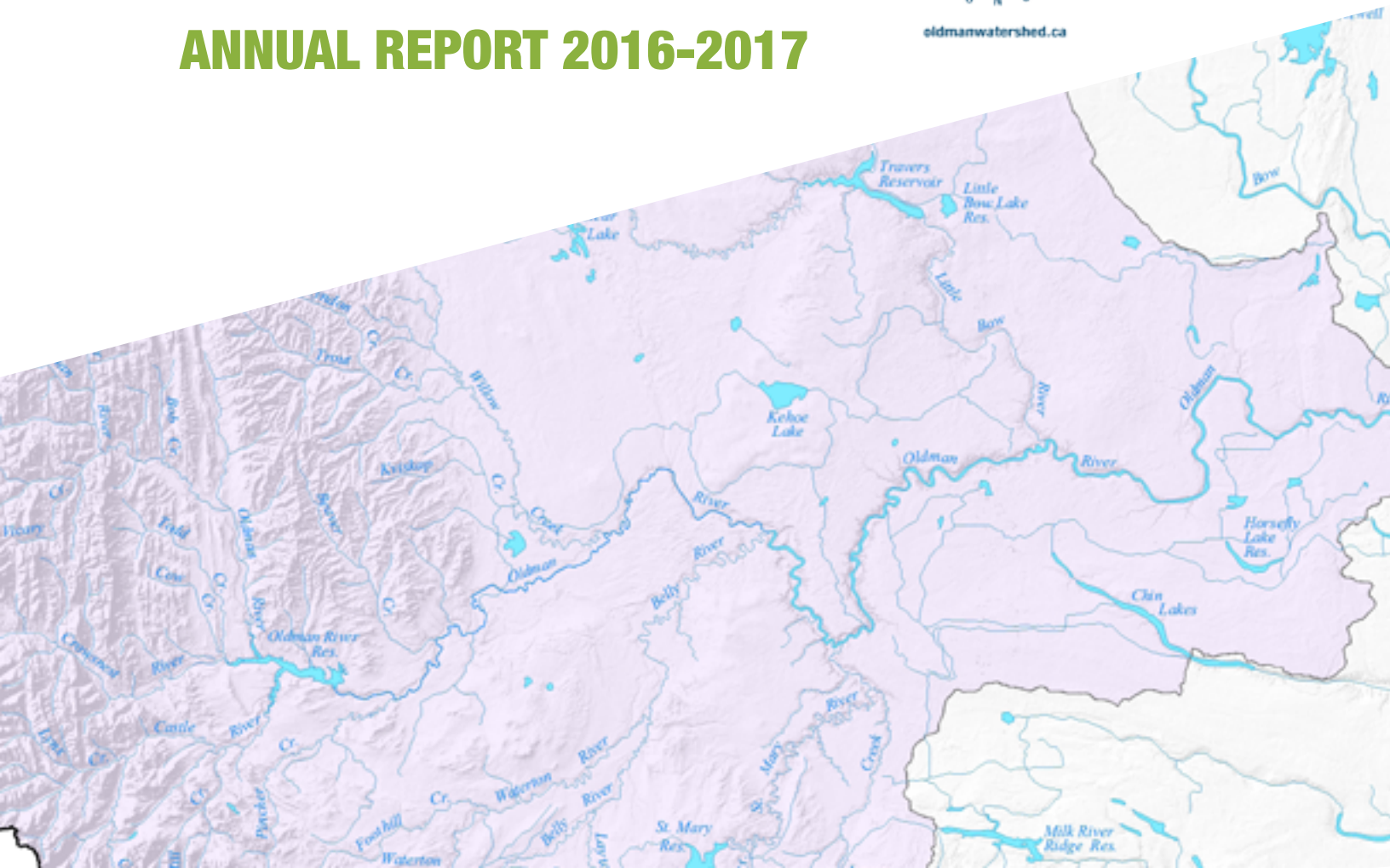




oldmanwatershed.ca

ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017



NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

With your support we were able to accomplish our mission - to inspire residents to improve the health of the Oldman watershed. From engaging hundreds of backcountry recreationists to supporting agricultural producers with restoration projects, together we have made a difference in people's lives and for the health of the watershed. The film shoots we completed with volunteer casts and donated props and costumes gave supporters opportunities to make a difference and will form episodes of our documentary film. The empowering videos we released this year have reached thousands of viewers and will be educational tools for years to come. We continue to have a strong relationship with the Government of Alberta and provide regular information and advice to both the Minister of Environment and Parks and GOA staff. Our social media outreach is exceptional and continues to grow daily. Read on to find out more!



OWC is all about people so I would like to acknowledge a few special souls who have made valuable contributions to OWC this year. There are so many donors, volunteers and supporters who helped us along the way that I can't possibly name you all but you inspire me to keep going. Thank you for making our work possible and fun to do! We truly couldn't do it without you.

First, I would like to recognize and thank my staff Anna, Taren, Sofie, Larin and Rob for their dedication and hard work over the last year. We have a highly qualified and committed team that works evenings and weekends, fundraises to support their projects and keeps many balls in the air - all without complaint. Near the end of the year we attracted an experienced and talented Fund Development Specialist, Yvonne, to our Team and we are so excited about the possibilities her talents bring to OWC's future and it has been our pleasure to get to know her.

Cody has been helping out part time and brought such enthusiasm and positivity to the team that we will greatly miss. Thank you for everything and all the best growing your bison herd!

I would also like to recognize our Chair, Doug Kaupp, who is always there to support us and shows up whenever we ask, and even when we don't. You make my life easier and my job more fun. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

A big thank you to Christina Lam, Heather Sinton and Kelly Scott, our Governance Committee, who created and revised many of our policies over the past year to ensure our governance systems are up to date and useful.

Lastly, a special thank you to Terry Kerkhoff who brings extra joy to our office with his delicious treats and is always there to offer support and say 'well done' when we need a boost. Your wise advice and caring spirit is much appreciated.

Looking forward to an inspiring 2017-18!

Shannon Frank,
Executive Director

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STAFF 2016-2017

CURRENT



Shannon Frank
Executive Director
August 2010 - present



Anna Garleff
Communications Specialist
February 2014 - present



Larin Guenther
Planning Manager
November 2015 - present



Sofie Forsstrom
Education Program Manager
November 2015 - present



Taren Hager
Office Manager/WLP Manager
March 2016 - present



Robinson Taylor
Program Assistant
April 2016 - present



Yvonne Barker
Fund Development Specialist
March 2017 - present



Jayme Cabrera Lopez
Communications Assistant
April 2017 - present

ALUMNI

Cody Spencer
Watershed Legacy
Program Manager
January 2016 - March 2017



Ryan Bell
Outreach Assistant
May 2016 - August 2016



Nicola Spencer
Outreach Assistant
May 2016 - August 2016



Thomas Porter
Outreach Assistant
April 2016 - August 2016



BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2016-2017



Doug Kaupp
City of Lethbridge
Chair



Andrew Hurly
Academia
Vice-Chair



Claudia Sheedy
Federal Government
Treasurer



Anne Stevick
Wildlife Conservation
Organizations



Loreena (Lori)
Brave Rock
Member at Large



Brian Brewin
Municipal Districts
and Counties



Cheryl Fujikawa
Environmental
Non-Government



Terry Kerkhoff
Member at Large



Christina Lam
Member at Large



Blair Painter
Townships/villages/
hamlets



Shane Porter
Member at Large



Robert Rippin
Health



Kelly Scott
Industry



Heather Sinton
Provincial
Government



Linda Cerney
Provincial
Government
(Alternate)



Janna Casson
Provincial
Government



Dwayne Rogness
Agriculture Producers



Terrence Hochstein
Agriculture Producers
(Alternate)



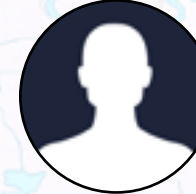
Martin Van Diemen
Irrigation (Alumni)



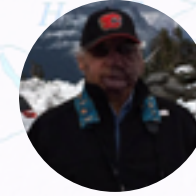
Alan Harrold
Irrigation



Randall Wolf Tail
First Nations



Noreen Plain Eagle
First Nations
(Alternate)



Mike Bruised Head
First Nations

FINANCIAL DONORS 2016-2017

\$1-\$100

Anonymous
Kirsten Hironka
Curtis Matwychuk-Goodman
Cheryl Meheden
Robert Tarleck
Wendy Ellen Inc.
Lethbridge Sustainable Living Association
Anonymous
Kelly Bell * In Honour of Freya Marie Webster
Linda Cerney
Cheryl Fujikawa
Jim Fujikawa
Gerhardt Hartman
Mandi Parker, EBA Consulting
Shane Porter
Simon Teather

\$101-\$250

Yvonne Barker
Anna Garleff
Graeme Greenlee
Mountain View Irrigation District
Village of Barons
Janna Casson
Terry Kerkhoff
Kelly Scott
Town of Granum
Town of Stavely
Virginia Grinevitch
Andy Hurly
Claudia Sheedy
Village of Cowley
Carl Wirzba
Rosemary Jones
MD of Ranchlands No.66
Town of Taber

\$251-\$500

Shannon Frank
Doug Kaupp
Raymond Irrigation District
Heather Sinton
Village of Barnwell
Alberta Irrigation Projects Association

\$501-\$1,000

Hays Stock Grazing Co-Op Ltd.
Town of Picture Butte
MD of Pincher Creek No.9
Town of Magrath
Fish Tails Fly Shop
Town of Coalhurst
Downtown BRZ

\$1,001-\$3,000

Town of Cardston
Town of Pincher Creek
Town of Claresholm
Town of Coaldale
MD of Taber
Municipality of Crowsnest Pass
S.M. Blair Family Foundation
Taber Irrigation District
Lethbridge Northern Irrigation District

\$3,001-\$5,000

Lethbridge County
Alberta Ecotrust Foundation
Potato Growers of Alberta
St. Mary River Irrigation District

\$9,000-\$65,000

Alberta Historical Resources Foundation
Alberta Conservation Association
Government of Canada - Canada Summer Jobs
Samuel Hanen Society For Resource
Conservation
Government of Canada - Habitat Stewardship
Program
City of Lethbridge
RBC Foundation

\$300,000+

Alberta Environment and Parks

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL EXPENDITURES 2016-2017

Community Partnerships	\$29,000
Watershed Legacy Program	\$55,000
Communications and Outreach	\$68,854
Organizational Development	\$74,000
Film Project (includes Historical Timeline and Videos)	\$95,000
Administration and Office Space	\$115,300
Headwaters Action Plan Implementation (includes Engaging Recreationists Project)	\$295,000
TOTAL	\$732,154

For detailed financial information see Audited Financial Statement

Every 💰 you donate helps protect our 💧 shed! Each and every donor is a super ⭐ in our 👁's - thanks for your support! 🙌

IN-KIND DONATIONS 2016-2017

Adam Michelsen - \$250
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada - \$3,716
Agriculture and Forestry - \$4,264
Alberta Environment and Parks - \$4,801
Alberta Health Services - \$3,505
Alberta Irrigation Projects Association - \$1,621
Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society (Cows & Fish) - \$8,700
Ashley Pankhurst - \$500
ATCO Power - \$4,086
Backcountry Restoration Event - \$21,400
Balsamroot Glass Studio - \$60
Bluebird Cabins (Barbara Amos) - \$130
Bob Wallace - \$250
Bobbie Fox - \$1,000
Canadian Prairie Rail Society - \$50
Carina Mill-Forsstrom - \$300
Chinook Waters Fly Fishing Club - \$80
City of Lethbridge - \$6,267
Cody Spencer - \$500
Country Outpost - \$250
Creepy Hollow - \$50
Crowsnest Cafe and Fly Shop - \$121
David Aimes - \$250
Debbie-Jo Webster - \$1,400
Deborah Gregorash - \$1,000
Don Cassell - \$500
Drywood-Yarrow Conservation Partnership - \$253
Elspeth Nickle - \$700
Fish Tales Fly Shop - \$250
Funky Petals - \$25
Gem of the West Museum - \$100
Geraldine Dyck - \$3,000
Hans-Henning Muendel - \$250
Harambee Grandmas - \$400
Headwaters Action Team - \$20,505
Helen McMenamin - \$250
International Joint Commission - \$250
Jeff Bronsch - \$250
Jesse Lybbert - \$250
Jessica Theoret - \$250
Jordan Pinkster - \$50
Kainai Nation - \$1,697
Karen Manuel - \$1,000
Kasko Cattle Company Ltd. - \$250
Ken Orich - \$1,000
Kim Green - \$50
Kirk Morrison - \$1,000
Knud Petersen - \$500
Knutson and Shaw Growers - \$415
Kyle Wind - \$300
Leta Pezderic - \$50
Lethbridge County - \$1,312
Lethbridge Herald - \$50
Lewis Baarda - \$250
Lorne Fitch - \$250
Lucas Szuch - \$250
Mayors & Reeves of Southwest Alberta - \$3,025
Member at Large - \$8,277
Mike Gretzinger - \$250
Mocha Cabana - \$50
Monty Orr & Family - \$1,750
MULTISAR - \$8,374
Municipal District of Willow Creek No.26 - \$368
My World Photography - \$1,850
Nakamura Family - \$250
Nature Conservancy of Canada - \$2,825
Neal Family - \$500
North Blood Drummers - \$1,500
Perry Family - \$500
Phil Shields - \$500
Phillip Berg - \$250
Piikani Nation - \$1,519
Pogo Bros Inc. - \$500
Potato Growers of Alberta - \$453
Quentin Stevick - \$100
Recreation Advisory Committee (RAC) - \$26,040
RJ Pisko Photography - \$1,000
Robert Halliday - \$250
Roger Marsh - \$250
Ryan Bell - \$50
Saikat Basu - \$100
Savannah Hood - \$250
Shane Porter - \$94
Shawna van Uden & Family - \$1,500

Shirley Pickering - \$311
Southern Alberta Group for the Environment - \$2,121
Southern Alberta Land Trust Society - \$632
Southland International Trucks - \$201
Streetside Eatery - \$50
Sundog Solar - \$1,000
Taber Irrigation District - \$1,061
Ted Nanninga - \$405
The Geomatic Attic - \$75
Thomas Porter - \$100
Toby Mandel - \$250
Todd Wallcott - \$250
University of Lethbridge - \$600
Urban Grocer - \$25
Watershed Legacy Program Team - \$9,588

TOTAL - \$179,252

THANK YOU!

TO ALL OF OUR SUPPORTERS, BIG AND SMALL. YOUR DONATIONS MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WATERSHED AND WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT!



COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS

With the move to our downtown Lethbridge location, OWC has firmly established itself as a community hub for Southern Alberta. Communications – whether in person or virtual – have grown by leaps and bounds, and we are reaching more people than ever before. And the quality of those conversations is deepening as we strengthen relationships and become better listeners. Wherever you are in the watershed, OWC is there - providing information and support as trusted partners in both local and provincial conversations on watershed management and health.

Watershed work is people work: it is humans who impact the landscape. By engaging governments, municipalities, landowners, businesses, students, volunteers and donors, we connect people around the very thing that makes life and prosperity in Southern Alberta possible – water.

By the numbers (April 1, 2016 – March 31, 2017):



Twitter Followers:
This year: 3,034
Last year: 1,899
Our tweets make about
4,000 impressions within a
24 hour cycle.



Facebook Likes:
This year: 1,685
Last year: 1,020
Our most popular post
reached nearly 10,000
people in just one day.



Website:
This year: 613,536
Last year: 383,316
Our blog continues to be the
most popular feature on our
website and stories are picked
up by the press.

We also run YouTube for videos, LinkedIn for professional networking, and Flickr as our digital archive.

Social Media Grows our Impact

The people who, live, work and play in the watershed are scattered all over the world. With a small staff on a non-profit budget, how can we reach them all? Perhaps more importantly – how can they reach us with their stories and concerns and ideas? Our social media channels are powerful tools and our network has grown enormously. In fact, we're just a tweet away.

For the second year in a row, we were honored by Fish Tales Fly Shop in Calgary who designated us as their charity of choice for their annual Film Festival fundraiser. Our Film Project Trailer and the "Where Is Your Watershed?" video were featured on the big screen in an even bigger theatre than last year at the Crowfoot Cinema in Calgary.

It is interesting to see the scope of the various guest blogs we receive and getting that community perspective on watershed work is extremely important to us and to our readers. As issues arise in the news, you'll often find that OWC has got an article ready, providing science-based insight, explanations and solutions to many of the issues facing Southern Albertans.



Oldman branding helps tell the watershed story

Wherever he goes, the Oldman tells a story. The eagle, bison and trout are hidden in his design, which shows the snowpack in the Rockies travelling through the forested foothills to the prairie grasslands on its way out to meet the Bow River.

The emblem is also used on three 4' x 4' portable puzzle boards that have been out to media scrums, classrooms and even backcountry events - and borrowed by a variety of other groups for teaching purposes. The design is cut into 25 magnetic pieces, which, when placed in sequence, tell a story from beginning to end.

The Oldman is now walking around on t-shirts, vests, hats, and stickers as a popular volunteer thank you or gift for watershed lovers. We have added to our line of merchandise with beautiful mugs and coasters designed by Karen Armstrong of Coulee Pottery in Lethbridge. This is a modest but growing source of revenue for the OWC.

Our Volunteers Rely On Us

And we rely on them. The OWC is all about community – and if you're reading this report, that includes you! We are so lucky to have dedicated, excited people contributing to our cause and making it their own.

What's really popular is requests for backcountry work. People want to help, and they want to connect with nature. The feeling of giving back is powerful – and an excellent way to make new friends around shared values. Luckily, OWC has got more than a few projects on the go! From the headwaters to the tailwaters; from classrooms and kids to helping us crunch the numbers – everyone can volunteer. We are so grateful you do!

Often, one thing leads to another. Social media outreach can lead to a speaking invitation, which can inspire new volunteers, which means more hands and hearts engaged for the Oldman! Together, we are making a difference.



Selfie Heaven - and Gorgeous Photography

We also document our work with photos - it's visual communication. You know what they say: a picture is worth a thousand words. There are 16,147 photos on Flickr so far. That's the equivalent of a lot of words. Some of them were generously donated by guest photographers and some were taken by staff. All help show people - rather than just tell them - about what's happening in our watershed.

Our digital archive is used by organizations across Canada for images about the OWC's Research & Projects, the Oldman watershed itself, and Southern Alberta. We document the hundreds of thousands of hours dedicated to making our watershed resilient for generations to come. The photos all help showcase why Southern Alberta is special and why watershed health is human health. They are organized into albums and are in chronological order, labelled by date. They're free - please help yourself.

Now for absolute, flat-out geeks, there's a new toy in town: Epicollect. It's a customizable App that allows us to not just take a photo, but record the GIS coordinates and other site details to generate incredible interactive maps and data sets. We piloted it this year to great success and look forward to it being a central part of data collection for our Outreach Assistants in the coming year.



© Debby Gregorash



We don't just open our doors - we knock on yours!

We believe in getting out and about, experiencing the land and the changes on it, and visiting the folks who are the real stewards of the land - on the land. Whether it's Crown land or private land, we've put in many a mile this past year. All of our Research and Projects take us to your doorstep, and this year was no exception. In fact, in response to what we heard from you, we hosted 3 separate rural events at Taber, Twin Butte and Stavely to hear more from local agriculture experts. We recorded your feedback on the future of watershed stewardship and very much appreciate the great attendance at all 3 locations - they were empowering conversations that will help shape our way forward. Read more about it in our Watershed Legacy program report!

Let's Get Together

We still do old-school get togethers: at conferences, at presentations, in the cities, the towns, the farms and on the ranges. And at #greendrinksyql, which is into its second year. The event is part of a global network and places Lethbridge on the map in terms of a #meetup. We've established a regular crowd and continue to be delighted by the newcomers that visit us on the first Tuesday of the month at the Owl Acoustic Lounge from 4 - 6 pm.

Children are welcome, so it's an ideal informal networking space for people to hear the latest on watershed work, have a chance to say hello and catch up, and exchange ideas and contact details; whether they are professionals, volunteers or job seekers in the environmental and non-profit sectors. It's open to everyone - we'd love to see you there!

#OLDMANGOESTOHOLLYWOOD

Our Film Project has a lot of moving parts. And a lot of moving people - isn't that what "the movies" is?

The basis for the story is history – after all, how can we plan our future when we don't adequately understand our past? How can we make better, more collaborative decisions about watershed management and health when we don't know about the decisions that got us here in the first place? What can we learn – and where can it lead us?

500 entries form the basis of our historical timeline. It reaches back 60,000 years into deep Blackfoot knowledge to find the first traces of human storytelling about our watershed. It took a lot of research and a lot of coding to bring the historical timeline to our website, and it's a free resource for everyone to use. Funding was generously provided by a grant from the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation. As a scholarly work, all the entries have references, and many have corresponding photos.

We would like to thank: Gerry and Armin Dyck - their books, fossils and artifacts in the basement started this project off; Belinda Crowson for her initial background information; Karen Manuel for helping vet software projects and for the many, many hours creating the historical maps; Ryan Heavy Head for his encyclopedic knowledge of Blackfoot wisdom and for writing the entries for the earliest of days; Kirk Morrison for always being at the other end of the phone with IT magic, much good humour, and a "Yes, sure I can!" answer; Elsa Perry for writing the archaeological thread; Debby Gregorash for her previous work and publications on irrigation, answering random



#OLDMANGOESTOHOLLYWOOD - Part 2

questions, and for quiet nights at Setaspell; Jessica Theoret for organizing the backend of the database and believing it could be done; Heather Manuel for editing and proofreading; Aries Casteel for getting the initial data up onto the software; Bobbie Fox for assisting with reference checks; Anamaria Turuk for initial research into historical photos; William Singer III, Debbie Jo Webster, Romy Tittel, Cheryl Bradley, Monica Fields, Knud Peterson and many others for vetting the timeline and providing feedback.

The timeline tells our shared history – from various socio-political / ecological-economic perspectives. Consider that we are writing yesterday's history today: It will be a more positive legacy if we are able to appreciate our differences and draw on them as a strength upon which we can build our shared future.

OWC's timeline lays the foundation for scripting the documentary film. We have chosen specific historical events that reflect major impacts. Filming is always contingent on time of year, weather, availability of cast, crew and location. This year, we filmed the Sweetgrass Bison herd out at Twin Butte. It was a challenge to "herd" them with a drone, but we did it!

We would like to thank: Cody Spencer, Don Cassell, Roger Marsh ... and all the bison!

We also had an all-volunteer cast out at Windy Rafters where we used Monty Orr's old schoolhouse to recreate a homestead dealing with the flood of 1908. Our poor 10-year-old actor had to get drenched with water many times to create the scene (but he loved it!). *We would like to thank: Monty Orr and family; Shawna, Molly, John, Logan and Kira van Uden; Adam Michelsen; Cody Spencer and his dog Stoney; Ashley Pankhurst; the Country Outpost in Coaldale – and Gerry Dyck for the generous loan of her entire living room.*



Check out the full timeline online at www.oldmanwatershed.ca/timeline



My World Photography filming bison at Twin Butte in winter 2017

It was a chilly day in February when we recreated a June scene out at the old courthouse in Fort Macleod to film the International Boundary Waters Treaty Order scene from 1921. Many thanks again to the all-volunteer cast, costumers and props people who assisted that day. There were 32 people on set, but we pulled it off and the footage is gorgeous.

We would like to thank: Bob Wallace; Hans-Henning Muendel; Lorne Fitch; Knud Peterson; Monty Orr; Toby Mandel; Helen McMenamain; Mike Gretzinger; Lewis Baarda; Roy Pogorzelski; John Pogorzelski; Todd Walcott; Lorraine and Doug Neal; Ashley Pankhurst; Jesse Lybbert; David Amies; Phillip Berg; Creepy Hollow; Gem of The West Museum; Canadian Prairie Rail Society; The International Joint Commission – and Gerry Dyck for organizing all the costumes and props. Heartfelt thanks also to Jonathan Blackwood of My World Photography who has been a reliable and supportive partner for us along the way.

This is all going on steadily in the background while we continue to forge new Collaborative Partnerships for the many videos we create. OWC is able to delve into the specifics of science; messaging for the public at large; and the watershed world for children - because of these partnerships. The funding these partnerships provide helps tell their watershed story – and ours.

The City of Lethbridge now boasts 3 videos: their science video addresses municipal wastewater treatment (with a bit of history to provide context); the public video follows a citizen of Lethbridge as he uses water (often without knowing it!) throughout his day; the kids' video is about the ways kids can make a big contribution toward great watershed stewardship – even in their own backyards!

Many thanks to Doug Kaupp, General Manager of Water and Wastewater at the City of Lethbridge; Mayor Chris Spearman and the staff at the City; Stephanie Vehnon; Kerry McArthur; Jason Richmond; Steve and staff at Streetside Eatery; Angel and staff at Mocha Cabana; Debbie, William and Sophie Gregorash; Savannah Hood; Lucas Szuch; Gerry Dyck and the Harambee Grandmas.

The Potato Growers of Alberta also got 3 fabulous videos: their science video discusses how improved technology coupled with some traditional farming practices increases irrigation efficiency (again, watch for the history component!); the public video is about consumer trust and what we are using our water to grow; the kids' video is a fantastic animation about a snowflake's journey from the headwaters down to the fields where it eventually becomes a potato!

OWC looks forward to producing a new series of 3 with our newest Collaborative Partner, the County of Lethbridge! If you know of other organizations who have a great watershed story to tell, and would like to highlight what they are doing to conserve water and the environment, please let us know – we welcome new Collaborative Partnerships!

We have been able to produce a number of other independent videos. The following page contains a complete list and description of them. We hope that you will share them widely at presentations and meetings and wherever watershed management and health should be promoted! Whether your theme is urban or rural, scientific or educational, they are all on YouTube, and they are all free to use and share widely. We hope very much that you do!

FIND ALL OUR VIDEOS AT <http://oldmanwatershed.ca/audiovideophoto/>

1. Where Is Your Watershed? (3:24)

Produced in cooperation with Agrium, this video is for the youngest of our viewers. Its animation depicts the Oldman watershed on a map, describes the journey the water takes and includes many fun facts.

2. The Film Project Trailer (6:44)

The challenge of communicating science and why the OWC embarked on its Film Project; what we hope to achieve, what's at stake (and why you should donate!).

3. The Oldman Watershed - An Overview (24:13)

This one is intended for science enthusiasts and high-school / undergrad classrooms. It depicts land use over time in the Oldman watershed using GIS heat maps, and has a built-in quiz.

4. Introducing the OWC (3:42)

Depicting land use over landscape, it conveys a real sense of urgency around basic ecological thresholds, how the environment provides the basis for our economy, and the OWC's role in representing all stakeholders.

5. Minister Video – Dutch Creek (3:12)

The Minister of Environment & Parks, Shannon Phillips, expresses her support for WPACs and describes how they are a crucial part of the government's Water 4 Life Strategy, emphasizing their role in providing advice to the Minister and education to the public.

6 - 8: Municipal Watershed Management and Health

This three-part series was produced in collaboration with the City of Lethbridge, which contributed \$5000 toward our #oldmangoestohollywood Film Project. Communications Specialist, Anna Garleff, scripted and produced the videos with myworldphoto.com.

6. Municipal Wastewater Treatment - 1/3 (8:41)

This video appeals to scientists and those interested in the science of watershed work. From an urban point of view, find out what life was like before the city began treating its water, and what is unique about the City's approach.

7. Kids and Water Management – 2/3 (8:23)

Tips and tricks for younger students - and the young at heart! Covering topics ranging from water in our bodies to bodies of water, the video empowers viewers to become active watershed stewards in their own urban neighbourhoods.

8. Teaching An Old Doug New Tricks – 3/3 (8:55)

From the early morning shower to the products we buy, our lives depend on continuous access to water. Southern Alberta's largest municipality is located in a semi-arid region.

9 - 11: Potato Growers of Alberta

PGA teamed up with OWC to produce 3 films about rural watershed management and health.

9. Kids Know Potatoes Come From Snow (6:27)

This animated video tells the fascinating story of how a tiny snowflake makes its long journey down from the mountains to eventually become a potato! The video aims to teach children where their water and food comes from and how important a healthy watershed and smart farmers are to our well-being.

10. The Science of Spuds - 1/3

This video delves into some of the history of Southern Alberta and how hard-working farmers turned the dry prairie into productive agricultural land.

11. Water You Eating? - 3/3

This video looks at rural watershed management and health from the perspective of the consumer.

THANK YOU TO OUR MANY PROJECT FUNDERS FROM 2015-2017

Founding Partners



Collaborative Partners



Grant Funders



The Chawkers Foundation

Friends



Klaus Jericho - Connie Simmons - Shannon Frank - Cheryl Bradley, in memory of Bill Brown - Andrea Vaxvick - Anna Garleff - Andrew Hurly, in memory of Sam Zoeteman - Jim and Cheryl Fujikawa - Glen and Kelly Hall - Canadian Constitution Committee - Fish Tales Fly Shop

WATERSHED LEGACY PROGRAM

Since 2009, the Watershed Legacy Program (WLP) has provided funding and other resources to over 50 on-the-ground stewardship projects and educational field days on private and public land, totaling over \$170,000. These projects include: streambank restoration, river and creek fencing, off-stream watering systems, soil bioengineering and bank stabilization, weed pulls and watershed stewardship tours. In addition to the positive impacts these projects have on riparian health and resiliency, the OWC has been able to communicate these success stories to other producers and the public through our ever-growing blog and social media presence.

The 2016-2017 Watershed Legacy Program grant recipients:

- Castle Crown Wilderness Coalition, Castle River watershed: Education and Reclamation in the Castle – invasive species removal field days
- Municipal District of Willow Creek, Meadow Creek, Beaver Creek and Oldman River watersheds: Bio-control agents for invasive species (Hounds-tongue and Leafy Spurge)
- Tyler and Rachel Herbert, Trails End Beef, Nanton Creek watershed: Riparian fencing of dugout and supplies to set up solar watering system
- Ross Wideman, Wideman Cattle Co., Mosquito Creek and Willow Creek watershed: Portable winter solar off-stream watering system
- Roxy Wideman, Miapatow Ranch Ltd., Willow Creek Watershed: Portable winter solar off-stream watering system
- Stan McNab, McNab Ranch Ltd., Belly River watershed: Portable solar off-stream watering system (generously donated by MULTISAR) and riparian fencing



Thank you to the WLP Team for helping make this program successful!



A big thank you to our funders for making our rural programs possible:



VOICES OF THE OLDMAN: AGRICULTURE MATTERS

OWC hosted 3 input gathering sessions over the winter called “Voices of the Oldman: Agriculture Matters”. The sessions began with brief presentations from local stewardship experts. Approximately 150 producers and agricultural organization representatives in total attended and engaged in the discussions. These sessions were an interactive forum designed to gain input from the rural agricultural community on what they see as the most important issues facing agriculture and watershed stewardship, and what solutions are needed.

The results have shown that producers have concerns on a wide range of topics, that include:

- Communication between producers and consumers (social license, rural/urban divide).
- Fragmentation of agricultural and natural landscapes.
- Water quality and quantity.
- Flood and drought resilience.
- Invasive species (weeds, zebra/quagga mussels).
- Financial support to implement stewardship projects.

The Watershed Legacy Program and our partners help the agricultural community have been addressing most, if not all of these issues for years. Our resources directly support projects that bolster flood and drought resilience, improve riparian health, remove invasive weeds and improve water quality. We share the success stories of these projects with the public through our social media platforms, which are followed by thousands of people throughout the watershed and beyond. The input gathered from these sessions is being used to evolve our programs to better engage with the rural community and also better educate the urban community on agricultural watershed stewardship in the watershed. Many thanks to all those who attended the sessions!



Sponsors



Partners



Drywood-Yarrow
Conservation Partnership

Highwood Management Plan
Public Advisory Committee

Alberta Agriculture
and Forestry

THE HEADWATERS ACTION PLAN

The Headwaters Action Plan (HAP) was written in 2013-2014 with the help of community members and key stakeholders who formed the Partnership Advisory Network (PAN). From this PAN, the Headwaters Action Team or HAT was formed of the representatives from key sectors who participated in the development of the HAP. The HAT initiated an implementation strategy on 5 selected Priority Actions in the Headwaters. The success of the HAP and attaining the goals of the Priority Actions depends on the community, key stakeholders, such as the HAT and the OWC working together.



Priority Action 1

In October 2014, **Priority Action 1: Complete a Classification of Linear Features** was attained with the completion of the Dutch Creek Linear Features Classification Project. Since that time, the OWC has continued to address this Priority Action in the form of an advisory role to the Government of Alberta (GoA). In particular, in 2016-17, the OWC has actively participated in the GoA process of developing a Land Footprint Management Plan (LFMP) for Livingstone and the Porcupine Hills and Recreation Management Plans (RMP) for each area individually.

The OWC will continue to be active in this initiative, and will be participating on the Southwest Alberta Recreation Advisory Group (SARAG) in the spring and summer of 2017. SARAG will be providing advice to the GoA to help inform the Recreation Management Plans of the Livingstone and the Porcupine Hills. The RMPs and LFMP are set to be released in draft form in fall of 2017.



Priority Action 2

Complete a fine scale cumulative effects assessment of fish populations and habitat streams has continued to be a big focus in the 2016-17 year. Headwaters Action Team member Jason Blackburn with Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) has been working with a team on studying 18 watersheds in the headwaters of the Oldman. ACA has been documenting the effects stream sedimentation has on Westslope Cutthroat Trout (WSCT). The full data report from ACA's research will be available in the spring of 2017.

Trout Unlimited Oldman River Chapter Society has supported assessments in 2016 on Chipman Creek and Little Crooked Creek for the potential re-introduction of native fish in those water bodies. It was found that both creeks showed potential for re-introduction WSCT and Chipman also showed potential for Bull Trout. TUC and the Chapter are working with various other stakeholders including land owners and lease holders in the area, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Alberta Conservation Association, Cows and Fish and Lethbridge College to do further work to increase the health of the creeks.

The Government of Alberta (GoA) is also continuing to address this Priority Action. In 2016-17, the GoA conducted research to collect data in order to determine the current status of fish in the headwaters. The cumulative effects model for fish in the headwaters is nearing completion. In addition, resources are being specifically directed to WSCT including developing a new Recovery Plan to replace the Alberta Westslope Cutthroat Trout Recover Plan 2012-2017 which expires this fall. The new Plan seeks to focus on implementation rather than making it a voluntary plan.

The GoA was also faced with the devastation of Whirling Disease first being detected in August, 2016 in Johnson Lake in Banff National Park. Recently, as of May 1, 2017, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) declared the Oldman River watershed infected with whirling disease. Whirling disease is caused by *Myxobolus cerebralis*, a microscopic parasite of salmonid fish. Species such as rainbow trout, cutthroat

trout and whitefish are particularly susceptible and efforts will continue to be made to bring about awareness of the disease in order to stop the spread.

Priority Action 3

Assist Environment and Parks with the awareness and education program (Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers) for stakeholders and the public on how to prevent these aquatic invasive species from entering Alberta.

Unfortunately, 2016 proved to be a scary one on the topic of Aquatic Invasive Species. Although not yet detected in Alberta, in October 2016 state officials in Montana found larval mussels, known as veligers, in the Tiber and Canyon Ferry reservoirs.

To protect against their infestation, Alberta Environment and Parks have been monitoring 60 high priority water bodies in the province with the awareness and education program – Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers. The program has added additional watercraft inspection stations in 2017 which will also operate with increased hours. The Headwaters Action Team has been supporting an expansion of the program and support the GoA in their commitment and efforts to keep mussels out of our waters.

In addition to the provincial government, the federal government and municipal governments have also taken steps to prevent the spread of mussels. Parks Canada implemented a ban on motorized watercraft in Waterton Lakes National Park in early 2017. The Municipality of Crowsnest Pass employed an Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) program for zebra and quagga mussels in 2016 during which two Mussel Monitors were deployed in Crowsnest and Chinook Lakes and 28 inspections were conducted.

Priority Action 4

Explore options for recreational user fees to fund enforcement, education and stewardship projects. The OWC has been working with another group of stakeholders, the Recreation Advisory Committee (RAC). The RAC is made up of representatives from



the motorized recreation community who are looking to improve the current status of motorized recreation in Alberta by supporting user fees, increased enforcement, properly managed and constructed trail systems and increased education on proper riding. The RAC is also helping to inform the OWC's Engaging Recreationists Program.

Priority Action 5

Education and Awareness. In addition to the four specific Priority Actions, the fifth is more general and all-encompassing. This Priority Action has the key focuses of educating the public and improving the riparian health in the headwaters. To address this Priority Action, the municipality of Crowsnest Pass organized multiple workshops and riparian health activities that totalled 36 separate activities in 2016. These activities included educational community and school riparian events, weed pulls, tree planting, invasive species workshop and various public information sessions. Castle Crown Coalition also hosts an annual weed pull in the headwaters. In 2017, they chose an area alongside Castle River.

The GoA also completed year 2 fieldwork of the East Slopes Riparian Assessment Project in 2016 where in total, 252 streams on forested, public lands of the Bow and Oldman watersheds were assessed. The 2016 Interim Report indicated that of the 252 randomly selected sites 33% were assessed as properly functioning, 23% as functioning at risk, 21% as functioning at high risk and 23% non-properly functioning. This assessment will help to prioritize areas for rehabilitation actions while also increasing the public and stakeholder awareness of riparian conditions in the forested areas of the headwaters.

TESTIMONIALS

“Spray Lake Sawmills has been a supporter of the Oldman Watershed Council since 2013 with one of our key staff as a participating member on the Headwaters Action Team. SLS agrees watershed management is of the highest priority and our company’s success is reliant on a healthy forest ecosystem. The work that has been done by the Oldman Watershed Council for watershed improvements, conservation, wildlife and education is significant and we very honored to be part of this important work. We commend the participants and supporters of the OWC for their ongoing efforts and contributions to sound watershed management in southern Alberta.”

Wade Aebli
C5 Woodlands Operations Supervisor
Spray Lake Sawmills



“Environment and Parks is very appreciative of the significant contributions that the OWC has made to the Livingstone-Porcupine Land Footprint Management Plan and the Recreation Management Plans that the GoA is developing. The Headwaters Action Plan (HAP) provided a solid foundation through extensive scientific research and public engagement. It is great to see the HAP being implemented through the efforts of many collaborative partners and through the OWC’s Engaging Recreationists Program, a program that involves working directly with recreationists to promote stewardship in the headwaters. This will be a big step toward educating users about the values of these landscapes and about how to use the area in a responsible sustainable way. This work showcases what collaborative efforts can achieve; well done!”

Heather Sinton
Land and Environment Planning Director (South)
Alberta Environment and Parks



THE HEADWATERS ACTION TEAM

The Headwaters Action Team (HAT) is made up of key stakeholders representing organizations, municipalities, industry, landowners, gazing associations and government that have a direct interest in the headwaters of the Oldman watershed. Through the HAT, the Headwaters Action Plan (HAP) and the HAP’s Five Priority Actions are implemented by stakeholders as well as the OWC.

RICHARD BURKE
NGO
(Trot Unlimited Canada - Oldman Chapter)

TED SMITH
Agriculture/land-owners
(Livingstone Landowners Group)

OSCAR ANDERSON
Municipal Government
(MD Ranchlands)

JIM LYNCH-STAUTON
Agriculture/landowners
(Rocky Mountain Grazing Association)

JASON BLACKBURN
NGO
(Alberta Conservation Association)

WADE AEBLI
Industry
(Spray Lake Sawmills)

MIKE BRYSKI
Government of Alberta
(Fisheries)

BILL KOVACH
Municipal Government
(Municipality of Crownest)

CAROLYN ASPESLET
NGO
(Castle Crown Wilderness Coalition)

TERRY YAGOS
Municipal Government
(MD Pincher Creek)

TONY BRUDER
Agriculture/landowners
(Drywood Creek)

MIKE WAGNER
Government of Alberta
(Forestry)

DARYL FERGUSON
Recreation
(Crownest Pass Quad Squad)

LORNE FITCH
NGO
(Cows and Fish)

CRAIG JOHNSON
Government of Alberta
(Fisheries)

ENGAGING RECREATIONISTS PROJECT

Reducing threats to the headwaters (Goal 3) continued to be a top priority for OWC in 2016-17. The Engaging Recreationists project, piloted in 2015, continues its strategy of education and engagement, restoration and stewardship, communications and outreach, and building strong partnerships with other organizations.



Recreation Advisory Committee

In the winter of 2015-16, the OWC reached out to off-roading retailers and organizations to form the Recreation Advisory Committee, in order to help us understand our audience and to act as credible, community multipliers for our messaging. Throughout 2016, they invited OWC to speak at their events, shared OWC content through social media, and started to speak out against unacceptable actions (e.g. littering) and deliberately showcase appropriate behaviours (e.g. cleaning machines in car-washes instead of streams) on social media. They organized a garbage cleanup around the Atlas Staging Area at the end of August. The Recreation Advisory Committee has also been supportive of our summer outreach program.



Backcountry Outreach

From May-August, the OWC hired four seasonal Outreach Assistants to go out into the backcountry to engage motorized recreationists in conversations about watershed health. Rob, Ryan, Nicola, and Thomas conducted in-person surveys at staging areas to assess recreationists' knowledge and concerns about watershed health and recreation. Overall, Outreach Assistants were impressed by how knowledgeable many recreationists were. These surveys allow us to identify gaps in knowledge and awareness, and serve as a baseline against which to measure the effectiveness of our education programs.

Supporting Stewardship

In addition to surveys, Outreach Assistants attended various stewardship and outreach events, including volunteering with the Backcountry Trails Flood Rehabilitation program; helping the Crowsnest Pass Quad Squad deck bridges; removing invasive weeds at Blueweed Blitz in Pincher Creek; teaching families about aquatic invertebrates at Parks Day at Beauvais Lake Provincial Park and Canada Day at Henderson Park in Lethbridge; encouraging responsible recreation at events like PlayCleanGo; and more. They also partnered with Alberta Parks staff to deliver point-duties (informal, interactive learning programs) about watershed health at various Provincial Recreation Areas.

Observations and Sign Testing

The Outreach Assistants recorded observations throughout the watershed (e.g. bridges, restoration sites, random camping areas) using an app called EpiCollect, which was customized by our Communications Specialist. This app produced a map and database that have great potential to help us move forward with this project. Outreach Assistants also tested whether a "Thank you for using the bridge" sign would influence how recreationists chose to cross a stream.

Preliminary results found that over 90% of OHV riders took the bridge when a sign was present, while less than half used the bridge (and instead drove through the stream) when there was no sign. We will continue sign testing in 2017 to get a larger sample size.

Social Media Boosts Impact

Our Communications efforts have been very successful this year. Through our various social media channels, OWC reaches upwards of 15,000 people weekly. We have noticed a shift in our demographic we are engaging with on Facebook towards young, male off-roading enthusiasts, indicating that our content and messaging are reaching our target audience. Thanks to doubling our staff on-the-ground in the backcountry (from 2015 pilot), we also increased our social media output in 2016 and added extensively to our digital archive of images on Flickr.

New Capacity Adds Value

We were fortunate to be able to retain one of the Outreach Assistants, Rob, through the winter of 2016-17 to assist with mapping and data analysis. Rob has taken on the role of Outreach Team Lead in 2017. We are very excited to have him on board full time and greatly appreciate his mapping skills and commitment to scientific rigour!

Restoring Dutch Creek

Together with Cows and Fish, OWC organized a willow harvesting and riparian restoration event along Dutch Creek in October 2016. Volunteers helped us plant willow and install fencing and signage to stabilize areas near the streambank and protect important habitat. These activities were followed by a campfire to enjoy the camaraderie that developed after a day spent working hard together. We are pleased to report that the overwhelming majority (94%) of willows planted at the 2015 restoration event survived and were growing in 2016. We look forward to seeing the success of the 2016 plantings.



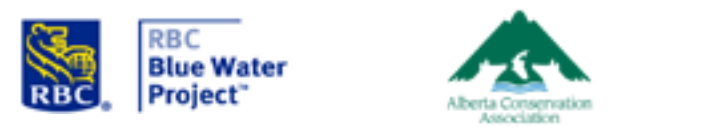
Donor and Partner Tour

In November, we invited donors and partners to come tour our restoration sites to see the on-the-ground impact their continued support has had. None of this work would have been possible without the generous support of our partners, donors, and volunteers - thank you!

"It's been good to work together to accomplish more - OWC has more targeted and explicit time and resources to put towards interacting with the recreation community more broadly, which is needed."

Kristi Stebanuk, Cows and Fish

Thank you to our funders who make this project possible!



S.M. Blair Family Foundation

Samuel Hanen Society for Resource Conservation

And a special thank you to our partners of the restoration event:



OWC Engaging Recreationists by Numbers 2016

Weekly reach through social media channels

15000

2412

Images added to digital archive on Flickr

People engaged at outreach events throughout the watershed

1000

303

Recreationists engaged in watershed conversations through surveys

Watershed observations & outreach events recorded using EpiCollect app

245

94%

of recreationists observed using the bridge when a sign was present

In-person surveys completed with recreationists in the backcountry

83

13

OHV retailers and organizations involved in the Recreation Advisory Committee

Seasonal Outreach Assistants hired in 2016

1

little girl inspired to become an entomologist!



Oldman Watershed Council

oldmanwatershed.ca

Backcountry Restoration Event by Numbers 2016

Square metres restored near stream

1900

613

Willow stakes harvested & planted

Fence posts put in (many by hand!)

131

94%

Survival of willows planted at last year's event

Total number of people at the event

43

13

Oldman Watershed Council & Cows and Fish staff present

Youth volunteers

6

4

'Steer clear' and Restoration signs installed

Sunny day spent in the backcountry!

1



Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society
cowsandfish.org



Oldman Watershed Council

oldmanwatershed.ca

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



Environment Lethbridge

Environment Lethbridge is a valued partner delivering urban environmental programs that are outside the scope of OWC, but that contribute to watershed health and strong communities. OWC has been instrumental in the building of Environment Lethbridge (EL) since 2011 and continues to actively participate as a member of the Executive Committee. 2016-17 was a big year for EL with the launch of the www.WasteLESS.ca website and the release of the Lethbridge State of the Environment Report 2017. These two informational pieces are essential to furthering the educational efforts of EL in the community and OWC is proud to contribute to this vital work.

Shortly following the release of WasteLESS, Lethbridge City Council voted in favor of implementing city-wide curbside recycling. EL will continue to support the City of Lethbridge in the strategy to implement the program by offering community education on waste and recycling through the WasteLESS site. The State of the Environment Report examines seven themes of which 32 environmental indicators were evaluated and given an overall trend value. This information provides a baseline of the city's environmental health, one which we can use to set future environmental goals for Lethbridge.



City Of Lethbridge Environment And Historic Resources Strategy

Community Liaison Group

The City's Planning and Development Services Department has been concentrating on a multi-year project for the development of Lethbridge's Environment and Historic Resources Strategy (EnvS). The OWC participates on the Environmental Community Liaison Group and has been actively engaged in the development of the EnvS since late 2015. In January, 2017, the Draft Environment and Historic Resources Strategy was circulated to the Community Liaison Group. The purpose of the EnvS is to compile a baseline understanding of the environmental and historic resources in Lethbridge which will be used to update Lethbridge's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan / Municipal Development Plan. This Plan will be in compliance with the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan by August, 2019 and OWC aims to influence the plan to ensure environmental targets are set and supported with resources to ensure they are met.

Porcupine Hills Coalition

The OWC has participated in this multi-stakeholder group since 2015. The group is made up of those who have an interest in protecting the Porcupine Hills from environmental degradation. As OWC is a multi-stakeholder based organization, we bring to the table the views of many stakeholders. OWC's participation on this group supports a balanced approach to land-use and decision-making that affect many different stakeholders in the watershed. We listen to voices around the table and also share points of view from other stakeholders as well as watershed information.



The Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce Natural Resource and Environment Committee (Nrec)

The business community in Lethbridge is both impacted and has an impact on our watershed. The OWC values business as a stakeholder of the watershed, and as such makes connecting with businesses a priority in both outreach activities and consultation. The Chamber's NREC has been focusing on policy development and recommendations specifically around conventional and alternative energy in the Lethbridge area and the newly introduced Carbon Tax and Energy Efficiency Program in Alberta. The OWC has participated in various consultation and policy development sessions as a member of the Chamber's NREC in order to both provide input and remain informed on issues affecting businesses in Lethbridge. OWC also builds valuable relationships through this committee and demonstrates our commitment to the economy of our community.



Roundtable On The Crown Of The Continent

The OWC sits on the Leadership Team of the Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent. The Roundtable is made up of numerous organizations who work in and value the land of the Crown of the Continent ecosystem which spans corners of Eastern Alberta, Western British Columbia and Northern Montana. The Roundtable engages stakeholders across the Crown of the Continent in order to promote stewardship activities on the land that foster conservation, culture and community. The 2016 annual conference was the biggest focus for the Roundtable this year and was held in Fernie, BC around the theme of One Backyard: Celebrating a Shared Landscape.

Chinook Food Connect (CFC)

The CFC is a grassroots organization dedicated to increasing awareness around food security in southern Alberta. The OWC is focused on developing informational tools to highlight the connection between food and water, specifically in regards to the agricultural setting of southern Alberta. In 2016 the CFC was involved in gathering data to populate a local food map for the region. This map will be released as a part of the Southern Alberta Water Charter in 2017.



Taber Irrigation District Integrated Watershed Management Project

OWC is working with the TID to promote TID's Integrated Watershed Management and Natural Restoration Project using the OWC's lines of communication to highlight the project within the watershed and to encourage this type of stewardship. In partnership with other collaborators including the Government of Alberta - Agriculture and Forestry, Alberta Conservation Association, Municipal District of Taber, St. Mary River Irrigation District and the Town of Taber, TID's proposed project will improve watershed health through constructed wetlands, riparian enhancements and/or open canal improvements.



Watershed Planning And Advisory Councils Of Alberta

The 11 WPACs of Alberta meet regularly to learn from each other and to maintain a strong provincial voice with the Government of Alberta. Together we shape the role and future of WPACs as leaders in watershed management, stakeholder engagement and environmental education.



South Saskatchewan River Basin Intra-Basin Water Coordination Committee

The OWC participates on this committee to provide advice to the Government of Alberta on managing water during periods of water shortage and how to best meet the Master Agreement on Apportionment, which shares water between the Prairie Provinces. Thank you to Brian Brewin for serving as our representative and Doug Kaupp for serving as the Alternate.



Watershed Resiliency And Restoration Program

The OWC participates on the WRRP Advisory Team to provide advice and recommendations to the Government of Alberta to guide the refinement of WRRP and its alignment with the Agriculture Watershed Enhancement program under Growing Forward. By participating we can help ensure that the outcomes of these two programs best serve the needs of those actively involved in watershed restoration and management.



Alberta Water Council

The AWC is a provincial non-profit that provides policy recommendations to the Government of Alberta and tracks progress on the Water for Life Strategy. The Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils of Alberta have a seat on the AWC's Board of Directors and the OWC is now serving as the WPAC Director on this Board. OWC also provides input to project teams on a wide range of topics. Thank you very much to Cheryl Fujikawa for serving as our representative!

Kainai Environmental Protection Agency

OWC liases with KEPA to offer support as the organization is setting up and organizing events like the Annual Summit where OWC participates by attending, setting up an information display, joining field tours and/or presenting.

Thank you to all our community partners for the valuable contributions you make to watershed management and health!

"We are seeing the birth of a new perspective of the world, where ecology and economics are two sides of the same coin."

- Leif Johansson





oldmanwatershed.ca



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