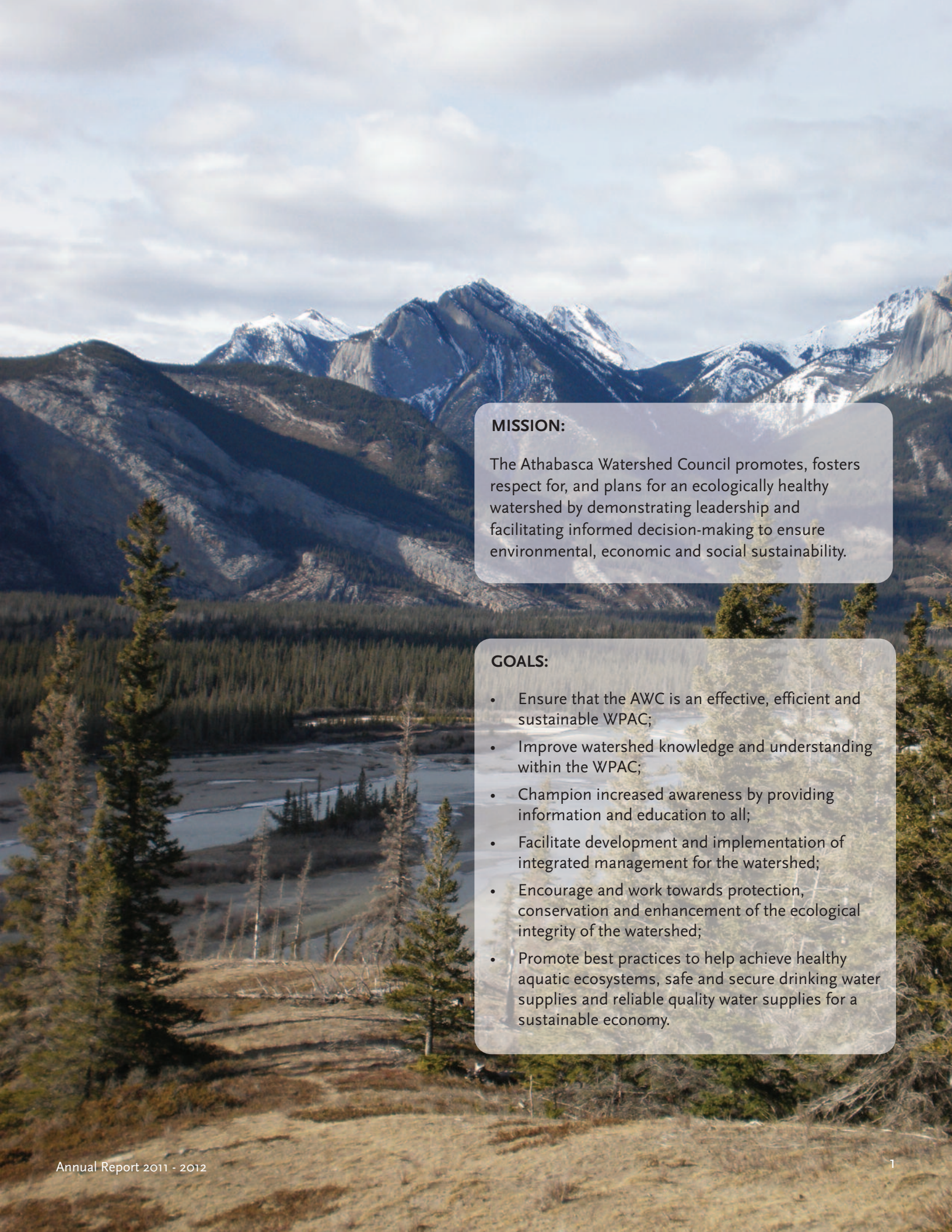




Athabasca Watershed Council

Annual Report 2011 - 2012





MISSION:

The Athabasca Watershed Council promotes, fosters respect for, and plans for an ecologically healthy watershed by demonstrating leadership and facilitating informed decision-making to ensure environmental, economic and social sustainability.

GOALS:

- Ensure that the AWC is an effective, efficient and sustainable WPAC;
- Improve watershed knowledge and understanding within the WPAC;
- Champion increased awareness by providing information and education to all;
- Facilitate development and implementation of integrated management for the watershed;
- Encourage and work towards protection, conservation and enhancement of the ecological integrity of the watershed;
- Promote best practices to help achieve healthy aquatic ecosystems, safe and secure drinking water supplies and reliable quality water supplies for a sustainable economy.

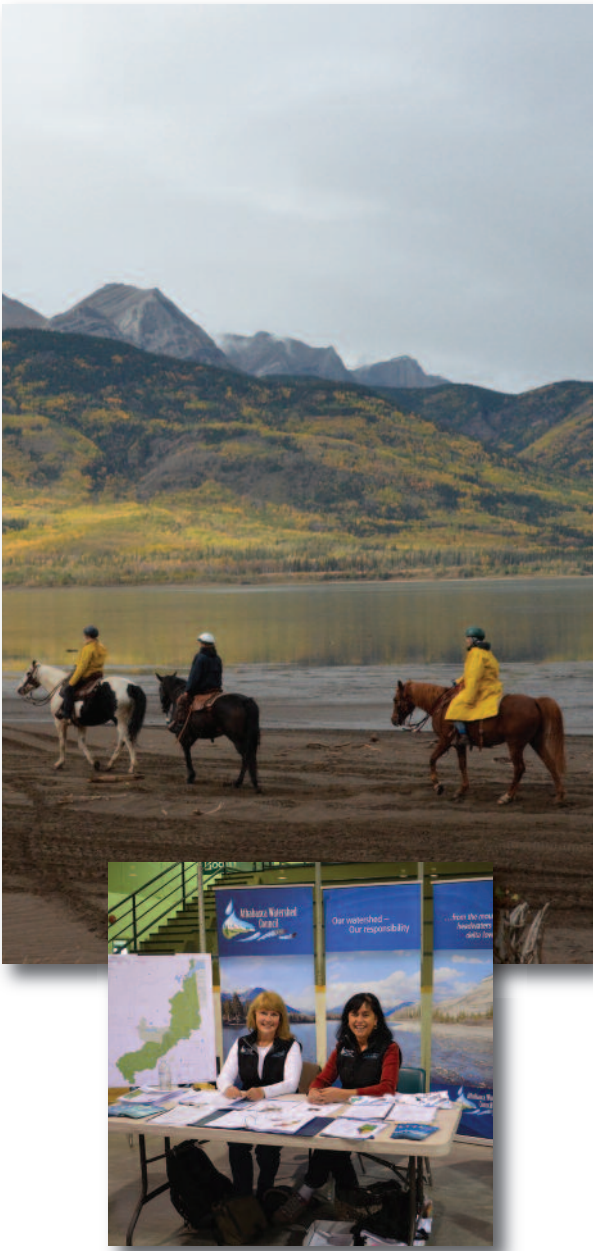


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Message from the Chair

It is a pleasure to watch the Athabasca Watershed Council grow and evolve. This has been a successful year in that we produced our Athabasca State of the Watershed Report - Phase 2, and our Online Interactive Atlas. The next steps for the AWC will be to take these products out to the citizens of our watershed.

I am not going to list all the other accomplishments of this year, rather, I want to thank all the people involved in our work. First, and foremost, I wish to thank staff members Connie Simmons, Brenda Taillefer, and our newest addition - Watershed Science Coordinator, Marilou Montemayor. Without our staff, none of this would be happening - they go above and beyond the call of duty.

Our Board of Directors, too, deserve recognition for passing a governance review with flying colors. We have a great team of "old hands" that continue to engage with this work - you all know who you are and how your commitment is so important. I would also like to acknowledge our newest board members, Darrell Troock, Lorraine Johnston-MacKay, Julie Burke, and Rick Zroback. Our science advisory team has volunteered to help with the technical side of our mandate. Thanks to Monica Dahl, Ernest Kerkhoven, Margaret Klebek, Amber Stewart, David Schindler, and a special thanks to Dave Mussell. However, staff and board are still not enough to make things happen - we have help and advice from so many people that I cannot mention them all.

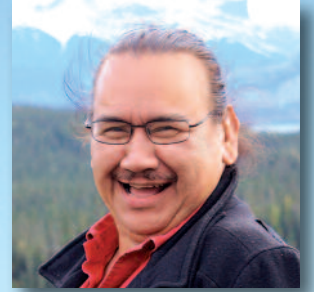
Without the involvement of passionate people, being president would not be half as fascinating as it continues to be. Our values and our consensus-decision making process have served us well and I look forward to continued engagement with such special people. It is exciting and rewarding work.



Paula Evans
President
Athabasca Watershed Council



Lavone Olson



Doug Badger



Dan Moore



Darrell Troock



Julie Burke



Janice Linehan



Janice Pitman



Lorraine Johnston-MacKay



Marsha Hayward



Richard Chabaylo



Lou Pawlowich



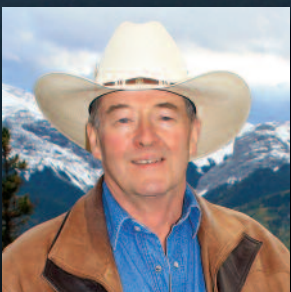
Rick Zroback



Sonny Flett



Paula Evans



Tom Weber

Athabasca Watershed Council - Board of Directors, 2011-12

Athabasca Watershed Council - Board of Directors 2011-2012

Section	Member	Affiliation
Non Government Organizations Sector (3)	Paula Evans (President)	Crooked Creek Conservancy Society of Athabasca
	Lorraine Johnston-Mackay (Treasurer)	Hinton Historical Society
	Tom Weber	Clearwater Heritage River Society
Industry (3)	Janice Linehan	Suncor Energy Inc.
	Daniel Moore	Alberta Newsprint Company /Alberta Forest Products Association
	Janice Pitman (Secretary)	National Farmers' Union
Government Sector (3)	Richard Chabaylo	Alberta Environment/Government of Alberta
	Sonny Flett	Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo
	Darrell Troock	County of Barrhead
Aboriginal Sector (3) (Vice-President)	Doug Badger	Regional Environmental Action Committee
	Julie Burke	Métis Nation of Alberta
	Lou Pawlowich	Métis Settlements General Council
Other Sector (3)	Rick Zroback	Public Member-at-large
	David Rector	Public Member-at-large
	Marsha Hayward	Public Member-at-large
Past-President (1)	Lavone Olson	Yellowhead County

Athabasca Watershed Council - Staff

The Athabasca Watershed Council is supported by three Staff members who work to fulfill the mandate of the Council, provide communications to and from the membership, and address the business and action items of the Council.



Connie Simmons PhD.
Executive Director



Marilou Montemayor MSc.
Watershed Science
Coordinator



Brenda Taillefer
Executive Assistant



Highlights of the Working Committees 2011-12

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee had a busy year in 2011-2012 working closely with staff to strengthen organizational capacity of the AWC-WPAC. The Committee worked towards key elements of Human Resources policy for the AWC-WPAC, as well as reviewing and providing direction for key items of business such as Honorarium policy, membership fees, Key Media Messages, work plans, and a lively discussion on the pros and cons of an application for Charitable status.

Technical Committee

The Technical Committee was very active in 2011-12, and provided thoughtful input and advice towards the successful completion of the Athabasca State of the Watershed – Phase 2 Project. Working with the AWC-WPAC Watershed Science Coordinator, the Science Advisory Team and the consultant, Fiera Biological Consulting Ltd., the Technical Committee worked diligently to understand unavoidable mid-course changes to the project, and provide thorough reviews and sound guidance to both staff and the consultant. The Technical Committee is grateful for the input from the Science Advisory Team of Dr. David Schindler, Dr. Ernst Kerkhoven and Margaret Klebek for guidance and input during the State of the Watershed Phase 2 Project. Special thanks is extended to Fiera Biological Consulting for their effort and professionalism in providing an excellent foundational State of the Watershed Report during Phase 2 of the research for this living, online document.

Communications and Community Engagement Committee

In 2011-12, the Council actively engaged communities and groups with the intent to foster partnerships that will help address watershed health concerns. Meetings, conferences and workshops have been held or attended by the AWC-WPAC to further understanding of the Council's role in the watershed, and to gain insight and understanding of the many initiatives affecting watershed health. Highlights of community outreach during this year include:

- Foothills Research Institute – Water Project – interest generated to work together in the upper reaches of the Athabasca watershed
- Lac La Nonne Watershed Stewardship Society – Lakes – The Naked Truth II , helped with public outreach at the Edmonton Outdoors Show to raise awareness of impacts on lakes

- Hinton Pulp – Hinton, Alberta – introduction to the AWC-WPAC presentation
 - Teck Coal – Hinton, Alberta. Participation in understanding their Selenium Management Plan
 - Alberta Stewardship Network – working on new ideas to further support for stewardship in the watershed
 - Alberta Land Use Framework - Lower Athabasca Regional Plan – review of the LARP Framework.
 - Town of Whitecourt – introduction to the AWC-WPAC presentation. Town of Whitecourt has expressed interest in becoming a partner with the AWC-WPAC.
 - Northeast Alberta Watershed Team (NEWT) – Bonnyville, AB. Participated in NEWT's introductory workshop and supported this important regional initiative to raise awareness and educate the public about water and watershed health
 - Junior Forest Rangers – Hinton, AB. Provided an education session at the Hardisty Creek Restoration Project on watershed health and cumulative effects issues.
 - Athabasca River Voyageur Canoe Brigade - August 2012. AWC-WPAC Board of Directors participated in this event to commemorate the history of the voyageurs on the Athabasca River, and raise public awareness of the AWC-WPAC and enlist new members.
 - University of Calgary – Veterinarian College. Provided presentation on theme of a 'Watershed approach to animal health'
 - River Rally 2011 - Edmonton. Participated at this annual gathering of water and watershed NGO's, networked with participants, and raised awareness of the work of the AWC-WPAC
 - Hinton Rotary Club – provided an introductory presentation to the work of the AWC-WPAC
- Yellowhead County Council – provided an update on progress, and requested and received \$10,000.00 in financial support for AWC-WPAC work
- Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo – Environmental Services - Introduction of the AWC-WPAC presentation, and learning of the many proactive initiatives of the RMD Wood Buffalo focused on water and watershed management concerns
- Cumulative Effects Management Association (CEMA) – CEMA presented their mandate and options for future partnership with the AWC-WPAC





- Athabasca River Basin Research Institute (ARBRI) at Athabasca University – invited ARBRI to a preliminary workshop on the Athabasca State of the Watershed – Phase 2 Project, and was then invited to participate at ‘ARBRI Day’ event in Athabasca. The AWC-WPAC introduced the mandate of the AWC-WPAC and benefits of a working partnership with ARBRI.
- Alberta Innovates – Environment and Energy Solutions - initiated discussion on Athabasca Watershed research needs and potential
- Alberta Institute of Agrologists - AWC-WPAC introduction and presentation on the State of the Watershed – Phase 2 Report findings at the “Water, Food and Energy Nexus” Conference.
- University of Alberta Water Initiative - fostered a preliminary discussion between the Water Initiative and the AWC-WPAC Board of Directors regarding multi-disciplinary research initiatives related to the Athabasca watershed.

The AWC-WPAC Quarterly Newsletter was also sent to members and friends, as well as periodic updates on the progress of the State of the Watershed Phase 2 Project. Further to the fostering of multi-sector partnerships within the watershed, the Committee also focused on strategic planning for public awareness and education following the release of the Athabasca State of the Watershed Phase 2 Report. The AWC-WPAC is now looking forward to a full year of community and sector engagement that provides awareness and education around the findings of the SoW P2 Report, and encourages communities and sectors to feel free to voice concerns regarding watershed health.

Finance Committee

The Finance and Fund-raising Committee initiated a planning process to address funding required for projects as well as ongoing operational expenses. While funding from the Government of Alberta provides basic operational and project funding, the AWC-WPAC will need to address shortfalls with a Strategic Funding model to accomplish key goals in a shorter timeframe. The committee will be investigating more fully the options for funding from multiple sources in the 2012-13 fiscal year.

Athabasca State of the Watershed Report – Phase 2

The Athabasca State of the Watershed Report - Phase 2 (SoW P2) project was completed March 31, 2012. The SoW P2 project was prepared by Fiera Biological Consulting of Edmonton and supervised by the Athabasca Watershed Council Technical Committee, Science Advisory Team, and staff. The written document and the online Interactive Atlas will be available to the public in May 2012 through our website www.awc-wpac.ca.

The SoW P2 compiled the most current available watershed-wide data on various watershed condition and pressure indicators and presented this data in a spatial (map) format at the tertiary watershed scale. The Athabasca watershed consists of 10 sub-watersheds which are further sub-divided into 31 sub-watersheds.

Out of a total of 32 watershed condition and pressure indicators listed for the Athabasca Watershed, only 15 indicators had watershed-wide data and were mapped and grouped as follows:

1. Indicators with science-based thresholds and data were ranked using “Pressure Ratings” (high, moderate, low):
 - Road Density
 - Seismic Line, Pipeline, Power line, and railroad density
 - Large Patches of Natural Vegetation (shown on the next page)
 - Stream Crossing Density
 - Human Population Growth
 - Human Land Use—Agriculture
2. Indicators with no science-based thresholds but data could be grouped into three “Relative Disturbance Classification” (minimal, moderate, elevated), relative to the ratings of tertiary watersheds using a statistical method:
 - Stream Connectivity (shown on the next page)
 - Non-Point Source Contamination
 - Potential Surface Water Use
 - Potential Groundwater Use
 - Human Land Use—Built Up Areas
 - Land Conversion

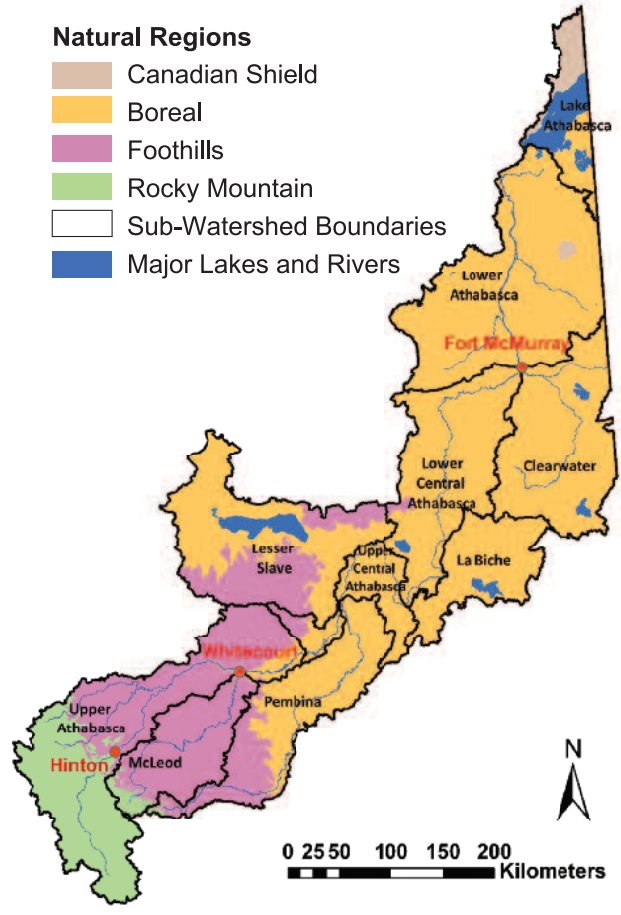
Non-rated Indicators:

- River Water Flows
- Athabasca River Water Quality Index
- Point Source Contamination

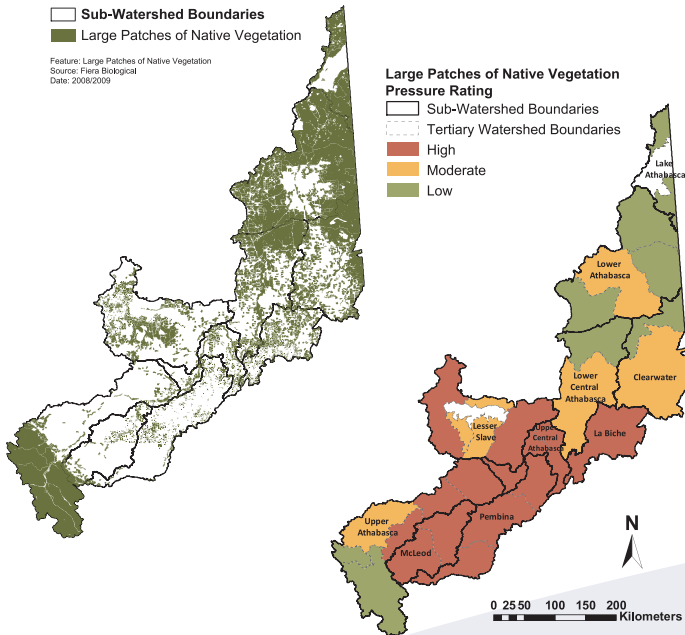


3. The next phase of the Athabasca State of the Watershed Report (Phase 3 – 2012-13) will focus on surface water quality, and will also include an update of the Phase 2 Report and Interactive Atlas.

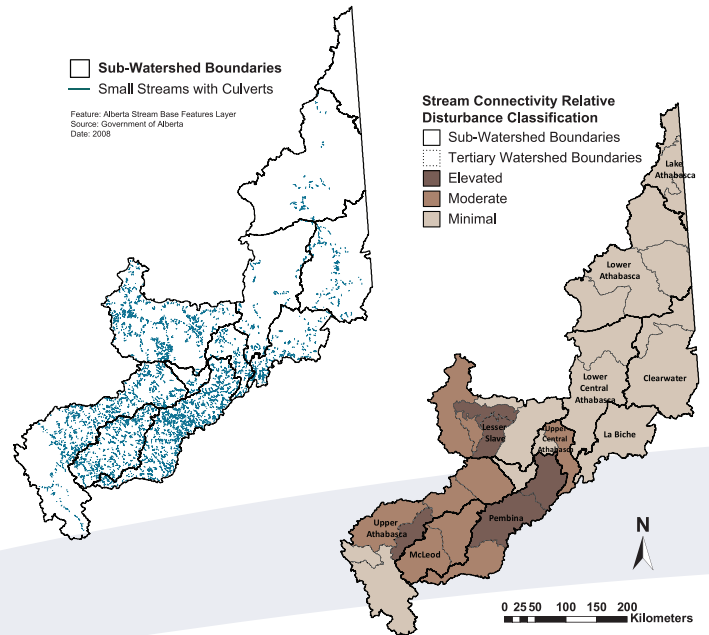
Athabasca Watershed Natural Regions



Athabasca Watershed - Pressure Ratings - Large Patches of Native Vegetation



Athabasca Watershed - Relative Disturbance Classification - Stream Connectivity



Examples of the mapping completed for the Athabasca State of the Watershed Report-Phase 2

Athabasca Watershed Council Financial Highlights

The April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012, fiscal year was the second full year of operation for the AWC-WPAC. Core Operational grant funding in the amount of \$250,000 was provided by Alberta Environment and Water. The \$250,000 for the 2011/2012 fiscal year was held in a GIC until it was required for operation in April 2011. Additionally, Alberta Environment and Water also provided project funding for the completion of the State of the Watershed Phase 2 Project in the amount of \$115,000.

Administration prepared in-house Financial Statements from unadjusted financial information in accordance with generally accepted Canadian accounting standards. These statements were audited by two volunteer financial auditors who were appointed at the 2011 Annual General Meeting: Juan Grande (Councillor, Town of Whitecourt), and Donna Mendelsohn (Watershed Steward – Central Athabasca Stewardship Society).

As a responsibility to Alberta Environment and Water, the Council has also contracted the services of Virginia Stafford Professional Corporation, C.G.A., of Hinton, Alberta, for the completion of a Review of the Financial Statements and Engagement Report for this fiscal year. Upon completion, the document will be posted on the AWC-WPAC website (www.awc-wpac.ca), and will also be available upon request.

The following financial highlights were prepared from in-house, unadjusted financial information, and summarize the financial position of the Athabasca Watershed Council as of the fiscal year ending March 31, 2012:

Assets	
Cash	\$ 61,511
GIC	125,000
Equipment	11,044
Prepaid Expenses	700
Receivables	65,000
Total Assets	\$ 263,255

Receipts	
Donations	\$ 15,729
Operating Grant	250,000
Project Funding	115,000
Bank Interest	1,209
Total Receipts	\$ 381,938

Liabilities & Equity	
Payroll Payable	\$ 3,107
Accounts Payable	57,750
Credit Card Payable	568
GST Payable (Refund)	-7,353
Deferred Cont. (Grant)	185,150
Total Liabilities	\$ 239,222
Equity (Retained Earnings)	\$ 21,492
Prior Period Adj. (GST)	2,541
Total Liabilities/Equity	\$ 263,255

Expenses	
Subcontracts – Staff	\$ 40,833
Subcontracts – Project	114,996
Payroll Expenses	127,156
Advertising & Promotion	10,316
GST Expense	1,030
Office & Administration	14,760
Board/Staff Travel	41,188
Hosting Meetings	4,538
Board/Staff Development	6,057
Total Expenses	\$ 360,874

Excess of Receipts Over Expenses: \$21,064



Appreciation and Acknowledgements

The Athabasca Watershed Council continues to build on relationships and partnerships with organizations, groups and communities who have a sincere interest in the mission and goals of the AWC-WPAC. Support of the AWC-WPAC with sound advice as well as in-kind and monetary contributions is gratefully acknowledged.

Thank You

- Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development
- Science Advisory Team members: Dr. D. Schindler, Dr. E. Kerkhoven and M. Klebek
- Hinton Training Centre – Hinton, Alberta
- Yellowhead County Council
- Town of Athabasca Council
- Suncor Energy Inc.
- Alberta Newsprint
- Fiera Biological Consulting Ltd.
- Juan Grande and Donna Mendelsohn
- Shawn Hartman - Inkhunter
- Kevin Scoble – Director of Environmental Services, Regional Municipal District of Wood Buffalo
- Dr. Lisa Carter and Jim Sellers - Athabasca University – Athabasca River Basin Research Institute
- Dr. Bill Shotyk – University of Alberta, Water Initiative
- Glen Semenchuk – Cumulative Effects Management Association
- Alberta WPACS – Managers and Executive Directors
- Lac La Nonne Watershed Stewardship Society
- Kerri O'Shaughnessy – Cows and Fish
- Michelle Riopel – Alberta Stewardship Network
- Pat Letizia – Alberta Ecotrust
- Teck Coal Operations – Hinton
- Kaylee Kinch - Northeast Alberta Watershed Team (NEWT) Bonnyville, AB
- Marlin Taillefer

Photo credits: Hilary Shannon and Connie Simmons

