



Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance



Diverse, Responsible & Connected

July 2023

Flow of the Peace

What Flows

AGM Update	Page 1
Message from the Executive Director	Page 2
Message from Technical Committee	Page 2
Project Updates	Page 3
Staff of MPWA	Page 3
Education & Outreach Update	Page 4
Publications to Check Out	Page 4
Board of Directors	Page 4

AGM Update

On June 22, 2023, we hosted our Annual General Meeting. This year it was an online format. The day consisted of nominations for the Board of Directors, where we had seats open for 2-year and 1-year terms. After nominations were accepted, there are still various seats vacant. Also included were messages from Chair Chris Thiessen, our Executive Director Rhonda Clarke-Gauthier, and a financial report from Vern Lymburner were given. MPWA's Watershed Coordinator, Adam Norris, provided the technical committee's project update with a pre-recorded video that will be available on our website. The Annual Report 2022-2023 was reviewed and will be available on the website, and physical copies can be sent out to anyone who wants one.

The guest speaker for the AGM was Shannon Wagner (Knowledge, Translation, and Engagement Lead) with the Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute (ABMI). She gave a tour of the Wetland Atlas of Alberta, which is a fantastic resource for anyone to use. To view this Atlas, please visit: [Wetland Atlas of Alberta -Active \(abmi.ca\)](https://www.abmi.ca)



Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance

Celebrating
10 Years
2011-2021



Tenth Anniversary Booklet: We are excited to share the fact that our tenth anniversary booklet has been released this year. Copies were sent to MPWA members. Digital copies will also be made available on our website.

If you would like a physical copies of either the anniversary booklet or Annual Report please email mpwa.admin@telus.net or phone 780-324-3355

From the Executive Director 's Desk By Rhonda Clarke-Gauthier

Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance has completed another successful year of operations and are now well into the 2023-2024 year. We were pleased to receive an agreement with the Government of Alberta for a 4 year grant for core operations and projects that meet our agreed upon Mandate and Roles. This provides the MPWA with some stability to engage with other sponsors, grant holders, industry, other governments, partners, and stakeholders to continue doing work on the landscape that will move towards improved water quality and quantity.



MPWA continues to work with partners in areas of Source Water Protection Planning and Implementation of plans, Riparian Health Improvement Projects (streambank stabilization, monitoring Redwillow, livestock crossings, etc), Education opportunities for youth in the form of school presentations and 'Walk through the Forest' Days, Floating Wetland project to clean stormwater ponds and organizing volunteers for LakeKeepers (with ALMS) monitoring to name a few. We are also planning for new activities that address a number of the recommendations found in the MPWA IWMP (Integrated Watershed Management Plan). If you have thoughts regarding these projects or other potential activities, please contact the office.

Back in 2019, we hosted an event that discussed a number of concerns around water quality and quantity and the effects of fire on the watershed. While that event was important that year, in light of the large amount of devastation from 2023 fires, this has once again become a bigger discussion topic (we will plan a late fall /winter event addressing this item). As well, some areas of the watershed are experiencing drought, we are planning for a program for municipalities that looks at **Building Resiliency to Multi-Year Drought**.

As these events occur, we all need to address how we can better protect and manage our water resources – what are the things that happen on the landscape (planned or unplanned) that have major and long lasting consequences to our water supply? How can we work to better protect the water? What can we change, maintain, or improve to ensure we have safe secure drinking water, healthy aquatic ecosystems, and reliable quality water for sustainable economy? The MPWA with the assistance and contributions from many of the stakeholders of the watershed, produced an IWMP (Integrated Watershed Management Plan) that has a number of recommendations within it that provide a path towards ensuring beneficial management practices are being upheld to deal with a number of watershed concerns. This plan can be found on our website.

Thank you for your continued support of the MPWA work! Enjoy your summer!

Technical Committee Chair David Walty: Source Water Maps

The Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance has just completed a project mapping all the watersheds of drinking water sources in the Peace Country. Have you ever thought of where your tap water comes from? We tend to rely on our water treatment systems to protect us and maintain our water. Do you drink bottle water? Do you know anything about the source water where it comes from? Canada has among the best drinking water standards and quantity of fresh water in the world. Maybe we should focus on our own backyard, our own source water, and ensure it remains the best.

Our project is the start. We have generated three map products that provide each county, town, city or municipality with a snapshot of what influences your water as it drains off the land. The first map shows all human disturbances, agriculture land by types, roads, industrial sites, cutlines, etc. The second map shows land cover, deciduous forests, conifers, grasslands, shrubs, agriculture, and more. The third map shows wetlands like swamps, bogs and fens. All maps show placement, where they occur in the watershed and area in hectares, so each type of landscape is quantified. With this project, we are supplying the picture and overview. These maps can be interpreted to identify relative threats to water purity. As it turns out, many of you are already aware of common protection strategies, such as healthy riparian zones, vegetated buffers to creeks, controlling point sources like sewage or pesticides, and preventing ditch erosion along roads, especially where they drain into creeks.

One of the key landscape features threatening our watersheds is how much land is cleared of trees. Agriculture cropland and forestry clear cuts are the largest alterations. Other footprints like linear features, industrial and residential sites all alter the rate of water running off the land. Snow melts earlier without trees, and water runs off more rapidly. The consequences are a higher frequency of flooding and accelerated erosion. Retention of water on land now is our remediation strategy. Save wetlands with every road project. We need to spend as much effort as we do trying to drain land to get on it as early as possible.

What it takes is action, and who are the best people to do this? The residents who live in the area and land draining into the creeks and rivers. What can you do to contribute? Maybe municipalities can develop programs to encourage volunteer groups to invent and educate on corrective action or devote their own staff resources to projects for improvements. It just takes commitment and willingness to protect our own water source.

Project Updates

Here at Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance, we work with various organizations, industries, municipalities, and people on projects that help improve the state of our watershed. One such project that is being continued is the Streambank Stabilization with a local landowner in the Peace Region. The goal of this project is to reduce erosion and thereby improve water quality.

Other projects include: 1.) a watershed video of the Bear Creek Watershed in Grande Prairie with the County of GP and the City of Grande prairie with the focus to improve watershed literacy around the region. 2.) The Floating Wetland Project that was started in the summer of 2022 has been continued for the summer of 2023. The Floating Wetland project aims to improve water quality in storm drain ponds by using floating wetlands with native plants growing on them; we used cattails and sedges. We have partnered with the City of Grande Prairie to use the Pinnacle West Storm Drain Pond again. We expanded the amount of the surface area that the floating platforms cover of the pond; the goal is to get around 5% of the surface area covered. The platforms are constructed from plug trays donated by PRT Growing in Beaverlodge. Each month we will be testing the water quality and documenting the changes that occur. 3.) The Lower Peace Freshwater Contaminant Reduction Project is underway, and we partnered with several other organizations to do this project, including Mackenzie County and Cows & Fish. It is taking place around La Crete, where we are improving a stream crossing which included the installation of a crossing and improving the riparian area. 4.) Several volunteers are helping with water quality monitoring with ALMS and AHS.



Floating Wetland Project at Pinnacle West Storm Drain Pond



Lower Peace Creek Crossing Installation Project

MPWA Staff



Rhonda Clarke—Gauthier, P.Ag.—Executive Director



Adam Norris, M.Sc., P.Biol.—Watershed Coordinator

Focuses on planning & technical project work (currently on leave).



Jacqueline Kirby— Summer Student Outreach Coordinator

Focuses on various educational programs, resources & opportunities

MPWA has had the pleasure of having Jacqueline join us as summer staff—she has done an excellent job of supporting and moving many projects & initiatives forward. She will be heading to University in September for her 3rd year. We wish her well and thank her for her hard work and dedication.

Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance
 c/o Rhonda Clarke-Gauthier, Executive Director
 P.O. Box 217 McLennan, Alberta T0H 2L0
 Phone: 780-324-3355 Fax: 780-324-3377
 E-mail: info@mightypeacewatershedalliance.org
www.mightypeacewatershedalliance.org

Newsletter produced with support from
 AEPA, Alberta Government

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.

Education & Outreach Coordinator Update

During May and June, our Education & Outreach Coordinator presented to four schools and seven classes within our watershed. Presentations were done for grades 5, 6, and 7, with topics of watersheds, wetlands, riparian areas, erosion, groundwater, and better management practices being covered. Thanks to Ducks Unlimited for use of the Wetland Centre, we were able to provide Wetland Tours to 88 students, where they got the chance to practice wetland classification.

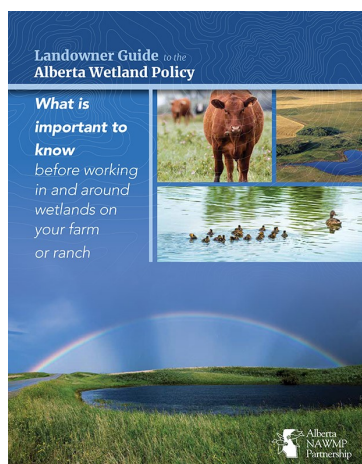
In May, our Education and Outreach Coordinator took a training course for X-Stream Science courtesy of the Lesser Slave Watershed Council. X-Stream Science is a hands-on learning experience for students to learn more about freshwater ecosystems. We have delivered this program to the Eaglesham 4-H group for their Achievement Day, at two of our events, and have provided an indoor version for library programs in Peace River and Grande Prairie.

We were excited to offer events at Figure Eight Lake and Moonshine Lake on June 23rd and 24th. Evening at the Lake took place at Figure Eight Lake, and we had ACA and ALMs as guest speakers, and at Moonshine Lake, ALMs acted as the guest speaker, and the Watershed Coordinator from LSWC came to help with kids' activities. It was great to see the engagement from campers and attendees.

On July 27th in La Crete we participated in an event called Working with Water, which was a joint effort between MARA, MPWA, Cows and Fish, AWES, and Mackenzie County. The event showcased riparian health information, the Lower Peace Freshwater Contaminant Reduction Project, and off site watering systems.



Publications to Check Out



1. Alberta NAWMP Partnership released a **Landowner Guide to the Alberta Wetland Policy**. This booklet is a great resource for landowners to know their rights and responsibilities. The format is easy to follow and provides great information, resources, and legislation landowners should be aware of when it comes to dealing with wetlands.

Print copies can be requested by emailing the AB NAWMP Partnership Coordinator, g_hale@ducks.ca.

2. Another great wetland resource is **Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute's Wetland Atlas of Alberta**. It is a new resource that includes province-wide inventories of wetland habitat developed by ABMI with data collected by ABMI over the past decade on Alberta's wetland species. The Wetland Atlas of Alberta is available on the first page of ABMI's website. [Wetland Atlas of Alberta -Active \(abmi.ca\)](http://www.abmi.ca)

Board Members 2023-2024

Government	Industry	Non-Governmental Organizations	Indigenous Communities
Federal-Transboundary Relations -Abdi Siad-Omar (AEPA)	Agriculture -Jill Henry	Conservation/Environment -David Walty	Métis Nation of Alberta -Vacant
Provincial -Bonnie Segal (AHS)	Forestry -Justin Hetu Alternate: Daniel Potts	Watershed Stewardship -Cathy Newhook	Metis Settlement General Council -Vacant
Large Urban Municipality -Chris Thiessen Alternate: Michelle Gairdner	Oil & Gas -Sandra Miller	Research/Education- Vacant	Upper Watershed First Nation -Vacant
Small Urban Municipality -Vern Lymburner	Utilities -Ashley Rowney Alternate: Greg Pippus	Public Member-at-Large (2) -Richard Keillor -Audrey DeWit	Middle Watershed First Nation -Vacant
Rural Municipality -Elaine Garrow Alternate: Danny Roy	Mining -Vacant	Tourism/Fisheries/Recreation -Brian Lieverse	Lower Watershed First Nation -Jim Webb Alternate: Darryel Sowan