



Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance

Diverse, Responsible, Connected

2017-2018 Annual Report





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Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance (MPWA):

The Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance has been designated, since its formation in 2011, by the Government of Alberta (GOA) as the official Watershed Planning and Advisory Council (WPAC) for the Peace and Slave River Basins under Alberta's Water for Life Strategy. The MPWA was created to address the key outcomes of the Strategy:

- Safe, secure drinking water
- Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems
- Reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy

This multi-sector, not-for-profit society is committed to planning for an ecologically healthy watershed while ensuring environmental, economic and social sustainability.

The Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance is a group of active stakeholders and communities that use consensus decision-making, adaptive management, and innovation to understand and promote living within the watershed. The Board will report on the state of the watershed, lead watershed planning activities, promote best management practices and develop educational programs.



About the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance

The MPWA is guided by its vision, mission, goals and shared values:

VISION

The Peace is a healthy, sustainable watershed that supports our social, environmental and economic objectives.

MISSION

To promote watershed excellence, the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance will monitor cumulative effects from land use practices, industry and other activities in the watershed and work to address issues through science, education, communication, policy and by supporting watershed stewardship.

SHARED VALUES

The Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance will:

Respect a diversity of peoples and values:

By demonstrating individual and collective respect for the air, land and water and by appreciating the diversity of values and opinions found in the Peace watershed.

Be an ambassador for the Peace watershed:

By promoting our vision and mission, demonstrating integrity, accountability and practicality, and practicing effective communication, knowledge-building and consensus decision-making.

Be a trustworthy and credible source of information:

By being well-informed and providing sound advice through an adaptive watershed approach that integrates traditional, local and scientific knowledge in information-gathering and problem-solving.

Be fair and transparent to all:

By seeking balanced representation and listening to all stakeholders in an open, transparent manner.

Be inclusive and collaborative:

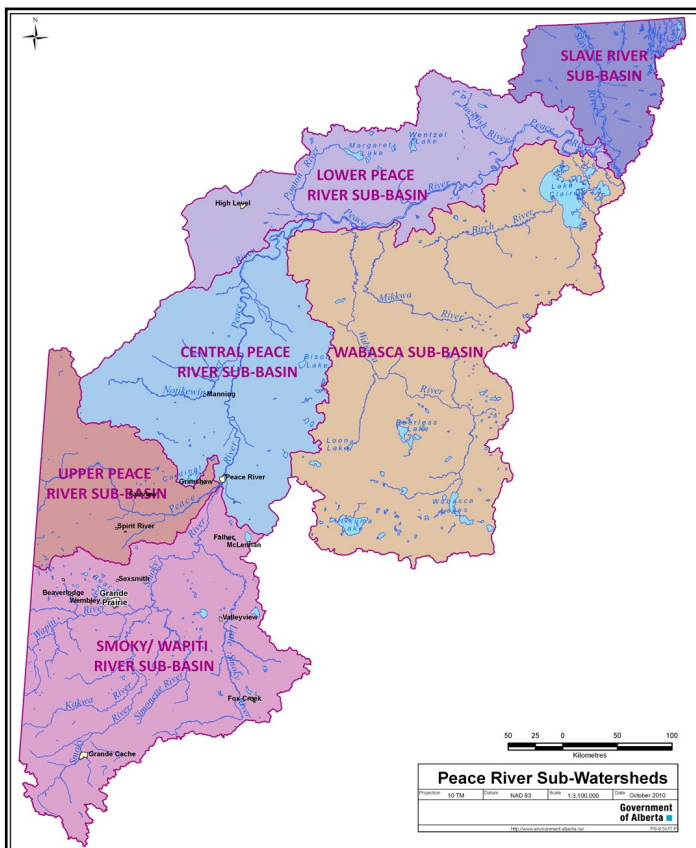
By facilitating inclusive and collaborative processes and partnerships, promoting membership and interaction, and providing opportunities for all stakeholders to be involved.

Be innovative and action-oriented:

By being motivated, resourceful and action-oriented in finding new, innovative ideas and win-win solutions.

Foster Stewardship:

By encouraging and enabling individuals and organizations to be good stewards of the watershed.



Diverse, Responsible & Connected!

- *Diverse* group of people representing diverse interests.
- *Responsible* for bringing those interests together.
- *Connected* to all stakeholders across the watershed area.



Message from the Chairman

Another year, and a lot of water under the bridge. Amazingly, it happens every year, another snowmelt, too much water, then not enough water where and when we want it, ad infinitum.

Have you ever wondered where it all comes from, where it all goes, and what is the quality, and reliability of this water that flows through our lives, and our landscapes? Especially important are the smaller streams, lakes, wetlands, and aquifers, that are so crucial to our wellbeing, even to our existence. These provide drinking water, support municipal water systems, provide water to support agriculture, forestry, and recreation. And let's not forget the water that supports all the other environmental goods and services that we tend to take for granted, but know we shouldn't. Water truly is LIFE.

This is the mandate of the MPWA, and the passion of its directors and staff – trying to understand water issues, planning appropriate projects, and helping to make a difference in conjunction with a host of partner organizations and individuals. Often the ideas are out there, the need is known, the desire to act exists, and resources are available. MPWA works to bring the appropriate partners together, define the project and develop the necessary planning, and initiate the required actions. MPWA appreciates all the partner organizations it has worked with this past year, and that we are still

working with. We are always open to new partnerships, and ideas.

Our main achievement this past year was completion of an Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) for the entire Peace watershed. This “living document” is intended to be a starting point for discussions and decisions about everyone's issues, concerns, and vision of how we might live, work, and play in our watershed going forward. Please take some time to read it, find those parts most relevant to your interests, and join the discussion. Other partner projects, completed or ongoing, include Source Water Protection Planning for the Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer, riparian protection projects, input into the Peace/Athabasca Delta water issues, etc. Please read the Annual Report for the whole list.

As chair, I would like to thank all the Board Members for their many hours of service, and involvement this past year. I would especially like to thank our dedicated staff members, who go above and beyond to make things happen, and provide advice and guidance to the Board.

**Rick Keillor,
Chairman of the Board**





Message from the Executive Director

It is always amazing how quickly time passes, the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance has just completed its 7th year as an organization. Once again some major milestones were achieved: the completion of the first IWMP (Integrated Watershed Management Plan), working with Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer Management Advisory Association regarding a source water protection plan, restoration projects and numerous education and outreach events to name a few. The opportunities to engage and work with the stakeholders throughout the watershed are abundant and provide excellent partnerships for current and future work. The diversity of this watershed and its people have always been a treasure and a challenge when working in the area of watershed planning and management.

The Board continues to be committed to the **goals of Alberta Government's 'Water For Life Strategy' – Safe, secure drinking water; Healthy aquatic ecosystems; Reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy.**

The Directors are dedicated to the work of the organization therefore, spend a great deal of time and effort working, reviewing, learning, educating, reviewing policy, and planning. The work of the MPWA is to engage multiple sectors to plan for future water uses and needs, while protecting water quality and quantity. We would encourage all people of the watershed to think about how they live, work, and play, and see if there are improvements that can be made that will benefit our watershed. They exhibit a passion and willingness to do this very important work on behalf of all inhabitants within the geographic scope of a watershed that covers approximately 30% of the Province of Alberta.

The Watershed Alliance continues to work in areas of education, awareness, providing accurate information, and watershed planning. The board works under a consensus decision making model to ensure that voices from many perspectives - industry, government, non-governmental agencies, aboriginal communities, and the public at large – can be heard and sectors have the opportunity for participation in the planning process for the watershed. MPWA strives to engage stakeholders to find workable actions, beneficial management practices, and provide advice for policies and guidelines.

The prominent areas of work include:

- 1) Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) – This complex piece of work, that can look at absolutely everything that happens on the landscape that affects water quality and quantity, was taken out in its draft form to numerous stakeholders for comment and the first **MPWA IWMP was accepted by consensus by the Board of Directors in March 2018.**
- 2) Project work: in areas such as Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer, Redwillow, Wapiti River, etc.
- 3) Continued engagement with councils, stakeholder groups, and residents through meetings, presentations, and forums.
- 4) Increased education opportunities by offering workshops, school presentations, and attending tradeshow.
- 5) Participating in broader processes such as Land Use, Alberta WPACs, Water North Coalition, Play-based pilot projects, etc.
- 6) General Organization and board functioning.

Thank you:

Kudos to the people—Directors and named alternates—who put their name forward and participate in the board of directors. Their perseverance to strive towards sound ways forward to protect our water resources.

I appreciate the continued hard work and dedication of the staff. The Staff worked with the board of Directors on a number of projects and initiatives, with the Board framing the goals and the staff putting the pieces together to further project progress.

Thank you to all of the supporters of the MPWA; whether it be in the form of financial contributions or various forms of in-kind support. MPWA can only continue to do work on behalf of Albertans through your support and assistance.

Rhonda Clarke-Gauthier
Executive Director



Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance Financial Highlights 2017/2018

The Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance was granted \$315,612.90, 72% of our total ask from AEP, to move forward with the program as outlined in our strategic plan. Other major funds received and allotted for projects including sponsorship totals \$252,000. With funds received and an estimated \$185,976 In-Kind support from organizations in the Peace, the MPWA continues to forge ahead.

AEP funds are to be used to support operating costs such as salaries, office capital and supplies. They are traditionally doled out, 80% following the awarding of the grant and 20% following the interim report. These funds are to be completely spent by March 31 of each year. Unfortunately by the time the funds become available, it is well into the fiscal year, meaning there is less than a year to complete the project. In 2017/18, the MPWA had 10 months to complete, 12 month projects. Another issue the MPWA faces is that our staff must go on reduced hours or even close the doors beginning April 1 because of the timing of funding application, confirmation, and distribution. This makes it extremely difficult to retain staff, although the MPWA has been lucky with having understanding staff committed to the organization.

As the youngest of eleven Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils in Alberta, and despite our financial challenges, several milestones have been completed. The first State of the Watershed report was supported by the community and completed in 2015 and the Integrated Management Plan was completed in March 2018. These important documents can be accessed on the website (www.mightypeacewatershedalliance.org).

In addition, a number of projects in the watershed are in the process of completion or have been completed. Projects include the Heart River Watershed Restoration Project, the Redwillow Watershed Restoration Project, the Wapiti River Management Plan, the Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer Source Water Protection Plan, Streambank Stabilization and Extension project, and the Improved livestock Crossing Project.

The stellar reputation of the MPWA for its ability to spearhead projects and multi-stakeholder planning is growing. Its work is considered imperative to address land use practices of industry, recreation, aboriginal, government and the public, through science, education, communication and policy.

The MPWA is moving ahead with its planned activities of 2018, as we wait for news as to the state of our grant funding request. We are excited and honoured to be hosts for the AB WPAC Summit in June, 2018. All the WPACs are invited to visit us in the largest watershed in Alberta and experience our very long summer days.

We thank AEP as our primary partner and supporter; municipal, industry and not-for-profit partners for their financial and in-kind support. I would also like to thank my fellow Directors for their hard work and support. We have a big job to accomplish and without the respect, efforts and humour of the Board, we would not have been able to complete what we have.

**Shelleen Gerbig
Treasurer**



Financial Snapshot April 1/17-Mar 31/18

INCOME

Sponsorship	4,880.00
AEP Grant	315,612.90
WRRP Grants	210,593.00
Environmental Damage Funds	37,368.45
Bank Interest	146.21
Total	568,600.56

EXPENSES

Subcontracts – Projects	74,453.80
Salaries, Honoraria & Benefits	211,723.38
Advertising & Promotions	8415.56
Office & Administration	39,827.12
Travel	35,873.76
Board/Staff Development	3401.98
Total	373,695.60

Note: Watershed Resilience and Restoration Plan (WRRP) Funds and Environmental Damages Funds are carried forward year to year until end of project..

***Gifts in Kind (Incl. Office space)
\$185,976.51***

The 2017-2018 Board of Directors

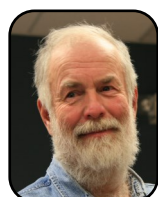
Member	Sector	Affiliation
Non-Government Organizations		
Bob Cameron	Conservation- Environmental	Peace River Environmental Society
Jean-Marie Sobze	Research- Education	NAIT Boreal Research Institute- novaNAIT Center for Applied Research
Tony Saunders	Watershed Stewardship	Northern Sunrise County Watershed Advisory Committee
Dave Hay	Recreation- Tourism- Fisheries	
Richard Keillor (Chair)	Public-At-Large	
David Walty	Public-At-Large	
Industry		
Ashley Rowney (Secretary)	Utilities	AQUATERA® Utilities Inc.
Ian Daisley	Forestry	Alberta Forest Products Association
Robert Thompson	Oil and Gas	Encana
Shelleen Gerbig (Treasurer)	Agriculture	Smoky Applied Research & Demonstration Association (SARDA)
VACANT	Mining	
Aboriginal		
Darren Calliou	Metis Settlement General Council	Metis Settlement General Council
VACANT	Upper Watershed First Nation	
Troy Stuart	Middle Watershed First Nation	Bigstone Cree Nation
Jim Webb	Lower Watershed First Nation	North Peace Tribal Council
Sylvia Johnson	Métis Nations of Alberta	Presidents Region VI
Government		
Abdi Siad-Omar	Federal Transboundary Relations	Alberta Environment and Parks
Chris Thiessen (Vice Chair)	Large Urban	City of Grande Prairie
Elaine Manzer	Small Urban	Town of Peace River
Dan Benson	Provincial Government	Alberta Agriculture and Forestry
Elaine Garrow	Rural Municipalities	AAMDC- Northern Zone- MD of Spirit River



Abdi Siad-Omar



Ashley Rowney



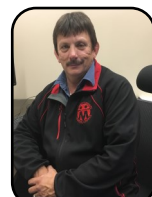
Bob Cameron



Chris Thiessen



Dan Benson



Darren Calliou



David Walty



Dave Hay



Elaine Garrow



Elaine Manzer



Ian Daisley

Jean-Marie
Sobze

Jim Webb



Rick Keillor



Robert Thompson



Shelleen Gerbig



Sylvia Johnson



Tony Saunders



Troy Stuart

Thank you to the Board members. We are very thankful and appreciative for your contributions.

We also acknowledge the contributions of named alternates: Barry Dibb, Bin Xu, Cathy Newhook, Courtney Hughes, Eric Jorgenson, Lindee Dumas, Michelle Gairdner, Ray Skrepnek, Roxie Rutt, Sandra Miller, Vern Lymburner.

Technical Committee Report

Scope of the Technical Committee

The Technical Committee (TC) has been appointed by the Board of Directors of the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance as a standing committee. Their role is to assist and advise the Board of Directors on technical, scientific and project matters. The technical committee reports directly to the Board of Directors on a regular basis.

Members of the Committee for 2017/18:

Abdi Said-Omar, Ashley Rowney, Bob Cameron, David Walty, Elaine Garrow, Jean-Marie Sobze, Ian Daisley, Richard Keillor

The TC was actively supported by the Watershed Coordinator and Executive Director of the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance.

Tasks Completed in 2017/2018

Partnering with the Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer Management Association and AEP, a Source Water Protection Plan for the Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer has been initiated. Hazard identification and risk assessment are well underway and completion of the plan is expected in 2018-2019.

Improved Livestock Crossing and Streambank Stabilization and Extension are 2 projects taken on by the same project team using Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program funding. Agroforestry Woodlot Extension Society, Alberta Conservation Association, Cows and Fish and County of Grande Prairie are working with us to improve flood and drought resiliency and water quality. Making better crossings and restoring eroding streams are the on-the-ground work.



The Redwillow Watershed Restoration Project has finalized their Restoration Plan and is awaiting appropriate water conditions to work on fish passage improvement. This project involves many partners.



Alberta Parks and Environment is looking to complete engagement on the final report submitted by the Wapiti River Water Management Plan Steering Committee to support the creation of Water Management Plan.

The TC has been providing input on a range of watershed issues including the Strategic Environmental Assessment of Wood Buffalo National Park, Area Based Regulation Panel, Transboundary Biological Indicators Workshop and updates to the Pulp and Paper Effluent Regulations.

Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP)

The IWMP is complete! Thanks to all who contributed! The IWMP Steering Committee has guided the IWMP process and now they have been appointed by the Board to track and evaluate implementation.

Projects for 2018/2019

New projects will align with the recommendations of the IWMP as we work towards implementation. For the coming year, we anticipate starting work on hydraulic modelling of the Peace River in the Lower Peace and a Wapiti Watershed Source Water Protection Plan. Other potential projects are currently being scoped and the TC continues to seek, rely on and collaborate with a range of partners.

Adam Norris
Watershed Coordinator





Education and Stewardship Committee Report

Scope of the Education and Stewardship Committee.

1. Education and Awareness of water, stewardship, and watershed health.
2. Outreach to engage with stakeholders of the Watershed.
3. Improved Communications through website, factsheets, brochures, social media, etc.
4. Encouraging sponsorship of MPWA and its watershed planning and work.

Members of the Committee for 2017/18:

Ashley Rowney, Elaine Manzer, Michelle Gairdner, Shelleen Gerbig

Activities:

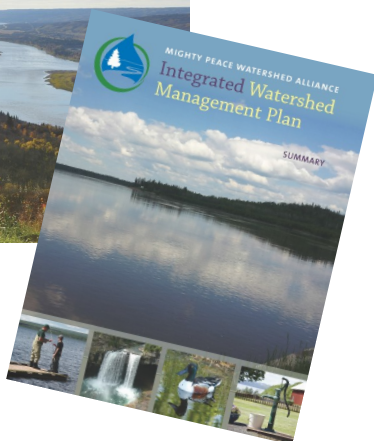
Throughout the year the committee worked on releasing three newsletters for the public and our membership.

Additionally two fact sheets (What is a watershed and rivers & Ferries within our watershed) were created for distribution at events at tradeshow.

In the spring of 2017 we were able to release a new children's activity book, the book will be distributed at tradeshow and to school and other programs throughout our watershed.

Take a few moments to check the website our at www.mightypeacewatershedalliance.org for information on the organization, the projects, the State of the Watershed, and the Integrated Watershed Management Plan.

Please share your comments about new publications and the website with the Directors and the Staff.



A watershed is all of the area (land and water) where the water drains to a common body of water.



Education & Outreach Report

Within the past year the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance has had amazing opportunities to go out and meet with the public across the watershed.

MPWA had the chance to go to local schools within the Peace Watershed to educate the students on water quality and conservation. We also were able to partner with other events throughout the watershed (Beaverlodge Spring Riparian Tour, Hines Creek FINs Release and a two day Riparian Management Course for Land owners).

Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance participated in a number of tradeshow (Grande Prairie Fall Home and Leisure, Clear Hills Country, Peace Country Classic, ATCO Staff Tradeshow and Grande Prairie Earth Day) where we had the opportunity to hand out education resources and engage with the public so they could learn more about their local watershed and projects.

At the tradeshow we were able to provide education about the current projects such as our Integrated Watershed Management Plan.

MPWA also hosted a public forum this year on Watershed Stewardship (How to form or

enhance a watershed stewardship group) with guest speakers from the Land Stewardship Centre and Alberta Lake Management Society. 12 people attended.

Implementing a recommendation from our Integrated Watershed Management Plan, the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance created a Wetland Education Committee. The committee has members from NAIT Boreal Research institute as well as Wetland Specialists from AEP. The Committee will be hosting Wetland Education Workshops for residents and municipalities within the watershed in the 2018 -2019 year.

For the upcoming 2018-2019 fiscal year the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance is looking forward to engaging the residents of the Peace Watershed and continuing to create more education opportunities for the public.

Megan Graham
Education & Outreach
Coordinator



Highlights of 2017-2018

The Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance worked on the 6 Goals that have been established for the organization:

Goal #1 - The Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance is a strong, vibrant, and sustainable organization.

- 7 Board meetings in various locations: McLennan, Grande Prairie, Peace River, Grimshaw, Sexsmith, Spirit River; plus Conference calls.
- Discussion with Regional AEP about priorities .
- Conversations and planning with Watershed Planning and Advisory Council (WPAC) managers and Alberta Environment & Parks - about funding & solutions, structure, purpose.
- Board Development opportunities: Cows, Crops, Culverts and Fish Wksp, Lake Index and Report Card presentation, Foothills Research Institute Stream Crossing Program, Geological Society, AER ABR.
- Further development of policies and processes.
- Discussions with various councils about MPWA work.
- Exploring funding options, eg., other grants, sponsorship, etc.

Goal #2 - The Board and Members of the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance are well educated about air, water and land issues in the basin and are open to innovative ideas and practices.

- Participated in AEP/WPAC Forum, ALMS Annual Workshop, Flowing Waters Conference, Municipal Progress for Watershed Planning in the NSR Basin
- MPWA hosted a Watershed Stewardship Day for local watershed stewardship groups and municipalities & board members.
- MPWA hosted a Groundwater Forum in Grimshaw
- Presentations for and discussions with various groups: Fox Creek Operators Group, Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, Bigstone Cree Nation, County of Grande Prairie, Agricultural Services Board conference, Mackenzie Municipal Services Agency, City of Grande Prairie, Grande Prairie Environmental Network
- Preparation to host Watershed Planning and Advisory Council Summit in June 2018

Goal #3 - The Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance is well-known and accessible to residents in the basin.

- Participated in 2 Alberta Association Municipal Districts & Councils—Northern Zone Meeting
- Produced 3 newsletter articles for SARDA's Back 40, maintained website , Twitter account and Facebook page, attended tradeshow (Clear Hills Country Tradeshow, Grande Prairie's Earth Day Show, ATCO Staff Tradeshow, Grande Prairie Fall Home & Leisure, Peace Country Classic Agri-Show), radio interviews.

- Continued Awareness and Education Campaign for Heart River (HWRP) and Redwillow Watershed Restoration project (RWRP).
- Member of Weyerhaeuser's Public Advisory Group

Goal #4 - Residents of the Peace watershed have access to safe, secure drinking water.

- Continued to work with the Wapiti River Watershed Management Project (WRWMP).
- Participating in Water North Coalition.
- Continue work with the partners in the RWRP and HWRP (project complete, collaboration continues)
- Initiated a Source Water Protection Plan for the Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer

Goal #5 - Water quality, quantity and seasonal rate of flow in the Peace watershed is understood and advice on its uses are made to the appropriate bodies.

- Ongoing WRWMP work
- Ongoing conversation with Parks Canada, WaterSMART and Municipalities.
- Participated in AER's Area Based Regulation Panel for the MD of Greenview regarding fresh water use.
- Provided input to Wood Buffalo National Park's Strategic Environmental Assessment
- Reviewed Pulp and Paper Effluent Regulations update
- Participated in Transboundary Biological Indicators Workshop

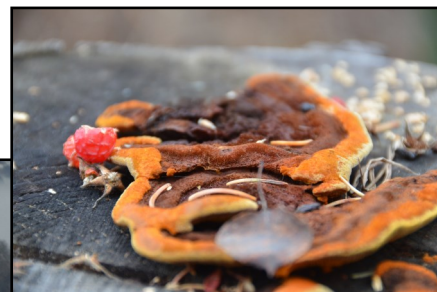
Goal #6 - Watershed Stewardship is widely supported by residents throughout the basin.

- Attended Peace Valley Conservation, Recreation & Tourism Societies AGM
- Engaged in conversations at Tradeshow
- Engaged with Saddle Hills County and 3 schools for the Little Green Thumbs Program
- Presented at multiple Schools regarding MPWA, Water Quality & Wetlands
- Participated with the High School Riparian Spring Tour
- MPWA established a Wetland Education Committee
- A partner in the Northern Sunrise County field tour
- Project lead for Improved Livestock Crossing and Streambank Stabilization and Extension projects, which engage watershed residents through forums, workshops and one-on-one.

Financial and In-Kind Supporters

Agroforestry Woodlot Extension Society	Métis Nation of Alberta
Alberta Agriculture & Forestry	Metis Settlements General Council
Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties – Zone 4	Municipal District of Fairview
Alberta Conservation Association	Municipal District of Greenview
Alberta Energy Regulator	Municipal District of Peace
Alberta Environment and Parks	Municipal District of Smoky River
Alberta Geological Survey	Municipal District of Spirit River
Alberta Infrastructure	NAIT Boreal Research Institute
Alberta Newsprint Company	Northern Sunrise County
Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society (Cows and Fish)	North Peace Tribal Council
Alberta Transportation	Parks Canada
AQUATERA Utilities Inc.	Peace Country Beef and Forage Association
City of Grande Prairie	Q99 Radio Station
County of Grande Prairie	SARDA Ag Research
County of Northern Lights	Seven Generations Energy Ltd.
Dr. Michael Church	Shell Canada
EnCana Corporation	Town of Beaverlodge
Environment Canada	Town of Grimshaw
Foothills Research Institute	Town of Peace River
Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer Management Advisory Association	Town of Valleyview
Mackenzie County	Victory GIS
	Village of Berwyn
	West County Watershed Society

If we have forgotten anyone, we offer our sincere apologies and request you please contact us so that we can remedy it.



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