds, amphibians, and animals of all kinds are not disturbed during construction.



Fun Fact

In East Coulee, a nesting cedar waxwing was discovered mid-construction! To protect the nest, a buffer zone was set up and work in that area was temporarily delayed. The nest was carefully monitored until the chicks fledged, and once the nest was empty, construction was able to continue without any impact to the birds. Pictured below you can see construction avoiding the buffer zone.



Fun Fact

Over at North Drumheller Hospital Berm, new Bank Swallow nesting cavities were created to offset habitat impacts and maintain ecological balance. This proactive approach allowed the project to move forward without compromising the environment.

2024 Highlights Continued



Willow Staking & Hedge Brush Layering

A Natural Solution to Erosion: By using live willow stakes alongside durable materials like rocks, we can stabilize streambanks in a way that enhances the natural environment. This eco-friendly method called bioengineering, not only prevents erosion but also improves habitat and promotes overall ecological health.

Willows thrive in wet conditions, and their deep root systems act as natural anchors, holding soil in place while their branches shade the ground and slow water along the bank. In addition to reducing erosion, willows boost biodiversity, offering food and shelter for local wildlife.

One of the key highlights of our Flood Program is the use of willow staking and willow-hedge brush layering for the re-alignment of Michichi Creek. It's a simple yet effective solution that benefits both the landscape and the creatures that call it home.



Riprap: Balancing Protection and Preservation

Riprap is a layer of large stones strategically placed along riverbanks to prevent erosion and protect the shoreline from the force of flowing water. While riprap is a necessary tool for protecting high risk areas, near infrastructure and homes, it can pose impacts to instream habitat. We've worked with engineers and biologists to find ways to lessen the impact of riprap on instream habitat. A perfect example of this is through incorporating willow stakes in and around riprap. This strikes a balance of immediate protection from riprap with the benefits of riparian vegetation.

Together, we're building smarter, more sustainable solutions that protect our rivers and the wildlife they support.



Forest Rehabilitation

Revitalizing Our Trees & Shrubs
Trees and forests do more than beautify our surroundings—they're vital to our communities, providing clean air, cooling shade, and varied habitats for wildlife. They also create peaceful spaces that enhance our well-being. As part of our flood mitigation efforts in the Drumheller Valley, you may have noticed the thousands of new trees and shrubs being planted, with even more to come!

It's been a challenging journey. The conditions over the past few years haven't always been ideal for new plantings to establish roots, but we're committed to nurturing these green spaces. Significant efforts are underway to ensure the long-term success of these trees and shrubs, from careful planting to ongoing care. While it will take time, these efforts are crucial to building resilience in our environment and ensuring a healthier, greener future for our community.

2024 Highlights Continued



Fish & Aquatic Habitats

Protecting Our Aquatic Ecosystem

While working to protect our communities from flooding, we cannot forget about the vital fish and aquatic habitat of the river. Aquatic habitats include areas where fish and aquatic species travel, feed, grow, rest, and reproduce. Before any construction begins, a comprehensive Fish Habitat Assessment is carried out to evaluate the potential impacts of the proposed works on local fish populations and their habitats. This proactive study helps us ensure that any necessary measures are taken to protect and restore these habitats, meeting all offsetting requirements before work starts.

The Flood Program has worked with Fisheries and Oceans Canada to ensure our work is carried in a safe manner and that impacts to fish habitat are compensated for with improvements elsewhere.



Funding Tour

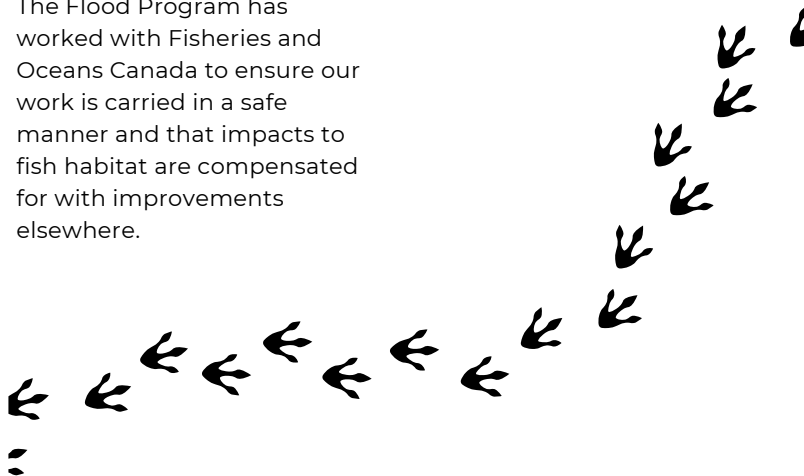
This fall, the Town of Drumheller had the privilege of hosting our funding partners for a special tour of the Valley. On a stunning, warm day, we showcased completed berms, buyout locations, and active construction sites, offering a firsthand look at the progress we've made. It was a fantastic opportunity to highlight the beauty of our Valley and the positive impact of our flood mitigation efforts to both Provincial and Federal stakeholders. We're proud to share our progress and grateful for the support that helps make it all possible!



Historic Resources

Preserving the Past During Construction

As part of our commitment to preserving local history, archaeologists carry out thorough surveys before construction begins. They dig test pits along where new disturbances will occur, allowing them to assess the land for the potential of historic artifacts. All their findings are documented and recorded with the Government of Alberta. During construction if anything of historical significance is uncovered, work is immediately paused until a proper assessment is carried out.



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2024 Highlights Continued



Downtown Completion

Centennial Park is Back and Better Than Ever!
Have you had a chance to explore the newly reopened green space and trails at Centennial Park yet? We're beyond excited to see this beautiful park come to life again! In collaboration with the Town and the entire community, we've transformed this area into a welcoming, vibrant spot for everyone to enjoy. Whether you're walking, biking, or simply soaking in the views, this park is now better than ever—and it's here for you to explore!



Riverside Drive & Retaining Wall

A Success Story of Collaboration
What began as a controversial project has now become a shining example of success! Thanks to the incredible teamwork between the Town, the community, and our dedicated consultants; the Riverside Drive and retaining wall project has exceeded expectations. By coming together, we've transformed a challenging situation into a remarkable achievement that benefits everyone.



Ongoing Consultations with Indigenous Communities

Building Strong Partnerships.
The Flood Office is excited to be engaging in meaningful consultations with Indigenous partners on the upcoming Nacmine and Rosedale berm construction as well as Indigenous planting initiatives in the Lehigh area. These discussions are a vital step in ensuring that we move forward in a way that respects and honors the heritage and input of Indigenous communities. We look forward to sharing more updates as these partnerships continue to grow and strengthen our projects.



Public Information Night: Let's Chat!

Join us at the Public Information Night hosted by the Town of Drumheller on March 5th at the BCF. The Flood Office will be there with a table ready to answer all your questions! Whether you're curious about the Nacmine, Rosedale, & West Rosedale projects or want to learn more about flood readiness, we'll have consultants on hand and plenty of informative materials to share. Come by, say hello, and have a chat with us—we'd love to hear from you!

Winter Construction Break

Construction has paused for the winter months. Updates will resume in the spring as work picks up again. We appreciate your patience throughout the 2024 construction season and look forward to continuing our progress in the 2025 construction season.

Substantial Completion of East Coulee and North Drumheller Flood Improvements

We are pleased to announce the substantial completion of the East Coulee and North Drumheller Flood Improvements Projects. This milestone signifies that the berms have been built to their design standards that will protect the communities from flooding.

There are still a few minor items left to complete in the spring when weather permits. Over the next two years, the berms will also be under a Contractor Maintenance Warranty period as we continue with re-vegetation efforts.

It's important to note that although the North Drumheller berms themselves are now substantially complete, there is still flood risk in the community until further work is completed by Alberta Transportation to the flood wall at the upstream end of Michichi Creek. Conceptual design for replacement of the flood wall are currently being finalized and will be shared with the public in Summer of 2025. Completion of the flood works and replacement of Hwy 838 Michichi Creek Bridge will be dependent on Provincial funding.

As we conclude another busy and impactful season of construction to safeguard our Valley from flooding, we want to express our sincere gratitude to all the communities for their patience and support. Together, we are not just building berms – we are creating a safer, more resilient future for everyone.



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