



Athabasca
WATERSHED COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020

AWC-WPAC.CA

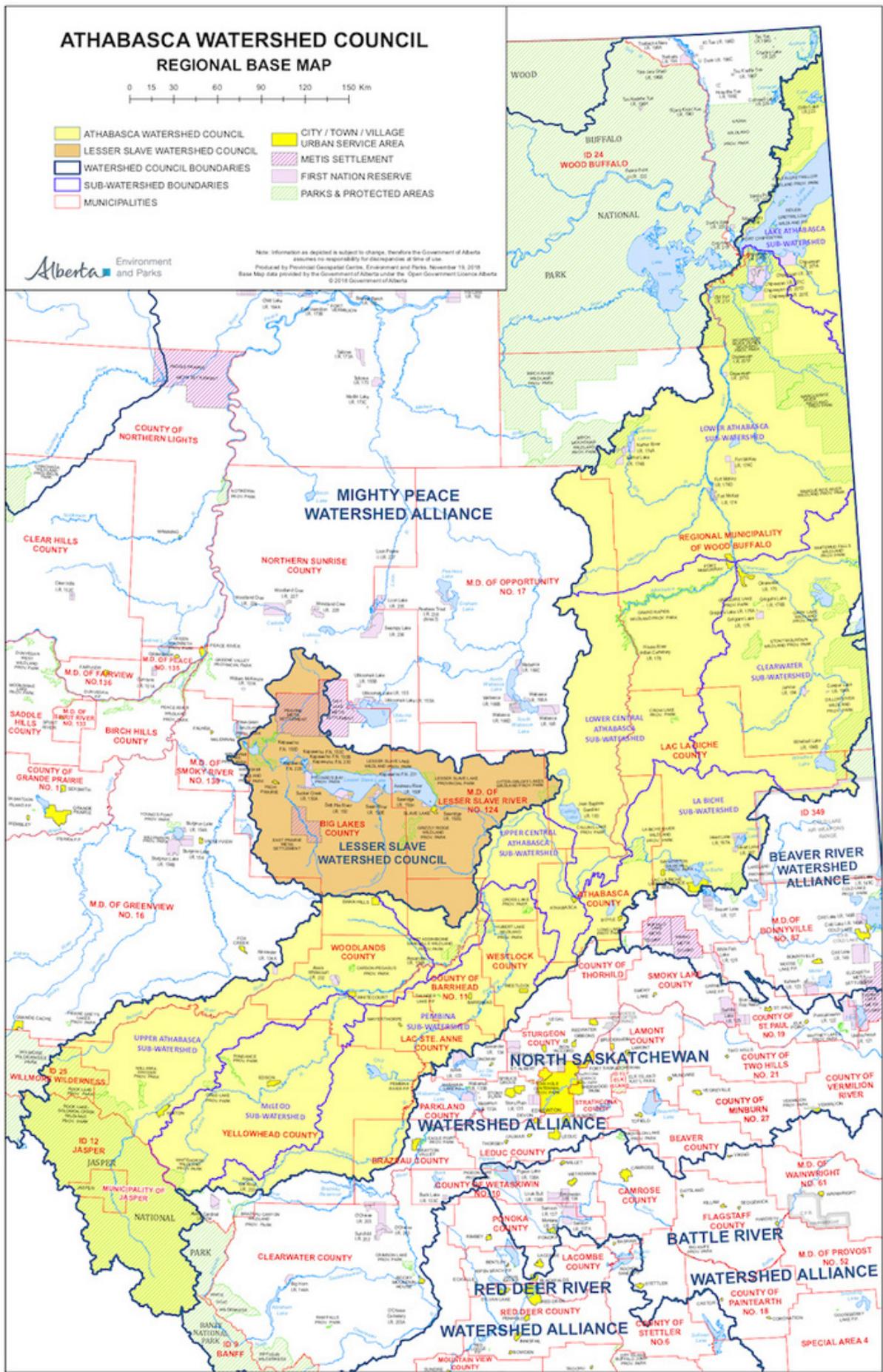
ATHABASCA WATERSHED COUNCIL REGIONAL BASE MAP



- ATHABASCA WATERSHED COUNCIL
- LESSER SLAVE WATERSHED COUNCIL
- WATERSHED COUNCIL BOUNDARIES
- SUB-WATERSHED BOUNDARIES
- MUNICIPALITIES
- CITY / TOWN / VILLAGE URBAN SERVICE AREA
- METIS SETTLEMENT
- FIRST NATION RESERVE
- PARKS & PROTECTED AREAS



Note: Information as depicted is subject to change. Therefore the Government of Alberta assumes no responsibility for discrepancies at time of use.
Produced by Provincial Geospatial Centre, Environment and Parks, November 19, 2019
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Lisa Allan

Cover Photo by: Dale Kiselyk

ABOUT THE ATHABASCA WATERSHED



Photo by: R.G. Holmberg

The Athabasca River is approximately 1,231 km long, flowing from the Columbia Icefield in Jasper National Park all the way to Lake Athabasca. The Athabasca River watershed is 159,000 square km in size, covering roughly 24% of Alberta's landmass.

Our watershed is a diverse landscape. It contains several distinct ecosystems, including the Rocky Mountain, Foothills, Boreal Forest, and Canadian Shield. It is the site of numerous industrial activities, including agriculture, forestry, oil and gas, recreation and more.

The Athabasca Watershed contains all or parts of 13 Municipal Districts, 3 Specialized Municipalities, 10 Towns, 9 Summer Villages, 1 village and 4 Improvement Districts. It spans over Treaty 6, Treaty 8 and Treaty 10 territories and is the home of many Indigenous people.

There are many pressures on our watershed, including, but not limited to: surface and groundwater allocations to industry and municipalities, linear disturbances like roads and pipelines, pressures on wetlands and riparian areas, and the many other human activities that may adversely impact the diverse ecosystems that reside here.

To manage the water that we all depend on, we must effectively manage the land that we share. To do that, we must come together to understand the issues, challenges, opportunities, and blind spots affecting our watershed. The Athabasca Watershed Council works to bring stakeholders, citizens, and Indigenous peoples together to effectively manage the Athabasca River Watershed.



Our Vision

The AWC strives to keep the Athabasca Watershed ecologically healthy, socially responsible, and economically sustainable.

Our Mission

The Athabasca Watershed Council demonstrates leadership and facilitates informed decision-making in the Athabasca Watershed by bringing stakeholders and Indigenous peoples together to promote, foster respect, and plan for an ecologically healthy watershed that supports social responsibility and economic sustainability.

The Athabasca Watershed Council (AWC) is a registered not-for-profit organization formed in August, 2009. We work with academia, industry, environmental and stewardship groups, various levels of government, communities, citizens, and Indigenous peoples to provide timely and credible information about the Athabasca Watershed.

Our Values

- We value integrity, trust, and transparency.
- We respect all points of view.
- Water is a blessing and gift and is essential for environment, society, economy and the spirit.
- Respect the environment and people.
- We believe in consensus decision making.
- We respect economic necessities.
- We value a high standard of achievement and conduct in the WPAC.
- We value ecological health as foundational to all life.
- We value timely responses to issues.
- We value and respect the Indigenous peoples, culture, and knowledge in the Athabasca Watershed.
- We value inclusivity.
- We value creativity, innovation, and risk taking.
- We are responsible and accountable to all members.
- We are purpose driven.



Water for Life:

Water For Life Goals:

The Athabasca Watershed Council follows the Water for Life action plan in order to maintain Alberta's Water for Life goals:

- Achieve safe, secure drinking water
- Maintain healthy aquatic ecosystems
- Create reliable quality water supplies for a sustainable economy

To learn more about the Water for Life Strategy, visit:

www.alberta.ca/water-for-life-strategy.aspx

The Water for Life strategy outlines the Government of Alberta's commitments to manage and safeguard Alberta's water resources, now and in the future. The strategy has been the vehicle for managing Alberta's precious water resources since its release in 2003. Because it has been such an effective tool for managing Alberta's water resources, the Government of Alberta renewed the strategy and will implement a renewed action plan.

The Water for Life renewal builds upon the good work already undertaken and reaffirms the Government of Alberta's commitment to the Water for Life approach for the wise management of Alberta's water quantity and quality to benefit all Albertan's. In essence, we are making a good strategy even better.

Water for Life goals and key directions will be achieved through the Water for Life action plan, which is designed to ensure achievable and timely outcomes that reflect growing pressures on our province's water supplies. Water is an essential resource that must be protected to ensure future growth and prosperity in Alberta.



What is a WPAC?



The Athabasca Watershed Council is one of eleven Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils (WPACs) in Alberta. WPAC's are independent, non-profit organizations that work within four main program areas:

- Education and Outreach
- Environmental Stewardship
- Watershed Evaluation and Reporting
- Watershed Management Planning

Our Goals:

Long Term Goal 1: AWC is a highly reputable and credible authority on the Athabasca watershed and earns recognition for its leadership and expertise.

Long Term Goal 2: Stakeholders and Indigenous peoples throughout the Athabasca River watershed understand basic watershed science, are knowledgeable about the condition of the watershed, and are actively engaged with AWC in putting into action the resources and commitments to achieve defined outcomes.

Long Term Goal 3: Basin stakeholders have defined the desired outcomes for the Athabasca Watershed that will form the basis for the Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) and the AWC has healthy and active relationships with the stakeholders in meeting these outcomes.

Long Term Goal 4: AWC has a reputation for organizational professionalism, balanced representation, sustainability, effective and efficient use of resources and makes strategically wise and evidence-based decisions.

Long Term Goal 5: AWC understands and informs the Stakeholders and Indigenous Peoples about the alignment (or misalignment) of the various Acts, Bylaws and Policies that exist relating to the achievement of the 'Water for Life' goals and approaches.



From left to right: Tom Weber, Sarah Macdonald, Robert Holmberg, Brian Deheer, Lavone Olson

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2019-2020

To ensure that AWC is representative of all voices from across the watershed, the Board of Directors is comprised of elected and appointed seats from each specified stakeholder and partner group.



Brian Deheer | Board Chair

Stewards of Lac La Biche Watershed
(Health or Environment)

Dan Moore | Vice Chair

Alberta Newsprint Company/ Alberta Forest
Products Association (Industry - Forestry)

Morris Nesdole | Treasurer

Baptiste & Island Lakes Stewardship Society
(Stewardship)

Cleo Reece | Secretary

Fort McMurray First Nations (Indigenous)

Marcel Ulliac | (Past) Treasurer

Individual (Member-at-Large)

Abdi Siad-Omar | AEP- Land and

Environmental

Planning (AEP Representative)

Dr. Greg Piorkowski | Alberta Agriculture

and Forestry

(Provincial/Federal Government)

Robert Esau | M.D. of Lesser Slave River

(Municipal – Upper Basin)

Larry Armfelt | Athabasca County

(Municipal – Middle Basin)

Sterling Johnson | Lac La Biche County

(Municipal – Lower Basin)

Janice Linehan | Suncor Energy Inc.

(Industry - Oil & Gas)

Janice Pitman | Private Organic Farm

(Industry - Small Agricultural Producer)

Andrew Hutchinson | Bighorn Mining Ltd.

(Industry - Mining & Utilities)

John Ritchie | Individual

(Indigenous)

Marv Fyten | Individual

(Health or Environment)

Tom Weber | Clearwater River Heritage

Society

(Stewardship)

Dr. Robert Holmberg | Athabasca University

(Research & Academia)

Tim Polzin | Individual

(Member-at-Large)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (ALTERNATES)

As outlined in the Board of Directors Terms of Reference, the Board of Directors has a maximum of 21 members (including the past Chair) representing specified positions for industry (5 seats), non-governmental organizations (5 seats), governments (5 seats), Indigenous (3 seats), and Members-at-Large (2 seats). Each seat is allowed 1 alternate.

Curtis Brock | Alberta Environment and Parks
(AEP Representative)

Lavone Olson | Yellowhead County
(Municipal – Upper Basin)

Colleen Powell | Town of Athabasca
(Municipal – Middle Basin)

Victor Gladue | M.D. of Opportunity
(Municipal – Lower Basin)

Terry Sheehan | Individual
(Industry - Small Agricultural Producer)

Jamie Giberson | Aspen Regional Water
Services (Industry - Mining & Utilities)

Rick Zroback | Individual
(Member-at-Large)

Chantel Quintel | Individual
(Indigenous)

Joel Gervais | Individual
(Health or Environment)

Lorraine Johnstone MacKay | Athabasca River
Voyageur Canoe Brigade Society (Stewardship)

Paula Evans | Crooked Creek Conservancy
Society (Stewardship)

Dr. Scott Ketcheson | Athabasca University
(Research & Academia)

Bill Grieve | Individual
(Member-at-Large)



From left to right: Marv Fyten, Cleo Reece, Tim Polzin, Robert Esau, Sterling Johnson, Larry Armfelt, Brian Deheer, Lavone Olson, Robert Holmberg, Marcel Ulliac, Paula Evans

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2020 has been a busy year for the AWC Board despite this province undergoing a large shift due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The AWC Board has been forced to re-consider watershed management; however, they still have been educating, gathering information, supporting local initiatives, expanding outreach, developing the integrated watershed management plan, and working with stewardship groups. The AWC also achieved Charitable status this year to further grant opportunities, donations, and income streams.

AWC marked a special its 10-year anniversary of protecting and promoting the Athabasca Watershed with an annual Gala held November 23, 2019 at the Athabasca Senior Center. It brought together representative stakeholders from all over the watershed and ended up being a great success of socialization, fund raising, learning, and fun.

Five educational posters were also developed by the AWC Staff for the Lac La Nonne Education Center at Klondike Park. These posters included information on the History of Lac La Nonne, Lake Science, Blue-green algae, Fishing Regulations, and Riparian Areas.

The AWC Board and its members passed the bylaws that were approved by consensus. It was also great for the AWC Board to pass their Attendance at Events Policy.

\$210,000 additional funding was secured through the Watershed Resilience and Restoration Program (WRRP) for the AWC's Pembina Project. This enables the AWC to apply a GIS assessment method that estimates riparian condition to the entire Pembina Sub-watershed for this project. The GIS assessment method was created by Fiera Biological Consulting to rapidly map and assess riparian areas and generally assess pressure on riparian system function. This will help the AWC identify areas in the watershed for habitat restoration, education, and/or conservation.

The AWC Board looks forward to working together to overcome the new challenges ahead and having further achievements in the upcoming years, especially with the confirmation of AEP's annual core grant of \$200,000 for the next three years. This grant enables the AWC Board to plan ahead for the next three years knowing this funding is in place.

IWMP:



Dan Moore
Technical
Committee Chair

Lavone Olson
Communications,
Education &
Community
Engagement Chair

The Athabasca Watershed Council is now in its second year of the Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) development.

This initiative intends to provide recommendations in a plan to improve watershed management such that Water for Life and AWC goals are being achieved in the Athabasca watershed.

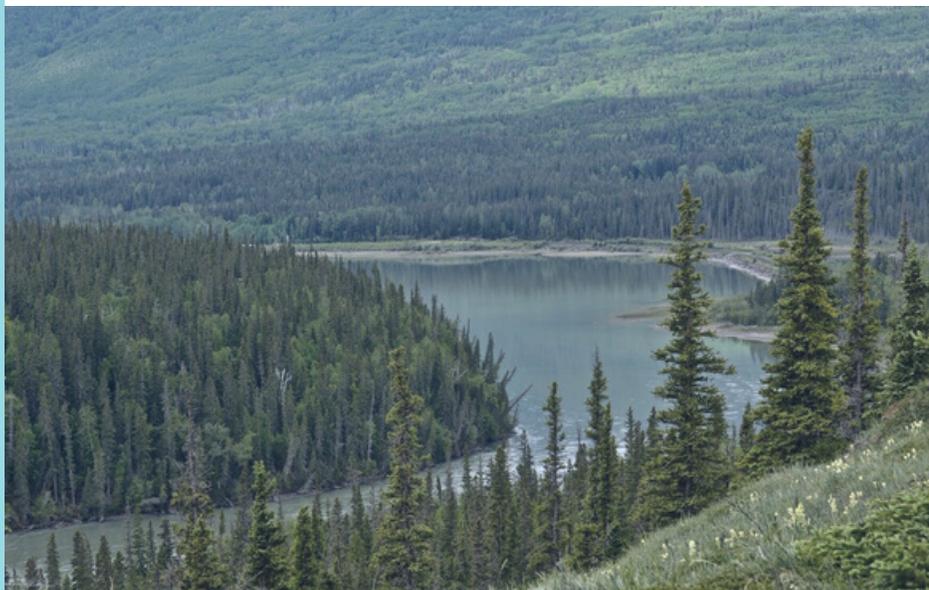
An IWMP is a document that guides decision makers towards ensuring that watershed management is integrated with other land and water initiatives and is occurring in a trusting, collaborative atmosphere where water information is shared, stakeholders and the public are knowledgeable about water issues and there are opportunities to be engaged in watershed stewardship.

It is considered a 'living/evergreen' document that is guided by a 30 year, long term vision and principles, but management strategies and actions will guide a ten year period, starting with 2020 to 2030. IWMP progress will be reported on by the AWC annually. The plan will be reviewed in detail, and if required, renewed, every five years, or as special circumstances warrant.

"Since the Integrated Watershed Management Plan formed in 2009, the Athabasca Watershed Council has been working on filling information gaps about the Athabasca watershed.

This work is guided by the AWC board, who are ultimately responsible for the IWMP development and implementation.

The AWC board and staff continue to seek out advice and learning from different levels of government, stakeholders, indigenous communities, industries and the public to continue the development of this plan."



FINANCIALS

ATHABASCA WATERSHED COUNCIL
Statement of Revenues and Expenditures
Year Ended March 31, 2020

(Unaudited)

	2020	2019
REVENUE		
Grant revenue	\$ 204,388	\$ 270,000
Gala revenue	9,359	446
Donations	3,710	16,857
Insurance proceeds	-	3,018
	217,457	290,321
EXPENSES		
Salaries and wages	157,372	148,946
Professional fees	15,892	5,756
Travel	12,995	24,084
Office	12,264	14,176
Rental	7,290	7,748
Advertising and promotion	6,972	3,425
Gala expenses	5,125	-
Honorariums (Note 8)	4,550	14,925
Telephone	3,898	4,323
Amortization	2,570	2,571
Insurance	1,969	1,648
Business taxes, licenses and memberships	1,535	1,595
Meetings and conventions	1,501	7,976
Goods and Services Tax	1,128	1,584
Interest and bank charges	260	321
Contracts	72	23,630
Training	24	777
Insurance - replacement of items	-	3,705
	235,417	267,190
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES FROM OPERATIONS	(17,960)	23,131
OTHER INCOME		
Gain on disposal of equipment	300	-
Interest income	173	154
	473	154
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	\$ (17,487)	\$ 23,285



Message from the Treasurer

"We have seen a lot of progress this year for the AWC. We've secured funding from multiple partners and hosted many outreach events this summer. 2019 has been a successful year for our organization, both financial and development wise."

– Morris Nesdole

ATHABASCA WATERSHED COUNCIL

Statement of Financial Position

March 31, 2020

(Unaudited)

	2020	2019
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash	\$ 220,981	\$ 194,694
Term deposit (Note 3)	10,000	10,000
Accounts receivable	-	657
Goods and Services Tax recoverable	2,748	1,623
Prepaid expenses	1,928	2,761
	235,657	209,735
EQUIPMENT (Note 4)	1,285	3,855
	\$ 236,942	\$ 213,590
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 4,999	\$ 7,854
Withholdings payable	2,041	3,639
Deferred income (Note 5)	145,612	100,000
Advances from related parties (Note 6)	402	722
	153,054	112,215
CONTINGENT LIABILITY (Note 7)		
NET ASSETS		
General fund	82,603	97,520
Invested in equipment	1,285	3,855
	83,888	101,375
	\$ 236,942	\$ 213,590

PEMBINA PROJECT

Goal

To improve flood and drought resiliency in the Pembina River watershed through riparian area assessment, education, restoration, conservation and long-term stewardship initiatives.

Objectives

- Apply a GIS-based method for mapping riparian intactness to the Pembina Watershed that will assess pressure on riparian system function to guide current & future watershed planning & management.
- Create an outreach program that connect landowners to existing programs for improving their riparian area & build community capacity to continue this work in the future.
- Initiate and assist with multiple restoration programs, working with on-the-ground partners, focusing on areas of high restoration priority.
- Create complementary outcomes through restoration, including improving fish/wildlife habitat, water quality & community outreach opportunities.

The Pembina Project is a multi-year project that uses the Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Programs (WRRP) to build on the data gaps that were identified in the State of the Watershed Reports. The WRRP aim to increase watershed resilience primarily through wetland and riparian habitat restoration and implementation of best practices. This new information will help planning, management, conservation, and restoration within the Athabasca Watershed.

The AWC is working with Fiera Biological Consulting (Fiera) that has developed a methodology to rapidly map and assess riparian areas and generally assess pressure on riparian system function over the Pembina sub-watershed. This methodology has been validated against aerial videography and ground-based assessments within different watersheds in central Alberta including the North Saskatchewan Watershed and the Red Deer Watershed.

Creating healthier riparian areas can slow and absorb floodwater, prevent loss of land, absorb nutrients and provide shade and food for fish, wildlife and livestock. Riparian restoration also reduces bank erosion by increasing bank strength and filtering sediment. These ecological functions maintain biodiversity, protect water quality, and help us prepare for flood and drought.



POND DAYS PROGRAM

On June 4th 2019, Highway 2 Conservation, in partnership with Athabasca County, County of Barrhead and Westlock County, held its annual Grade five education program, Pond Days, in Rainbow Park, just east of the town of Westlock. Our AWC staff were invited to present our Watershed Pollution model to the students. Over 90 kids got a chance to learn about different types of non-point source and point source pollution that happen in our watershed. After they finished piling all the pollution onto the model, they simulated rain with spray bottles. When the runoff collected in the lake, none of them wanted to drink the water. A good lesson learned!



DISCOVER YOUR RIVER

On June 8th 2019, the Athabasca River Voyager Canoe Brigade Society, in partnership with Yellowhead County, the Town of Hinton, and many other community members organized the Discover Your River event in Hinton, Alberta. This was in celebration of the new Solomon Creek staging area and access trail about 17 km west of Hinton. Paddlers of all ages and skill levels showed up to take the alluring float down the river to the newly installed floating dock at Hinton's Athabasca Riverfront Park. Paddlers were then greeted upon arrival with festivities. This event aimed to promote loving your river, the more people experience the river, the more likely they are to protect it.



YEAR IN REVIEW



2019 Annual General Meeting
Best Western Plus, Hinton
May 25, 2019



Whitecourt trade Show
Whitecourt May 11-12, 2019



Environment Week Event
Lac La Biche June 2nd, 2019

YEAR IN REVIEW



Water Science Day
Fort McMurray June 12, 2019



Science Outreach, Athabasca
University November 9, 2019



10th Anniversary Celebration of the Athabasca Watershed
Council Gala, Athabasca Senior Centre November 23, 2019

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful for the financial contributions and shared expertise of our primary partner, Alberta's Government department of Environment and Parks.



We gratefully acknowledge the support and contributions from the following partners:

AEP - Land and Environmental Planning, Northern Region

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, Water Quality Section

Alberta Forest Products Association

Alberta Lake Management Society

Alberta Newsprint Company

Alberta Water Council

Alberta WPAC's

Alliance For Water Stewardship

Aspen Regional Water Services Commission

Athabasca Advocate

Athabasca Chamber of Commerce

Athabasca County

Athabasca Farm Women's Conference

Athabasca Heritage Society

Athabasca Hometown Printing

Athabasca River Voyageur Canoe Brigade Society

Athabasca University

Baptiste and Island Lakes Stewardship Society

Barrhead No. 11 County

Barrhead Regional Water Commission

Big Lakes County

Bighorn Mining - Vista Mine

Brazeau County

Canadian Special Risks

Catapult Environmental Inc.

Clearwater River Heritage Society

Crooked Creek Conservancy Society

Environment and Climate Change Canada

Fort McMurray First Nations

Highway 2 Conservation

Lac La Biche County

Lac La Biche Fisheries Advisory Council

Lac La Biche Region Watershed Stewardship Society

Lac La Nonne Enhancement and Protection Association

Lac Ste. Anne County

Lakeview Ranch

Land Stewardship Centre

Let's Go Outdoors Alberta

Long & Narrow Lake Stewardship Society

MD of Lesser Slave River

Municipal District of Greenview No. 16

Municipal District of Jasper

Municipal District of Lesser Slave River

Municipal District of Opportunity No. 17

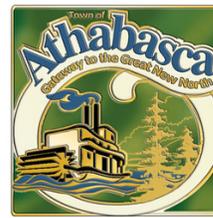
Nature Alberta



DERKO'S
Catering Services



Canadian Special Risks
*Registered Trade Name of Canadian Farm Insurance Services Inc.



Athabasca Advocate



Parkland County

Petra Rowell Consulting

Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

Science Outreach of Athabasca University

Stewards of Lac La Biche

Suncor Energy Inc.

Tom's Marine and Sports

Town of Athabasca

Town of Edson

Town of High Prairie

Town of Hinton

Town of Mayerthorpe

Town of Slave Lake

Town of Swan Hills

Town of Westlock

Town of Whitecourt

Village of Boyle

Westlock County

Whitecourt Rotary Club

Woodlands County

Yellowhead County

Yellowhead County Agricultural Services

M.D. Opportunity No 17

Suncor Energy Inc.

Athabasca Advocate

Tom's Marine and Sports-

Tom Weber Sr. and Tom

Weber Jr.

Alberta Newsprint Company

Athabasca River Voyageur

Canoe Brigade Society

Canadian Special Risks-

Bill Grieve

Derko's Catering Services

Town of Athabasca

The Torpedos

Brian Deheer

Lavone Olson

Bromely Chamberlain

Glenn van Diijken, MLA

Robert Holmberg

Dave Coish

Athabasca Heritage Society

Willow Ridge Knives-

Morris Nesdole

Evelyn Melloft

Terry and Roseanna Sheehan

Doug and Heather Kariel

Marv and Ruth Fyten

Shady Lane Estate Winery

West of the 5th Distillery

Landing Liquor Store

Independent Foods (Tipton's)

Flowers by Christina

Lolly Pop Thrift Shop

Holly and Ken Astill

Tim and Marianne Polzin

Dean Litzenberger

Burt Metchewais

Thank you to our sponsors and everyone who made our 10th Anniversary Gala a success!

Memoriam Donor:



In memory of
John McMahon

Thank you to Heather and Keith Park who have donated to the Athabasca Watershed Council in honor of John McMahon and his love for the Athabasca River.

We are honored to accept this donation in his name. All proceeds will go towards our work in maintaining the Athabasca Watershed and upholding the "Water for Life" strategy.



IN-KIND DONATIONS

Thank you to everyone who donated their time. This year we were able to double our in-kind donations from the previous 2018-2019 financial year. None of this would be possible without our members.

Brian Deheer	Rick Zroback
Terry Sheehan	Dan Moore
Cleo Reece	Victor Gladue
Janice Pitman	Andrew Hutchison
Chantel Quintel	Jamie Giberson
John Ritchie	Joel Gervais
Robert Esau	Lavone Olson
Marv Fyten	Larry Armfelt
Morris Nesdole	Janice Linehan
Lorriane Mackay	Collen Powell
Tom Weber	Sterling Johnson
Paula Evans	Greg Piorkowski
Robert Holmberg	Abdi Siad Omar
Scott Ketcheson	Curtis Brock
Tim Polzin	Other In-kind
Bill Grieve	Professional In-kind
Marcel Ulliac	Public In-kind

TOTAL: \$257,797

Message from the Staff



Janet Pomeroy
Executive Director



Sarah Macdonald
Watershed Planner



Lisa Allan
Communications Specialist



Paula Sawatzky
Administrative Coordinator

"We would like to thank all of our members, partners, and stakeholders for their support. It is because of their contributions that the AWC has been able to expand as a not-for-profit organization and charity working towards the 'Water For Life' strategies in the Athabasca Watershed."

- AWC Staff

- 468 Monthly website users
- 528 Monthly website sessions
- 248 Facebook page likes
- 7258 Monthly Facebook reach
- 301 Twitter followers
- 8423 Monthly Twitter reach
- 298 Instagram followers
- 175 Monthly Instagram reach
- 320 Newsletter subscribers
- 36% Newsletter opens

- 2682 people reached through Educational Outreach
- 649 people reached through Partner Outreach
- 422 people reached through Municipal Outreach



Athabasca
WATERSHED COUNCIL

awc-wpac.ca

Our Watershed. Our Responsibility.

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