



ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

Oldman
Watershed
Council

ANNUAL REPORT



2018-19

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Notes from the Executive Director



I would like to give a heartfelt thank you to the OWC Board of Directors, staff, donors, partners, and volunteers who make our work possible and also make it fun. You are the people that inspire me to work hard each day to make our watershed a little bit better.

Our belief in collective action has never been more challenging and your investments of time, energy, and resources are deeply appreciated. While some people entrench themselves in opposite corners, we redouble our efforts to bring people together and forge a stronger sense of community.

The path forward is built on trust and courage to speak with, learn from, and share stories with those who are very different from ourselves. Each year I have the pleasure of working with old friends and meeting many new ones, and I continue to be struck by the similarities of all people.

We all believe in stewardship and conservation, and we all love our watershed and understand its value. As we continue to harness this passion, great things happen! You can read all about it in the following pages and meet those who have dedicated themselves to make our home a better place.

Shannon Frank

Notes from the Chair of the Board



By design the OWC Board of Directors is large and provides our organization with a full range of perspectives that reflect many community interests. Regardless, we manage to govern the OWC with the ongoing health of the Oldman watershed as our number one shared concern. This daunting assignment may have been easy to envision, but its effectiveness should not be taken for granted. The high level of professionalism and mutual respect we have for each other is indeed the secret sauce to our success as a board. I am proud to count myself as one among this impressive collection of passionate watershed dwellers that is the Board of Directors of the Oldman Watershed Council.

Doug Kaupp

About the Oldman Watershed Council

The Oldman Watershed Council (OWC) is a not-for-profit organization in Southern Alberta, Canada. We are one of 11 Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils in Alberta, mandated by the provincial government to provide an independent voice for watershed management and health under the Province's Water For Life strategy.

The Council consists of the staff and OWC members who work collaboratively with all stakeholders to improve the Oldman River watershed by:

- improving and sharing knowledge
- building and strengthening stakeholder partnerships
- providing a science-based forum for all voices to be heard
- promoting and facilitating community and institutional action and stewardship
- developing and implementing integrated land and water plans

The Council is governed by a Board of Directors that is comprised of nineteen representatives from various stakeholder sectors, and four members at large.

The OWC was formed in September 2004, when the Oldman River Basin Water Quality Initiative merged with the Oldman Basin Advisory Council. When the Province's Water for Life Strategy was released, these two groups combined to provide a diverse partnership knowledgeable in all areas of watershed management, including sustainable water management and land use practices in the Oldman Basin.

Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils are mandated to create a State of the Watershed Report and an Integrated Watershed Management Plan. The OWC has accomplished these targets, and is moving through implementation.

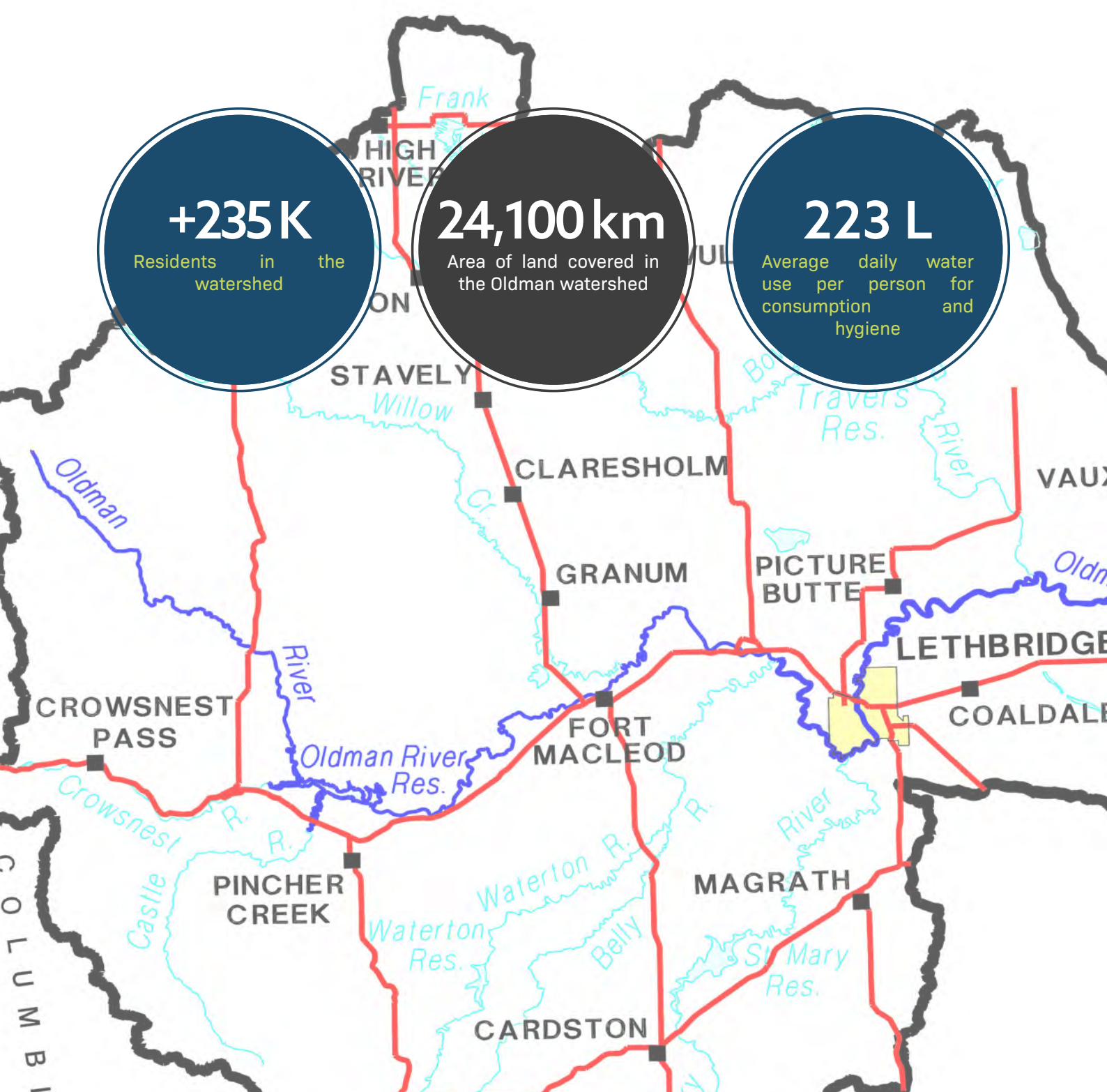
About our Watershed

A watershed is an area of land that drains into a water body, like a creek, river, or lake. Our Oldman watershed is all the land that eventually drains into the Oldman River through its tributaries.



The Oldman watershed is a large, diverse land and water system in southern Alberta, covering 23,000 km² in southwestern Alberta and 2,100 km² in Montana. It extends eastward from the forested slopes of the Rocky Mountains, through rangelands in the foothills, dryland and irrigated agricultural plains, to the prairie grasslands.

The Rocky Mountains feed the headwaters of the Oldman main (and Pincher creeks), while the headwaters of the Belly, Water greatly, both in terms of the status of the land and water resource water quantity is adequate, quality is fair to good, and riparian e flows east, water quality deteriorates and available water suppl



stream and its tributaries (Crowsnest and Castle rivers, Willow River, Waterton and St. Mary rivers rise in Montana. The watershed varies in size and impacts from human activities. In headwater sub-basins, ecosystems are generally healthy. However, as the Oldman River flows downstream, challenges for those downstream.

The OWC Team

Executive Director



Shannon Frank
August 2010 – Present

Education Manager



Sofie Forsström
November 2015 – Present

Communications Specialist



Jon Martin
October 2018 – Present

Office Manager

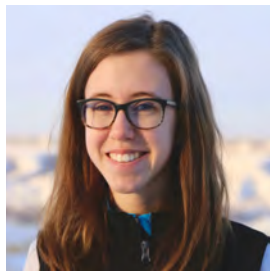


Kallie Desruisseaux
October 2018 – Present

OWC Alumni



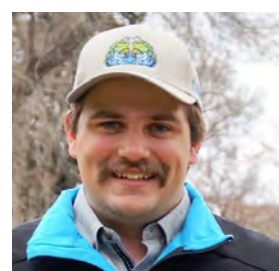
Taren Hager
Office Manager
Watershed Legacy
Project Manager
Mar. 2016 – Aug. 2018



Anique Vadnais
Co-op Student
January - March 2019



Dorothy Graham
Outreach Assistant
May – August 2019



Dylan Brassard
Outreach Assistant
May – August 2019

Meet the Board



Doug Kaupp
City of Lethbridge
Chair



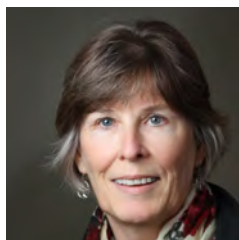
Andrew Hurly
Academia
Vice-Chair



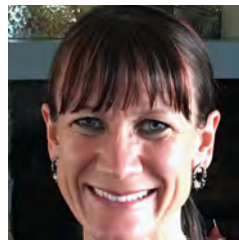
Allan Harrold
Irrigation Sector
Treasurer



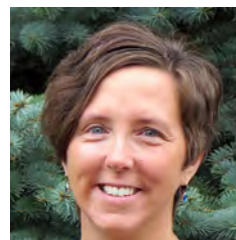
Claudia Sheedy
Federal Government



Heather Sinton
Provincial Government
(Retired)



Janna Casson
Provincial Government



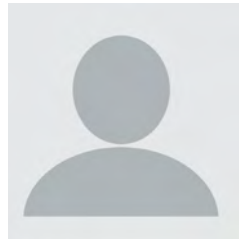
Linda Cerney
Provincial Government



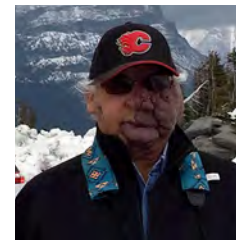
Maureen Bell
Environmental
Non-Government



Randall Wolf Tail
First Nations



Noreen Plain Eagle
First Nations
(Alternate)



Mike Bruised Head
First Nations



Dwayne Rogness
Agriculture Producers



Lori Goater
Wildlife Conservation
Organizations



Blair Painter
Towns and Villages



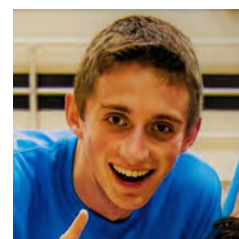
John Younger
Health Sector



Wade Aebli
Industry



Terry Kerkhoff
Member at Large



Antoine Gendron
Member at Large



Henk De Vlioger
Member at Large



John De Groot
Member at Large

Donors and Funders 2018-2019

\$500 (and under)

Alberta Irrigation Projects Association
Community Foundation Of Lethbridge
and Southwestern Alberta
Municipal District of Ranchland No. 66
Spray Lake Sawmills
Village Of Barnwell
Raymond Irrigation District
Bakers Appliances
Carl Wirzba
M & R Farms
United Irrigation District
Village Of Lomond
Town Of Stavely
Virginia Grinevitch
Andrew Hurly
Kirsten Hironaka
Town Of Nobleford
Town Of Vauxhall
Village Of Cowley
Town Of Granum
Village Of Barons
Linda Cerney
Barons School
Mobile Giving Foundation
Douglas Mitchell
Elsbeth Nickle
Gerhardt Hartman
Graeme Greenlee
Heather Sinton
James Fujikawa
Janna Casson
Jason Josey
Knud Peterson

Melanie Isaac
Shelly Wismath
Wendy Ellen Inc.
Bob Tarleck
United Way of Calgary (Donor Choice Program)
Kate Miller
Ken Pitcher
Robert Donald Peel
Tracey Bolseng
Michael McCague
Shawn Ray

Over \$500

D.A. Building Systems Ltd.
Farm Credit Canada
Lethbridge North County Potable Water Co-op
Robert McKay
Shannon Frank
Terry Kerkhoff
Town Of Nanton
Town Of Picture Butte
Magrath Irrigation District

A special thank you to all of our anonymous donors!



**Thank you to everyone who generated
ongoing operation and success of
in 2018**

Over \$1000

The Calgary Foundation (J.N. Fyvie Family Fund)
Cor Van Raay
Richardson Oilseed
St. Mary River Irrigation District
Town Of Coaldale
Taber Irrigation District
MD of Willow Creek No. 26
1st Choice Savings and Credit Union
Town Of Claresholm
Town Of Pincher Creek
Town Of Taber
Town Of Cardston
Town Of Coalhurst
The Calgary Foundation (Perlette Fund)
Town Of Magrath

Over \$5000

S.M. Blair Family Foundation
Government of Alberta
(Summer Temporary Employment Program)



S.M. Blair
Family Foundation

Over \$10,000

Samuel Hanen Society For Resource Conservation
Government of Canada (Habitat Stewardship Program)
Alberta Ecotrust Foundation
Alberta Conservation Association



Over \$25,000

City Of Lethbridge
RBC Foundation
Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission



CITY OF
Lethbridge

Over \$300,000

Government of Alberta Environment and Parks



ously contributed directly to the
f the Oldman Watershed Council
3-2019!

In-Kind Donations 2018-2019

Agricultural and Agri-Food Canada	\$4,930	Lethbridge Northern Irrigation District	\$4,675
Alberta Agriculture and Forestry	\$15,092	M.D. Of Pincher Creek	\$1,700
Alberta Conservation Association	\$1,700	M.D. Of Ranchland	\$1,700
Alberta Environment and Parks	\$4,675	M.D. Of Willow Creek	\$1,700
Anne Stevick	\$425	Multisar	\$1,700
Antoine Gendron	\$4,643	Municipality of Crowsnest Pass	\$3,400
Bridge Vacuum Cleaning Supplies	\$651	Piikani Lands Department	\$3,400
City of Lethbridge	\$4,959	Piikani Public Works	\$4,250
County Of Lethbridge	\$20,552	Scenic Drive Landscape Centre	\$530
Cows & Fish	\$1,700	Southern Alberta Group for the	
Cupper's Coffee Co. (1999) Inc.	\$30	Environment	\$4,953
Diane Herrick	\$100	Spray Lake Sawmills	\$5,200
Emma Stroud	\$850	Terry Kerkhoff	\$4,675
Farming Smarter	\$1,705	The Home Depot	\$150
Fitzhenry & Whiteside Limited	\$644	University Of Lethbridge	\$4,675
Galt Museum & Archives	\$104	UPaYa Consulting	\$2,044
GDI Services (Canada) LP	\$250	Water Conservation Trust of Canada	\$1,700
Green Haven Garden Centre	\$300		
Henk De Vlieger	\$4,675		
Jeff Doherty \$935	\$935		
John De Groot	\$3,400		
Kainai Environmental Protection			
Association	\$3,400		
Lee Valley Tools	\$150	Total Volunteer Hours:	1424
Lethbridge County	\$1,700	Total Number of Volunteers:	33
		Total	\$124,022

**Thank you to everyone who gave their
efforts in 2018-2019; our watershed
because**

Summary of Financial Expenditures **2018-2019**

Youth Education	\$22,100
Watershed Legacy Program	\$35,700
Community Outreach	\$85,800
Fund Development	\$93,200
Administration and Office Space	\$147,800
Headwaters Restoration and Education	\$151,400
	<hr/>
Total expenditures	\$536,000

Rounded to nearest increment of \$100. For detailed financial information, see Audited Financial Statements.



generously donated their time and
ed and its residents are healthier
e of you!

Development Highlights

Donor Appreciation Luncheon



Donor Appreciation Lunch held in December 2018. We awarded The Watershed Fund donors a certificate of appreciation. A thank you to 1st Choice Savings and Credit Union for sponsoring this event!



Richardson Charity Golf Classic



We attended the Richardson Charity Golf Classic as hosts on the golf course talking to golfers about our work. We were presented with a \$5000 cheque to support our restoration and fence post installation work.



RBC Foundation Cheque Presentation



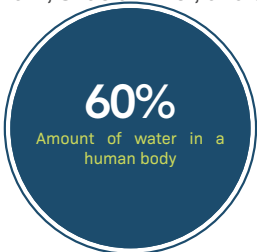
The RBC Foundation presented us with a cheque for \$37,000 to go towards our restoration and education initiatives.



Phillips Benefit Brew OWC Hazy Kolsch Launch Party



Celebrating the OWC's successful campaign to win the Phillips Brewing Company *Benefit Brew* competition. Phillips presented us with a \$10,000 cheque at the launch event, with musical performances from John Wort Hannam, Shaela Miller, and Jon Martin.



Special Projects

Phillips *Benefit Brew Goes Green* Competition

Each year, Phillips Brewing Company creates a custom brew for a worthy cause. The beer is named after the charity or non-profit, given a custom-designed label, and has the full proceeds (approx. \$10,000) donated to the organization. The competition sees 10 non-profit and charitable organizations selected by a committee at Phillips and then put forward to the public to be selected through a public vote.

Being such a unique and interesting competition, you can imagine our excitement at the beginning of 2019 when we were informed that we were nominated and chosen as a finalist for the 2019 Phillips Brewing Company's *Benefit Brew Goes Green* competition. If we were excited to be selected as a finalist, we were absolutely thrilled when we found out that we were selected as the winning organization for Alberta, taking home the top prize of our very own brew and \$10,000! If we were thrilled when we found out we won, we were ecstatic when we finally saw the amazing design! We won't even mention how elated we were when we tried the brew!

The Phillips *Benefit Brew Hazy Kolsch Oldman Watershed Council* beer was a tremendous and delicious success, selling out quickly in cans at the store and on tap at local pubs across Alberta. We couldn't have made it happen without the tremendous support of our watershed and community; and thank you for your support of the initiative.

Special thanks to Phillips Brewing Company for being a great project partner, supporting non-profit organizations, and putting together a wonderful product!



Jon, Shannon, and Kallie celebrating with the new beer on release day: April 17, 2019.



Phillips made an amazing label for the can, which features imagery and inspiration from the watershed including westslope cutthroat trout!



Devon Smith at Andrew Hilton in Lethbridge presenting us with the first four-pack of Hazy Kolsch to be sold.

Community Outreach

The OWC has a wide reach and is present in the community—virtual and otherwise. 2018-2019 was a strong year of outreach development and growth led by on-the-ground initiatives, high-quality media content, and in-person engagement.



+2140

In the news 20 times



**35 Presentations to
+1550 people**



+3680

**15 Event booths
reaching +1050 people**



+1440

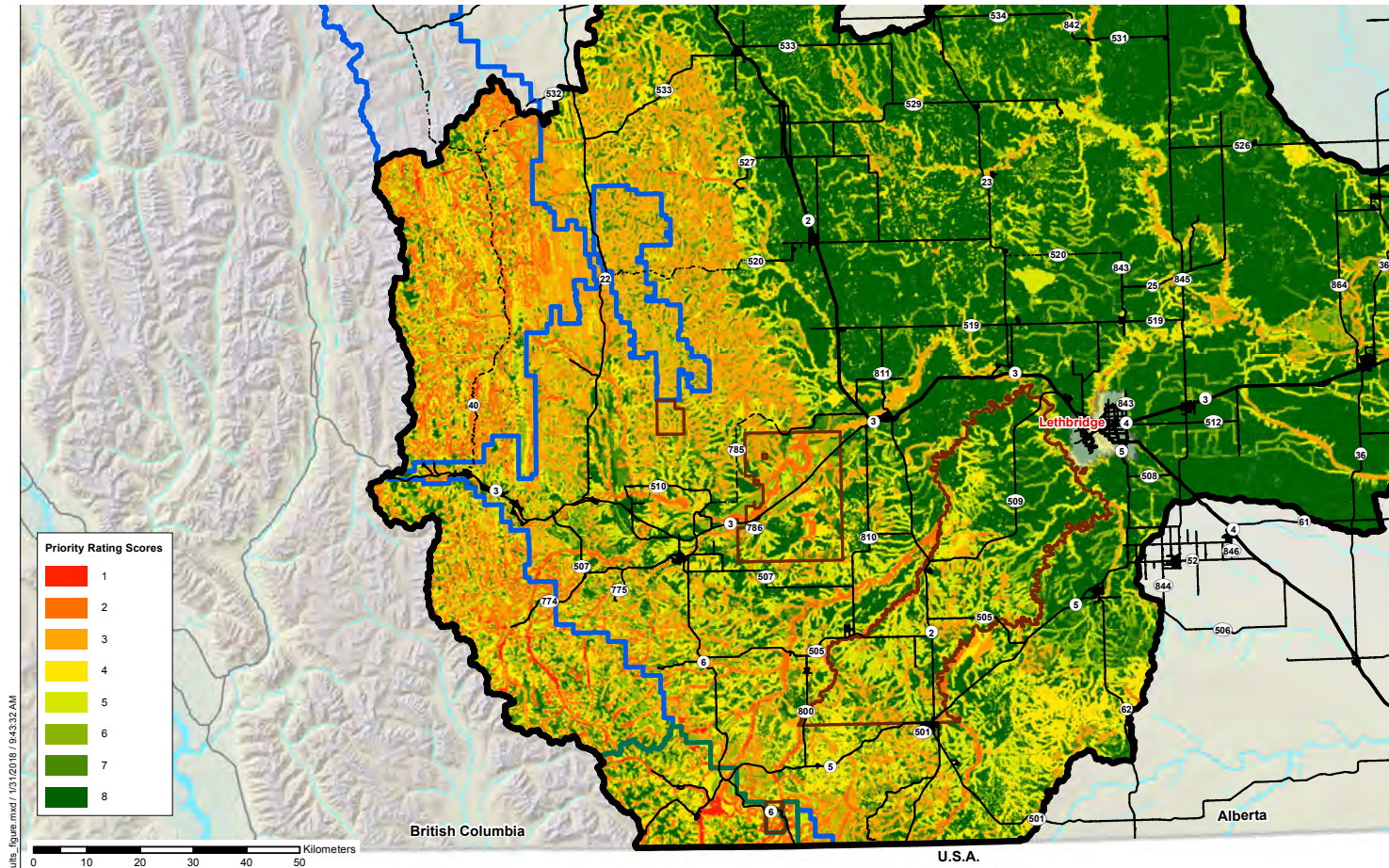
26 New blogs



+455

Projects and Initiatives

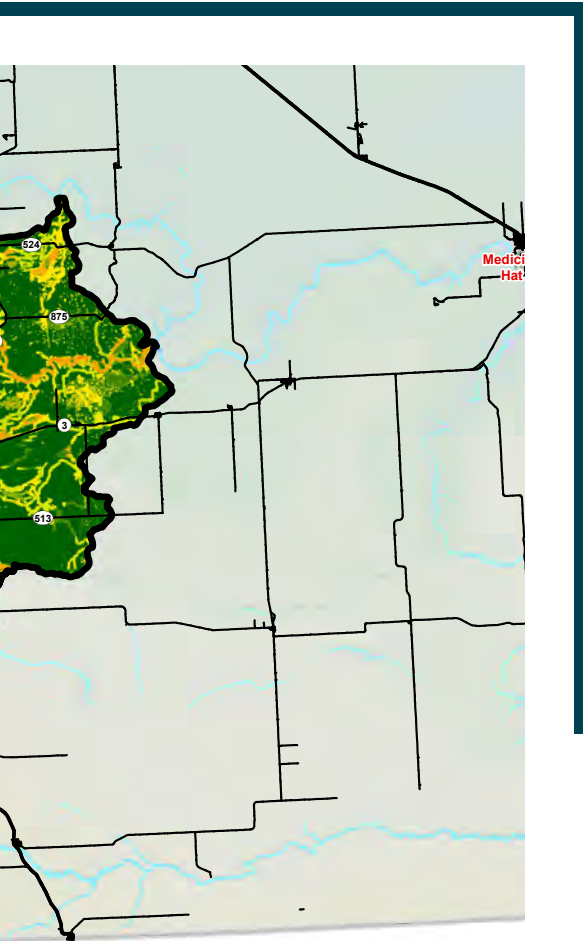
Mapping the Land Most Valuable for **Water**



This map shows those areas that if kept intact, will provide the greatest value in terms of maintaining water quality, storing water, and slowing runoff. The areas in red, orange, and yellow have the highest values.



OWC was part of a team—led by Southern Alberta Land Trust Society—who created a series of detailed maps identifying areas of high conservation value for water.



With our growing population, the quality and availability of water in southern Alberta has never been more important. Yet, many of our activities have a negative impact on how water interacts with the landscape. This mapping project identifies areas that, if kept intact, should provide the greatest benefit to water quality, flood mitigation, and drought resiliency. The premise of the project being that disturbing some areas will have a greater impact on water quality, storage, and runoff than other areas (based on factors such as slope, proximity to watercourses, vegetation, precipitation, soil), and this data could be represented with mapping data.

The maps will be useful to producers prioritizing where on their land to focus stewardship projects and demonstrating how valuable their land is. The maps also help conservation organizations focus their efforts on areas important for water, as well as governments who need to assess the appropriateness of different land uses as they relate to water.

Maps and reports can be found at:

<https://oldmanwatershed.ca/projects/saltsmaps/reportsmaps>



South Saskatchewan River Basin Water Management **Plan Review**

The South Saskatchewan River Basin Water Management Plan (SSRB-WMP) governs how water is managed in southern Alberta so it is a critically important document for our rivers, for irrigation, and for all those who live, work, and play here. The four Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils within the South Saskatchewan watershed worked collaboratively to see if the plan is meeting its stated goals since it was approved in 2006.

The review found that most of the recommendations made in 2006 have been implemented, and two key themes emerged:

- 1) It continues to be challenging to restore and protect the long-term health of our river systems while also meeting the water supply needs for economic and municipal growth. Progress has been made on water conservation and efficiency, but more work is needed.
- 2) Long-term investments in monitoring, analysis, and reporting of watershed health is needed in order to assess effectiveness of plans and policies, set goals, and manage the cumulative effects of all human activity.

The report also identifies many opportunities to inform and improve water management in the region and can be found at <https://oldmanwatershed.ca>.



For the Love of..

We had twenty-five new commitments made to our watershed through our “For the Love Of…” campaign. People expressed their love of hiking, camping, water, trees, creeks, lakes, fishing, rangelands, exploring with their dog—even chocolate zucchini cake—and so committed to picking up dog poop, conserving water in their gardens, reducing single-use plastics, cleaning their boats, target-grazing weeds, watering lawns later in the evening, cleaning up garbage, and respecting the rules. As southern Albertans, we have many common values. There is so much to love about our amazing watershed, and we all have a role to play in keeping it healthy.



Workshops and **Events**

Kainai Environmental Protection Association Summit 2018

Each year at the KEPA Summit we learn from the traditional ecological knowledge that is shared and are inspired by the stories of Blackfoot leaders and thousands of years of wisdom living in the watershed.



Citizen Science

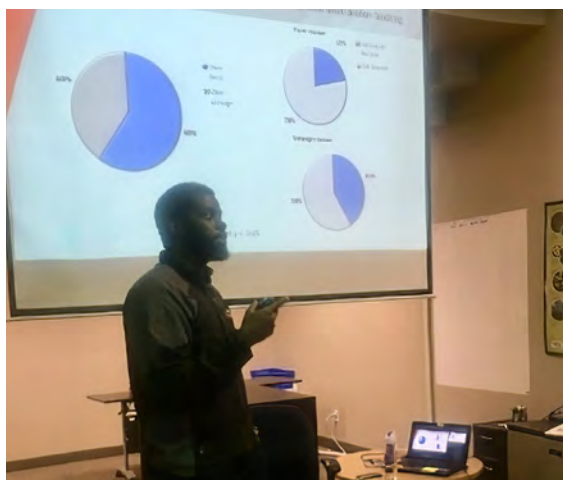
With funding from Alberta Conservation Association, OWC hosted our very first Citizen Science workshop in October and added a new Citizen Science page to our website. There are many curious and nature-savvy folks in our watershed whose contributions will benefit scientific research!



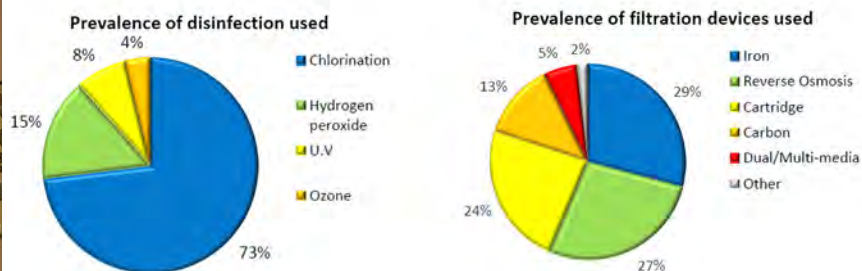
Well Water: Risky or Safe?

The OWC hosted an informative presentation about the perceived safety of drinking water wells amongst well users, followed by an interesting discussion with the audience. The event was based on a study by University of Calgary PhD student, Abraham Munene.

The study found that most well owners feel they are not susceptible to well contamination issues because they have not had any health concerns that they linked to their well water quality. Perceived susceptibility is critical, because it helps indicate how motivated people would be to test and/or treat their well.



About 40% of well owners reported using some form of well treatment



Piikani Sharing Circle

OWC participated in a sharing circle near the Oldman River on the land of the Piikani Nation where traditional and contemporary environmental management strategies were discussed. The event was hosted by Sustainability Resources to bring together those working on environmental issues and to encourage collaboration.



Prairie Urban Garden Workshop

OWC's Co-op student, Anique, did a wonderful job of organizing a Prairie Urban Garden workshop at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery in March. Led by Lethbridge College instructor Steve MacRae, the workshop guided participants through the principles of xeriscaping (landscaping for our dry, semi-arid climate) to design beautiful and low-maintenance gardens.

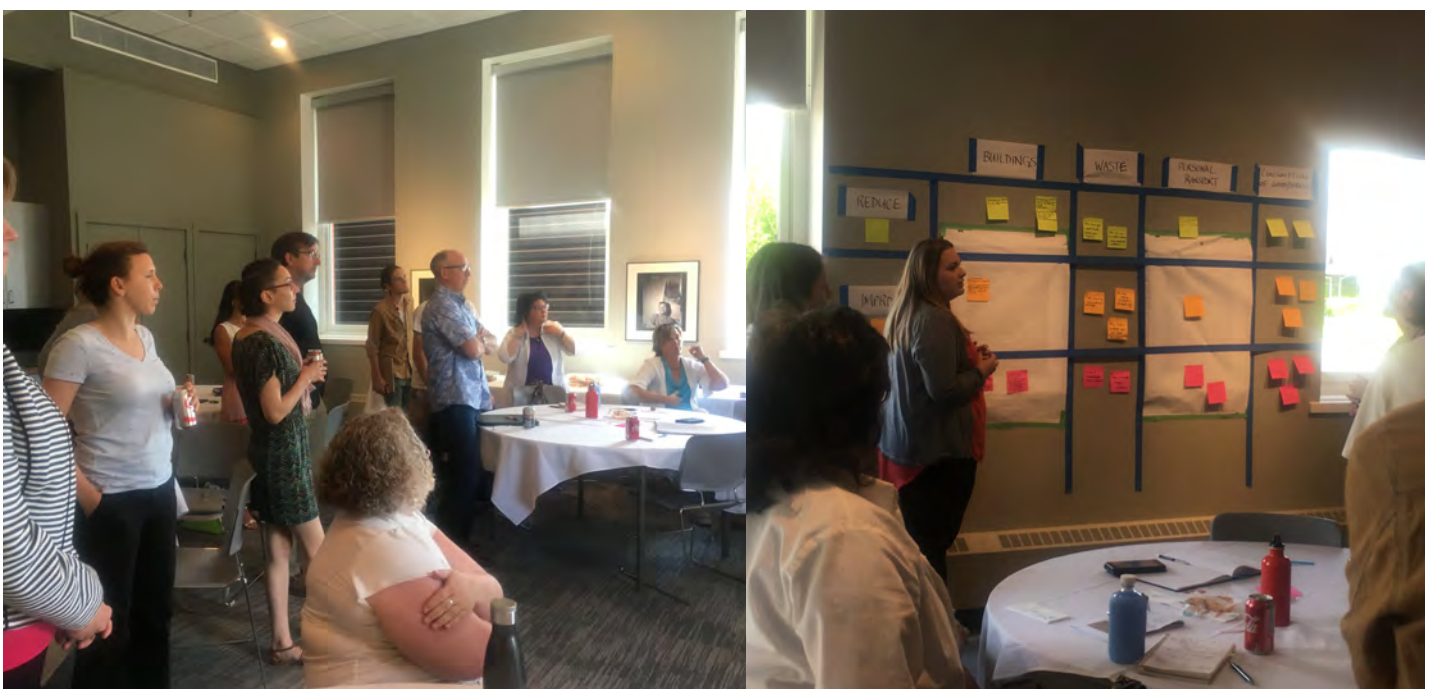


Climate Express

In partnership with All One Sky Foundation, OWC hosted the Climate Express workshop in May 2018 with concerned, active citizens to learn about local climate change impacts and discuss the best solutions to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.

We learned that in urban centres the consumption of goods and services has the largest carbon footprint by far—much larger than electricity or transportation—demonstrating that our everyday lifestyle choices do have a big impact.

The full report is available on the OWC website.



Southern Alberta Grazing for Women

In 2018, OWC was proud to be a partner to deliver the 16th Annual Southern Alberta Grazing School for Women. The progressive program, held in the Stavely area, supports practical, hands-on training for land managers, and hosted forty-seven female ranchers for two days of learning and sharing. Range and riparian health assessments and plant identification continue to be the most popular and valuable lessons, which shows how much producers care for the land they depend on for their livelihood.

Thank you to the many partners who supported and organized this valuable workshop. A special thank you to Cows and Fish for leading the program for many years and the S.M. Blair Family Foundation for making our participation possible.



Hearts- and Hands-On in the Headwaters

Building on the momentum from our Headwaters Action Plan and Engaging Recreationists project, this year we have continued engaging headwaters users through education/outreach and restoration/stewardship. Thanks to a multi-year grant from the Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program, we are able to support restoration of key riparian areas in the headwaters, increase understanding of watersheds, and build community skills that will contribute to healthier headwaters. Our long-term goal is to improve water security, as well as flood and drought resilience, throughout the Oldman watershed.

Connecting Online and Off



We shared lessons learned about engaging recreationists at the 2018 WPAC Summit in Peace River, gave regular updates to Mayors and Reeves, and presented at various tours and community events.

From May to August, Outreach Assistants Dylan Brassard and Dorothy Graham had face-to-face conversations with over 1000 people, including many children, and played interactive games to highlight the importance of water quality, preventing invasive species, and protecting native fish. They attended public outreach events like the Magrath Chautauqua, the Doors Open and Heritage Festival in Crowsnest Pass, Nature Play Day at Henderson Lake in Lethbridge, Parks Day at Beauvais Lake Provincial Park, and Day on the Creek in Pincher Creek. Dylan and Dorothy also set up interactive stations at Day Use Areas to connect with folks who were recreating in the headwaters. Maps allowed people to point out their favourite place, and they were encouraged to express what they love about our watershed. Interacting with people face-to-face has proven to be the most effective way to build relationships with people who live, work, and play in our watershed, to share stories, and to inspire action to help keep it healthy.

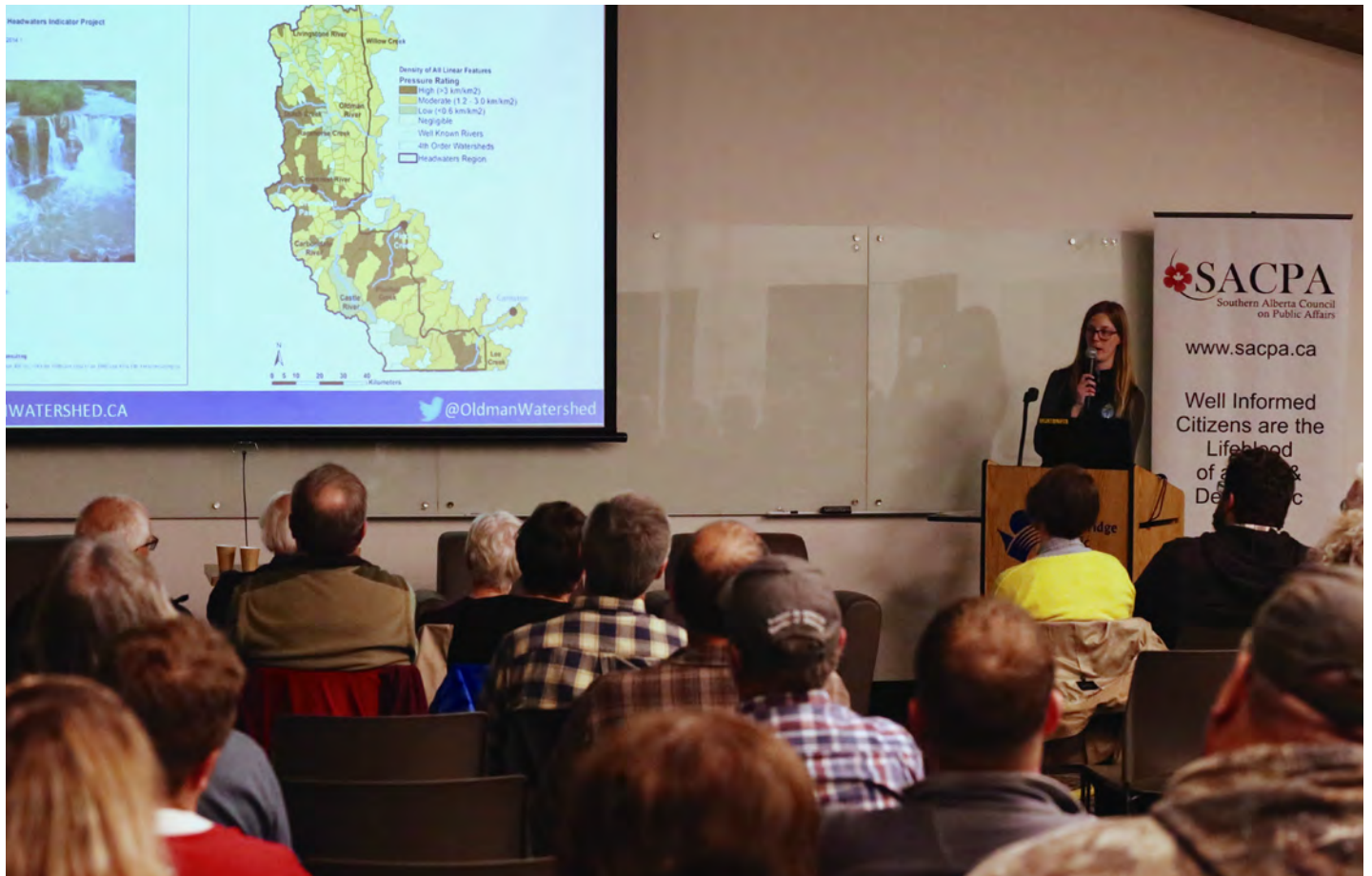


Of course, with over 200,000 people in the Oldman watershed, we need more than one approach when it comes to outreach and communications. We published 13 blogs related to things happening in the headwaters,

added over 1300 photos to our digital archive (Flickr), and engaged folks online through Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Dylan and Dorothy created short educational videos about river structures, pools, and riffles as important native fish habitat, cottonwoods, invasive weeds, and disinfecting gear to prevent the spread of pathogens like whirling disease—videos that can be viewed on OWC's YouTube channel.

Public Affairs on Public Lands

In October, OWC was part of a Southern Alberta Council on Public Affairs (SACPA) panel discussion on the topic, “Are the proposed restrictions and bans appropriate for off-highway vehicle riders using Alberta’s public lands?” OWC’s Education Program Manager joined Gary Clark from the Crowsnest Pass Quad Squad, Joanna Skrajny from the Alberta Wilderness Association, and ecologist Lorne Fitch to offer perspectives on the Recreation Management Plans for the Livingstone and Porcupine Hills. Ultimately, the common message was that we all love these places, something needs to be done to keep them healthy, and we all have a role to play in making that happen!



Putting Our Backs Into It

Here at OWC, we are firm believers that it’s not enough to talk the talk - that is, planning and information alone are not sufficient - we also need to walk the walk. That’s why we support on-the-ground stewardship, and we often take a hands-on approach, with our staff working alongside other dedicated individuals and organizations. OWC helped remove over 200 bags of invasive weeds in partnership with the Helen Schuler Nature Centre, MD of Ranchland, Castle Crown Wilderness Coalition, Nature Conservancy of Canada, and the Pincher Creek Watershed Group. Dylan and Dorothy even took home the “Bent Back Award” for pulling the most weeds during the Blueweed Blitz in Pincher Creek!



But invasive weeds grow on land - how do they impact the headwaters and greater watershed, you ask? Non-native weeds often have aggressive reproductive strategies and out-compete native species. However, they often don’t do as good of a job of stabilizing soil, may have lower forage value, and some produce toxins that adversely affect native plants and wildlife, lowering biodiversity. Thank you to all the organizations and volunteers for tirelessly tackling these invaders!

“Canaries in the Creeks”

Westslope Cutthroat Trout are like the canaries in the coalmine—or in this case, creek. They have very particular habitat requirements (clean, clear, and cold water), and so their presence indicates that a stream is relatively healthy. The good news is that we have streams with westslope cutthroat trout in our headwaters. The bad news is that due to numerous anthropogenic pressures, the population is listed as “threatened.” Many of our education, stewardship, and restoration activities aim to mitigate human impacts and improve riparian habitat for westslope cutthroat trout (among other species, of course).

We helped the Crowsnest Pass Quad Squad deck a bridge over Allison Creek for Ed Gregor Memorial Stewardship Day in the Crowsnest Pass. We assisted with restoration at Lost Creek, and helped plant 800 seedlings along Hidden Creek, in partnership with Alberta Environment and Parks. We also installed signs at a past restoration site along Dutch Creek, reminding people to steer clear of ponds & creeks, and thanking them for using the bridge.



Helping re-deck a bridge over Allison Creek at Ed Gregor Memorial Stewardship Day. Photo Credit: Crowsnest Pass Quad Squad



Assisting Alberta Environment and Parks with streamside restoration at Lost Creek.



Installing a “Thank you for using the bridge” sign next to Dutch Creek.

Pasque Creek Restoration

Our 2018 Backcountry Restoration Event took place along Pasque Creek, a tributary to the Oldman River near the Beehive Natural Area and Honeymoon Creek. Working with Cows and Fish, Spray Lake Sawmills, and a volunteer, 349 live willow stakes were planted on either side of the creek in an area of approximately 116 square metres.

Riparian restoration involves making holes in the ground using sledge hammers and digging bars, then inserting a willow stake and packing the soil around it to ensure good contact. Spray Lake Sawmills had completed ‘rough and loose’ work to de-compact the soil beforehand, making our task much easier! Afterwards, we were careful to decontaminate all of our tools and footwear in order to ensure we weren’t accidentally spreading whirling disease.

The sun was shining; the coffee (from Cafe Orange in Fort Macleod), treats (from Homestead Bakeshop in Fort Macleod), and lunch (from Country Encounters in Coleman) were delicious; and the camaraderie was palpable. We all felt great knowing that together we were improving riparian habitat for westslope cutthroat trout and helping to ensure clean water for everyone downstream. One highlight of the day was seeing numerous cutthroat in the creek just upstream from our worksite! You can find photos and a video from the day on our Flickr and YouTube sites.



Where There's a Willow, There's a Way...

Follow-up and monitoring is a crucial part of the restoration process - it allows us to gauge our success, adapt, and improve our methods. In 2018, Cows and Fish conducted Riparian Health Inventories for us at Pasque Creek prior to restoration, and on South Racehorse Creek at our 2017 restoration site. Both sites are currently considered “unhealthy;” we look forward to seeing how they improve over the coming years following our restoration efforts.

Together with partners and a volunteer, we harvested approximately 700 willows that were layered next to three bridges in the headwaters. As these willows grow, they will re-establish the shrub community and stabilize the soil approaching these stream crossings, keeping sediment out of the water. Combined, all of our 2018 restoration work added up to over 2,500 willows, trees, and other shrubs being planted.

We also worked with Cows and Fish to create a new design for the metal planting bars we use to make holes into which we plant willow stakes. The ones we had been using, while good, were getting old, and their square handles were breaking due to repeated use. We are excited to test out these new designs—with triangular handles—next season!

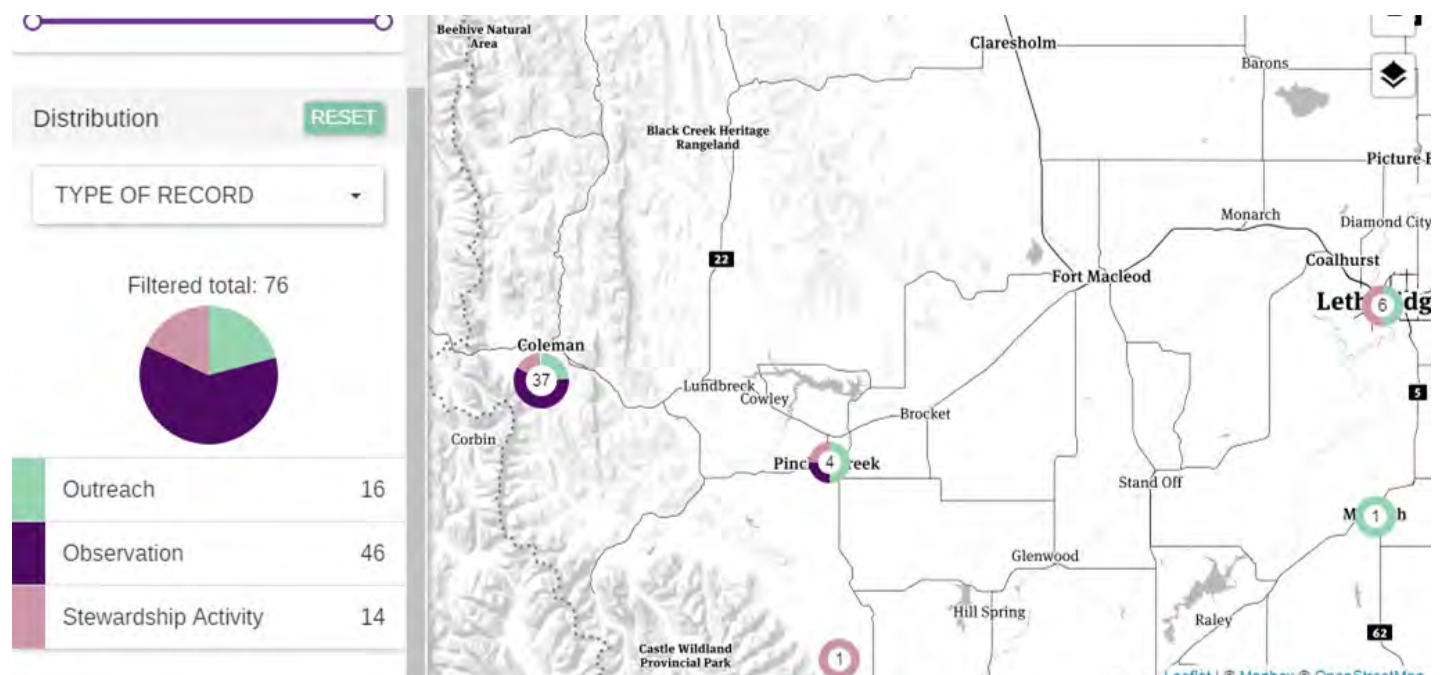


Planting bars: Old square design on top, new triangular design on bottom.

EpiCollect

We have been using a customizable data collection app called EpiCollect5 to track our on-the-ground outreach and stewardship activities. In 2018 we added 76 entries, which consisted of 16 outreach events (pop-up education stations and public events), 14 stewardship activities (such as weed pulls, bridge decking, and restoration), and 46 watershed observations (e.g. signage, potential restoration sites, invasive species, etc). These observations will help inform future activities.

OWC's focus lately has been the headwaters, the source of up to 90% of the water in our river, located in the western part of our watershed. That said, our 2016-2017 backcountry surveys indicated that recreationists were coming to the Oldman headwaters from all over the watershed, Alberta, and even out-of-province. Therefore, it has been worthwhile to attend public events throughout the Oldman watershed in order to improve watershed literacy. After all, ultimately we are all downstream!



The Next Generation of Watershed Leaders

We know that in order to be sustainable, our activities must equip the next generation of leaders with the knowledge and hands-on skills required to carry the torch. That's part of the reason we look to hire post-secondary students each summer, and provide them with opportunities for networking and training. Last summer, training for the Outreach Assistants included:

- Local plant walk
- Field trip to learn about the X-Stream Science program with other Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils
- Webinars on storytelling and environmental communications
- Environmental Education workshop put on by the Alberta Council for Environmental Education
- Experience creating and delivering their own educational program(s)
- Kainai Environmental Protection Association Summit at the University of Lethbridge and Standoff.
- Hands-on learning about different riparian restoration techniques
- Riparian Health Workshop put on by Cows and Fish and MD Foothills
- Field training on how to install stream temperature data loggers, by the Alberta Government's Whirling Disease Program

By investing in training our future leaders, we know we are leaving our headwaters and watershed in good hands!



Advising the Government of Alberta

A critical part of our role as a Watershed Planning and Advisory Council is to work collaboratively with the Government of Alberta on watershed management. Since 2013 we have been advocating for increased enforcement, education, and restoration in the headwaters, along with properly designed trails and infrastructure for recreation. This work continues through our participation on the multi-stakeholder Livingstone-Porcupine Hills Recreation Advisory Group led by Alberta Environment and Parks. This group is instrumental to the successful implementation of the Livingstone-Porcupine Hills Land Footprint Management Plan and Recreation Management Plan.

Funders and Partners

Our 2018 work in the headwaters was generously funded through the Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program; Habitat Stewardship Program; ACA Conservation, Community, and Education Grant; and the STEP Program. This work has also been made possible thanks to our dedicated partners and volunteers. Thank you for helping to keep our headwaters healthy!



Spray Lake Sawmills



UPāYA CONSULTING

Youth Education

2017-2018 Highlights

- OWC presented at the Spring Teen Program at the Helen Schuler Nature Centre, followed by an outdoor watershed simulation, nature walk, and shoreline cleanup (10 students).
- Sofie, Dylan, and Dorothy visited Ms. Kozak's Gr. 4/5 class at Barons School. These 17 students had previously worked with Dorothy to complete Waterlution's Great Waters Challenge. They had raised funds for a watershed celebration and donated the remaining amount to OWC. During our visit, we learned about their personal connections to water, and Dorothy read a book she had co-written, Canada's Great Water Adventure.
- We enthralled 80 people at the Magrath Chautauqua with aquatic invertebrates borrowed from Pothole Creek.
- The second annual Day on the Creek saw 96 people simulate the flow of water through a watershed, investigate aquatic invertebrates, and discuss indicators of water quality in Pincher Creek.
- 144 people matched adult and juvenile stages of benthic macroinvertebrates as part of a Memory game at Nature Play Day at Henderson Lake.
- The Environmental Management class at the University of Lethbridge were led through a resource development exercise to highlight the complexity of multiple land- and water-uses in a watershed.
- We engaged 147 high-school students at career fairs.
- At Spring Nature Fest, we sent 155 people on an incredible journey through the water cycle.
- Our Education Program Manager completed training to become a certified Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) Facilitator, enabling us to offer professional development on delivering water education programming to local teachers.
- The WPAC Education Coordinators collaborated to provide feedback on the new draft curriculum for Kindergarten-Grade 4.



Outreach Assistant Dorothy Graham reads an excerpt from *Canada's Great Water Adventure*, a book she co-wrote, to Ms. Kozak's grade 4/5 class at Barons School.

Co-op student Anique at Spring Nature Fest walking participants through a simulation of the water cycle at the Helen Schuler Nature Centre.

Caring for our Watersheds

Our Co-op student, Anique, got 190 students thinking about what they can do to improve their watershed by delivering six Caring for our Watersheds presentations. Following the free presentation, fifty-two student proposals from the Oldman watershed were submitted to the southern Alberta competition. One group from Cardston Junior High placed 3rd in the final competition, and another received an honourable mention. Way to go!



Students from Cardston Junior High being presented with their prize for placing third in the Caring For Our Watersheds competition.



Honourable mention being presented to Cardston Junior High students for their work in the Caring For Our Watersheds competition.

Watershed Legacy Program



The Oldman watershed includes some of the most productive farm and ranchland in the world. The OWC is proud of its reputation as being a “hands-on” organization, and we work on the land, directly with our rural stakeholders.

Agriculture is 80% of what we do in Southern Alberta. So, taking care of farmers and ranchers is literally everybody’s business. Landowners have been protecting the water, the wildlife, and the land for generations. A legacy of conservation has been built, and Albertans want to see it continue. The Watershed Legacy Program (WLP) provides the resources for landowners to continue the tradition of stewardship.



Sweetgrass Bison Riparian Fencing



Municipal Councillors, agricultural producers, public servants and nonprofit staff learn new strategies to address invasive species, fires, stream bank erosion and gravel pit impacts.

Since 2009, we have been working with agricultural groups and producers, providing support for over 60 on-the-ground stewardship projects, totalling over \$180,000. These projects include: stream bank restoration, off-stream watering units, riparian fencing, educational events and tours, weed pulls, and more. The WLP has benefitted the rural communities of southern Alberta by supporting stewardship projects that improve the health of the watershed, thus the quality of life for rural land stewards and everyone downstream.



2018 Blueweed Blitz along Pincher Creek to remove invasive weeds.

Congratulations to our 2018-19 grant recipients!

- Bar 15 Ranch, who is restoring Trout Creek by installing off stream watering troughs to attract cattle away from the streambank.
- Waldron Grazing Co-operative Ltd., who are improving Damon Creek by installing electric fencing to manage cattle access during sensitive times.
- Tony and Debbie Webster, who are enhancing Chaffen Creek by fencing the streambank to manage cattle access.

Thank you to the WLP team and all of the funders!

Watershed Legacy Project Team



Anne Stevick



Watershed Legacy Project Funders



Samuel Hanen Society for Resource Conservation



S.M. Blair Family Foundation

United Irrigation District

The Oldman Watershed Council (OWC) is an essential environmental non-profit in southern Alberta, and one of the most established Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils (WPAC) in the province of Alberta. The OWC is run by dedicated group of individuals whose primary focus it is to protect the health of the Oldman Watershed and the quality of water for all those who live, work, and play in the area through boots-on-the-ground restoration work, education initiatives, and research. As a non-government charitable organization, they work with government, industry, and community members to ensure that facts, science, and education guide decisions about environmental action. While the Oldman Watershed Council primarily supports the +235,000 citizens in their area and all those who access water downstream—from the Rocky Mountain headwaters to the Hudson Bay—they also assist and support other Canadian WPACs to collectively improve the health of all water in Canada.



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