



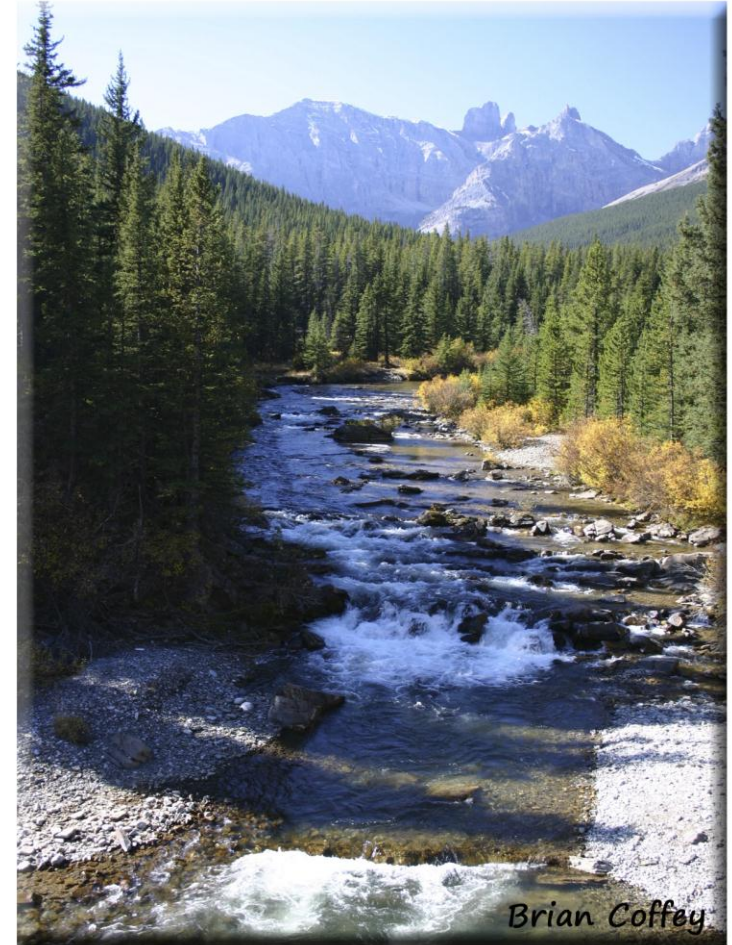
watershed management – watershed health

*2011 - 2012  
ANNUAL REPORT*

[www.oldmanbasin.org](http://www.oldmanbasin.org)

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Brian Coffey

# ABOUT THE OLDMAN WATERSHED



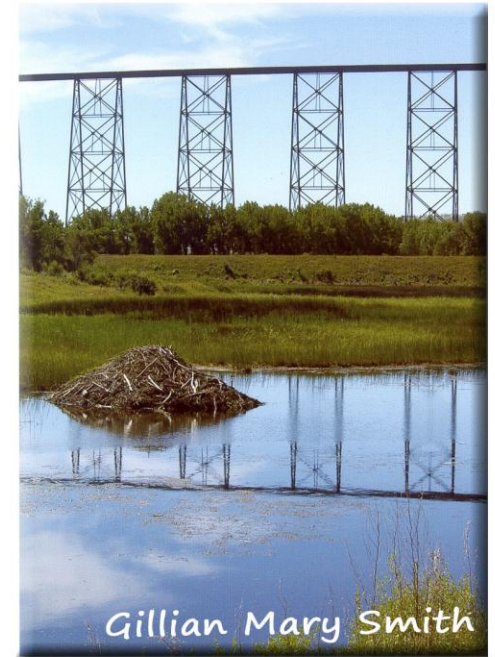
- The Oldman River has a total length of 362 km, a drainage area of 26,700 km<sup>2</sup> and a mean discharge of 95 m<sup>3</sup>/s.
- Approximately 210,000 people reside in this area.
- The Oldman River headwaters are in the Canadian Rocky Mountains where precipitation is very high.
- The headwaters are a mountainous area of alpine tundra and old-growth spruce and fir forests.
- The Oldman River begins in the mountains, flows to Grassy Lake where it joins the Bow River to form the South Saskatchewan River which eventually drains into Lake Winnipeg and then Hudson Bay.
- 60% of the land in the watershed is cultivated for agriculture, and 20% of that agricultural land is irrigated.
- The watershed's climate is typically semi-arid and extreme; susceptible to frequent droughts and floods.



# ***ABOUT THE OLDMAN WATERSHED COUNCIL***

The Oldman Watershed Council (OWC) is a charitable not-for-profit organization working extensively with communities and organizations throughout southern Alberta; helping them understand the importance of healthy watersheds and what can be done to maintain this.

Through various programs and management plans that have been since implemented in the watershed, stakeholders and over fifty regular volunteers have generated a strong support system, contributing their expertise, enthusiasm, and dedication towards the overall success of the OWC. Also contributing, are the 16 board members and four staff members who are responsible for the decision making, completing and overseeing of the day to day operations at the OWC.



## ***VISION***

Our vision is a healthy, resilient watershed where people, wildlife and habitat thrive.

## ***MISSION***

The Oldman Watershed Council is a not-for-profit organization of southern Albertans that maintains and improves the Oldman watershed by:

- Improving and sharing knowledge
- Building and strengthening stakeholder partnerships
- Promoting community action and stewardship
- Developing and implementing integrated land and water plans

## ***CONTACT INFORMATION***

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100, 5401 – 1st Avenue South  
Lethbridge, Alberta T1J 4V6



Phone: (403) 382-4239 / Fax: (403) 381-5765

Email: [info@oldmanbasin.org](mailto:info@oldmanbasin.org) / Website: [www.oldmanbasin.org](http://www.oldmanbasin.org)

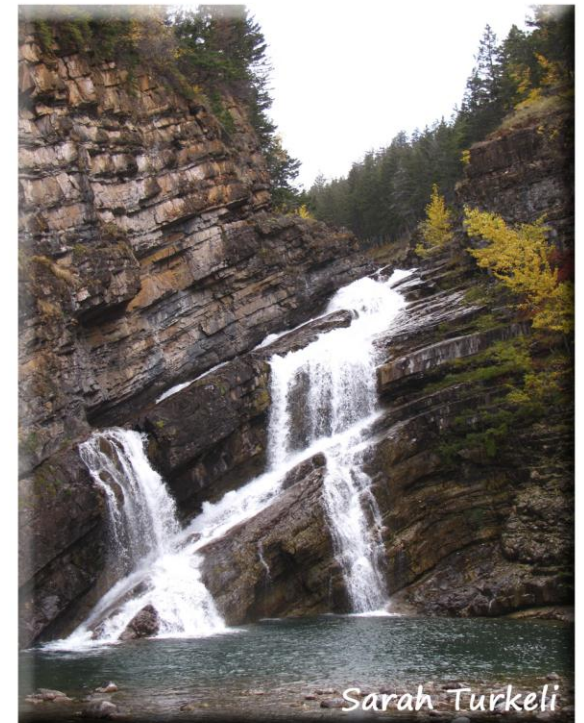
## ***LONG TERM GOALS***

1. We understand our watershed.
2. Residents are well informed and actively engaged.
3. Basin stakeholders have defined outcomes for the Oldman watershed that will form the basis for the Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP).
4. The OWC and stakeholders put into action the capacity and commitment to achieve defined outcomes.
5. Practices that are beneficial to the health and function of the watershed are adopted.



# COMMUNICATION & OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

- The Board of Directors completed the OWC's 2011-2013 Strategic Plan.
- Facebook page was maintained and updated: [www.facebook.com/Oldman-Watershed-Council](http://www.facebook.com/Oldman-Watershed-Council).
- Created a calendar with the winning photos from the OWC Photo Calendar Contest.
- Media releases distributed for all events and major accomplishments leading to coverage 12 separate times.
- Website updated regularly: [www.oldmanbasin.org](http://www.oldmanbasin.org).
- 17 presentations were given to various groups.
- Set up displays at 21 events.
- Revamped e-newsletter sent to subscribers every two weeks.
- Annual Report was completed.



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



- “OWC Volunteers Make a World of Difference” was the theme for the 8th AGM held on June 9, 2011 at the Lethbridge Coast Hotel with over 80 people in attendance.
- Financial reports were presented by John Van Liere of Van Liere Chartered Accountants, board election was held and bylaw amendments were adopted.
- Two new member at large board members were elected – Shirley Pickering & Brian Valgardson.
- Departing board members Gerhardt Hartman (member at large), Andrea Kalischuk (Government of Alberta) and Bruce Konynenbelt (agriculture producers) were acknowledged and thanked for their service to the OWC board.
- Each OWC Team presented their accomplishments from the past year and were thanked for their volunteer commitment to the OWC.
- The AGM concluded with a short video entitled “OWC Volunteers Make a World of Difference”, highlighting the contributions of OWC volunteers throughout the years.



[www.oldmanbasin.org/Communications-and-Outreach-Activities.html](http://www.oldmanbasin.org/Communications-and-Outreach-Activities.html)

# ***FINANCIAL & IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS***

## ***FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS***

Alberta Beef Producers	\$5,000
Alberta Environment	\$347,835
Alberta Irrigation Projects Association	\$500
Anne Stevick	\$300
Cheryl Fujikawa	\$50
City of Lethbridge	\$26,365
County of Lethbridge	\$3,091
Ducks Unlimited Canada	\$500
Farm Credit Canada	\$200
Gerhardt Hartman	\$100
Leron Torrie Farms	\$50
Lethbridge Northern Irrigation District	\$5,000
Mark & Bev Bellamy	\$50
MD of Ranchland	\$250
Robert Rippin	\$250
Rod Cyr	\$100

## ***IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS***

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	\$4,876
Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development	\$102,000
Alberta Conservation Association	\$1,307
Alberta Environment	\$88,374
Alberta Health Services	\$4,744
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development	\$2,935
Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation	\$11,296
Blood Tribe	\$1,740
Cardston County	\$4,631
City of Lethbridge	\$9,242
County of Lethbridge	\$3,174
Ducks Unlimited Canada	\$1,361
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	\$798
Groundwater Team	\$12,000
Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) Participants	\$5,253
Kasko Cattle Co. Ltd.	\$4,479
Lethbridge College	\$3,873



Shannon Frank	\$100
Shirley Pickering	\$50
St. Mary River Irrigation District	\$4,991
Solar Terrestrial Dispatch (Cary Oler)	\$20
Taber Irrigation District	\$2,303
Town of Cardston	\$1,073
Town of Claresholm	\$1,110
Town of Coaldale	\$2,084
Town of Coalhurst	\$586
Town of Picture Butte	\$478
Village of Barons	\$89
Village of Cowley	\$66
Viterra Inc.	\$500
Waterton Biosphere Reserve Association	\$1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$404,091</b>

Mayors & Reeves Association of Southwest Alberta	\$5,587
Members at Large	\$21,703
Nature Conservancy of Canada	\$3,258
Piikani Public Works	\$1,837
Southern Alberta Group for the Environment	\$20,230
Southwestern Alberta Conservation Partnership	\$69,498
Taber Irrigation District	\$6,307
Town of Cardston	\$2,570
Town of Coaldale	\$461
Trout Unlimited Canada	\$6,022
University of Lethbridge	\$5,971
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$405,527</b>



**A very special THANK YOU  
to all of our donors  
& volunteers!**

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS - SECTORS REPRESENTED:

### **Academia:**

Andrew Hurlly – Vice Chair

### **Environmental Non-Government Organizations:**

Cheryl Fujikawa – Treasurer  
Richard Burke

### **Federal Government:**

Shane Petry

### **Health:**

Robert Rippin

### **Member at Large:**

Anne Stevick  
Rodney Cyr  
Shirley Pickering  
Brian Valgardson

### **Agriculture Producers:**

Ryan Kasko

### **Municipalities:**

Terry Kerkhoff – Chair  
Jeff Carlson, *resigned*  
Jeff Coffman

### **Industry:**

*Vacant*

### **Irrigators:**

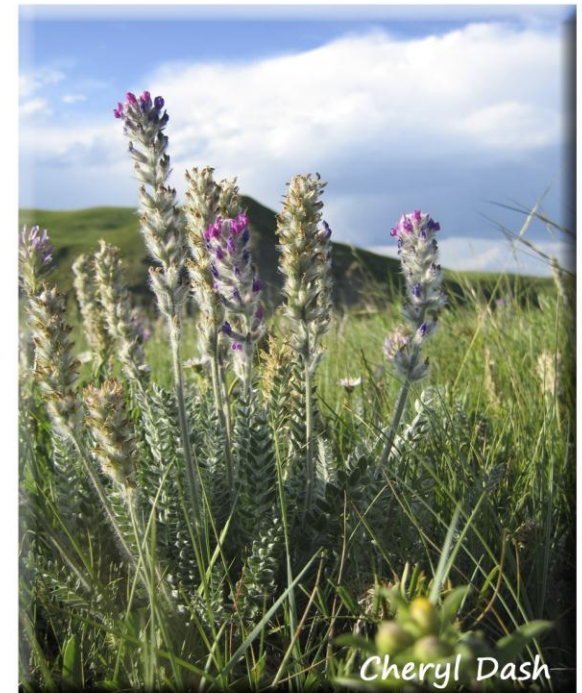
Keith Francis

### **Provincial Government:**

Bill Dolan  
Ian Dyson

### **First Nations:**

Randall Wolf Tail – Piikani  
*Vacant - Kainai*



*Cheryl Dash*

## *STAFF*

**Stephanie Palechek - Executive Director, *resigned***

**Shannon Frank - Executive Director**

**Leta Pezderic - Program Coordinator**

**Bev Bellamy - Administrative Assistant**



**Missing: Shane Petry & Ryan Kasko**

[www.oldmanbasin.org/Board-of-Directors.html](http://www.oldmanbasin.org/Board-of-Directors.html)

# **INTEGRATED WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN TEAM**

- An Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) sets specific environmental targets for the watershed and outlines actions to achieve them.
- An IWMP considers all aspects of a watershed including environmental, social, cultural and economic needs.
- It is a collaborative effort where all sectors are engaged to work towards achieving the targets.
- It makes recommendations to all levels of government about how the watershed should be managed.
- The Council relies on community input and non-biased, scientifically credible information to guide decision making.
- In phase 1 a community vision for the watershed was created through surveys and interviews with residents (completed 2009-2010).
- The community vision is a healthy, resilient watershed where people, wildlife & habitat thrive.
- Phase 2 identified and prioritized risks that would prevent the community from achieving its vision (completed 2010-2011).
- Phase 3 set priority goals that address risks identified in phase 2 and recommendations from the Oldman River State of the Watershed Report (completed 2011-2012).



*Sarah Turkeli*

- In December 2011 Priorities for the Oldman Watershed: Promoting action to maintain and improve our watershed was released after consultation with the IWMP Core Team, watershed residents at 4 community information sessions and through a questionnaire.
- The 8 priorities outlined in the report are:
  - o Goal 1: Improve the understanding and strengthen the commitment of residents to the health of the Oldman watershed
  - o Goal 2: Optimize the availability of water for the natural ecosystem while supporting the social and economic needs of the community
  - o Goal 3: Manage and protect the integrity of headwaters and source waters
  - o Goal 4: Identify and prioritize thresholds to manage threats and impacts on terrestrial and aquatic habitat
  - o Goal 5: Understand groundwater and how it interacts with surface water
  - o Goal 6: Identify water quality outcomes and assess factors impacting them for adaptive watershed management
  - o Goal 7: Prevent and control invasive species
  - o Goal 8: Understand the status and implications of emerging contaminants
- The IWMP will achieve these goals over the next decade through partnerships with stakeholders.
- Goal 1 is the foundation for the IWMP and will continue to be a core focus throughout.
- An action plan to achieve goal 1 is complete and the next step will be forming a team to work on the actions in it.



[www.oldmanbasin.org/Integrated-Watershed-Management-Plan-Team2.html](http://www.oldmanbasin.org/Integrated-Watershed-Management-Plan-Team2.html)

# WATERSHED SCIENCE TEAM

## 2011 WATERSHED SCIENCE TOUR

- Highlighted some of the ways people are conserving and reusing water, such as rain water used for watering at Broxburn Vegetables and gray water from processing potatoes at McCain's being used to water and fertilize crops.
- Participants learned about:
  - o Manure management at Elk Creek Dairy
  - o Water collection and recycling at Broxburn Vegetables
  - o Waste water treatment at the Lethbridge Wastewater Treatment Plant
  - o Reusing gray water at McCain's
  - o Groundwater monitoring at a feedlot
  - o Water monitoring technology at Pavan park.
- 39 participants enjoyed a locally produced lunch from the Broxburn Café.



## ***RESEARCH AND MONITORING PROJECT DIRECTORY***

- Launched directory of current surface water research and monitoring projects occurring in the Oldman watershed.
- 58 projects in the directory to date.
- Directory was organized into reader-friendly keywords.

## ***WILLOW CREEK WATERSHED GROUNDWATER STUDY***

- A groundwater study was completed for the Willow Creek Watershed to address a groundwater knowledge gap identified in the Oldman River State of the Watershed Report.
- Aquifers and geology for the region were mapped and a preliminary analysis of existing data was completed.
- Estimated recharge is greater than current use, based on the limited data available.
- A long term monitoring plan and data coordination plan were recommended to address the lack of groundwater data.



[www.oldmanbasin.org/Watershed-Science-Team.html](http://www.oldmanbasin.org/Watershed-Science-Team.html)

# RURAL TEAM

## WATERSHED LEGACY PROGRAM

- Provides funding for watershed stewardship projects.
- Provides administrative, technical and communication assistance.
- Funded 8 watershed stewardship projects:
  - o Inventory mapping and removal of weeds
  - o Installation of off-stream livestock watering systems and fencing to protect riparian areas
  - o Land use and habitat mapping for future planning and protection of human health and environment
  - o Soil and manure sampling for nutrient management for protection of water and soil quality







## ***HOLDING THE REINS***

- Annual learning event for agricultural producers held in Fort Macleod.
- Gives attendees insight into rural issues and opportunities in the watershed and their impacts on agricultural producers.
- Landowner and watershed stewardship groups give updates on successes and struggles over the year.
- 2012 theme was “Watershed Stewardship: where are we headed?”
- 128 people attended the 6th Annual Holding the Reins, making this year’s the most highly attended.
- Topics included:
  - o Protecting our headwaters
  - o Invasive species and the Oldman watershed
  - o Watershed hydrology and modelling
  - o Agriculture around the world; what the next generation has in store
  - o Digital stories from local landowners

[www.oldmanbasin.org/Rural-Team.html](http://www.oldmanbasin.org/Rural-Team.html)

# URBAN TEAM

## PRAIRIE URBAN GARDEN (PUG)

- Demonstrates the beauty and benefits of having a low maintenance and environmentally friendly PUG that conserves water and requires less or no pesticides and fertilizers.
- The 3rd annual garden tour had 145 attendees.
- 50 best plants directory was made into a 50 Best Plants for PUGs in Southern Alberta booklet, sold at events for \$2 suggested donation.
- Received Shell funding for installation of xeriscaped garden at St. Michael's Health Centre.
- Continued support in developing xeriscape demonstration sites at Birds of Prey Centre in Coaldale, Claresholm and Fort Macleod.
- A student was hired for Grass to Xeriscape study. Results will be available in June/July.

## LETHBRIDGE HOME AND GARDEN SHOW

- Featured information on PUGs and the top 6 invasive plants in the Lethbridge river valley.
- Distributed 100 - 50 Best Plants for PUGs in Southern Alberta booklets, 200 The 7 Principles of Xeriscaping posters, and others.
- Gained 5 new members.
- Gave away 5 Edible Plants for Prairie Gardens & Native Plants for Prairie Gardens books by June Flanagan.
- 1 rain barrel and 1 composter as prizes.
- 52 people signed up for a future PUG tour or workshop.



## ***MUNICIPAL CONSERVATION, EFFICIENCY & PRODUCTIVITY PLANNING WORKSHOP***

- Workshop to assist municipalities in understanding their role in water conservation and encourage them to develop a Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Plan.
- 25 people attended from 10 municipalities and water management related organizations.
- People were asked about their municipality:
  - o What is being done to conserve water?
  - o What opportunities are there to increase water conservation?
  - o What barriers exist to increase water conservation?
  - o What can the Urban Team do to assist in water conservation planning?



[www.oldmanbasin.org/Urban-Team.html](http://www.oldmanbasin.org/Urban-Team.html) and [www.prairieurbangarden.ca](http://www.prairieurbangarden.ca)

# ***PARTNERSHIPS AND PROJECTS***

## ***CARING FOR OUR WATERSHEDS***

- A youth contest sponsored by Agrium and promoted by the OWC.
- Youth answer the question “what can you do to improve your watershed?” by proposing a project that they could accomplish.
- Winners and their schools receive a cash reward and funds to implement their project.



## ***ENVIRONMENT WEEK***

- OWC is a member of the Lethbridge Environment Week Committee.
- Designated as the first week of June each year.
- Events are held all week to engage people in environmental activities.
- The Green List recognizes individuals, organizations and businesses taking green actions.
- 26 nominations were made to the Green List in 2011.
- A celebration event was held in October during Waste and Recycling Week to award nominees a Green List Certificate, draw for prizes and celebrate environmental action.
- 75 people attended the celebration which included a keynote presentation from The Otesha Project and displays from environmental groups.
- A Bike and Barby for Clean Air Day was continually rained out and was not able to be held.

## **GREAT CANADIAN SHORELINE CLEANUP**

- A one day garbage pickup event held every September to clean up the Nature Reserve along the Oldman River in Lethbridge.
- Removing litter is important because wildlife can be trapped or injured by it & the City looks better too.
- Organized in partnership with the Helen Schuler Nature Centre.
- In 2011, 27 volunteers removed 15 full bags of litter as well as 2 tires, a chainsaw, a spear gun, 2 bicycles, lawn furniture, 6 blow up rafts and a shopping cart.
- 6 kayakers and 1 snorkeler made it possible to clean up items in the river and on the islands in the middle of the river.



## **PRAIRIE CONSERVATION FORUM**

- OWC is a member of the PCF and participates on their Education Team.
- Instilling an appreciation of grasslands in Albertans, especially youth.
- In partnership with the Helen Schuler Nature Centre, 18 students from Livingstone School were taken on a 2 day field trip to learn about and experience grasslands first hand.
- A videoconference presentation called Deep Roots: Exploring Alberta's Grasslands was completed for use with classrooms and youth groups.



[www.oldmanbasin.org/Partnerships-and-Projects.html](http://www.oldmanbasin.org/Partnerships-and-Projects.html)

# LOOKING AHEAD

**The OWC is looking forward to these events and accomplishments in the next fiscal year. Stay connected through our newsletter, website and Facebook page!**

## ***IWMP TEAM***

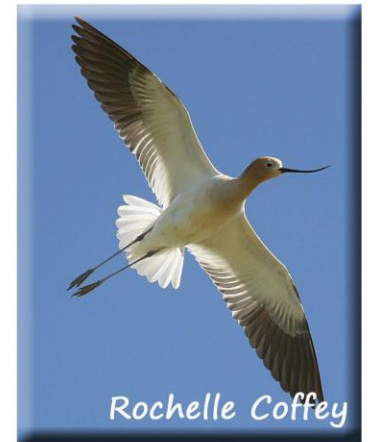
- Developing an IWMP for the headwaters that includes specific targets and an action plan to achieve them.
- Building community support for protecting the integrity of the headwaters.
- Engaging stakeholders from all sectors in headwaters protection activities.

## ***FUNDING TEAM***

- Diversifying funding sources to ensure OWC longevity.
- Building and maintaining relationships with donors.
- Recognizing and reporting back to donors.

## ***COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH TEAM***

- Raising awareness about watershed issues and solutions.
- Communicating the accomplishments and activities of the OWC.
- Encouraging people to take action in their own lives to improve the watershed.



*Rochelle Coffey*



*Rochelle Coffey*

## Get Involved!

### URBAN TEAM



Rochelle Coffey

- Knapweed Pull in Cottonwood Park: July 19, 2012 from 5pm-9pm. Wraps and sandwiches will be provided. Bring your water bottle and get ready to help annihilate one of the river valley's top 6 most invasive plants!
- Prairie Urban Garden Workshop and Tour: 2013. Learn how to design your dream xeriscape and tour local prairie urban gardens.
- Stay tuned for the *Grass to Xeriscape* report to be released in June 2012.

### RURAL TEAM



Rochelle Coffey

- Watershed Stewardship Tour: fall 2012. Tour projects funded by the Watershed Legacy Program, a support program for landowners taking positive action for watershed health.

### SCIENCE TEAM

- Watershed Science Forum and Tour: mid-October 2012. Don't miss out on these exciting 2 days profiling current issues, research and ideas for management in the Oldman watershed.

For more information or to get involved in Team events, contact  
Andrea, Program Coordinator at 403-381-5801



watershed management – watershed health

[www.oldmanbasin.org](http://www.oldmanbasin.org)

*The OWC has accomplished a great deal in the past year because of the support that we received. Please show your support by making a donation of your own.*

*Thank you!*

*Jeff Bronsch*