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The Athabasca Dispatch

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Athabasca Watershed Council begins work on the State of the Watershed—Phase 1 Report

The Athabasca Watershed Council has initiated Phase 1 of the **Athabasca State of the Watershed Report (SoW)**.

The AWC-WPAC received Project funding for the SoW Report in August 2010, and have commenced the major task of gathering the best and most current science and traditional ecological knowledge (available and allowed) as a foundation for the Athabasca State of the Watershed Final Re-

port. The expected completion date of the Final Athabasca State of the Watershed Report is 2012-13.

The Athabasca State of the Watershed Report is a foundational document for a future **Athabasca Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP)**. State of the Watershed Reports and IWMPs are requirements of all Alberta WPACS under Alberta's **Water for Life Strategy**.

Phase 1 of the State of the

Watershed Report will include an Athabasca watershed geo-data base (by sub-watershed and main-stem Athabasca River); a preliminary Athabasca Watershed Atlas; recommendations for specific indicators of watershed health; a knowledge and data gap assessment; and final Terms of Reference for the **Athabasca State of the Watershed Final Report**.



CARING FOR OUR WATERSHEDS—A PROGRAM FOR SCHOOLS

The Athabasca Watershed Council has endorsed **Caring for our Watersheds**, a program to instil environmental stewardship in youth and improve the quality of watersheds within local communities. The program asks students “*what can you do to improve your watershed?*” Individually, or as a team, students complete project research and work on solutions to watershed concerns. Cash prizes up to \$1000.00 are awarded for projects that best address working to ensure watersheds are healthy. For more information: see www.CaringForOurWatersheds.com.

SAVE THE DATE!

- **Athabasca Watershed Stewardship Group Forum** - January 28-29, 2011—Athabasca, Alberta
- **Athabasca Watershed Municipal Forum**— February 16, 2011—Senior's Centre, Athabasca, Alberta
- **Athabasca Watershed Council—Annual General Meeting**—Saturday, May 28, 2011—Hinton, Alberta

Athabasca Watershed Council Board of Directors and Staff

Left to right:

Dan Moore - Director
 Charlie Ashbey - Director
 Janice Pitman - Secretary
 Tom Weber - Director
 Janice Linehan - Director
 Sonny Flett - Director
 Richard Chabaylo - Director
 Mary Richardson (alternate for Paula Evans) - Treasurer
 Marsha Hayward - Director
 Lavone Olson - President
 Doug Badger - Vice President

Front:

Connie Simmons -
 Staff- Executive Director
 Wayne Brehaut - Director

Absent:

Bill Loutitt—Director
 Paula Evans—Treasurer
 Darlene Carifelle—Director
 Brenda Taillefer—Staff— Exec. Ass't

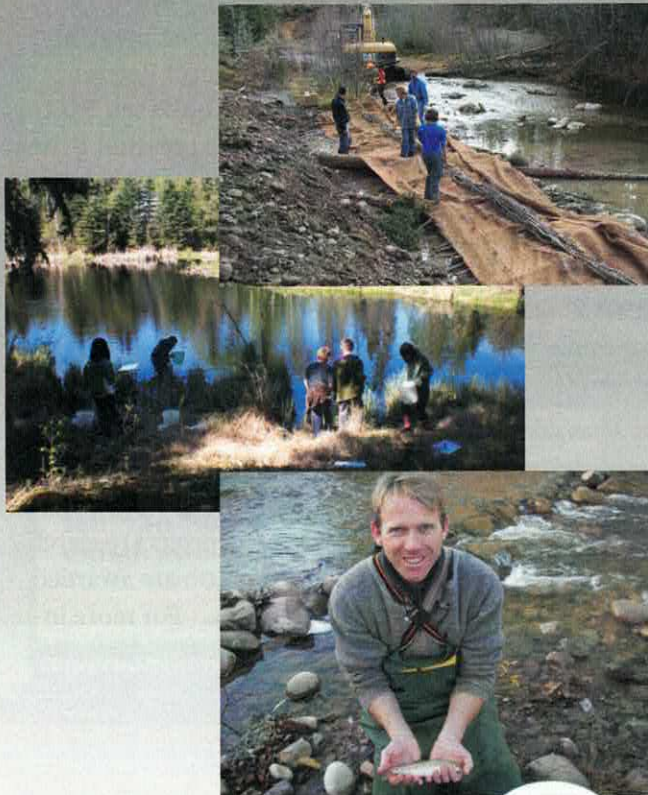


Photo: Hilary Shannon



The Athabasca Watershed Council wishes you all a very

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year !



Top and bottom—Hardisty Creek Restoration Project, Hinton, AB.
 Centre—Watershed Education, Anzac Elementary School, Anzac AB
 (Photos: C. Simmons)

Stewardship— A Commitment of Care

The Athabasca Watershed is fortunate to have the commitment and energy of **over 20 Watershed Stewardship Groups (WSG's)** actively working on local or regional watershed issues.

From Jasper/Hinton to Fort McMurray, local stewards are working on concerns that range from creek restoration, watershed education and lake water quality, to raising awareness about cumulative impacts to watershed health.

Watershed Stewardship Groups are invited to provide a description of their projects, with pictures, to be showcased in the Athabasca Dispatch's **Stewardship—A Commitment of Care** column in each issue. We welcome your stewardship voice to the **Athabasca Dispatch**.

The AWC-WPAC welcomes all Watershed Stewardship Groups to join us for an **Athabasca WSG Forum** on January 28-29th, 2011, in Athabasca.

For more information please feel free to contact us:

awc-wpac@hotmail.com or call 780-865-8223.

TECK Coal—Working to address selenium issues

TECK Coal currently operates the Cheviot and Luscar Mine sites in the McLeod River headwaters of the upper Athabasca watershed region.



AWC-WPAC Board members on tour of Cheviot Mine—Sept. 23, 2010

TECK commissioned a **Strategic Advisory Panel on Selenium Management** to work independently on a strategic plan to control selenium issues.

Selenium is a natural element essential for health of all animals and humans, however, it can be toxic if present in elevated concentrations. Waste rock, when exposed to air, accelerates the release of selenium into the environment.

TECK is now working moving to-

wards implementing a three pronged approach to controlling selenium: active water treatment; diverting clean water from rock drains; and avoiding the placement of waste rock in cross valley fills.

The AWC-WPAC sincerely thanks TECK Coal for an informative tour September 23, 2010.

For more information on selenium management, contact: lisa.jones@teck.com

Keepers of the Water IV Gathering Hatchet Lake, SK. - August 18-21st, 2010

Members of the Athabasca Watershed Council Board of Directors attended the **Keepers of the Water IV Gathering**, August 18-21st, 2010. The Keepers IV Gathering was hosted by the Hatchet Lake Denesuline First Nation in their community on the eastern shores of Wollastan Lake.

The *Keepers of the Water* are comprised of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people, environmental groups and concerned watershed citizens and communities, working for the protection of air, water and lands, and thus all living things today and tomorrow.

The conference was well attended, with over 500 participants registered from across Canada and the United States. Presentation topics included oilsands development impacts; watershed protection; merging Traditional Ecological Knowledge with western science; and a focused de-

bate on the impacts to northern communities from uranium mining.

The AWC-WPAC recognizes that watershed engagement and communication across provincial/territory boundaries is needed for collaborative solutions to watershed issues and the health of the Athabasca Watershed.

General membership to the Athabasca Watershed Council is open to all. Membership on the Board of Directors from outside Alberta will be addressed at the next AGM of the AWC-WPAC— May 28th, 2011.

The Athabasca Watershed Council thanks the Hatchet Lake Denesuline people for their hospitality and generosity during the Keepers of the Water IV Gathering.

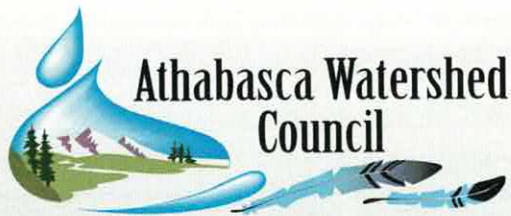
Marsi Cho.



Opening Ceremony of the **Keepers of the Water IV Gathering**



First Nations youth arriving at the **Keepers of the Water IV Gathering** after 4 full days of paddling to Wollastan Lake from northern Manitoba.



BECOME A MEMBER!
Our Watershed ...Our Responsibility.

Alberta WPAC Summit— Cypress Hills, AB

Collaboration for Sustainability

The Athabasca Watershed Council attended the Alberta Watershed Planning and Advisory Council (WPAC) Summit Conference, held at Cypress Hills, AB., from Oct. 19-22nd, 2010. The seventh meeting of its kind, the WPAC Summit brought together watershed professionals, WPAC management, and Board of Directors members to discuss environmental, economic and social challenges facing Alberta's watersheds.

Presentations from all WPACs provided updates on current projects, and discussion of future opportunities and direction of each unique Alberta WPAC. A major goal of the Summit was accomplished when all Alberta WPACs agreed to work collaboratively in the future to secure financial and knowledge resources, and strategies to raise the profile of WPACs and watershed management in Alberta.

The Athabasca Watershed Council thanks the South

East Alberta Alliance (SEAWA) and the Milk River Watershed Council for hosting an informative WPAC Summit.



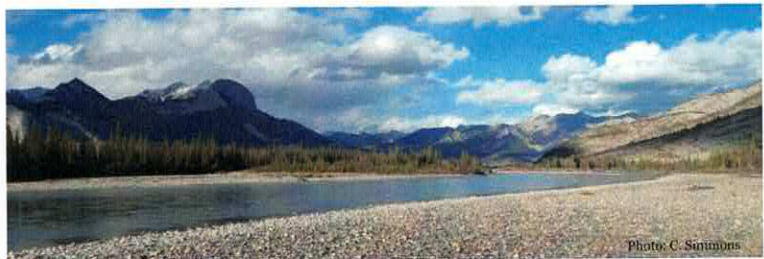
(left to right: Doug Badger, Honourable Rob Renner, Paula Evans, Lavone Olson).

AWC-WPAC Executive members with Rob Renner, Minister of Environment, at the WPAC Summit. The Minister noted that the Athabasca Watershed is especially complex, and saw the creation of the Athabasca Watershed Council as a critical milestone for watershed management planning in Alberta.

Working from the mountain headwaters...to the delta lowlands.

Contact us:

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email: awc-wpac@hotmail.com**



Why the "Dispatch"?

In 1904, Billy Louttit, a Métis dispatch carrier for the Hudson Bay Company, ran 100 miles from Athabasca to Edmonton in 16 hours to get help for the town, threatened by an imminent flood. Then, like now, water was an issue to be taken seriously. "Dispatches" were often official messages, sent with haste and importance, to a particular destination. And so it is with this newsletter—important information about the Athabasca Watershed Council and its work, sent to keep you informed and up-to-date.

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