



Athabasca
WATERSHED COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT

2018-2019

AWC-WPAC.CA

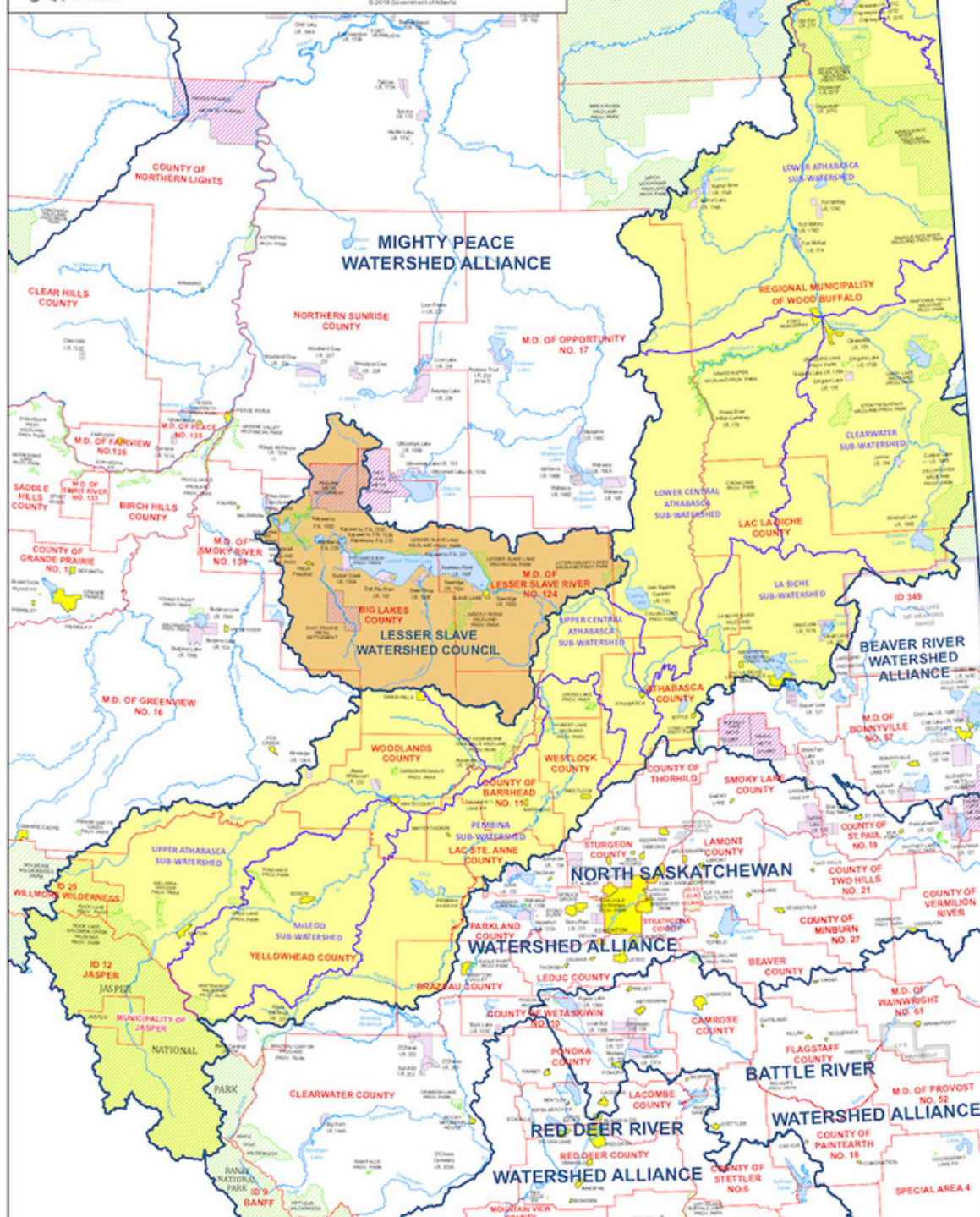
ATHABASCA WATERSHED COUNCIL REGIONAL BASE MAP

0 15 30 60 90 120 150 Km

- ATHABASCA WATERSHED COUNCIL
- LESSER SLAVE WATERSHED COUNCIL
- WATERSHED COUNCIL BOUNDARIES
- SUB-WATERSHED BOUNDARIES
- MUNICIPALITIES
- CITY / TOWN / VILLAGE
- URBAN SERVICE AREA
- METIS SETTLEMENT
- FIRST NATION RESERVE
- PARKS & PROTECTED AREAS

Alberta Environment and Parks

Note: Information as depicted is subject to change, therefore the Government of Alberta assumes no responsibility for discrepancies in data of use.
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athabascahometownprinting@gmail.com

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James Hammond
Janet Pomeroy
Lisa Allan
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Photo by: James Hammond

Athabasca Watershed Quick Stats

- The Athabasca River begins at the Columbia Glacier in Jasper National Park
- The river basin is approximately 159,000 square km
- It is the second largest river in Alberta
- It is the longest river entirely in Alberta
- It is the longest un-dammed river in Alberta
- Along with the Peace, Slave, Liard, and the Mackenzie Rivers, makes up the 13th longest river system in the world, the 2nd longest in North America and the longest in Canada
- The confluence of the Peace and Athabasca Rivers with Lake Athabasca forms the largest freshwater delta in Canada, called the Peace-Athabasca Delta (PAD), which is part of Wood Buffalo National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- The greater Athabasca watershed is made up of 10 sub watersheds including the McLeod, Pembina, La Biche, Lesser Slave and Clearwater and many smaller lake watersheds
- Many First Nations peoples have inhabited the basin and the river continues to be an important component of traditional life
- There are over 180,000 residents in the watershed
- The main industries of the watershed include forestry, oil & gas, mining, agriculture and tourism



Photo by: R.G. Holmberg



Photo by: R.G. Holmberg

Water is everywhere. It's in lakes, sloughs, and puddles. It's in rivers, creeks, streams, and underground aquifers. It comes from rain, snow, hail, and melting glaciers. All water flows downhill, and if that water eventually ends up in the Athabasca River, then it's in our watershed.

Read our State of the Watershed Summary Report: <https://awc-wpac.ca/our-watershed/state-of-the-watershed/>

The Athabasca River is 1,231 km long. It flows from the Columbia Icefield in Jasper National Park to Lake Athabasca. The Athabasca River watershed covers about 24% of Alberta (159,000 square km).

Our watershed is diverse. It contains several distinct ecosystems, including alpine regions, parkland, and boreal forest. It is the site of many kinds of industrial activities, including agriculture, forestry, oil and gas, and others. It contains all or part of 13 Municipal Districts, 3 Specialized Municipalities, 10 Towns, 9 Summer Villages, 1 village and 4 Improvement Districts. It spans Treaty 6, Treaty 8 and Treaty 10 territories and is the home of many Indigenous people.

There are many strains on the watershed, including, but not limited to, surface and groundwater allocations to industry and municipalities, linear disturbances like roads and pipelines, pressures on wetlands and riparian areas, and the many other human activities that may adversely impact the diverse ecosystems contained in the watershed.

To manage the water that we all depend on, we must effectively manage the land that we share. To do that, we must come together to understand the issues, challenges, opportunities, and blind spots. The AWC works to bring stakeholders, citizens, and Indigenous peoples together to effectively manage the Athabasca River watershed.

ABOUT THE ATHABASCA WATERSHED



Board of Directors

To ensure that the AWC is representative of voices from across the watershed, the Board of Directors is comprised of elected and appointed seats from each specified stakeholder and partner group.

As outlined in the Board of Directors Terms of Reference, the Board of Directors has a maximum of 21 members (including the past Chair) representing specified positions for industry (5 seats), non-governmental organizations (5 seats), governments (5 seats), Indigenous (3 seats), and Members-at-Large (2 seats).

Brian Deheer | Board Chair
Stewards of Lac La Biche Watershed
(Health or Environment)

Dan Moore | Vice Chair
Alberta Newsprint Company/
Alberta Forest Products Association
(Industry – Forestry)

Marcel Ulliac | Treasurer
Individual (Member-at-Large)

Cleo Reece | Secretary
Fort McMurray First Nations (Indigenous)

Tim Polzin | Individual (Member-at-Large)

Dave Coish | Alberta Environment and Parks
(Provincial Government)

Janice Linehan | Suncor Energy Inc. (Industry – Oil & Gas)

Janice Pitman | Private Organic Farm
(Industry – Small Agricultural Producer)

Greg Piorkowski | Alberta Agriculture and Forestry
(Provincial/Federal Government)

Robert Holmberg | Athabasca University
(Research & Academia)

Larry Armfelt | Athabasca County
(Municipal – Middle Basin)

Robert Esau | M.D. of Lesser Slave River
(Municipal – Upper Basin)

Sterling Johnson | Lac La Biche County
(Municipal – Lower Basin)

Lavone Olson | Yellowhead County
(Alternate, Municipal – Upper Basin)

Tom Weber | Clearwater River Heritage Society
(Stewardship)

Marv Fyten | Individual (Health or Environment)

Morris Nesdole | Baptiste & Island Lakes Stewardship
Society (Stewardship)

Bill Grieve | Canadian Special Risks
(Alternate, Member-at-Large)

Robert Mitchell | Yellowhead County Ag. Services
(Industry – Agriculture)

Andrew Hutchinson | Bighorn Mining Ltd.
(Industry – Mining & Utilities)

Curtis Brock | Alberta Environment and Parks
(Provincial Government – Alternate)

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

There is a saying, “May you live in interesting times.” This can certainly relate to the Athabasca Watershed Council in the past year, both in terms of challenges and accomplishments.

Some of the challenges may have seemed daunting; but we’ve certainly had various accomplishments. From expanding our staff, to broadening our fund-raising and outreach, to nearing the release of the first draft of the Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP), it has been a productive year.

We have several new staff. First of all, a new administrator: in May of last year, Janet Pomeroy, CMA, CPA, CAE, was hired as Executive Director. With her accounting training and non-profit experience, she has helped to organize our financial affairs and pursued grant applications. We also have a Communications Specialist, Lisa Allan, as well as an Administrative Coordinator, Paula Sawatzky. Meanwhile, we await the return of our Outreach Coordinator, Marie Bay Breiner, who is on maternity leave.

The Board has spent time and energy on strategic planning and a bylaws review. We also saw the addition of two new Board Members: one for the Agriculture seat and the other for Mining/Utilities. The AWC hosted a Municipal Forum in November which was well-attended and well-received. We hope to continue such efforts through similar engagement forums with our various stakeholders and Indigenous partners.

Our fund-raising efforts have started to show results. Several municipalities have generously committed to financial support of the AWC. This helps us to diversify our revenues, so that we do not have to rely so heavily on provincial funding, and we hope to continue this trend.

A big thank-you to Board members for their ongoing participation and dedication. I look forward to working together to overcome new challenges, and having further achievements in the coming year.



**Brian Deheer, Board Chair
Health or Environment**

Water For Life

- Safe, secure drinking water
- Healthy aquatic ecosystems
- Reliable quality and quantity for a sustainable economy

What is a WPAC?

The Athabasca Watershed Council is one of eleven Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils (WPACs) in Alberta. WPAC's are independent, non-profit organizations that have the responsibility to:

- Report on the health of Alberta's watersheds
- Lead collaborative planning
- Facilitate education and stewardship activities

Our Goals

Long Term Goal 1: AWC is a highly reputable and credible authority on the Athabasca watershed and earns recognition for its leadership and expertise.

Long Term Goal 2: Stakeholders and Indigenous peoples throughout the Athabasca River watershed understand basic watershed science, are knowledgeable about the condition of the watershed, and are actively engaged with AWC in putting into action the resources and commitments to achieve defined outcomes.

Long Term Goal 3: Basin stakeholders have defined the desired outcomes for the Athabasca Watershed that will form the basis for the Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) and the AWC has healthy and active relationships with the stakeholders in meeting these outcomes.

Long Term Goal 4: AWC has a reputation for organizational professionalism, balanced representation, sustainability, effective and efficient use of resources and makes strategically wise and evidence-based decisions.

Long Term Goal 5: AWC understands and informs the Stakeholders and Indigenous Peoples about the alignment (or misalignment) of the various Acts, Bylaws and Policies (eg. the Public Lands Act, the Water Act, the municipal bylaws, source water protection, wetland policies) that exist relating to the achievement of the 'Water for Life' goals and approaches.

Our Staff

Lisa Allan
Communications Specialist 

Marie Bay Breiner
Outreach Coordinator 

Paula Sawatzky
Administration Coordinator



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A huge thank you needs to go to the Board members (past and present) for their countless hours of work and their support to me in my new role. Thank you also to my team: Marie, Lisa and Paula. They do outstanding work and are so very much fun to be with!

Thank you to Alberta Environment and Parks as the funding provided and the dedication of the numerous staff involved with the council has been invaluable!

As well, the Executive Directors of the other ten Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils provided their guidance and wisdom to me as I learned my new role and I send thanks to them.

Finally, the Stakeholders! Thank you to each municipality that welcomed us to make a presentation, gave us the thumbs up at the municipal forum and provided funding to us, to the First Peoples of our watershed for continuing to have their voices heard, to the schools, colleges and universities for the education programs and the invitations to us, to the stewardship groups that are doing good work in their sub-watersheds, to the water commissions working to provide clean drinking water, to the industries and businesses that are aware of the best practices and are operating sustainably, to the media who have featured us at our events and finally to individuals that make the right choices everyday that contribute to the sustainability of the watershed.

The future looks so very positive as the Board of Directors have set some amazing goals. We will continue to bring the 'Water for Life' strategy to the citizens of the watershed!

"Our Watershed. Our Responsibility."



Janet R. Pomeroy, CMA, CPA, CAE
Executive Director



Our Supporters

The Athabasca Watershed Council is supported by our Board Members, their respective organizations, our project partners, members of the communities we serve and our Membership, both financially and with their valuable time.

Watershed Fund Donors

- Brian Deheer \$70
- Gerry St. Pierre \$100
- Town of Mayerthorpe \$200
- Anonymous \$222
- Lac La Biche County \$5000
- Lac Ste. Anne County \$5130
- Lac la Biche Fisheries Advisory Council \$6135
- Alberta Environment & Parks \$270,000

In-Kind Donations

Thank you to everyone who donated their time to AWC this year! It takes many active hands to protect a watershed and we appreciate everyone's contributions.

Brian Deheer - \$6188
Suncor Energy Inc. - \$6682
Tim Polzin - \$2741
Athabasca County - \$7324
Cleo Reece - \$4017
Yellowhead County - \$4348
Janice Pitman - \$2741
Janet Pomeroy - \$1909
Marv Fyten - \$3571
Alberta Agriculture and Forestry - \$4426
Morris Nesdole - \$5001
Robert Esau - \$2529
Robert Grandjambe - \$1381
Robert Holmberg - \$10,817
Bill Grieve - \$1424
Tom Weber - \$2274
Marcel Ulliac - \$2890
Robert Mitchell - \$808
Alberta Environment - \$6331
Alberta Newsprint Co. - \$10,826
Lac La Biche County - \$2957
Bighorn Mining Ltd. - \$1176
Others - \$13,870

TOTAL \$106,231

Photo by: R.G. Holmberg



Our Vision

The Athabasca watershed is ecologically healthy, socially responsible, and economically sustainable.

Our Mission

The Athabasca Watershed Council demonstrates leadership and facilitates informed decision-making in the Athabasca watershed by bringing stakeholders and Indigenous peoples together to promote, foster respect, and plan for an ecologically healthy watershed that supports social responsibility and economic sustainability.

The Athabasca Watershed Council (AWC) is a registered not-for-profit organization formed in August 2009. We work with academia, industry, environmental and stewardship groups, various levels of government, communities, citizens, and Indigenous peoples to provide timely and credible information about the Athabasca Watershed.

Our Values

- We value integrity, trust, and transparency.
- We respect all points of view.
- Water is a blessing and gift and is essential for environment, society, economy and the spirit.
- Respect the environment and people.
- We believe in consensus decision making.
- We respect economic necessities.
- We value a high standard of achievement and conduct in the WPAC.
- We value ecological health as foundational to all life.
- We value timely responses to issues.
- We value and respect the Indigenous peoples, culture, and knowledge in the Athabasca watershed.
- We value inclusivity.
- We value creativity, innovation, and risk taking.
- We are responsible and accountable to all members.
- We are purpose driven.

ABOUT THE ATHABASCA WATERSHED COUNCIL

FINANCIALS

ATHABASCA WATERSHED COUNCIL

Statement of Revenues and Expenditures

Year Ended March 31, 2019

(Unaudited)

	2019	2018
REVENUE		
Grant revenue	\$ 270,000	\$ 180,000
Grant previously deferred and earned in the current year	-	7,750
Donations	16,857	6,642
Insurance proceeds	3,018	-
Miscellaneous revenue	446	-
	290,321	194,392
EXPENSES		
Salaries and wages	148,946	90,180
Travel	24,084	27,230
Contracts	23,630	-
Honorariums (Note 7)	14,925	17,575
Office	14,176	7,502
Meetings and conventions	7,976	5,498
Rental	7,748	5,840
Professional fees	5,756	5,791
Telephone	4,323	3,497
Insurance - replacement of items	3,705	-
Advertising and promotion	3,425	3,961
Amortization	2,571	1,466
Insurance	1,648	1,734
Business taxes, licenses and memberships	1,595	161
Goods and Services Tax	1,584	1,053
Training	777	-
Interest and bank charges	321	68
	267,190	171,556
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES FROM OPERATIONS	23,131	22,836
INTEREST INCOME	154	63
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	\$ 23,285	\$ 22,899

FINANCIALS

ATHABASCA WATERSHED COUNCIL

Statement of Financial Position

March 31, 2019

(Unaudited)

	2019	2018
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash	\$ 194,694	\$ 101,895
Term deposit (Note 3)	10,000	10,000
Accounts receivable	657	-
Goods and Services Tax recoverable	1,623	12,595
Prepaid expenses	2,761	1,619
	209,735	126,109
EQUIPMENT (Note 4)	3,855	6,426
	\$ 213,590	\$ 132,535
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 7,854	\$ 7,552
Withholdings payable	3,639	1,511
Deferred income (Note 5)	100,000	40,000
Advances from related parties (Note 6)	722	5,382
	112,215	54,445
NET ASSETS		
General fund	97,520	71,664
Invested in equipment	3,855	6,426
	101,375	78,090
	\$ 213,590	\$ 132,535



From the Treasurer

It has been a successful year financially for the Athabasca Watershed Council. Not only did we secure our funding from our partners at AEP, we had one of the most fruitful fundraising years in the history of the Athabasca Watershed Council. We hope to carry this momentum moving forward into the next fiscal year.

– Marcel Ulliach

YEAR IN REVIEW



From the Secretary

Athabasca Watershed Council acknowledges that our watershed is located on Treaty 6, Treaty 8 and Treaty 10 territory and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant watershed. – Cleo Reece



AGM 2018, Fort McMurray,
June 16, 2018



Moonlight Madness, Athabasca,
November 30, 2018



Science Outreach, Athabasca
University, October 24, 2018



Baptiste and Island Lakes
Stewardship Society,
Watershed Management Plan
Release, Island Lake,
September 17, 2018



Science Outreach, Athabasca
University, November 21, 2018



Farm Women's Conference,
Athabasca, February 7, 2019



Communications & Outreach Stats

- 286 monthly website users
- 370 monthly website sessions
- 155 Facebook page likes
- 2479 monthly Facebook reach
- 212 Twitter followers
- 5930 monthly Twitter reach
- 150 Instagram followers
- 59 weekly Instagram reach
- 251 Newsletter subscribers
- 35% Newsletter opens
- 15 Newspaper articles
- 1390 people reached through Educational Outreach
- 497 people reached through Partner Outreach
- 278 people reached through Municipal Outreach

Communications

With the hiring of a Communications Specialist this year, the AWC's communications have greatly expanded. We are now producing a monthly e-mail newsletter, have grown our social media audiences and are now tracking the reach of our website.

The Athabasca Watershed Council brand has been solidified with each communication, both visually and through our messaging. Effective advertising for our events online and in traditional media has reached thousands of people in the watershed, exposing them to our organization and mission.

Outreach

Through attending events across the watershed, or hosting our own, we have continued to educate and inform our stakeholder audiences, while gathering information from them for the Integrated Watershed Management Plan.

There was a lot of focus on Municipal Government outreach this year, with the AWC holding a Municipal Forum in November 2018 and multiple presentations to Municipal Councils. We visited 15 municipalities, presented to regional organizations and sat at the table for multiple workshops and sub-watershed management planning sessions.

Photo by: R.G. Holmberg

COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

YEAR IN REVIEW

The Athabasca Watershed Council Staff and Board attended multiple Pond Days, the Watershed Planning and Advisory Council's (WPAC's) Summit in Peace River and other summer science outreach events.



Municipal Forum

On November 17, 2018, the Athabasca Watershed Council (AWC-WPAC) hosted a Municipal Forum in Westlock, AB. The purpose of the forum was to enhance watershed literacy & awareness, build relationships, share information, and discuss watershed management best practices with our Municipal partners. The attendees included Mayors, Reeves, Councilors and Managers from various towns and rural municipalities throughout the Watershed, plus many of the Athabasca Watershed Council Board of Directors. The day featured 5 presentations and an interactive roundtable exercise.





From the Chair of the Technical Committee

This year we have seen substantial progress on the Integrated Watershed Management Plan. With a first draft almost complete, we are planning a summer of outreach to gather information, opinions and solutions from our partners and stakeholders throughout the watershed. This input will inform the final draft. – Dan Moore

After assessing the state of the watershed, the AWC is now initiating development of an Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) that will apply to the Athabasca watershed within Alberta's borders. The AWC may also identify transboundary issues to the appropriate authority responsible for transboundary waters management.

The intent of this initiative is to provide recommendations in a plan to improve watershed management such that Water for Life and AWC goals are being achieved in the Athabasca watershed.

Additionally, an IWMP will work towards ensuring watershed management is integrated with other land and water initiatives and is occurring in a trusting, collaborative atmosphere where water information is shared, stakeholders and the public are knowledgeable about water issues and there are opportunities to be engaged in watershed stewardship.

The IWMP will be considered a 'living/evergreen' document. It will be guided by a long term (30 year) vision and principles, but management strategies and actions will guide a ten year period, starting with 2020 – 2030. IWMP progress will be reported on by the AWC annually. The plan will be reviewed in detail, and if required, renewed, every five years, or as special circumstances warrant.

Photo by: R.G. Holmberg

INTEGRATED WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN

[illegible]

Photo by: R.G. Holmberg

An aerial photograph of a wide river, likely the Snake River, winding through a lush, green, forested landscape. A multi-span bridge crosses the river in the center-left. To the right of the bridge, a small town or village is visible, nestled among the trees. The river continues to curve through the valley, with dense evergreen forests lining its banks. The overall scene is a serene depiction of a natural waterway in a mountainous region.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge the support and contributions from the following partners:

- AEP - Land and Environmental Planning, Northern Region
- Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, Water Quality Section
- Alberta Forest Products Association
- Alberta Lake Management Society
- Alberta Newsprint Company
- Alberta Water Council
- Alberta WPAC's
- Alliance For Water Stewardship
- Athabasca Advocate
- Athabasca Chamber of Commerce
- Athabasca County
- Athabasca Farm Women's Conference
- Athabasca Heritage Society
- Athabasca Hometown Printing
- Athabasca University
- Baptiste and Island Lakes Stewardship Society
- Barrhead Regional Water Commission
- Clearwater River Heritage Society
- Cows & Fish
- Environment and Climate Change Canada
- Fort McMurray First Nations
- Highway 2 Conservation
- James Hammond
- Lac La Biche County
- Lac La Biche Fisheries Advisory Council
- Lac Ste. Anne County
- Lakeview Ranch
- Let's Go Outdoors Alberta
- Long and Narrow Lake Stewardship Society
- MD of Lesser Slave River
- Nature Alberta
- Petra Rowell Consulting
- Science Outreach - Athabasca University
- Stewards of Lac La Biche
- Suncor Energy Inc.
- Town of Mayerthorpe
- Whitecourt Rotary Club
- Yellowhead County Agricultural Services
- Yellowhead County

We are grateful for the financial contributions and shared expertise of our primary partner, Alberta's Government department of Environment and Parks.





5101 50th Avenue
PO Box 1058
Athabasca, AB, T9S 2A8
780.213.0343
780.213.4389
admin@awc-wpac.ca



Photo by: R.G. Holmberg

awc-wpac.ca

Our Watershed. Our Responsibility.