

Ripple Effect # 72

Saying Thanks for Water

When it comes to this time of year and its official Thanksgiving Days—early October in Canada, later November in the U.S.—we typically find our thanks directed at the bounty of our harvest and our food. Less often do we think to say thanks for water.

Yet water not only sustains our bodies—our bodies can live only three to four days without it—it also helps grow the food we eat, process or manufacture almost everything we use in our daily lives, and even produce the energy that keeps us warm.

Although water covers 71% of the earth, the amount of available fresh water is small. If we think of it in terms of drops, out of every 100 drops of water on the earth, about ½ drop is available fresh water, and only a very small amount of that ½ drop is potable or suited to drinking.

Despite this small percentage of potable water on our earth, there still is enough water for earth's six billion people. As we know, however, climates vary around the globe and weather patterns can change, leaving whole regions without adequate rainfall. Such a pattern shift is happening right now in the US, not only in the Southwest, but in parts of the Southeast as well.

Even here in the Red River Basin, we face a variable climate that can result in water shortages and drought. This is one of the reasons for new efforts such as the Canada-Manitoba National Water Supply Expansion Program that brings technical and financial support to agricultural producers for developing or enhancing long-term sustainable water supplies.

So we have reason to appreciate the water that made this growing season possible once again here in the Red River Basin. Yes, we have flooding events—that “goes with the territory,” as they say. But up ‘til now, our water supply in the Basin has seldom if ever totally failed us. This may not always be the case in the future. But right now, Fall 2007, we can say thanks for this year's adequate and safe waters. And we can pledge to conserve, protect and enhance the health of those waters in the Basin that make our lives possible here.

Thanks to Sandra Chisholm DeYonge and the Watercourse staff for their description of earth's potable waters in *Spring Waters: Gathering Places*, 2000.

Until the next Ripple Effect,

The Red River Basin Commission (RRBC)

The RRBC is a grassroots organization that is a chartered not-for-profit corporation under the provisions of Manitoba, North Dakota, Minnesota, and South Dakota law. Our offices in

Moorhead, MN and Winnipeg, MB can be reached at 218-291-0422 and 204-982-7254, or you can check out our website at www.redriverbasincommission.org

