



Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance

Diverse, Responsible, Connected

2019 - 2020 Annual Report



Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance

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.



Diverse

group of people representing diverse interests



Responsible

for bringing those interests together



Connected

to all stakeholders in the watershed area



Message from the Chairman

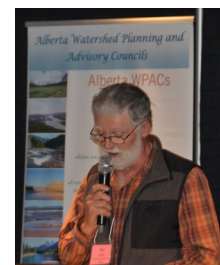
It has been another year of challenges, which keeps life interesting for the MPWA Board, and especially for the staff. As we wound up the 2020 year and began preparations for the AGM, COVID 19 arrived. The pandemic and its restrictions have affected us all and may continue to do so for some time to come. MPWA recently held a Board Meeting by conference call. While decisions on clear cut issues can be reached, it is far from an ideal process. The free flow of ideas (point and counterpoint) is extremely limited.

While Alberta WPAC's now have a four-year funding agreement with the provincial government, MPWA's core grant is less, and timing is still uncertain. Fortunately, our staff has been very flexible in adjusting their work schedules, or the organization would be unable to retain them. We have received significant funding commitments from a few municipalities in the South Peace area. This is the most populated area of the watershed, with attendant water issues and opportunities for projects and education initiatives.

MPWA has continued working on existing projects and taken on new initiatives (see Technical Committee report). Through projects and education, MPWA continues to demonstrate, lead and/or push for better water management practices and awareness throughout the Peace Watershed. Recent examples include the GRIMSAW GRAVELS AQUIFER SOURCE WATER PROTECTION PLAN, and the WAPITI RIVER SOURCE WATER PROTECTION PLAN.

Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance will continue to press on. We appreciate the support we have received to date, and look forward to continued, and new interactions with our stakeholders and the public of the Peace River watershed.

**Rick Keillor,
Chairman of the Board**



Message from the Executive Director

The past year provided the Board of Directors with opportunity for reflection and growth.

After a great deal of discussion and negotiation by many, the Alberta WPAC partners were finally offered a multi-year agreement for a grant for operating funds and some project work. A 4-year agreement was signed in December for the April 1, 2019 to Mar 31, 2023. While the amount is a definite reduction (as most partners) it is an amount that can hopefully be guaranteed and allow the organization to work with this base amount. This is a tremendous step forward in the partnership of multi-sector, multi-stakeholder WPACs and the Government of Alberta. As the Government designated Watershed planning and Advisory Councils for Alberta's major basins, it is positive to receive funding to support the initiatives.

The MPWA Board continued to take time to review their Strategic Plan and their IWMP (Integrated Watershed Management Plan, 2018). The board ensured that these 2 plans work in conjunction of one another to best serve the water quality and quantity concerns and needs of the Peace River and Slave River Watersheds.

As you can see in the Annual Report and on our website www.mightypeacewatershedalliance.org there are a number of projects being worked on across the watershed. Everything from source water protection planning to riparian health and rehabilitation to wetland mapping to education. We have continued to find avenues to provide Education and address Water/Watershed Literacy. Workshops, projects, training, school/community youth events, and hands on events have continued throughout the year. Unfortunately, we had to say goodbye in Sept 2019 to Megan Mader our Education/Outreach Coordinator of 4 as she made a career change. We truly appreciated all of her work. Her passion,



experience, and humor are missed. We send her best wishes.

Due to lack of confirmed core grant funding until Dec 2019 and then the beginning of the Covid -19 pandemic, our work plan ended up shifting a few times during the year, but we were successful in continuing work on a variety of programs and projects in a new way. While new technologies do allow for communication and connection, the technology frameworks truly need more work for consistent and less-frustrating interaction. We look forward to engaging and collaborating with stakeholders and partners in ways that are open and acceptable to both sides which promote full conversations.

On a provincial scale, identifying the Roles and Responsibilities of the AB WPACs was a large piece of work which started a few years ago and has now been firmed up by AEP and WPACs. There are 4 major roles that each WPAC tries to work within depending on their resources and organizational priorities. The 4 areas are: **Convener and Collaborator, Monitoring and Reporting, Policy and Planning, and Literacy and Education.**

The MPWA was established in April 2011, the organization continues to grow through reporting, planning, projects, and education initiatives. We look forward to greater engagement with stakeholders and those who work towards improved water quality and quantity throughout the watershed.



Rhonda Clarke-Gauthier
Executive Director



Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance Financial Highlights 2019/2020

For the 2019/20 financial year, we received an AEP Grant of \$230,000. An interim payment of \$100,000 was deposited on March 2019 with agreements made in December of 2019 that saw the remaining \$130,000 deposited. This \$230,000 AEP grant represents about 63% of our total operations and projects ask, therefore program and organization adjustments had to be made. This grant amount reflects a 27% reduction of the core operations funding from the previous year.

Other major sources of 2019/2020 funds included \$10,000 from the City of Grande Prairie, \$1,000 from the Grimshaw Gravel Aquifer Management Advisory Association, \$1,000 from the MD of Peace and \$5,000 from Saddle Hills County. MPWA has had a number of partners and supporters who have contributed their time and efforts, we note that Gifts and in-kind were valued in excess of \$180,900.

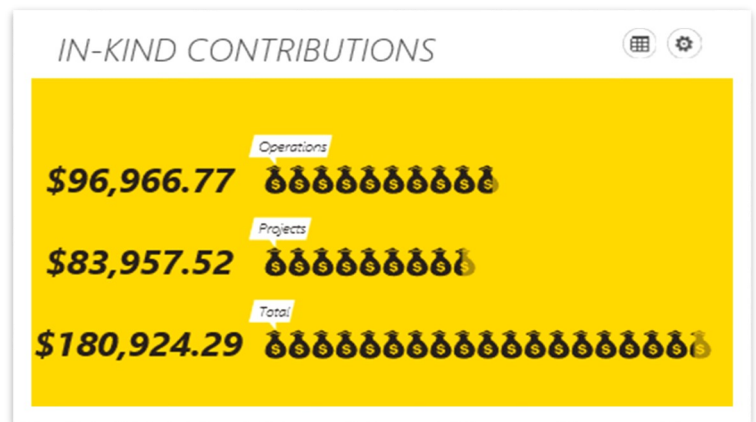
Despite the uncertainties resulting from both funding and COVID, the Alliance staff and partners continued work on many projects as indicated elsewhere in this annual report. Expenses were reduced by holding several meetings electronically, travel was reduced when several programs were delayed or cancelled and the education outreach coordinator position has been vacant since September 2019.

In the past, there has been great uncertainty each year about the AEP grant: first would there be an AEP grant, second, the actual amount of the grant and third, the timing of its deposit which has ranged from June to December. This has led to a pattern of MPWA suspending programs and limiting staff hours until funding was both finalized and deposited. The board thanks staff and partners for understanding the consequences of uncertainty of the amount and the timing of the deposit of the AEP grant.

However, we were pleased to receive good news in December 2019, when AEP signed a four-year multi-year agreement stating that MPWA would receive up to \$230,000 annually. The first year of the agreement was our 2019/2020 fiscal year. This is a good first step, but we would still like more certainty in timing. The grant has also been decreasing over the recent years and does not differentiate our watershed's needs from others. Our watershed is the largest in Alberta both geographically and by water volume in the mainstem.

The MPWA continues to welcome partners in maintaining a healthy sustainable watershed.

Elaine Manzer
Treasurer



Financial Snapshot April 1/19 - Mar 31/20 **INCOME**

Sponsorship (19/20)	17,620.00
AEP Grant	253,832.59
WRRP Grants	252,357.12
AB Transportation Project Funds	76,354.15
Contributions	80,212.87
Bank Interest	113.32
Total	680,490.05

EXPENSES

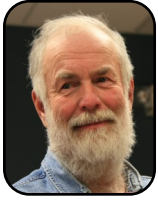
Subcontracts – Projects	133,643.45
Salaries, Honoraria & Benefits	176,813.34
Advertising & Promotions	1,415.95
Office & Administration	19,543.29
Travel	29,551.09
Board/Staff Development	1,480.91
Total	362,448.03

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

***Gifts in Kind (Incl. Office space)**
\$180,924.29*

The 2019-2020 Board of Directors

Non-Government Organizations



Conservation-Environment:
Bob Cameron, Peace River
Environmental Society



Research-Education:
Catherine Brown, NAIT
Centre for Boreal Research



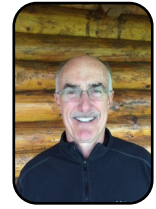
Watershed Stewardship:
Cathy Newhook, West
County Watershed Society



**Recreation-Tourism-
Fisheries:**
Vacant



**Public Member at
Large:**
Richard Keillor

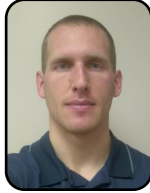


**Public Member at
Large:**
Dave Walty

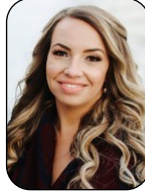
Industry



Utilities:
Ashley Rowney,
AQUATERA® Utilities Inc.



Forestry:
Ian Daisley, Alberta
Forest Products
Association



Oil & Gas:
Sarah Belak,
Tourmaline Oil
Corporation



Agriculture:
Jill Henry
Agriculture, County
of Grande Prairie



Mining:
Vacant

Aboriginal Communities



**Metis Settlement General
Council:**
Vacant



**Middle Watershed First
Nation:**
Vacant



**Lower Watershed First
Nation:**
Jim Webb, Little Red
River Cree Nation

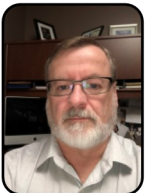


**Upper Watershed First
Nation:**
Vacant



Métis Nation of Alberta:
Vacant

Government



**Federal-Transboundary
Relations: May –
October**
Dave Coish, Alberta
Environment & Parks



**Federal-Transboundary
Relations: November –
March**
Abdi Siad-Omar, Alberta
Environment & Parks



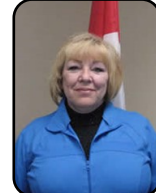
**Large Urban
Municipality:**
Chris Thiessen,
City of Grande
Prairie



**Small Urban
Municipalities:**
Elaine Manzer,
Town of Peace
River



**Provincial
Government:**
Dan Benson,
Alberta Agriculture &
Forestry



Rural Municipalities:
Elaine Garrow, Rural
Municipalities
Association, North
Zone

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

We also acknowledge the contributions of named alternates: Dan Pott, Eric Jorgenson, Jaimie Meneen, Kayedon Wilcox, Michelle Gairdner, Ray Skrepnek, Sandra Miller, Vern Lymburner.

Thank you to Directors who have served the board and now moved on: Catherine Brown & Dave Coish

IN-KIND HOURS CONTRIBUTED

757 Operations

956 Projects

1,713 Total

Education & Outreach Report

MPWA continues to focus on Education and Outreach as a crucial part of Watershed Management and Planning. Information is shared regarding wetlands, legislation, water quality, aquatic habitat and groundwater. This information needs to be shared and understood by all who engage in decision-making processes so that there is a common foundation for discussions. In short, our Education and Outreach focuses a lot on water literacy.



We hosted learning opportunities for youth and the public in such forums as wetlands presentations to Grade 5 Classes, 'Walk through the Forest' Events, Summer Library Programs, Riparian Tours for High School, Tradeshows, and displays at a variety of industry field days.

Some Outreach and Education work focused on a more technical audience and these events often tied into some of our other projects. Some of these events were the Soil Erosion Series workshop and tour (regarding streambank restoration work), workshop regarding 'Fire, the Watershed, and Source Water', contractor training for streambank work, and Source



When the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance personnel stopped in, I asked about a crossing so my stock would do less damage to the area and they had the resources. They came and did a great job... I was able to continue my work and they did their job. On top of that they took my opinions and my ideas and finished it up.

Carlo Toews —Landowner

Water planning presentations to Municipalities, other Watershed groups, and Water Week Programs.

Of course, part of our Outreach and Education occurs in online format including social media. Check out website and/or Twitter and Facebook for resources, project updates, interesting water facts and opportunities for engagement or learning.

As one of eleven Alberta Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils, (WPACs), MPWA participates and collaborates with the broader watershed work including the Education/Outreach initiatives. This allows to pool resources and ideas around water literacy and education.

This year we had to say goodbye to our Education & Outreach Coordinator as she moved on to other things. MPWA appreciates the time Megan put into classroom presentations, community engagement, tradeshows and the daily operation of MPWA.



We wish you all the best Megan!



Technical Committee Report

The Technical Committee continues to provide oversight for projects and technical review of projects or initiatives of relevance to the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance. Many thanks to the committee members Ashley Rowney, Richard Keillor, Bob Cameron, Elaine Garrow, Ian Daisley and Dave Walty.

MPWA projects can be lumped into three main categories: 1) Source Water Protection Planning, 2) Restoration, and 3) Monitoring and Knowledge Transfer. Source Water Protection Planning focuses on addressing hazards to source water at the landscape scale through proactive planning (i.e./ Grimshaw Gravel Aquifer and Wapiti River). Restoration projects are on the ground projects that restore ecological function with an intent to provide benefits such as flood mitigation, drought mitigation, water quality improvement or fish habitat

(Redwillow Watershed Restoration Plan, Streambank Stabilization, Improved Livestock Crossings). The final category is Monitoring and Knowledge Transfer. These projects focus on collecting environmental data and sharing information on Beneficial Management Practices that recognize watershed function (Evergreen Wetland Centre, LakeKeepers, Lower Wabasca Watershed Mapping).

One of the great moments this year was finding spawning suckers in the stream at one of our restoration project sites. Although the stated goal of this particular project is not fish habitat restoration, but flood mitigation and water quality, the components often come together. It is watershed function that we seek to restore so that the ecological goods and services that we need such as flood mitigation, improved water quality and yes fish habitat. Whether the fish were there due to improved water quality, improved structural habitat as a result of reduced erosion is not really important. What is important is that all the pieces and the ways that they interact have been restored so that the watershed is functioning and we are seeing these improvements.

We are lucky to work with so many great people and organizations, which is the real strength of MPWA. This collaboration is essential in our source water planning work, monitoring, and knowledge transfer efforts. Each sector best knows their operations and management practices, so we are grateful that they willing come to the table and discuss if or how things may be improved to better safeguard watershed function. A big thank you to the volunteers who monitor lakes for us in the LakeKeepers program! Likewise the contributions of aboriginal, municipal, provincial and industry partners for source water protection planning need to be recognized.



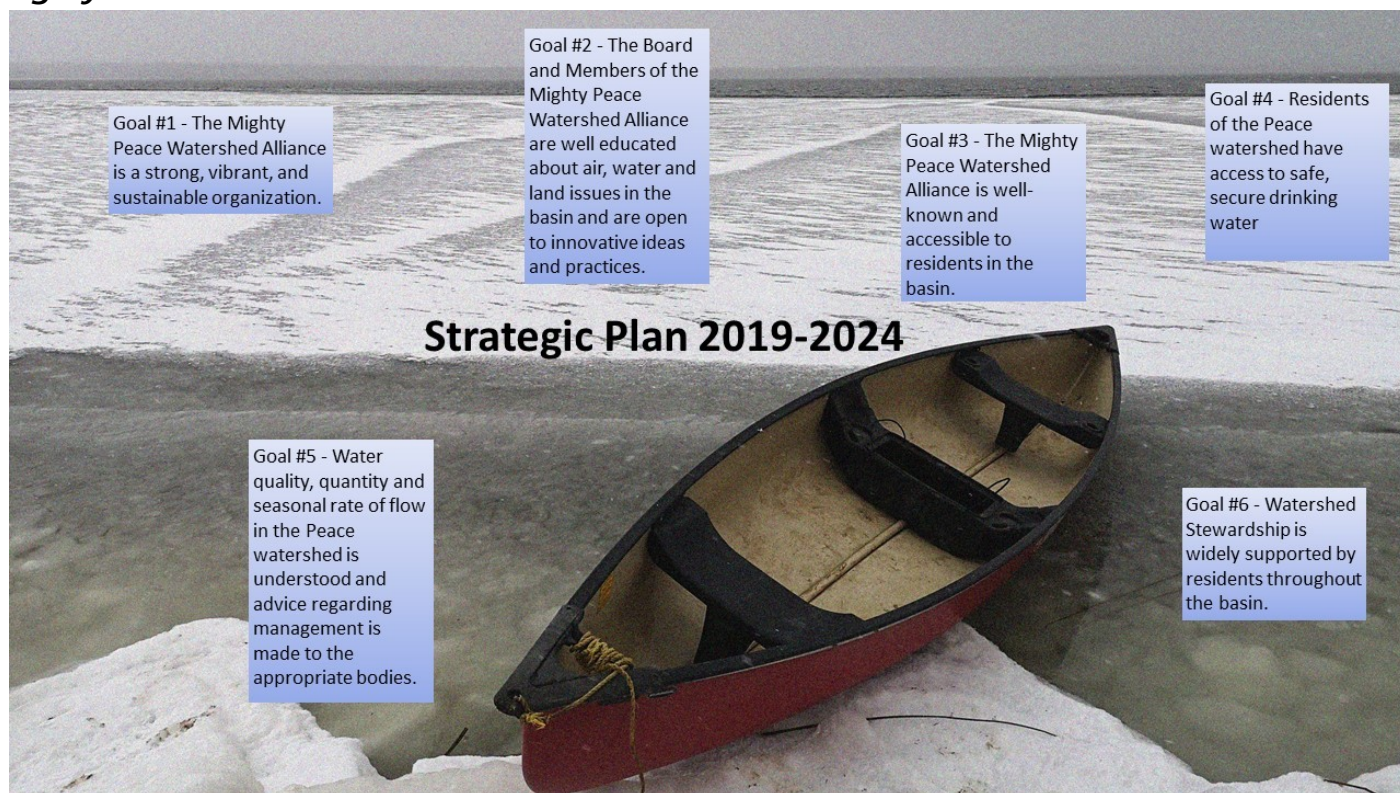
Working with the MPWA has been invaluable while creating our Source Water Protection Plan for GGA-MAA. The cooperative philosophy brought forward by the MPWA was key in engaging all the stakeholders to promote and encourage dialogue in building the framework of our plan. Being able to draw on the professional and expert resources of the MPWA was essential in guiding our committee through this process. It allowed our committee create a key document that will lead our association forward to achieve its mission in water protection in the north.

Colleen Sklapsky—Councillor, Town of Grimshaw



Adam Norris
Watershed Coordinator

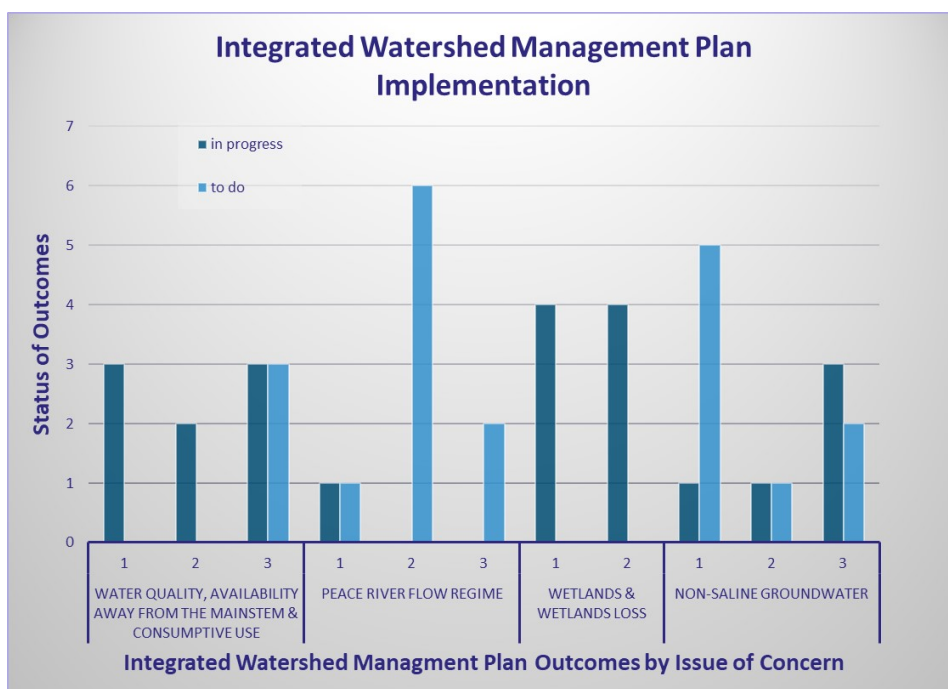




The Board of Directors continue to provide direction to the organization including through the Strategic Plan. Work has been completed to ensure the alignment of the Strategic Plan and the Integrated Watershed Management Plan for the Peace River and Slave River Watersheds. Visit the website for the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan and the *Integrated Watershed Management Plan*. (IWMP)

The Board has a committee directed to monitor the implementation of the *Integrated Watershed Management Plan*. Results from the 2019-2020 year review (Year 2 of implementation) can be seen below. The graph Status of the Outcomes identified under each Issue of Concern. A lot of Outcomes have the status **ongoing** due to the long-term nature of the Strategic Directions (suggested management actions to achieve the Outcomes). Both Peace River Flow Regime and Non-saline Groundwater have a larger number of Outcomes with a **to do** status. This reflects both the complex, multi-jurisdictional nature of the Strategic Directions as well as the serial nature of some Strategic Directions. This means that one Strategic Direction needs to be completed before the next one can be undertaken.

Many thanks to the IWMP Steering Committee -Bob Cameron, Elaine Garrow, Ian Daisley, Richard Keillor, Jim Webb, Chris Thiessen & Dave Walty - for all their work!



I am involved with the MPWA as I see value in an integrated approach to watershed management. The MPWA is a place where a diverse group can come together to identify risks to water in the Peace Country.

Ian Daisley — Forestry

Highlights of 2019-2020

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.

- 4 Board meetings in various locations: McLennan, Grande Prairie, plus Conference calls.
- Consistent professional Staff complement.
- 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: Ground Water Monitoring, Surface Water Allocation Directive, Wabasca Wetlands Mapping, Fisheries Management, Peatland Restoration, Forest Management, Environmental Flow Management, Water Production, Midstream and Disposal in the Duvernay
- Further development of policies and processes.
- Discussions with various councils about MPWA work.
- Exploring funding options, e.g., other grants, sponsorship, etc.
- AB WPAC Managers and Education Coordinators meet to find common goals, share resources, and move initiatives forward.

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, Hosted Fire, Watershed and Source Water Workshop, Soil Erosion Workshop Series, met with Kiskatinaw Watershed Group
- Involved with Evergreen Wetland Centre and the Evergreen Learning and Innovation Society
- Presentations for and discussions with various groups: Alberta Institute of Agrologists, Rural Municipalities Association—Northern Zone, Various Municipalities, Wapiti Watershed Source Water Protection partners, and Partners of the Restoration work in the West County.

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

- Participated in RMA(Rural Municipalities Association) Northern Zone Meeting
- Produced 2 MPWA newsletters. Contribute articles for SARDA's Back 40.
- Maintained website, Twitter account & Facebook page
- Tradeshow -GP Sports Expo, Sarda and Peace Country Beef and Forage Field Days, PR Chamber, Clearhills Ag Show, etc.
- Multiple Classroom and Summer Library Presentations for schools within the Watershed.
- Met with North Peace Tribal Council members

- Member of Weyerhaeuser's and Mercer's Public Advisory Groups

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

- Participating in Water North Coalition.
- Source Water Protection Plan for the Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer completion and beginning of implementation work
- Wapiti Watershed Source Water Protection Plan project team formation and work
- Met with communities which have an identified water security issue
- Partner with organizations and landowners to improve water quality through restoration work.

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.

- Continued to work with the Wapiti River Water Management Plan (WRWMP) - engagement phase
- Ongoing conversation with Parks Canada, WaterSMART and Municipalities.
- Involved with WBNP Environmental Flow Needs Group
- Extension work in Improved Livestock Crossing, Redwillow Watershed Restoration, Streambank Stabilization and Extension and Wapiti Watershed bank Stabilization Projects
- Working with fRI Research on Smoky Headwaters Initiative
- Developing a working relationship with Mackenzie River Basin Board
- Working with groups to investigate CABIN monitoring project.

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

- Engaged in conversations at Tradeshow
- Presented at multiple Schools regarding MPWA, Water Quality & Wetlands and High School Riparian Spring Tour
- Participated in Walk through the Forest Grande Prairie & Peace River
- Project lead for Improved Livestock Crossing and Streambank Stabilization and Extension and Wapiti Watershed Bank Stabilization projects, which engage watershed residents through forums, workshops and one-on-one.
- Participating in LakeKeepers Summer and Winter programs
- Involvement with Evergreen Wetland Centre

Financial and In-Kind Supporters 2019-2020

Agroforestry Woodlot Extension Society

Alberta Agriculture & Forestry

Alberta Conservation Association

Alberta Environment and Parks

Alberta Geological Survey

Alberta Infrastructure

Alberta Institute of Agrologists

Alberta Newsprint Company

Cows and Fish

Alberta Transportation

AQUATERA Utilities Inc.

CANFOR

City of Grande Prairie

County of Grande Prairie

Environment and Climate Change Canada

fRI Research

**Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer Management Advisory
Association**

Hydrogeological Consulting Ltd.

Little Red River Cree Nation

Mackenzie County

Municipal District of Fairview

Municipal District of Greenview

Municipal District of Peace

Municipal District of Spirit River

NAIT Centre for Boreal Research

North Peace Tribal Council

Peace Country Beef and Forage Association

RMA—Rural Municipalities Association

Saddle Hills County

SARDA Ag Research

Seven Generations Energy Ltd.

Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation

Town of Grimshaw

Town of Peace River

Town of Valleyview

University of Alberta—presenters

West County Watershed Society

**All the landowners who worked with us on a
range of projects.**

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

Collaborators 2019-2020

Agroforestry Woodlot Extension Society

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry

Alberta Conservation Association

Alberta Environment and Parks

Alberta Lake Management Society

Aquatera Inc.

Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers

City of Grande Prairie

Clear Hills County

County of Grande Prairie

County of Northern Lights

Cows and Fish

Ducks Unlimited

Evergreen Learning and Innovation Society

fRI Research

LakeKeepers Volunteers

Municipal District of Fairview

Municipal District of Greenview

Municipal District of Peace

North Peace Applied Research Association

Peace Country Beef and Forage Association

Seven Generations Energy Ltd.

Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation

Town of Grimshaw

Village of Berwyn

West County Watershed Society

Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance

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