High River flood prevention: Town rail bridge will be dismantled

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Associate
Minister Rick Fraser and High River Mayor Emile Blokland have announced an important step in the prevention of future flooding in High River. Beginning in October, construction crews will dismantle the Canadian Pacific Railway bridge that spans the Highwood River in High River. The removal of the bridge and its footings will eliminate a bottleneck in the river and increase the flowing capacity of the Highwood. "This bridge has been a recognizable landmark in High River for many years; however its removal is an important step in flood mitigation measures for the community", said Emile Blokland, Mayor of High River. "This step will help prevent future flooding. We need to do everything we can to protect this vibrant community from another disaster", explained Rick Fraser, Associate Minister of Regional Recovery and Reconstruction for High River.

The original High River rail bridge was built in 1892 by the Calgary and Edmonton Railway. The current refurbished bridge has not carried any rail traffic since 2010. Over the past several weeks, crews have begun removing about 600 metres of railway track leading up to the bridge. The Alberta government has arranged for Calgary-based Tervita to dismantle the railway bridge. Tervita has been working in High River since July 18 and, among other projects, has scalped about 22 Olympic-sized swimming pools of material from the town's river system. The dismantling of the bridge in addition to the river scalping should nearly double the flowing capacity of the Highwood in the years ahead and help protect the town from flooding.Â

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