

Priddis diversion a bad choice

There's a lot of work that needs to be done to protect southern Alberta communities against flooding, but provincial officials need to pull the plug on any plans to divert water from the Elbow River to the Priddis Creek.

The proposal is reviewed in a report by Alberta WaterSMART looking at ways to limit flood damage along the Elbow River. The proposal would see water diverted from the river into the Priddis Creek, the Fish Creek and empty into the Bow River in Calgary.

Alberta WaterSMART's Chief Executive Officer states the report is only a review of historical proposals and they are only recommending it be investigated further. It is prudent to review previous plans and proposals to protect southern Alberta's communities, particularly considering the scale of damage from last year's flood and the scope of the projects being considered to limit potential damage for future flooding.

However, diverting floodwater to Priddis Creek would only transfer the flood risk from people living near the Elbow River to those near the Priddis Creek.

Proposals call for diverting as much as 345 cubic metres per second of water. This would be higher than the levels seen in June 2013, when water levels peaked at 200 cubic metres per second. This has the potential to cause significant damage to properties and agricultural land along the Priddis Creek.

There's no doubt something needs to be done to protect communities against a repeat of last year's flood. Diverting floodwater from one community to another is not the right way to do it.