Establishment of Oldman River Sub-Basin
Water Conservation Objectives

The Lieutenant Governor in Council approved the Water Management Plan for the South Saskatchewan River Basin in Alberta on August 30, 2006 through Order In Council (O.C. 409/2006).

The Water Management Plan for the South Saskatchewan River Basin recommends the establishment of a Water Conservation Objective (WCO) for the Oldman River sub-basin.

The Water Management Plan for the South Saskatchewan River Basin considered both the technical information on the state of the basin as well as the publics’ comments.

Technical and public consultation for the Water Management Plan for the South Saskatchewan River Basin included deliberations by the Oldman River Basin Advisory Committee since October 2001 as well as First Nations and the general public in late 2005 and early 2006. The established Instream Objectives (IO's) and minimum flows within the Oldman River sub-basin were widely discussed considering the definition of a WCO and the existing Interim WCO established for the Southern Tributaries of the Oldman Basin.

The technical studies undertaken demonstrate the diversion of water from the Oldman River and its tributaries negatively effects the aquatic environment to varying degrees. Technical instream needs assessments have shown that flows in excess of the current instream objectives are necessary for preferred protection of the aquatic environment.

Therefore, as recommended in the Water Management Plan for the South Saskatchewan River Basin and as provided for under section 15(1) of the Water Act, I hereby establish a:

- Water Conservation Objective (WCO) for the Oldman River mainstem (below the Oldman River Dam to the confluence with the Bow River) to be either 45% of the natural rate of flow, or the existing instream objective increased by 10%, whichever is greater at any point in time.

- Water Conservation Objective (WCO) for the headwater reaches (above Oldman Dam) of the Oldman River and tributaries of the Oldman River to be not less than the existing instream objective or the WCO downstream on the mainstem, whichever is greater at any point in time.
Implementation date for the Water Conservation Objectives (WCOs) to be May 1, 2005.

The existing WCO's established for the Southern Tributaries of the Oldman River Basin are hereby rescinded and replaced by these WCOs.

I find that the public consultation undertaken as part of the Water Management Plan for the South Saskatchewan River Basin planning process is adequate to satisfy the public consultation requirement for establishment of these WCOs.

Information on these Water Conservation Objectives will be provided to the basin councils, First Nations, and on the Alberta Environment website.

Designated Director Under the Act
May Mah-Paulson

January 16, 2007
Dated