

2019/2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Oldman Watershed Council



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Notes from the Executive Director



Watersheds remind us that we are interconnected with our neighbours living upstream and downstream of ourselves and encourage us to act collectively for our own benefit as well as the larger community. This local and collaborative approach is the foundation of provincially designated Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils that began to form across Alberta in 2004.

The Oldman Watershed Council grew from the roots of cooperation and community activism that was started in the 1990s by the Oldman Basin Advisory Council and Oldman Basin Water Quality Initiative. These two stakeholder groups merged in 2004 to form the OWC and applied to become a registered not-for-profit society, with official status being granted in February 2005.

Now, 15 years later, it is time to say congratulations to each and every one of our funders, volunteers, and partners who got us to this special anniversary! You made this possible with your dedication and perseverance. Everything that we have accomplished can be traced to committed volunteers and partners who took the reins and made it happen, usually with no map or guidebook (and no money!), but a whole lot of heart. All of the

energy and time you put in is deeply appreciated and has made a difference to the watershed and its wild and somewhat domesticated inhabitants.

There are many people that have been long standing gurus of the OWC, serving on the Board of Directors and committees for years. People like Doug Kaupp, Terry Kerkhoff, Dwayne Rogness, and our longest serving Director, Andy Hurly, who has been volunteering on the Board since the very beginning of OWC and elected as Vice-Chair for most of those years. I thank you, the watershed thanks you, and our thousands of supporters thank you for stepping up and building the OWC into the accomplished and trusted community partner we are today.

We have proven that it is possible for people from all sectors to find common ground and work collectively for the benefit of the whole. The OWC is a large and diverse family of people that believe in creating a better future together. We have triumphed through floods, fires, and drought and are now facing a global pandemic that keeps us physically apart but rekindles our appreciation for being together. I look forward to seeing you again at our next AGM, celebrating this special anniversary, and feeling the community pride we all share.

Cheers to another 15 years!

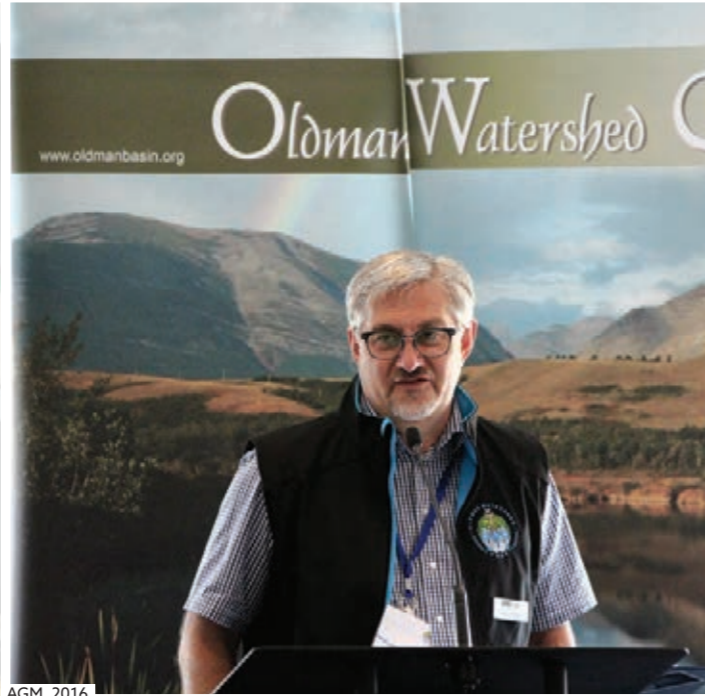
Shannon Frank



Notes from the Chair of the Board



2015. By Jayme Javier.



AGM, 2016.



Yellow Fish Road, 2014.



Youth forum, 2010.



2014. By Jayme Javier.

"It is important that we regularly make time to celebrate our achievements and to share our plans for the future. The OWC annual report keeps our stakeholders, donors, and communities informed of what we have been up to and what's next. However, this year our organization has reason to highlight and reflect on the fifteen years of achievements since our foundation in response to the Alberta Water for Life Strategy. With this also comes an opportunity to anticipate what our next fifteen years may have in store for us. Please join me and the Board of Directors of the Oldman Watershed Council as we celebrate the fifteen years of contributions made by our staff, stakeholders, and funding partners to the overall health of the Oldman watershed. Thanks to your years of passion and dedication, we have achieved a great deal to be proud of."

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 perspectives from various stakeholder sectors, including four members at large.

The OWC began to form 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 mainstem and its tributaries (Crownsnest, Livingstone, and Castle Rivers, Willow and Pincher Creeks), while the headwaters of the Belly, Waterton and St. Mary Rivers rise in Montana. The watershed varies greatly, both in terms of the status of the land and water resources and impacts from human activities. In headwater sub-basins, water quantity is adequate, quality is fair to good, and riparian ecosystems are generally healthy. However, as the Oldman River flows east, water quality deteriorates and available water supplies diminish, creating challenges for those downstream.

Photo by Rochelle Coffey.



Cows enjoying a beautiful day at a WLP site. By Jon Martin.

2019-2020 Highlights

- Leveraged Alberta Environment and Parks investment into an additional \$282,388 from non-Government of Alberta sources
- \$146,196 in-kind support from partners and volunteers
- Invested in 5 on-farm stewardship projects led by local agricultural producers
- Engaged over 2200 people in headwaters educational activities at 17 events
- Headwaters restoration included planting 200 shrubs, 370 limber pine and 1200 willows, pulling 162 bags of invasive weeds, collecting 11 bags of garbage and removing 3 km of fence from sensitive areas, with many partners
- Engaged 630 youth in hands-on activities and presentations at 17 events
- Increased our membership and followers on Facebook
- Invested in 2 Indigenous-led environmental assessment projects to support our First Nation partners
- Diversified revenue with new funders and long term grants to set us up for success for the next 3 years

The Team

Executive Director



Shannon Frank
August 2010 – Present

Education Program Manager



Sofie Forsström
November 2015 – Present

Communications Specialist



Jon Martin
October 2018 – Present

Office Manager



Kallie Desruisseaux
October 2018 – Present

Office Dog

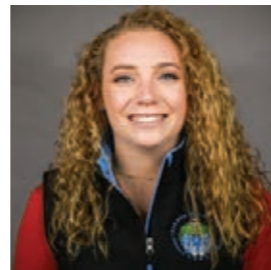


Quiche
April 2017 – Present

OWC Alumni



Rebekkah Bright
Outreach Assistant
May – August 2019



Sydney Taplin
Outreach Assistant
May – August 2019

The Board of Directors



Doug Kaupp
City of Lethbridge
Chair



Andrew Hurly
Academia
Vice-Chair



Alan Harrold
Irrigation
Treasurer



Claudia Sheedy
Federal Government



Randall Wolf Tail
First Nations



Mike Bruised Head
First Nations



Dwayne Rogness
Agriculture Producers



Janna Casson
Provincial Government



Linda Cerney
Provincial Government



Maureen Bell
Environmental
Non-Government



Lori Goater
Wildlife and Habitat
Organizations



Blair Painter
Towns and Villages



Mike Swystun
Health



Wade Aebli
Industry



Jonh De Groot
Agriculture
Producers
(Alternate)



Anne Stevick
Wildlife and Habitat
(Alternate)



Chad Willms
Provincial
Government
(Alternate)



Arlene Kwasniak
Environmental,
Non-Government
(Alternate)



Jan Newberry
Member at Large



Erik Cline
Member at Large



Henk De Vlieger
Member at Large



Jana Mackenzie
Member at Large

Donors and Funders 2019/2020

Up to \$1000

Town of Picture Butte
 Alberta Irrigation Districts Association
 Magrath Irrigation District
 Copper Line Liquor
 Jaitirth Inc.
 Andrew Hurly
 Doug Kaupp
 Raymond Irrigation District
 Anonymous
 Janice Newberry
 Town of Stavely
 Robert MacKinnon
 Rosemary Jones
 Virginia Grinevitch
 Village of Cowley
 Village of Hill Spring
 James Fujikawa
 Town of Vauxhall
 Barbara Vallance
 Elspeth Nickle
 Heather Sinton
 Jason Josey
 Benevity, Inc.
 Coreen Putnam
 United Way of Calgary, Donor Choice Program
 Curtis Matwychuk-Goodman

\$1000 and over

Lethbridge County
 Government of Alberta, Community Initiatives Program (CIP) Grant
 Calgary Foundation, J.N. Fyvie Family Fund
 Municipal District of Taber
 Alberta Real Estate Foundation
 Shell Canada Limited
 Town of Fort Macleod
 Taber Irrigation District
 Town of Cardston
 Town of Claresholm
 Town of Pincher Creek
 Town of Coalhurst
 Calgary Foundation, Perlette Fund
 Town of Nanton
 Government of Alberta, Canada-Alberta Job Grant
 Municipal District of Ranchland No. 66
 Shannon Frank
 Terry Kerkhoff

A special thank you to all of our anonymous donors!

Thank you for your generous contributions to the operation and success of the Oldman Watershed Council in 2019/2020!

\$5000 and over

Lethbridge Northern Irrigation District
 Alberta Historical Resources Foundation
 St. Mary River Irrigation District

\$10,000 and over

Government of Canada
 Alberta Ecotrust Foundation
 Edmonton Community Foundation
 Phillips Brewing & Malting Co. Ltd.



\$25,000 and over

Samuel Hanen Society



\$45,000 and over

Calgary Foundation
 City of Lethbridge



\$400,000 and over

Government of Alberta Environment and Parks



Your support makes the work we do to sustain and improve the health of our land, water, and communities possible.

In-Kind Donations 2019/2020

Person	Organization	Amount
Andrew Hurly	University of Lethbridge	7,804.83
Antoine Gendron		1,228.95
Chad Willms	Alberta Environment and Parks	1,700.00
Dwayne Rogness	Lethbridge County	13,777.00
Henk De Vlieger		3,990.00
Jana MacKenzie		3,400.00
Linda Cerney	Alberta Environment and Parks	5,239.29
Mike Swystun	Alberta Health Services	1,714.00
Wade Aebli	Spray Lake Sawmills	4,108.00
Wade Aebli	Montem Resources	916.00
Doug Kaupp	City of Lethbridge	17,147.50
Alan Harrold	Lethbridge Northern Irrigation District	13,747.50
Janna Casson	Alberta Agriculture and Forestry	5,672.50
Lori Goater	Southern Alberta Group for the Environment	3,547.50
Jim Bester	Cardston County	3,547.50
Maureen Bell	Water Conservation Trust	3,547.50
Blair Painter	Municipality of Crowsnest Pass	3,547.50
John De Groot	Hays Stock Grazing	3,547.50
John Younger	Alberta Health Services	3,547.50
Randall Wolf Tail	Piikani Public Works	3,547.50
Mike Bruised Head	Kainai Environmental Protection Association	5,247.50
Erik Cline		5,247.50
Jan Newberry		3,547.50
		-
Mojtaba Ahmadizadeh		680.00
Connor Frizzley		834.60
Joan La Faith Petersen		678.80
Sydney Taplin		798.00
		-
Troy Ormann	Alberta Agriculture and Forestry	940.90
Anne Stevick		255.00
		-
Norine Ambrose	Cows and Fish	172.95
Gary Secrist	Lethbridge County	170.00
Cor Van Raay	Van Raay Land Inc.	170.00
Ryan Kasko	Kasko Cattle Co Ltd	255.00
Rob Van Dieman	Van Dieman Poultry Farms	170.00
		-
Amber Bennett	Upaya Consulting	1,875.00
		-

Thank you to everyone who generously donated their time and efforts in 2019/2020!

Person	Organization	Amount
Callum Sears	Flying E Ranche	4,250.00
Tony and Deb Webster	Webster Ranch	1,221.00
	Waldron Grazing Co-operative Ltd.	3,950.00
Allan and Bev Garbutt	4 Winds Ranch	3,995.00
		-
Lorne Fitch		680.00
Ryan Heavy Head		680.00
Cheryl Bradley		680.00
Sarah Boon		680.00
Melody Garner-Skiba	Alberta Sugar Beet Growers	680.00
Coreen Putman	Helen Schuler Nature Centre	680.00
Stewart Rood	University of Lethbridge	680.00
		-
Jeff Reading	ATCO	850.00
Api' soomaahka (William Singer III)	Kainai Environmental Protection Association	850.00
		-
Total Volunteer Hours:	1526	Total \$146,196.82
Total Number of Volunteers:	46	

Summary of Financial Expenditures 2019/2020

Headwaters Restoration and Education	179,888
Administration and Office Space	179,628
Communications	89,285
First Nations Partnerships	42,287
Watershed Legacy Program	18,348
Youth Education	16,570
	<u>16,570</u>
Total	\$526,006

Our watershed and its residents are healthier because of you and your efforts!

Fifteen Years of OWC

This year, we are celebrating the 15th anniversary of the Oldman Watershed Council. Since we officially formed in 2005, a countless number of people from all places and areas of interest have contributed their time, financial support, efforts, ideas, and shared love of our home to help restore, maintain, and protect our watershed. While we have done our best to include as many people as possible in this comparatively-limited collection of photos, we would like to extend our gratitude to all those who have contributed over the years.

We hope that you enjoy this reflection on a small fraction of the all of the critical work that has been done by the OWC, its supporters, and our community.



Ian Dyson, Barry Olson et al, March 2005, AGM.



Board retreat January 2005.



Wilson Middle School Garden. May, 2 2005.



Leda Kozak, original staff September 2005.



Barb Lacey at AGM March 2005.



Wendy Devent, original ED at March 2005 AGM.



Louella Cronkrite 2005 Shoreline Cleanup.



Cheryl Dash at March 2005 AGM.



Brian Keating and Cheryl Dash at March 2005 AGM.



Lethbridge flooding June 2005.



Environment Week prep June 2005.



Pincher Creek flooding June 2005.



Cheryl Dash and seed packet designer student 2005.

2006



Mike Wagner and Cheryl's dog Lost Creek fire July 2006.



Bioengineering Paradise Canyon October 2006.



Lost Creek Fire regrowth July 2006.



Jamie Puchinger bio-engineering October 2006.



Cheryl Dash, Mike Wagner Lost Creek fire July 2006.



Bio-engineering tour September 2006.

2007



Yellow Fish Road May 2007.



Yellow Fish Road from May 2007.



Yellow Fish Road launch May 2007.



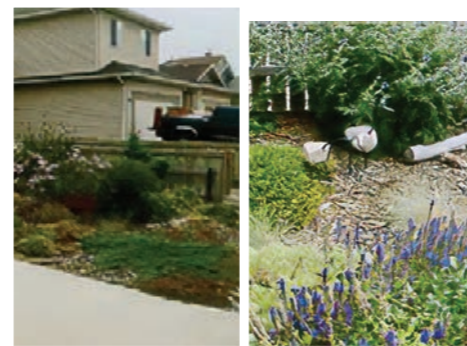
Home and Garden Show booth March 2007.



Stakeholder workshop 2007.



Stakeholder workshop 2007.



Great Garden Search July 2007.



Home and Garden Show draw March 2007.



Katheryn Taylor at the Stakeholder Workshop 2007.



Anne Stevick at the Stakeholder Workshop 2007.



March 12, 2008 AGM.



Rainwater only 2008.



Terry Kerkhoff at Board Retreat April 2008



Lorne Fitch, Ray Nadeau et al July 2008.



Blueweed Blitz July 2008.



Science forum October 3, 2008.



Blackfoot Challenge Tour August 2008.



Science forum October 3, 2008.



Board Retreat April 2008.



Staff and Rural Team trail ride October 2008



Alan Efetha, et al. Science Forum October 2008.



U of L Water building, Jim, Brian, Joanna October 2008.

2008

2009



Lyndon Creek tree planting May 2009.



Stephanie and Barbara at 2009 AGM by Natalie Kromrey.



Holding the Reins 2009.



PCF quilt 2009 Leta Steph.



Jollin Charest, Science tour October 2009.



Davin Johnson at 2009 AGM by Natalie Kromrey



Randall Wolf Tail, Science tour 2009.



Blueweed Blitz July 2009.



Wind surfing at Oldman Dam June 2009.



Tim Romanow et al 2009 WLP tour.



Piikani at Science tour October 2009.



Linda Cerney 2009 PCF.



Rock Snot Science tour October 2009.



Prairie Urban Garden tour 2009.



Science tour October 2009.

2010



Shane, Bev and Doug at 2010 AGM by Leta Pezderic.



March 2010 Youth Forum group.



Natalie Kromrey and Wendell Koning Science Forum 2010.



Jeff Porter and Tim Romanow Feb 2010. By Andy Hurly.



Board and staff January 2010.



Dennis Lastuka February 2010. By Andy Hurly.



Dwayne Rogness February 2010. By Andy Hurly.



Stephanie Jaffray and Bill Dolan Feb 2010. By Andy Hurly.



Watershed science team February 2010.



Stephanie Palechek (now Jaffray) 2010. By Andy Hurly.



Terry Kerkhoff at 2010 AGM. By Andy Hurly.



Prairie Urban Garden Tour 2010.



Steph, Leta, and Sean at 2010 AGM. By Andy Hurly.



Jeff Porter Waterton Tour August 2010. By Anne Stevick.



Michael Gerrand Waterton Tour August 2010. By Anne Stevick.

2011



Ashley Schinkel at 2011 AGM. By Andy Hurly.



Kids wearing Yellow Fish Road shirts 2011.



Stephanie Jaffray's farewell. July 2011. Jeff Porter, Holding the Reins 2011.



Cheryl Fujikawa at 2011 AGM. By Andy Hurly. Gerhardt Hartman at 2011 AGM. By Andy Hurly.



Jeff and kids, Yellow Fish Road 2011.



June Flanagan, PUG tour 2011.

2012



September 2012 tour.



Terry Kerkhoff, minister's luncheon Jan 2012.



Inside Oldman Dam tunnels September 2012.



Harley Bastion September 2012 tour.



Braum Barber at March 2012 Home and Garden Show.



Uldis Silins September 2012 science tour.



Ag Expo March 2012.



Science Forum September 2012.



Board and staff January 2012.

2013



Volunteers and staff WLP tour 2013.



PUG tour 2013.



2013 WPAC Summit group.



Board and ED June 20, 2013 AGM. By Leta Pezderic.



Lawrence Schinkel October 2013 tour.



Rose, Steph, and Bev June 2013 AGM. By Leta Pezderic.



Leta, Sarah, and Anna April 2013 at Children's festival.



Board Retreat 2013.



Kelly and Glen Hall, 2013 Holding the Reins.



Oldman spillway June 20, 2013. Flood during AGM.



Andrea Vaxvick and Nicola Miller 2013.

2013



Castle weed pull July 2013. By Leta Pezderic.



Dwayne Rogness tour October 2013.



Weed pull August 2013. By Leta Pezderic.



Mike Uchikura Blueweed Blitz July 2013. By Leta Pezderic.



Lori Brave Rock at June 2013 AGM. By Leta Pezderic.



Keith Francis and Anne Stevick 2013.



Connie Simmons at June 2013 AGM. By Leta Pezderic.



Claudia Sheedy Science tour October 2013.



Little Bow River flood June 2013.



OWC staff on St.Paddy's day 2013.



Green List October 2013.



Leta Pezderic at Green Life Expo 2013.



William Singer III at June 2013 AGM. By Leta Pezderic.

2014



Connie, Rose July 2014 AIS monitoring.



Linda Cerney and Kathryn Taylor 2014.



PUG tour 2014.



Doug, Yellow Fish Road 2014.



Ian Dyson and Shirley Pickering at June 2014 AGM. By Leta Pezderic.



Dutch Creek tour October 2014. By Leta Pezderic.



2014 Kick-off meeting.



2014 Kick-off meeting.



RBC cheque presentation June 2014.



Anne Stevick and Glenn Alm at June 2014 AGM. By Connie Simmons.



Climate change dialogue 2014.



Brad Stelfox, 2014, Holding the Reins.



Shirley Pickering 2014. By Denise Pezderic.



Rodney Cyr 2014.

OWC Staff, 2014, Holding the Reins. By Denise Pezderic.



Photo by Jon Martin.



Photo by Jon Martin.

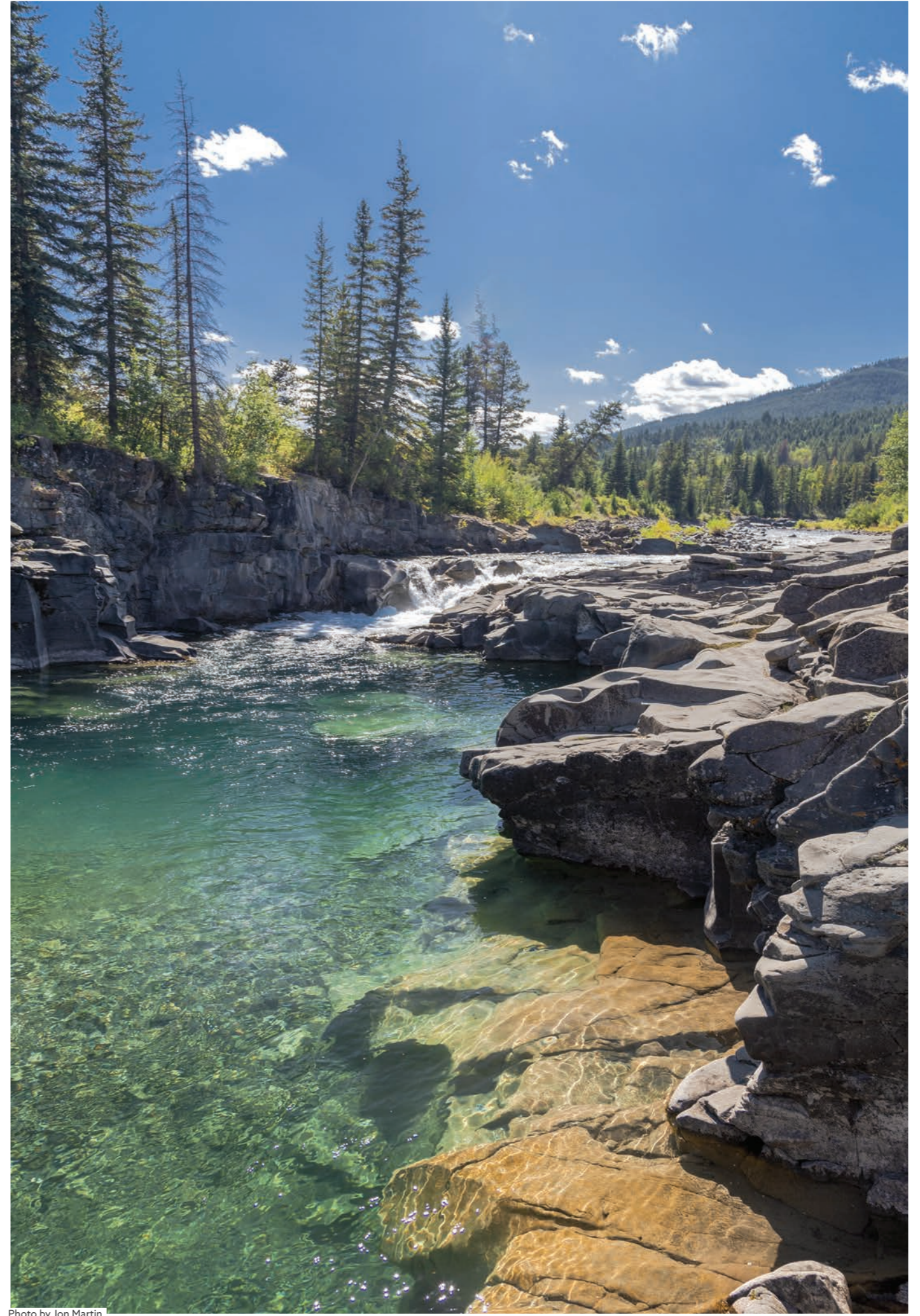


Photo by Jon Martin.

2014



Anna Garleff at 2014 Home and Garden Show.



David Hill, Cheryl Bradley, Andy Hurly November 2014. By Jayme Javier.

OLDMAN GOES TO HOLLYWOOD



OWC Staff, November 2014. By Jayme Javier.



Doug Kaupp November, 2014. By Jayme Javier.

OLDMAN GOES TO HOLLYWOOD



Windiana Farms July 2014. By Jeremy Wind.



Lorne Fitch and Debbie Gregorash November, 2014. By Jayme Javier.

OLDMAN GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

2015



Dutch Creek Restoration Event digging fence post holes



ER Adam Janzen with random-campers.



Kyle Gouw, 2015.



Dutch Creek Restoration Event planting willows.



Environment Minister Shannon Phillips visits Lethbridge to announce grant recipients



ER Rowan Wolf Garleff.



Film Project - Kainai - Mike Bruised Head.



Film Project - Kainai - Lena Russell.



Film Project - High River.

2015



Henk DeVlieger May 2015.



Film Project, Kainai.



By Jayme Javier.



Lori Brave Rock and William Singer III August 2015. By Jayme Javier.



Hidden Creek Restoration 2015.



Hidden Creek Restoration completion October 2015.



Kainai Nation August 2015 stratified geology. By Jayme Cabrera Lopez.



Kainai Nation August 2015 big view. By Jayme Javier.



Piikani film shoot June 2015.



The Forks where Bow and Oldman meet June 2015. By Jayme Javier.



The Forks valley June 2015. By Jayme Javier.



SACPA Anna Garleff, Barry Harper discuss recreation.

2016



Headwaters Tour November 2016.



Green Drinks Trivia June 2016.



Shirley Pickering and Debbie Gregorash February 2016.



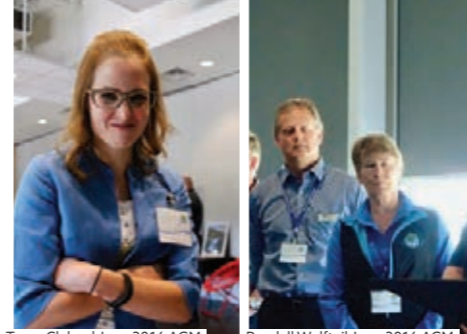
MLAs Flyfishing June 2016.



Sofie June 2016 AGM.



Outreach Assistants, 2016.



Taren Cleland June 2016 AGM.

Randall Wolfstail June 2016 AGM.



Film Project Potato Growers of Alberta.



The Forks where Bow and Oldman meet June 2015. By Jayme Javier.



Atlas Garbage Cleanup August 2016.



Atlas Garbage Cleanup August 2016.



Green Drinks 2016.



Bev Bellamy farewell February 2016.



Backcountry Trails Flood Rehabilitation May 2016.



OWC staff with steer clear sign May 2016.



Family Fishing Weekend.



Sofie and Steph March 2016 Home and Garden show.



Restoration Event 2016.

2017



"For the Love Of grasslands, I will pull weeds." June 2017.



Sofie at the Galt July 2017.

Taren at the Galt July 2017.



Engaging Recreationists 2017.



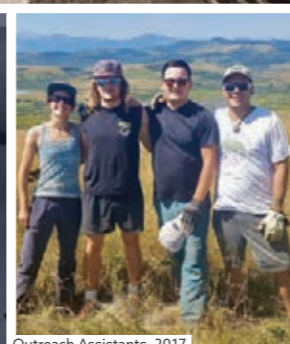
Film project.



Voices of the Oldman 2017.



Film project.



Outreach Assistants, 2017.



Voices of the Oldman 2017.



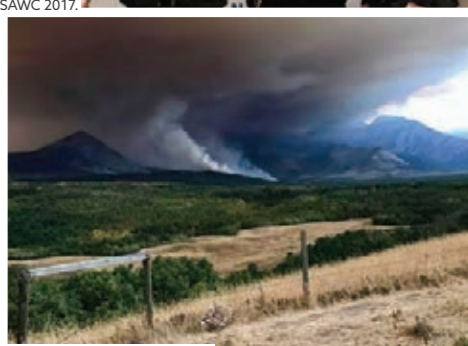
Willow harvest October 2017.



SAWC 2017.



Restoration Event October 2017.



Kenow Fire 2017. By Carter Merr.

2018



Grazing School For Women 2018.



Blueweed Blitz Awards 2018.



Pasque Creek Restoration Event 2018.



Grazing School For Women 2018.



Donor Lunch 2018.



Barons School. By Alana Kozak.



KEPA June 2018.



Citizen Science event.



SACPA Forum.



Beauvais Speaker Series 2018.



Outreach Assistants, 2018.



RBC cheque presentation.



Fish Sticks puppet workshop.



Richardson Charity Golf Classic 2018.

2019



Farm Credit Canada cheque presentation.



Quiche at staff photo day.



OWC and Phillips for beer day launch at the radio station.



Intern Anique Vadnais.



Kallie with BLOOMdiggity flowers.



Holiday card 2019.



Hazel at the AGM.



KEPA Summit 2019.



Community Builders award with MP Rachael Harder.



EPIC March 2019.



The Phillips Oldman Watershed Council Benefit Brew.



William Singer III speaking at June 2019 AGM.



OAs Sydney and Rebekkah.



South West Invasive Managers tour 2019.



Prairie Pitbull Rescue puppies in the office.



South Country Fair, 2019.

2020



Cultivate Youth Agriculture Leadership Summit Olds March 2020.



SACPA 2020.



Lundbreck Falls, 2020. By Jon Martin.



MLA tour with Nathan Neudorf, 2020. Photo by Jon Martin.



First OWC storm drain cover prototype.

Here's to the next 15!



Oldman dam, 2020. Photo by Jon Martin.

Community Outreach

The OWC has a wide reach and presence in the community—virtually and otherwise. 2019/2020 was a strong year of outreach development and growth led by on-the-ground initiatives, innovative projects, high-quality media content, and in-person engagement.

 **+2334**

 **In the news 9 times**

 **21 Presentations to +1614 people**

 **+3657**

 **16 Event booths reaching +2155 people**

 **+1700**

 **16 New blogs**

 **+532**

Community Outreach



Creekside Goat Company is being employed to target graze invasive weeds like leafy spurge. Lethbridge County Sustainable Agriculture Tour, September 24, 2019.



Kallie Desruisseaux at the University of Lethbridge Social Justice Symposium. September 20, 2019.



"For the love of dirt biking, I will use bridges."



"For the love of boating, I will clean my boat!"



OWC's Education Program Manager, Sofie Forsström, gave a community presentation entitled "For the Love of Headwaters: What Can We Do?" at the Southern Alberta Council on Public Affairs (SACPA) on January 30, 2020.



Outreach Assistants at the Lethbridge Farmers Market Community Table in August, 2019.

Projects and Initiatives

Alberta Water Council

Alberta's eleven Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils have a seat on the Alberta Water Council Board of Directors and actively participate on project teams to shape Government of Alberta policy and provide tools for watershed managers.

In 2019-20 the Alberta Water Council focused on two projects:

Building Resiliency to Multi-Year Drought: a guide for small rural and urban communities. The guidebook documents lessons learned from previous droughts in Alberta and brings together the most current information, tools, and resources as a reference for communities before, during, and after a multi-year drought.

Guide to Protecting Sources of Drinking Water in Alberta. The guide showcases lessons learned from case studies across Canada and introduces the main components of source water protection planning.

The OWC regularly provides input and support to the elected WPAC representatives on project teams and the Board of Directors.

Thank you very much to the 2019-20 volunteers for all the time and energy you put in to bring a watershed perspective to the Alberta Water Council:

- **Roxane Bretzlaff** – Lakeland Industry and Community Association / Beaver River Watershed
- **Tim Romanow** – Milk River Watershed Council Canada
- **Morris Nesdaie** – Athabasca Watershed Council
- **Sarah Skinner** – Battle River Watershed Alliance
- **Susanna Bruneau** – Battle River Watershed Alliance



Indigenous Partnerships

We are always learning from our Indigenous neighbours and are touched by their openness to sharing generations of wisdom and traditional knowledge with us. Lessons about the interconnections between all life forms are especially striking as they impress upon us how much we rely on each other and the land, water, and wild creatures we share our habitat with.

OWC is proud to support Piikani and Kainai Nations' stewardship initiatives by investing in environmental health assessments and restoration projects. In 2019-20 OWC invested \$30,000 in local, Indigenous-led watershed projects. The Oldman watershed is fortunate to have Indigenous land managers whose leadership is demonstrating how to braid traditional knowledge with western science.



Api'soomaahka (William Singer III) speaking at OWC's AGM about lihtaisapiiommao'p (Seed Bank Project).



From left to right: Janna Casson, Rebekkah Bright, Mike Bruised Head, Dwayne Rogness, Sydney Taplin, Shannon Frank (front) at June 2019 KEPA Summit.

Events like the Kainai Ecosystem Protection Association Annual Summit teach us about knowing from place and holistic land management that embraces the social and cultural needs of communities. OWC has attended all 6 past summits and continues to learn from the inspiring presentations and field trips. The June 2019 summit was memorable and engaging with a pipe ceremony, bison harvest and Elders sharing stories.

OWC is proud to support Piikani and Kainai Nations' stewardship initiatives by investing in environmental health assessments and restoration projects.

Headwaters Restoration and Education

OWC hired two fantastic Outreach Assistants, Lethbridge College students Sydney Taplin and Rebekkah Bright, who from May to August attended numerous stewardship and outreach events. Our Outreach Assistants set up place-based interpretive displays at 16 events throughout the watershed and engaged over 2,200 people in games and educational activities about native fish, benthic macroinvertebrates, and invasive species. They kept a weekly journal on Facebook, called "The Weekly Runoff," and created 9 videos about invasive weeds found in the watershed - published in a series called "Weedy Wednesday," which you can watch on OWC's Facebook page.



Our two fantastic Seasonal Outreach Assistants, Sydney Taplin and Rebekkah Bright.



Outreach Assistants Rebekkah and Sydney set up interactive displays at 16 events throughout the watershed, like Nature Play Day in Lethbridge.

Community Stewardship

OWC does our best to support the tremendous community stewardship initiatives that contribute to keeping our headwaters and watershed healthy. In May, Outreach Assistants Sydney and Rebekkah helped plant approximately 500 willows in the Porcupine Hills together with Nature Conservancy of Canada and volunteers. In June, they helped the Crowsnest Pass Quad Squad deck a bridge at Ed Gregor Memorial Stewardship Day. In partnership with groups like Nature



Rebekkah (L) and Sydney (R) helped plant 500 willows in the Porcupine Hills in May.



Invasive weeds are a big problem in the watershed. Luckily, many organizations - like Nature Conservancy Canada - organize volunteer weed pulls to help tackle the issue.

Conservancy of Canada, Alberta Conservation Association, Southern Alberta Land Trust Society, Pincher Creek Watershed Group, Castle Crown Wilderness Coalition, and the Helen Schuler Nature Centre, as well as volunteers, OWC helped pull 162 bags of invasive weeds, picked 11 bags of garbage, and helped remove 3 km of fence from environmentally-sensitive areas in our watershed. Staff also helped out at Trout Unlimited Canada's annual Fish Rescue, in which thousands of fish trapped in irrigation canals were returned to the Oldman River.



Pulling blueweed with Southern Alberta Land Trust Society (SALTS), July 2019!



Hands-on in the headwaters: Pounding in posts to rebuild a fence in the Crowsnest Pass with Nature Conservancy of Canada.



Rebekkah (L) and Sydney (R) helped the Crowsnest Pass Quad Squad deck a bridge over a creek at Ed Gregor Memorial Stewardship Day - keeping wheels out of water.

“Mooving” Back From the Water

We supported the installation of off-stream watering troughs at two sites in the MD of Willow Creek, and the building of riparian fences to keep livestock out of the creek at two sites in the MD of Ranchland No. 66. Five Riparian Health Inventories (RHI) were completed at these sites by our partner, Cows and Fish, during the summer season in 2019.

Restoration: Planning and Planting

OWC continues to participate in the Livingstone-Porcupine Hills Recreation Advisory Group, working to implement the Recreation Management Plans in our headwaters. Part of this involves identifying areas to be restored — and that requires, on top of maps and meetings around a table, getting out into the headwaters to see these areas in person, and working with partners to amplify our impact.

We scouted potential restoration sites along White Creek together with Trout Unlimited Canada and Alberta Environment and Parks, and along Beaver Creek with Cows and Fish. Restoration requires a lot of behind-the-scenes work — communication among riparian specialists, contractors, native plant suppliers, government approvals staff, agrologists, and public land leaseholders — but working closely with Cows and Fish, an ambitious restoration plan was developed and approved, with work slated to be completed next field season. OWC staff and volunteers assisted Alberta Agriculture and Forestry with planting



Scouting potential restoration sites along White Creek, July 2019.



Limber pine seedling.



We spent Halloween planting willows and shrubs to naturalize an area in the Porcupine Hills - great work, everyone!

endangered limber pine seedlings in the Castle area. The tiny trees had been grown from seeds harvested from local trees that show resistance to blister rust, a non-native fungus that kills whitebark and limber pine. Thanks to collaborative planting efforts, this long-lived species will continue to play an important ecological role as food for numerous species, and will survive to be enjoyed by future generations.

Our volunteer restoration event with Cows and Fish took place on Halloween. The weather threw some tricks at us (sun, wind, snow, and frozen ground), but staff and volunteers cheerfully and indefatigably planted willows and shrubs to naturalize a riparian area in the Porcupine Hills. We enjoyed a delicious hot lunch and treats from Prairie Stone Catering out of Claresholm. At the end of the day, we had planted nearly 200 shrubs - great work, everyone!



OWC staff and volunteers helped plant endangered limber pine seedlings in the Castle in September 2019.

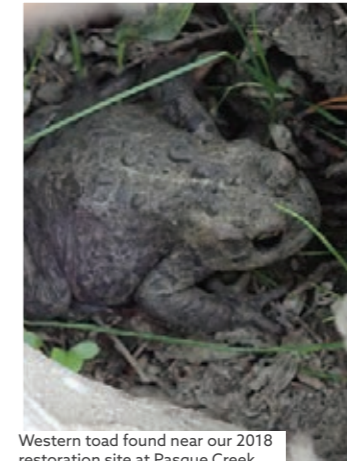
Assessing Success

In July, OWC staff toured the headwaters to check on our past volunteer restoration sites along Dutch, Dome, South Racehorse, and Pasque Creeks. We were pleased to see that willows were growing at all volunteer-planted sites. Our Outreach Assistants supplied some extra TLC by watering the spruce seedlings that had been planted further upland at Pasque Creek after last year’s restoration event.

Our partners at Cows and Fish conduct riparian health assessments at each of our restoration sites to provide a baseline against which to measure improvements. New this year, our Education Program Manager completed CABIN Project Manager certification, which consisted of online modules and field certification in Canmore in July. CABIN (Canadian Aquatic Biomonitoring Network) is a community-based freshwater benthic invertebrate monitoring program using a national protocol. Looking ahead, we can start to plan an aquatic monitoring program to complement the riparian assessments at our restoration sites.



Examining willow regrowth at our 2016 volunteer restoration site along Dutch Creek.



Western toad found near our 2018 restoration site at Pasque Creek.



A little extra TLC: watering seedlings at last year’s volunteer restoration site on Pasque Creek.



CABIN field training in Canmore. This national certification will allow us to plan a robust aquatic monitoring program at our restoration sites. By Ghost Watershed Alliance Society.

Partners and Funders



Environment and Climate Change Canada



Workshops and Events

Watershed **MLA** Tour

In the wake of the provincial election, OWC felt it was important to connect with our new UCP MLAs and showcase some of the valuable boots-on-the-ground stewardship being implemented by landowners and volunteers. On October 25, loaded with hot coffee and baked goods from local shops, we headed to the headwaters. Our first stop was a ranch near Maycroft, where landowners Judy and Einar Nelson described their approach to land and water stewardship, including riparian fencing and an off-stream watering system to keep cattle out of sensitive riparian areas. Our next stop was to Caesars Flat, a popular camping and recreational staging area. In 2016, 42 volunteers and staff planted more than 600 willows to help stabilize the streambank along Dutch Creek. We are proud to work with such amazing watershed stewards and partners - from landowners, volunteers, government, and other non-governmental organizations - to help improve our watershed.



Board Chair, Doug Kaupp.



Off-stream watering system.



Solar panels at a WLP site near Maycroft.



Touring a past OWC WLP site.



OWC staff, landowners Einar and Judy Nelson, and Nathan Neudorf, MLA Lethbridge East.



Touring a past restoration site along Dutch Creek.



OWC participated in Trout Unlimited Canada's Fish Rescue, which is a volunteer citizen science event that captures thousands of fish trapped in irrigation canals and releases them back into the river.

Youth Education

630

Students reached through presentations and events

56

Student proposals submitted to Caring for our Watersheds contest from three schools in the Oldman watershed

17

Youth presentations and events

5

Watershed distance learning programs delivered

3

Caring for our Watersheds winners from the Oldman watershed

1

New curriculum-based Grade 8 program developed

School Presentations

Learning about our watershed is important for students of all ages, and its interdisciplinary nature fits in with most school subjects - including Science, Social Studies, Math, Language Arts, and more - and all grade levels. During a custom classroom presentation, Grade 3 students in Coaldale learned about Alberta's water allocation system (known colloquially as "First in Time, First in Right") and how to be good citizens by being watershed stewards. High school students explored complex watershed and sustainability issues at the Southern Alberta Awareness to Action Summit in Lethbridge, and the Cultivate Youth Agriculture Leadership Summit in Olds - both of which included sessions with OWC's Education Program Manager. OWC also attended the EPIC Career Fair in Lethbridge, with a hands-on activity that demonstrated the important role environmental scientists play in keeping our watershed healthy.



OWC Education Program Manager helps students identify their watershed and discusses the relationship between agriculture and water during the Cultivate Youth Agriculture Leadership Summit in Olds. March 6, 2020.



Students at EPIC Career Fair exploring a career as an environmental scientist. February 12, 2020.

We were thrilled to be invited to lead an activity at Piikani Nation Secondary High in Brocket. Using OWC's puzzle, we discussed the symbology of the logo and diversity of our watershed - then everyone stood up and we simulated how water moves through tributaries in the headwaters downstream to a common body of water. Our staff had a wonderful day, and we learned a lot from the students, staff, and other presenters.



Students exploring the symbology and diversity of the Oldman watershed. May 8, 2019.



Simulating a watershed at Piikani Nation Secondary High. May 8, 2019.

In partnership with Alberta Parks, the pilot watershed distance learning program was delivered to 5 schools in our watershed. The interactive program, which was developed in collaboration between OWC and Alberta Parks, and funded in part by TD Friends of the Environment, highlights the importance of water and teaches students about their watershed. We look forward to this program expanding and becoming a success!

Day on the Creek

This year, for the 3rd annual Day on the Creek, OWC was asked to develop and lead a program about sediment and erosion for grade 8 students in Pincher Creek and area. Our program, called "Get Sedimental About Your Watershed," was a hit! First, we demonstrated the critical role of riparian vegetation in reducing erosion and trapping sediment by having students catch Bocce balls that were rolled down the hill (with a makeshift silt fence at the bottom to catch any that got through). Then, we removed all but a few of the students (vegetation) and compared how much more sediment (Bocce balls) made it to the bottom. This activity garnered laughs and cheers as students encouraged each other in a friendly competition. To finish, we assessed the turbidity of Pincher Creek using turbidity tubes with Secchi discs, and determined that even though the water looked clear, there was actually a lot of sediment suspended in the creek!



"Get Sedimental About Your Watershed" was a brand-new Grade 8 program we developed this year.

Grade 8 students calculating the turbidity of Pincher Creek at the 3rd annual "Day on the Creek"

Grade 8 students learning about the importance of riparian vegetation in keeping sediment out of creeks.

Caring for our Watersheds

The annual Caring for our Watersheds contest starts with an in-class presentation about their local watershed, and then asks students to put together a project proposal to answer the question, "What can you do to improve your watershed?" In 2019, 56 student proposals were submitted from three schools in the Oldman watershed. OWC's Education Program Manager was one of several judges who scored proposals from across Southern Alberta based on innovation, environmental impact, scope and communication, budget, realistic solution, and visuals. Ordinarily, the top 10 student proposals are invited to present their projects in person in front of a second panel of judges to compete for ten cash prizes; however, due to school closures in spring 2020, it was decided to divide the prizes evenly amongst the top 10 student proposals. Congratulations to the students from Cardston Junior High School and Magrath Junior Senior High School who were among the 2020 winners!



Pond-dipping for aquatic invertebrates with Helen Schuler Nature Centre's "Extreme by Nature" teen program at Elizabeth Hall Wetlands.



Going on a watershed adventure with a friendly pelican at Taber Public Library's Summer Reading Program.

Partners and Funders



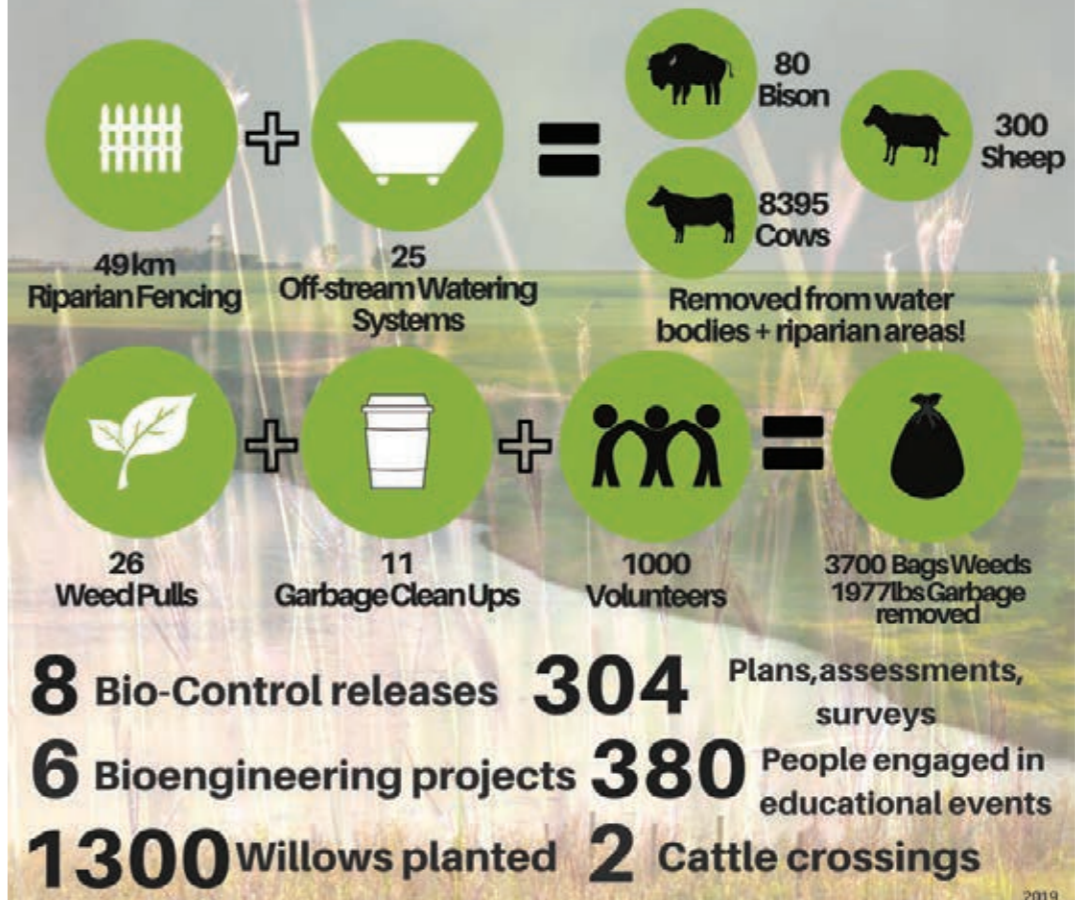
Watershed Legacy Program

The OWC is proud to support our rural community leaders who manage the land and water in ways that benefit all of us. Our communities rely on our farmers and ranchers to protect the ecosystem services that we all depend on for safe, clean water and productive land.

Since 2009, the OWC has been investing in grassroots stewardship projects led by agricultural producers and community groups. To date we have supported 65 projects totalling \$185,000. These restoration projects have improved water quality and riparian habitat while also benefiting local ranchers and farmers who depend on healthy land for a sustainable operation.



IMPACTS



Congratulations to our 2019/20 Recipients!

Flying E Ranche, who is improving the riparian health of Willow Creek by installing a solar watering trough to attract cattle away from the creek.

The Grasslands Restoration Forum, who will be holding a two-day Grassland Conservation and Restoration Workshop in 2021.

The Pincher Creek Watershed Group, who is hosting the 17th Annual Blueweed Blitz to remove this invasive weed from the shoreline of Pincher Creek.

The Taber Irrigation District, who is installing a solar watering trough and fencing to improve riparian habitat around Taber Reservoir.

The Webster Ranch, who is fencing part of Chaffen Creek to enhance riparian habitat and manage cattle during sensitive times.



OWC's 2 summer staff, Sydney and Rebekkah, helped dig out blueweed at the 2019 blitz.



Sound watershed stewardship practices at Timber Ridge Conservation Site gave us the confidence to drink straight from the spring fed trough.

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

Watershed Legacy Team



Anne Stevick

Watershed Legacy Funders



Samuel Hanen
Society for Resource Conservation



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 (WPACs) in the province of Alberta. The OWC is run by a dedicated group of individuals whose primary focus 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, we work with government, industry, and community members to ensure that facts, science, and education guide decisions about environmental action. The Oldman Watershed Council primarily supports the +200,000 citizens in our area and all those who access water downstream—from the Rocky Mountain headwaters to the Hudson Bay.

