



watershed management – watershed health

OLDMAN WATERSHED COUNCIL

Celebrating our Accomplishments

OWC Annual Report 2013-2014

Cover Art by Leta Pezderic

ABOUT THE OWC

The OWC is one of Alberta's 11 Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils (WPACs) designated by the Government of Alberta to work directly with local communities to assess the condition of watersheds and prepare and implement plans to address issues.

The OWC is a community-based, not-for-profit that works with everyone to find practical solutions to environmental challenges that impact us all. People depend on a healthy environment but we also need a healthy economy and we have social and cultural needs too.

Everything is connected so we must work together to make trade-offs, solve problems, plan for the future and have the quality of life we want right now.

It takes time and effort to work collaboratively but OWC is helping to build a new way of managing our water and land where we all do our part, work together and think long term. We believe it's worth the investment.

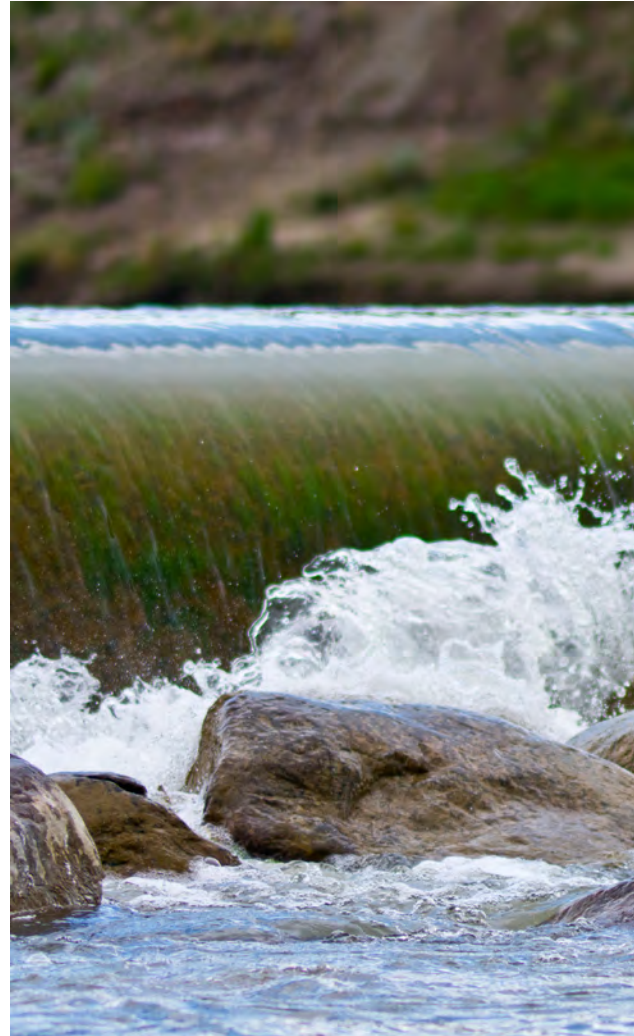




Photo by Byron Lee

CONTENTS

About the OWC	2
OWC Board of Directors	4
OWC Staff	5
Financial	6
Donations	
Sponsorships	
In Kind Donations	
Grants	
Communications & Outreach	8
Watershed Legacy Program	10
Holding the Reins	11
Prairie Urban Garden	12
Watershed Science Tour	14
Lethbridge Stormwater Outfalls Monitoring	15
Partnerships & Projects	16
Headwaters Action Plan	20
Looking Ahead - a snapshot	23

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Academia

Andrew Hurly - Vice Chair
(University of Lethbridge)

Agriculture Producers

LeRon Torrie

Environmental Non-Government

Cheryl Fujikawa - Treasurer
(Southern Alberta Group for the
Environment - SAGE)

Richard Burke
(Oldman River Chapter,
Trout Unlimited Canada)

First Nations

Randall Wolf Tail (Piikani)
Paulette Fox (Blackfoot)

Federal Government

Vacant

Health

Robert Rippin
(Alberta Health Services)

Industry

Kelly Scott
(ATCO Power)

Irrigators

Keith Francis
(Taber Irrigation District)

Members at Large

Loreena (Lori) Brave Rock
Shirley Pickering
Anne Stevick
Robert (Bob) Tarleck

Municipalities

Terry Kerkhoff - Chair (Municipalities)
(retired October 2013)

Doug Kaupp

(Municipalities - City of Lethbridge)

Brian Brewin

(Municipalities - MD's & Counties)

Blair Painter

(Municipalities - Towns and Villages)

Provincial

Rod Bennett
Alberta Agriculture and
Rural Development

Ian Dyson
Alberta Environment
and Sustainable
Resource Development



Photo by Larry Mitchell

OWC STAFF



From left to right:

Connie Simmons
Planning Manager

Andrea Vaxvick
Development Coordinator

Leta Pezderic
Program Coordinator

Shannon Frank
Executive Director

Bev Bellamy
Administrative Assistant

Anna Garleff
Communications Coordinator

FINANCIAL DONATIONS

Individuals

Anonymous	140	Town of Fort Macleod	921
Bellamy, Mark & Bev	50	Town of Nanton	640
Frank, Shannon	200	Town of Picture Butte	497
Fujikawa, Cheryl	160	Town of Pincher Creek	1,086
Garleff, Anna	50	Town of Stavely	149
Greenlee, Graeme	30	Village of Barons	97
Harding, Mary	25	Village of Carmangay	100
Hartman, Gerhardt	75	Village of Cowley	70
Hurly, Andrew	200	Vulcan County	1,149
Jones, Rosemary	80	Total	\$42,598
Kerkhoff, Terry	150		*\$0.30 per resident
Nickle, Elspeth	75		
Pickering, Robert & Shirley	100		
Simmons, Norman	100		
Stevick, Anne	300		
Tarleck, Robert	25		
Torrie, LeRon	100		
Vaxvick, Andrea	100		
Total	\$1,960		

MD's, Cities, Counties,

Towns, Villages*	Amount
City of Lethbridge	27,125
County of Lethbridge	3,018
MD of Pincher Creek No.9	992
MD of Ranchland No.66	250
MD of Taber	2,135
MD of Willow Creek	1,601
Town of Cardston	1,073
Town of Claresholm	1,110
Town of Coalhurst	585

Irrigation Districts*

	Amount
Alberta Irrigation Projects Association	500
Lethbridge Northern Irrigation District	3,000
Magrath Irrigation District	397
Raymond Irrigation District	300
St. Mary River Irrigation District	5,000
Taber Irrigation District	2,303
Total	\$11,500

*\$0.03 per acre of irrigated land

Corporations, Companies and Organizations

	Amount
EBA, A Tetra Tech Company	100
Stantec	100
Wendy Ellen Inc.	50
La Cite Des Prairies (school bottle drive)	41
Total	\$291

Total Financial Donations

\$56,349

SPONSORSHIPS

Alberta Beef Producers	2,500
Alberta Farmer Express	3,044
City of Lethbridge	1,500
Farm Credit Canada	300
Kasko Cattle Co. Ltd.	327
Prairie Post	3,501
Southwest AB Sustainable Communities Initiative	3,500
The Western Producer	3,625
Total	\$18,297

GRANTS

Alberta Ecotrust Foundation	30,000	ALCES modelling
Alberta Ecotrust Foundation	15,000	Communications Coordinator
Roundtable On The Crown Of The Continent	9,806	Headwaters Action Plan
Government Of Alberta - AESRD	60,000	Headwaters Action Plan
Government Of Alberta - AESRD	60,000	Crowsnest Groundwater Study
Government Of Alberta - AESRD	250,000	Operations
Total	\$424,806	

Total financial donations, sponsorships and grants - \$499,452

IN-KIND DONATIONS

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	1,932
Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development	105,051
Alberta Beef Producers	240
Alberta Conservation Association	1,932
Alberta Environment & Sustainable Resource Development	22,697
Alberta Health Services	4,493
Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation	6,597
ATCO Power	6,205
Canola Council of Canada	250
Cardston County	1,877
City of Lethbridge	8,910
County of Lethbridge	2,131
Farming Smarter	1,426
Lethbridge College	4,277
Mayors & Reeves of Southwest Alberta	3,201
Members at Large	18,171
Nature Conservancy of Canada	4,409
Piikani Public Works	1,203
St. Mary's Irrigation District	336
Southern Alberta Group for the Environment	20,546
Taber Irrigation District	2,404
Trout Unlimited Canada	5,646
University of Lethbridge	2,849
Total	\$226,783

THANK YOU TO DONORS/ SPONSORS/PARTNERS

The Oldman Watershed Council thanks you for caring and making a difference in your watershed.

You and your contributions in dollars, passion, time, skills, and energy are what make the council and its projects impactful. We are truly a great community and team.

We look forward to the year ahead, filled with many more accomplishments working together for the health of our watershed!

TOGETHER WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

Lethbridge Home and Garden Show

The theme of our booth this year was “Watersheds, Stormwater, and Xeriscaping – what are they and how are they connected?”

The combination of having a booth focused on water, and a boil water advisory for Lethbridge and area issued at the same time, led to a lot of great conversations!

We engaged hundreds of people, covering topics on where our water comes from and where it goes, stormwater quality, what a watershed is, the Oldman and Canada’s watersheds, and Xeriscaping.

Two rain barrels (one donated by Environment Lethbridge) and one composter (donated by the City of Lethbridge) were awarded as draw prizes.

Over 100 of our very popular “50 Best Plants for Prairie Urban Gardens in Southern Alberta” booklets were sold and we also handed out information on a variety of topics.

Team members/Partners/Volunteers

- City of Lethbridge
- Members at Large
- Southern Alberta Group for the Environment
- Environment Lethbridge
- Trout Unlimited Canada
- Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development



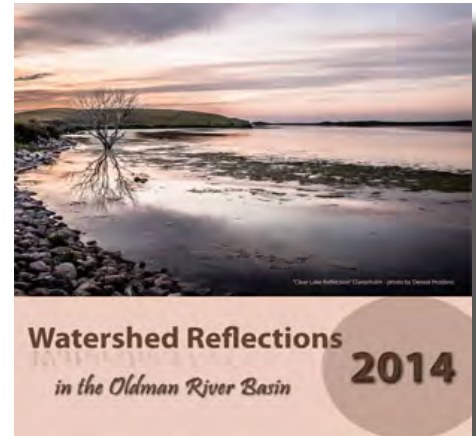


*Children's Festival
with partner Helen Schuler Nature Centre*



OWC accomplishments this year:

- E-newsletter emailed to 780 subscribers each month
- Events advertised in the media
- 25 presentations given to various groups
- Monthly updates to Mayors & Reeves of Southwest Alberta
- Attended and set up informational displays at 15 events
- Increased Facebook presence and started OWC Twitter and LinkedIn pages and an OWC blog



*2014 Photo Calendar Contest
Grand Prize Winner, Denise Pezderic,
donated a print of her winning photo
for a draw at Holding the Reins. The
donated print was won by Neil Wilson.*

WATERSHED LEGACY PROGRAM

Provides funding for watershed stewardship projects and for administrative, technical and communication assistance.

Funded 3 watershed stewardship projects.

Two Community weed pulls:

- Municipality of Crowsnest Pass and
- Pincher Creek Watershed Group (Blueweed Blitz);

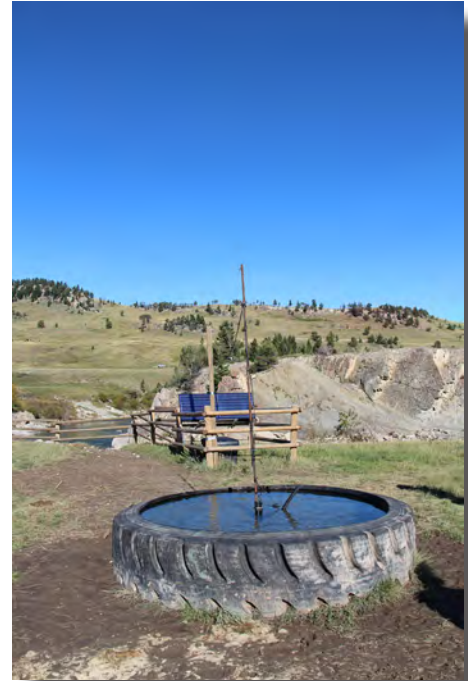
Installation of a solar off-stream livestock watering system and fencing to protect 850 metres of riparian area.

WLP Follow-up Tour

Since 2009, the Watershed Legacy Program has provided over \$100,000 in funding towards rural projects that improve the health of the Oldman watershed.

A Follow-up Tour was held with Project Team members to:

- Monitor results and see first-hand whether or not the project was successful and why.
- Meet the landowners, build relationships and hear how the WLP helped them improve the watershed.



HOLDING THE REINS

Over 100 people attended the 8th annual event held in Fort Macleod. It was “the best one so far” according to one long-time attendee!

Attendees learned about rural issues in the watershed from landowners and land managers and discussed the impact of these issues on the watershed and our communities.

Landowner and watershed stewardship groups shared the successes and struggles they faced while implementing environmental projects over the past year. And for those that couldn’t tell their stories in person, Norine Ambrose with Cows and Fish showed us Digital Stories of landowners making a difference on the landscape.

The 2013 theme was “Planning for the Future”.

Keynote speaker Dr. Brad Stelfox (Landscape Ecologist, ALCES Landscape and Land Use Ltd.) gave us a glimpse into the future of the Oldman watershed through the use of ALCES modelling, which allows us to watch as our watershed changes over the next 50 years.



*Dr. Shirley Pickering,
Impacts of the 2013 flood*



Dr. Brad Stelfox, ALCES modelling



*Nicole Seitz
Aquatic Invasive Species*

Other Topics included:

- The release of the draft South Saskatchewan Regional Plan and OWC’s feedback to the plan.
- The OWC’s Headwaters Action Plan
- Growing Forward 2 – Watershed Component, a funding program for landowners.
- Aquatic invasive species threatening Alberta.

Team members/Partners

- Members at Large
- Canola Council
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- County of Lethbridge
- Farming Smarter
- County of Warner
- Nature Conservancy of Canada
- Alberta Conservation Association
- Cardston County
- Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development

Funders

Main Funder

- Alberta Beef Producers

Beef

- Kasko Cattle Co. Ltd.

Advertising sponsors

- Alberta Farmer Express
- Prairie Post
- Western Producer

PRAIRIE URBAN GARDEN

Demonstrates the beauty and benefits of having a low maintenance and environmentally friendly Prairie Urban Garden that conserves water and requires less or no pesticides and fertilizers.

Prairie Urban Garden reminds people that what we do in our backyards, ends up in our rivers and lakes.



Photo by Leta Pezderic

Xeriscape Your Yard Workshop

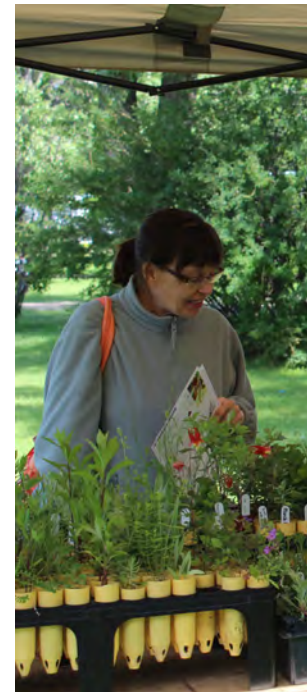


Photo by Leta Pezderic

Fourteen enthusiastic gardeners attended the “Xeriscape Your Yard” workshop in March 2014 to learn from Steve MacRae, local Xeriscape expert and owner of Prairie Xeriscape Designs.

MacRae led a full-day workshop that covered testing soils for pH, salinity and texture, tips for planning and designing their yard, amending their soil, selecting plants, mulching, watering and overall maintenance.

Funding provided in part by TD Friends of the Environment.



Prairie Urban Garden Tour 2013

We had a good turnout despite the weather preceding the 4th annual garden tour! Hail and flooding didn't deter the 80 enthusiastic gardeners from attending!

Nine garden owners welcomed visitors to talk about their gardens and send them off with a bit of inspiration for their own yards.

Kirsten Hironaka (Earthlings Inc. – A Landscape Company) presented the basic principles of Xeriscaping, answered questions and gave advice on achieving a beautiful Xeriscape garden.



ALCLA Native Plant Restoration Inc. brought a wide variety of native plants for people to purchase. This, coupled with Kirsten's guidance and inspiration gained from the featured gardens, motivated people to get started on their own gardens!

Prizes were donated by the OWC, the City of Lethbridge and Ladybug Arborists.

Team members/Partners

- Town of Cardston
- Southern Alberta Group for the Environment
- Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development
- Member at Large
- Communities in Bloom
- City of Lethbridge
- Oldman River Chapter - Trout Unlimited Canada

WATERSHED SCIENCE TOUR

Most people are unaware of the vast amount and diversity of research and innovative projects occurring in the Oldman watershed and why they are important. The Watershed Science Tour offers people the opportunity to connect research to their own lives, understand what it is telling us and see some innovative solutions to our environmental challenges first-hand by getting out in the field where all the action happens.

We had a full bus with 56 people eager to visit research sites and see innovative solutions in the watershed.

Tour stops included:

- Lethbridge Biogas Partnership - generating electrical and thermal energy from animal and food wastes.
- Local feedlots showcasing Beneficial Management Projects including a liquid manure composter.
- Dr. Alice Hontela, U of L, presented on how pharmaceuticals are entering our waters and what impact this is having on fish and the aquatic ecosystem.
- OWC's Stormwater Monitoring Project - viewed a stormwater outfall and learned what is in stormwater runoff and how it is impacting our watershed.
- Aquaponics - Lethbridge College - Aquaculture Centre, discussed how fish farming and growing greenhouse vegetables works together to create a sustainable, organic local food system.
- Alberta Agriculture's Demonstration and Research Canal showcasing efficient irrigation management.

Team members/ Partners

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada

Lethbridge College

Southern Alberta Group for the Environment

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development

Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development

Alberta Health Services

Members at Large

University of Lethbridge

City of Lethbridge



LETHBRIDGE STORMWATER OUTFALLS MONITORING

This monitoring project involves sampling and testing water from nine Lethbridge stormwater outfalls for bacteria, nutrients and pesticides from April to September each year. This study allows us to compare stormwater quality over the years to see if it is improving because of increased education programs about stormwater.

Findings from this project will guide OWC's educational programs about stormwater quality and water conservation as well as provide important data for monitoring. This study began in 2012 and will conclude in 2014.

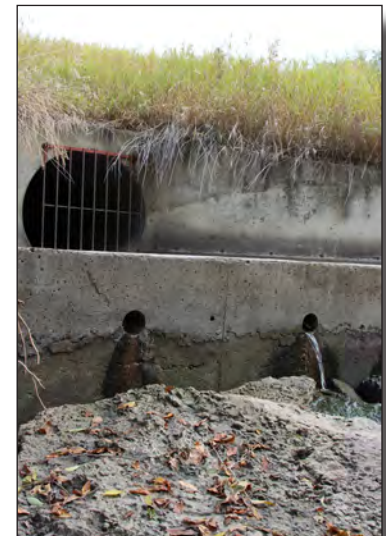
- The 2012 project report is available on our website at www.oldmanbasin.org
- The 2013 project report is currently being reviewed and will soon be available to the public.
- Sampling for the 2014 year is now underway.

Findings from research projects like the Lethbridge Stormwater Outfalls Monitoring help inform and guide the OWC's educational programs regarding storm water quality and water conservation as well as provide important data for monitoring.



Photo by Saikut Basu

OWC thanks the following Project Partners for their generous contributions:
Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development
City of Lethbridge
Lethbridge College
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada



PARTNERSHIPS AND PROJECTS

Caring for Our Watersheds



Kelsey Armstrong

Agrium's CARING FOR OUR WATERSHEDS program asks students to submit a proposal that answers the question: "What can you do to improve your watershed?" Students must research their local watershed, identify an environmental concern and come up with a realistic solution.

Community judges select the top entries to compete at a final competition with cash awards given to schools and students who participate. This program is sponsored by Agrium and supported by the OWC.

In 2014 Kelsey Armstrong, Grade 9 LCI student from Lethbridge, won 2nd place for her project: "Stormdrain Survival Kit". OWC Program Coordinator, Leta Pezderic, acted as Kelsey's mentor through the process and Kelsey received support from the OWC (\$1200), and City of Lethbridge (\$1000). Way to go Kelsey!

Environmental Awareness Team (EAT)



This team promotes and hosts events and activities that encourage acts of environmentalism in the Lethbridge community. It includes representatives from City of Lethbridge Waste & Recycling Services, Helen Schuler

Nature Centre, Alberta Health Services, City of Lethbridge and OWC.

In 2010 the EAT spearheaded the very successful "Green List" recognition program which was created to recognize individuals, businesses, organizations and youth that are taking "green" actions to better the environment.

In 2013 the Green List Celebration was held in conjunction with the first ever Green Life Expo, which showcased green products and services, and was held at the Lethbridge Exhibition Park. Over 70 people came out to watch the 11 Individuals, 3 organisations, 13 businesses, and 4 youth that were nominated, receive their awards.

EAT hosted a Walk in the Park and Picnic on June 8th in Indian Battle Park with 70 participants. This celebrated Environment Week and the theme "Step Back to Basics" showed that being "green" doesn't mean we take extreme action, but rather simply reconnect with nature.

Prairie Conservation Forum

OWC participates in the PCF's Education and Awareness Committee, instilling an appreciation of grassland in Albertans.

This committee developed an Educational videoconferencing (EDVC) presentation: 'Deep Roots: Exploring Alberta's Grassland,' designed to educate youth about the importance of grasslands, giving them a chance to experience these diverse landscapes without leaving their classrooms.

In 2013 activities were developed to go along with the broadcast. These are split into a pre-broadcast activity and a post-broadcast activity for grades 4/5, and 6/7. They tie into the current Alberta school curriculum.

The committee also helped to develop educational signage and exhibit programming for the "living roof" at the newly renovated Helen Schuler Nature Centre in Lethbridge. The living roof features native prairie plants, and combined with educational signs, helps people appreciate and understand the value of our grasslands and the rich biodiversity found within them.

Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup



OWC partnered with the Helen Schuler Nature Centre to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup.

Canadians from coast to coast join forces to clean up shoreline litter.

Over 30 volunteers participated in our cleanup at the Helen Schuler Nature Centre – including a group



Litter always has the potential to end up in or near the river - even if you don't directly throw it there. With our strong winds and the fact that our storm drains flow directly into the river, litter can be carried just about anywhere! The

from High Level Canoes and Kayaks cleaning up as they floated the river in their kayaks collecting over a dozen bags of garbage. We were also able to remove larger items such as car parts and a bicycle!

Invasive Plant Control

The OWC appreciates all the weed control efforts going on in our basin! Thanks to the many activities undertaken from dedicated groups and individuals we all enjoy the benefits of a healthier, cleaner watershed! The following are just a few of the weed pulls that the OWC managed to partake in this summer.



Knapweed Pull 2013

Knapweed Pull

A Knapweed Pull was held at Elizabeth Hall Wetlands in Lethbridge with over a dozen eager volunteers. Nearly 50 full bags of knapweed were collected. With each plant having the ability to produce up to 20,000 seeds, thousands of plants were prevented from ever entering the system.

Bluweed Blitz

The Pincher Creek Watershed Group held their annual “Bluweed Blitz” with over 80 volunteers taking part filling nearly 200 bags! This year marked the group’s 11th weed pull year!



Castle Wetland Weed Pull 2013

Ecological Reserve Weed Pull

Nearly 50 people came out to participate in the Castle Wetland and Ecological Reserve weed pull! Pickers came from all over – weed crews from the Crowsnest Pass, MD of Pincher Creek and Parks Canada, along with ESRD Fire Crews and Officers and the Southern Alberta Weed Coordinator all came out to help pick. Not only that but a group of students (plus 2 instructors) from the Wild Rockies Institute came all the way from the USA to help us out – weeds don’t know borders!!!

Working together to improve habitat for the Westslope Cutthroat Trout

OWC lent helping hands in a bioengineering project, along with Cows and Fish, Lethbridge College, Trout Unlimited, MD of Crowsnest Pass, Agroforestry & Woodlot Extension Society and ESRD, along with some passionate volunteers from the public.

The goal is to restore a degraded section of creek bank along Allison Creek, which is prime habitat for the threatened Westslope Cutthroat Trout.



Bioengineering

Investigation of High Nitrate Concentrations in Groundwater near Fort Macleod

High nitrate concentrations have been found in drinking water wells near Fort Macleod, a problem that can cause disease in vulnerable people.

A study began in February 2013 to determine the source of the nitrate and develop recommendations to improve drinking water quality for local residents.

Data collection and analysis has been completed and the final report is nearly complete.

Results will be shared with local residents in the fall of 2014.

Funding provided by:



Photo by Ron McNeil

A big thank you to the following individuals who completed the study:
Joan Rodvang, Landwise Inc.
Laura Good, University of Calgary
Cathy Ryan, University of Calgary

A big thank you to the following individuals and organizations who assisted with the study:

The landowners in the area by allowing us to test their wells
Robert Rippin, Alberta Health Services
Richard Stein
Samantha Managh, Honu Consulting
Chilako Drilling

Cheryl Fujikawa, Southern Alberta Group for the Environment
Barry Olson, Agriculture and Rural Development
Brian Hills, Environment and Sustainable Resource Development
Jeff Gutsell, Environment and Sustainable Resource Development
Brian Meller, Lethbridge College
Claudia Sheedy, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada
John Diwu, Environment and Sustainable Resource Development
Paulette Fox
Mike Iwanyshyn, Natural Resources Conservation Board
Geoff Nash, Environment and Sustainable Resource Development
MD Willow Creek
Ron McNeil, LandWise Inc.
Ron Schmidt and Grant Buyers, Dollman's Waterwell Drilling



Photo by Laura Good

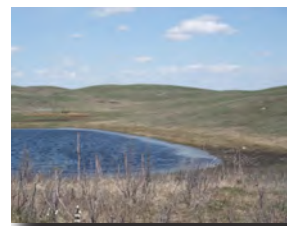


Photo by Robert Rippin

HEADWATERS ACTION PLAN

The headwaters are the source of 90% of the water in the Oldman watershed and are facing increasing pressure from human activity. The Headwaters Action Plan was developed with stakeholders to address these pressures and achieve the community's goal to "manage and protect the integrity of headwaters and source waters", identified through the OWC's Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) process.

With the active participation and commitment of key stakeholders and the public, the OWC reached a major milestone with the development of the Headwaters Action Plan 2013-14. This work included:

Scientific assessment of headwaters health:

- Oldman Watershed Headwaters Indicator Project - additional work was completed to look at riparian condition, presence of native fish (Westslope Cutthroat Trout and Bull Trout), human development footprint and a watershed integrity index (an overall "report card").
- An independent third party review of the Oldman Watershed Headwaters Indicator Project was completed and received a favourable rating, with full consideration of the limits of data availability and complexity of the task.
- The Oldman Watershed Headwaters Indicator Project - Final Report (version 2014.1) is now complete and available on the OWC website.

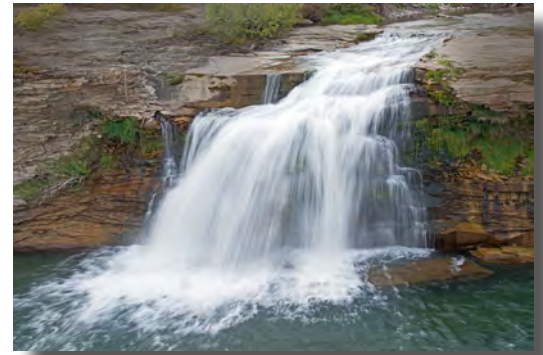


Photo by Van Christou



PAN HAP development workshop Oct. 2-3, 2013



Photo by Rochelle Coffey



PAN - selecting indicators - June 24, 2013



Dutch Creek - Photo by Brian Coffey



Lethbridge Draft HAP review Nov 2013

Stakeholder Engagement

The multi-stakeholder Partnership Advisory Network (PAN) was formed early in 2013, and was fully committed to the task of developing the Headwaters Action Plan. The OWC sincerely thanks and recognizes the tremendous contribution of the PAN to the process of developing the action plan. Thank you!

The PAN participated in selecting the first three indicators of headwaters health to be addressed; set the guidelines of consensus decision making and collaborative work; and then worked through the process to develop, review, and endorse the plan. Following suggestions for clarification from the public review of the plan, the PAN revised and improved the final plan, prioritized key actions, and selected a representative team to begin implementing the priority actions for headwaters health. The Headwaters Action Team is now working on implementation strategies for 4-5 priority actions from the Headwaters Action Plan 2013-14.

Public Engagement

A full public review of the Draft Headwaters Action Plan 2013-14 was completed in November-December 2013. Five community meetings, a website survey and presentations to groups were used to ask for input to the draft plan. The public responded with solid feedback that was compiled into a "Headwaters Action Plan 2013-14 - What We Heard" Report, available on the OWC website.

First Nations Engagement

The OWC continued to foster a relationship of learning and understanding with First Nations, and held a Sharing Circle event in January 2014 to hear Piikani and Kainai concerns on 'Protecting Our Water.' The OWC is now looking forward to working with the Piikani and Kainai on a 'Youth and Elders Water Day' to be held in the fall of 2014, to learn from traditional teachings about the importance of water and water beings.

HEADWATERS ACTION PLAN - 2014-15

The IWMP Team is now looking forward to working with the Headwaters Action Team to implement the first key steps in the plan. For the first two years of implementation, four key actions were rated as highest priority:

1. Complete a 'Classification of Linear Features' project (a prerequisite action).
2. Complete a fine scale cumulative effects assessment of fish populations and habitat streams.
3. Assist AESRD with education and awareness program (Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!) for stakeholders and the public on how to prevent aquatic invasives from entering the Oldman watershed.
4. Explore/implement options for recreation user fees to fund enforcement, education and stewardship projects.

In addition to these priority actions, the PAN also saw awareness and education as important to address in the first two years of implementation.

Integrated Watershed Management Planning Team

The IWMP Team provides oversight and direction throughout the Headwaters Action Plan process.

OWC recognizes the following individuals and organizations for their contributions:

Richard Burke – OWC Board Member, Oldman River Chapter, Trout Unlimited Canada

Linda Cerney – Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development

Cheryl Dash - Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development

Ian Dyson – OWC Board Member, Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development

Cheryl Fujikawa – OWC Board Member, Southern Alberta Group for the Environment

Rosemary Jones – Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation

Shirley Pickering – OWC Chair, Member at Large

Chris Gallagher – Taber Irrigation District

Karen Armstrong – City of Lethbridge

Erin McIlwraith – City of Lethbridge

Headwaters Action Plan funded by the



LOOKING AHEAD - a snapshot



Photo by Joe Michielsen



Photo by Leta Pezderic



Photo by Barry Olson

Core Operations

OWC will be focusing on improving its core operations to ensure long term success and stability. Fund development, communications, staff and volunteer training, and clear policies and procedures are all important to ensure projects are effective and goals are being achieved.

Stormwater Quality Project

This project supports and communicates research projects assessing the quality of stormwater flowing out of the City of Lethbridge. Findings from this research help inform and guide the OWC's educational programs regarding stormwater quality and water conservation as well as provide important data for monitoring.

Recreational Users Education and Awareness Project

This project is aimed at improving the health of the headwaters by changing the behaviour of recreational users and gaining support for watershed based management. This is a new project with a solid basis in peer-reviewed literature, case studies and best practice. This project is still pending funding.

Linear Features Classification Project

Linear features are trails, roads, pipelines, etc. that fragment the landscape and can cause soil erosion into streams. Classification is needed to understand which linear features are causing problems and what action would solve the problem. OWC is leading a pilot project in one 4th order watershed in the headwaters to create and test a system to classify linear features.

OWC MILESTONES

2005

- OWC officially incorporated as a not-for-profit society
- Lethbridge Storm Water Education Program, Design and Evaluation Report completed

2006

- Wetland Interpretative signs at SunRidge, Lethbridge's green neighbourhood in partnership with City of Lethbridge

2007

- First Annual Holding the Reins: Landowners Summit
- Yellow Fish Road stormwater education program begins in Oldman watershed

2008

- First Watershed Science Forum and First Lethbridge Home & Garden Show booth to share information about good backyard practices

2009

- First Watershed Science Tour; first Watershed Stewardship Tour highlighting landowner projects; Prairie Urban Garden begins and first Prairie Urban Garden tour held to promote xeriscaping principles
- Caring for Our Watershed Youth Contest initiated in partnership with Agrium.
- First Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup held in partnership with Helen Schuler Nature Centre

2010

- Oldman River State of the Watershed Report completed, community vision created for the Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP)
- Watershed Legacy Program created to provide financial and technical assistance to landowners
- First Green List awards held recognizing environmental actions in Lethbridge in partnership with Lethbridge Environmental Awareness Team

2011

- 34 risks were identified and prioritized for IWMP, risks grouped and formed into 8 goals
- First Research and Monitoring Project Directory created, first Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Planning Workshops held for municipalities
- Wetland interpretive signs installed at Birds of Prey Centre in Coaldale

2012

- Action plan completed to achieve Goal 1 of the IWMP
- Willow Creek Watershed Aquifer Mapping, Groundwater Management Planning Study and Grass to Xeriscape Cost-Benefit Analysis and Qualitative Study completed
- Deep Roots educational videoconference to showcase native prairie ecosystems, partnered with Prairie Conservation Forum

2013

- Headwaters Indicators Project completed, Action plan underway to achieve goal 3 from IWMP
- Crowsnest Watershed Aquifer Mapping and Groundwater Management Planning Study and Lethbridge Stormwater Outfalls Monitoring Project completed
- First "Xeriscape Your Yard" workshop hosts 14 participants

2014

- Headwaters Action Plan completed to achieve goal 3 of the IWMP
- Investigation of High Nitrate Concentrations in Groundwater near Fort Macleod completed
- 3 new staff hired for Fundraising, Communications and Planning
- Launched Facebook, Twitter, Blogspot

Oldman Watershed Council 100, 5401 - 1st Avenue South, Lethbridge, AB T1J 4V6

Phone: 403-382-4239 Email: info@oldmanbasin.org Website: www.oldmanbasin.org Twitter: <https://twitter.com/OldmanWatershed>

Facebook: <https://facebook.com/OldmanWatershedCouncil>

Blog: <http://oldmanwatershed.blogspot.ca>