



After the flood: Investigations of impacts to archaeological resources from the 2013 flood in southern Alberta

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Introduction

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An extraordinary rainfall event in June, 2013 resulted in southern Alberta's largest recorded flood. In a matter of one week, floodwaters had swept through the river and creek channels of the Bow River watershed, scouring away long-stable landforms and depositing metres of sediment debris in new locations. The government response was unprecedented, and resulted in a wide variety of programs intended to provide relief, rebuild infrastructure, and compile information in support of flood remediation strategies. A component of this response involved efforts to evaluate and mitigate impacts of the flood on historic resources, which in this context includes archaeological sites and palaeoenvironmental records. The objectives were to understand what had been lost, assess what remained, and generate information to guide the effective management of surviving resources in light of heightened landform instability, ongoing erosion, and the inevitable need for large-scale engineered solutions to repair the devastating flood damage.

The Southern Alberta Flood Investigation Program was coordinated by Alberta Culture and Tourism and involved partnerships between the Archaeological Survey of Alberta, the Royal Alberta Museum, the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology, and a community of consulting heritage professionals in the Province. Hundreds of kilometres of flood-affected rivers and creeks were examined, and hundreds of historic resources were investigated through 20 contracts that spanned 2014, 2015, and 2016. While much was destroyed, many new archaeological deposits were uncovered. The results of these multi-year investigations were delivered in final reports that were synthesized into government management plans to guide the future protection of significant archaeological and palaeontological resources across these sensitive riparian landscapes. In an effort to share

these outcomes with the public and heritage community across Alberta, an issue of the Archaeological Survey of Alberta's Occasional Paper Series is dedicated to the Southern Alberta Flood Investigation Program.

We are pleased to introduce the 37th volume of the Occasional Paper Series: *After the flood: Investigations of impacts to archaeological resources from the 2013 flood in southern Alberta*, which consists of 18 articles exploring multiple facets of the flood impact studies. I would like to sincerely thank all of the contributors for their efforts to compile, synthesize, and re-format complex technical results for a wide audience. As noted by authors throughout this volume, the legacy of the Flood Investigation Program will be the knowledge gained about Alberta's archaeological and palaeoenvironmental records including their fragility, interpretive value, and the complexities of managing these resources in the face of destructive environmental forces that periodically threaten them. I hope the information contained in this volume educates and motivates the public, inspires research, and reinforces Alberta's strong professional and avocational heritage stewardship community.

Lastly, successes of the Southern Alberta Flood Investigation Program were shaped by a community of dedicated and passionate people. On behalf of the Archaeological Survey of Alberta, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to historic resources consultants, students, researchers, Government staff, volunteers, First Nations participants, concerned members of the public who reported finds, landowners who granted permission to access private property, and members of the Archaeological Society of Alberta who demonstrated a shared commitment to the ideals of heritage conservation and stewardship in the aftermath of the flood: Thank you.