



Board of Directors Meeting June 23, 2022 Draft Meeting Minutes

Meeting Summary:

The Athabasca Watershed Council (AWC) Board of Directors held its first hybrid virtual / in-person meeting on June 23, 2022. Dan Moore, Laura Pekkola and Brian Deheer and three staff met in the Train Station Board Room in Athabasca. A number of other directors joined virtually via zoom. Learnings from this meeting will be used to improve logistics, including video and audio quality, of future hybrid meetings – which are likely becoming the norm.

After welcoming new board members Alyssa-Mae Laviolette, Kennedy Deregt-Taschuk, and Julie Hink, the board approved by consensus the meeting agenda, the previous (Feb. 9, 2022) meeting minutes, the slate of nominees for AWC Officers, and the Executive Directors activity and financial report for the first fiscal quarter (April 1 – June 30) of 2022-23. They then heard an update from AEP and other sectors and had an *in camera* session to discuss salaries before breaking for lunch. After a quick walk along the Athabasca River, the meeting re-convened, with Petra walking Directors through the first 2 Tabs of the new *Board Member's Information Binder*, with members providing feedback on AWC vision, mission, org structure, etc. before the meeting adjourned shortly after 2:00 pm. The next board meeting will be held September 15, 2022 in Lac La Biche.



ACTION LOG:

Action	Completed by:
Petra to post the approved Feb. 9, 2022 meeting minutes to the website.	July 30
Petra to send out a new board contact sheet and other revisions agreed to in the review of Tabs 1 and 2 of the Board Member's Information Binder and continue to work with the Board to review remaining binder Tabs at future meetings.	Ongoing
Staff to continue to investigate and upgrade IT meeting equipment.	Sept. 15

Meeting Attendees:

SEAT	DIRECTOR	ALTERNATE	Quorum
AEP Representative		Curtis Brock	√
Provincial/Federal Government	Vacant		
Municipal (Upper Basin)	Brigette Lemieux		√
Municipal (Middle Basin)			
Municipal (Lower Basin)	Lorin Tkachuk		√
Forestry	Dan Moore		√
Oil & Gas			
Small Agricultural Producer	Vacant		
Agriculture			
Mining/Utilities	Vacant		
Indigenous			
Indigenous	Alyssa Mae Laviolette		√
Indigenous	Vacant		
Health or Environment	Julie Hink		√
Health or Environment	Brian Deheer		√
Stewardship	Kendra Gilbert		√
Stewardship	Paula Evans		√
Research and Academia			
Member-at-Large	Vacant		
Member-at-Large	Laura Pekkola		√
Quorum = >50% filled seats (15) = 8			10
Staff present: Petra Rowell, AWC Executive Director Sarah MacDonald, Watershed Science Coordinator Ashley Johnson, Science and Outreach Coordinator			
Regrets: Abdi Siad-Omar, Gary Cromwell, Rob Minns, Jennifer Knievel, Janice Linehan, Kennedy Deregt-Taschuk, Cleo Reece, Alia Schamehorn and Scott Ketcheson			

1. Call to Order, Welcome, Round Table Introductions, Quorum, Treaty Land Acknowledgement

AWC President and meeting chair Dan Moore called the meeting to order at 10:06 am, checking for any health and safety concerns and confirming quorum. The Chair then called for a round table of introductions, which each member sharing their name, affiliation and plans for the summer.

The Chair provided a Treaty Land Acknowledgment, recognizing that the Athabasca watershed includes portions of Treaties 6, 8 and 10 and several Métis communities. Petra noted that while we were deeply grateful the Indigenous guests who provided their perspectives at some of our outreach events in 2021-22 (e.g., WPAC Summit, UN World Water Day) we are continuously looking at what we can do more for Indigenous engagement and she invited board members to continue to provide thoughts and ideas.

2. Review and Approval of Agenda

The agenda was circulated prior to the meeting and was approved by consensus as presented.

3. Approval of Feb. 9 2022 Board Meeting Minutes

Petra noted that the action items from the February Board Meeting were completed. The meeting minutes, circulated prior to the meeting, were approved by the board by consensus as presented.

4. Election of Officers

Petra noted that as per the AWC bylaws, the first board meeting after the June 11 AGM, is where the elected Directors elect the AWC officers. She then asked if the board was okay with her acting as Presiding Officer of the elections. There were no objections. Petra then noted that the existing suite of officers were letting their names stand as nominees. She then opened the floor for any additional nominees, calling three times for any nominees from the room or by those joining by video-conference. There were none. Petra then asked for a motion to approve the slate of acclaimed nominees as presented. Laura motioned to approve Dan Moore as President, Kendra Gilbert as Vice President, Paula Evans as Secretary, and Cleo Reece as Treasurer; Brigitte Lemieux seconded; all were in favor.

5. 2022-23 1st Quarter Financial and Activity Update

Petra gave an update on activities and finances to the board for the first quarter of the fiscal year (April 1 – June 30). Overall, she noted that the focus for the past 3 months had been on wrapping up the 2021-22 fiscal year end reporting as well as prepping for the AGM and June board meeting. However, as the weather warms, staff were also starting to enjoy more in-person events and fieldwork.

Petra went over several administration items. The office lease, insurance and WCB for 2022-23 have been renewed. Our 2022-23 core operating grant (\$200k) from AEP has been received (Thank you AEP!). Staff meet virtually weekly, and in-person at least once a month. Sarah was successful in getting a Canada Summer Jobs grant (\$4200) to hire Aneilia Ayotte, our Science Communications Coordinator for the summer. Responding to questions about our office space in the Train Station in the Town of Athabasca, Petra noted that while there are some issues with the age/condition of the building, we are getting a good deal as the monthly rent of \$500 (paid to Athabasca Heritage Society) includes all utilities and free Wi-Fi/internet connection.

On the governance side, Petra noted that the June 11 AGM was successful: we met quorum, elected several returning and new directors, and approved the 2021-22 financial statements, prepared and reviewed by KRP Accounting. The Executive Committee generally meets monthly or works by emails/phone. Petra also noted she is trying to find efficiencies, such that administration and governance is about half of her time.

On the science side, Petra noted that SAIT capstone student Laura Nethery completed her community drinking water resiliency project and the report is now on our website. In general, communities in the Athabasca watershed have pretty good drinking water, with many tied to regional drinking water networks, allowing rural and Indigenous communities to partner and leverage capacity for more robust drinking water systems than they could achieve alone. She also noted that the University of Alberta NSERC grant (~\$950k over 5 years) and project to look at water quality under ice, of which we are a partner with Dr. William Zhang, was approved. We will be sharing more about William's work as it moves forward.

Sarah continues to build the Pembina Technical Committee, now composed of 10 partner agencies who are working together on a State of the Pembina Watershed Report. We've been approached by Pembina Pipeline company and are in discussion on funds to potentially get a Pembina water quality monitoring program up and running. We've also been collaborating with Lisa Card from Highway2Conservation on some plantings at our French Creek Site. A desktop GIS riparian assessment has been completed for the Tawatinaw, and we are looking into open houses and setting up a stewardship group for that area. The majority of impacts in the Tawatinaw are near the headwaters (Helliwell Lake in the Nestow area). Sarah is now involved with the ALUS program, and we are hoping to work with more landowners for initiating best management practices. She is also taking part in the Roberta Bondar Women in STEM leadership program.

Sarah received another ACA grant (\$12k), and equipment will be purchased and training completed for our East Slopes CABIN benthic invertebrate sampling work to be carried out again this summer. She noted that the East Slopes collaborative is moving towards a broader aquatic biomonitoring network.

We have placed our Berland-Wildhay watercourse crossing project on hold for the summer, as we are all busy with field work, but a report is in the works. And we've just begun working with Lisa Schaubel, AEP to establish an East Slopes stream temperature monitoring program. We continue to have conversations with Kendra, Brian, Dan and AB WaterSmart about lake stewardship, wetland and northern river initiatives.

Petra noted that we've been thinking about our science projects in two streams, 1) having on the ground projects in each sub-basin, and 2) carrying out our role in adaptive watershed management, including re-doing our State of the Watershed Report. There was a question about whether or not the AWC is on the right track and aligned with AEP needs. It was agreed that an updated State of the Watershed Report is a good next move (will tie in nicely with the renewal of LARP this fall) and AEP is open to providing in-kind support, equipment and may be able to help more with financial support.

On the communications side, Petra noted that we're trying to be more thoughtful and consistent about our branding and messaging in our newsletters, website, social media, etc. We are also trying to develop more in-depth, technical communications pieces, using the blog or Athabasca Dispatch quarterly newsletter. Ashley also works with the other WPAC Education and Outreach Coordinators to coordinate province-wide events such as the UN World Water Day forum organized last March.

Petra noted that we are thinking more about how to increase our sector and community engagement and how and when we agree to collaborate with others. Currently, Petra meets quarterly with the other WPAC managers, and they have been meeting with the GOA regularly, particularly with work on the new Water for Life Action Plan. Petra is also now representing the 11 WPACs on the AER Multi Stakeholder Engagement Advisory Committee who are seeking input on their new expanded mandate to implement a regulatory framework for the development of minerals, hydrogen and carbon capture and storage. Laura reminded the board that NSWA is leading a WPAC initiative that will see a 5 video series on Alberta-wide watersheds. Dan stated there is potentially a lot of funding available for film; need to start by writing a script, something for the Communications Committee to discuss.

Petra quickly gave a financial summary, noting that we are ¼ of the way through the fiscal year and generally on track with expenditures. She then asked for a motion to accept her Q1 activities and financial statement report. Dan made the motion, and it was approved by consensus.

Revenues to June 30, 2022:		Expenses estimated to June 30, 2022:	
• AEP \$200,000		• Staffing + MERC	\$50,420
• ACA \$12,000 (Benthic)		• Rent	\$ 1,500
• CSJ \$4200 (summer student)		• Software	\$ 1,163
• CWF \$23,540 (Wildhay-Berland)		• Phone & Video	\$ 560
• AEP \$7500 (Stream Temp project)		• Supplies, course etc.	\$ 2,404
• WRRP roll over \$70,000		• Travel	\$ 898
SUB-TOTAL	\$ 317,240	SUB-TOTAL	\$56,945

6. GOA and other Sector Updates

AEP Update: Curtis Brock gave an AEP update, reviewing a document that was provided to the Alberta Water Council earlier this month that outlines a number of AEP initiatives (see Appendix 1). Relevant to the Athabasca is the current focus on getting the Upper Athabasca frameworks up and running. The Upper Athabasca Regional Surface Water Quality Management Framework should be adopted into policy soon; there are currently no plans for a regional plan in the Upper Athabasca but the frameworks should still act to tie together the work in the Lower and Upper Athabasca regions.

Water quality and quantity frameworks are in place in the Lower Athabasca, and condition reports for 2020 and their management reports will hopefully be released this June, with a webinar to follow this

fall; no triggers have been exceeded with regards to water quantity. There is an expectation to initiate discussions this fall for the renewal of the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan, with some opportunity for AWC to be involved with the discussions.

Several other updates around new wetland tools, an updated water reuse policy, barriers to stormwater use, flood mitigation, indicators, invasive species, etc. are relevant to the work of the AWC and its members. More has been added to the Alberta Flow Estimation tool for Ungauged Watersheds, including winter flow information. There has been some enhancement to other apps and tools, including the Alberta Rivers App. More flood mapping has occurred across the province, with mapping tools being made available to municipalities.

Education programs on fisheries continue to be a focus and the Alberta Native Trout website is now up and running. AEP works with AHS to monitor recreational waters, issuing warnings about blue-green algae and other health hazards. There is now some reporting on heat and issues with heat and air quality, which will be tied into water, available on the [AEPHIN](#) website.

There is continued discussion on the Coal Policy, especially relating to the headwaters and the McLeod, with information available on coal mining activity from 2006 – 2016. This will help inform discussion on management. The federal government is pushing for more regulation on coal mining effluent release.

A question was asked about how lake groups should connect with AEP, in terms of implementing their lake management plans. Curtis said the best way to start would be to connect with him and his team, so that activities can be coordinated in the future. Albertans can also utilize [environmental hotlines](#) when they see fish and wildlife or public lands violations.

Stewardship Sector: Kendra noted, as a stewardship member (representing Baptiste and Island Lakes Stewardship Society, or BAILS), she would like to see more collaboration between stewardship groups and the AWC. Currently, the county sees overlap between the AWC and BAILS and we need to provide more distinctions between organizations in order to encourage more municipal involvement with both organizations. Other members agreed we should commit to more collaboration with local groups across the watershed. Petra mentioned the Athabasca is a large basin, and that we would like to see stewardship groups and sub-basin initiatives across the entire watershed. The onus is on the AWC to ensure that municipalities understand that we aren't speaking on behalf of stewardship groups. It is not a hierarchy and we need to ensure that stewardship groups are treated as equals. Stewardship groups are listed on the AWC website as independent organizations and we can collaborate on messaging moving forward.

Municipal Sector: Petra noted she presented to Yellowhead County council on June 21 and it was well received. She will be presenting to Athabasca County on June 30 and will try to provide some clarity on the role of the AWC and local stewardship groups.

7. AWC Salary Package Review (In-camera session)

At the request of the Executive Director, staff were released for an early lunch and the board had an *in-camera* session to discuss how the AWC can fund a competitive salary and benefits package for staff. Petra will do more work to answer some of the questions raised and schedule time with the board to discuss this again soon.

LUNCH BREAK

With sandwiches and apples in hand, those attending the meeting in-person went out for a walk along the Athabasca River over the lunch break. Just by coincidence, we bumped into some AEP technicians who had just finished doing some water quality sampling on the Long Term River site at Athabasca, enjoying an informal but informative chat about AEP monitoring work.

8. Board Member Information Binder Review Exercise (Tab 1)

To improve AWC board governance, Petra has attended a number of board development webinars hosted by Community Development. This has helped as she organized the board member's information binders which were circulated to all board members prior to this meeting.

Petra is working on ensuring that we have comprehensive information binders to facilitate staff and board member transitions. The new board member's information binder has a WPAC Brochure, and an AWC brochure, as well as a map. Petra led the board members present through our tagline "*from the mountain headwaters to the delta lowlands, our watershed, our responsibility*". The tagline was developed after a great deal of board discussion, which Dan recapped for us. Petra asked what does the tagline mean to members? Comments included that the tagline can represent a holistic approach, encompassing all stakeholders and the landowners; it reflects that everything has an impact on the world around us; it encourages everyone to do their best; it puts us on an even playing field, and even if you don't interact with the water directly, it is still important to care for it.

Tab 1 has information for board members, including the water for life strategy and the water for life goals. Petra asked how well we relate to those goals, whether they guide us or do we just occasionally check in with them. Comments included that the AWC seems to focus the most on healthy aquatic ecosystems; it was very helpful to have been provided with these goals as a new board member; our community drinking water resiliency project is a great way to address the goal around safe secure drinking water; the goals are inter-related so working towards one goal will help achieve the others as well.

Petra then read out the AWC vision and mission and asked whether we should revisit these in the future, noting that stakeholders seem to struggle with the role of the WPACs. Comments were as follows: reading the vision, it seems like we are enforcers rather than facilitators, so it might need to be worded in such a way to provide clarity as to our role; the mission still works, but the vision statement is somewhat unclear; using the word River excludes lake groups from the watershed and isn't conducive to understanding how to take responsibility; the three parts of the vision are at odds with each other, where some people's sense of commodity doesn't correlate with keeping the watershed ecologically

healthy, need to convey how the three aspects will be balanced; we could generalize the vision statement more, so that it doesn't become redundant when read with the mission; suggestion to keep in mind that saying 'we' refers to all water users, including industry, the expectation is that the water users have to be at the table to achieve our vision; everyone has a role to play, and the watershed depends on all of the partners to do their part; it's a good time to review with current focus on environmental, social governance. The takeaway is that the basic elements of our vision and mission are there, but they need to be tweaked a bit – staff will bring proposed revisions back to the board in September.

The next part of the binder outlines expectations of board members, etc. Petra asked if there's anything missing from that section. Suggestions were to provide an estimate of time commitment, outlining the usual number of hours per board meeting and estimates on committee involvement; add a description of the various roles and highlight the values they bring; think about reducing the number of seats on the board; define sectors, outline how Directors are expected to reach out to their sector as a responsibility of being on the board and think about incorporating sector engagement plans.

Moving to the graphics showing the AWC's organizational structure, Petra asked the board to think about it, especially with respect to risk management. We moved into the annual planning and reporting structure, and the schedule of key annual events. Petra asked the board to consider creating a schedule to review key policies and processes, for example to review the bylaws every 5 years. It was suggested that somewhere in the introductory material, it would be good to clarify who WPACs are advisory to.

Based on the discussion above, staff will make draft changes to TAB 1 and 2 material for approval at the next board meeting, where the board will also review Tab 3 (bylaws) and Tab 4 (Board Terms of Reference).

9. Closing Comments

Dan asked for a motion to adjourn. Brian made the motion and Laura seconded. Petra reminded everyone that the next board meeting is scheduled for September 15, hopefully in-person in Lac La Biche (but likely with the ability to join virtually as well). Board members agreed that the November 22 and February 9 meetings would be virtual. The meeting was adjourned at 2:12 p.m.

Our Vision

The AWC strives to keep the Athabasca River watershed ecologically healthy, socially responsible, and economically sustainable.

Our Mission

To demonstrate leadership and facilitate informed decision-making in the Athabasca River 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.

Government of Alberta Update - Water

Prepared as information for the
Alberta Water Council Board meeting
June 14, 2022

1. Wetland Policy Implementation

Updating the Alberta Wetland Rapid Evaluation Tool (ABWRET-A)

- Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) has hired a contractor to complete a review of the current ABWRET-A GIS layers and provide a recommendation for modernizing GIS layers and streamlining the model
- A report from the contractor is anticipated in July.

2. Water Reuse Policy (New)

Proposed Water (Ministerial) Regulation amendments to reduce regulatory barriers for the use of stormwater.

- Targeted stakeholder engagement was held in March and April over three engagement sessions.
- Stakeholder feedback will help inform proposed regulation amendments that address:
 - Specific volumes
 - Specific uses of stormwater that should be exempt from requiring a Water Act licence; and,
 - Whether regions facing water scarcity should have different stormwater licensing exemptions.
 - In 2021, the Wetland Replacement Program (WRP) completed seven (7) projects with three municipalities and one non-profit organization. The WRP has provided \$3.2 million in funding, resulting in 124 hectares of land being replaced.
- Feedback to inform final policy recommendations was received until May 31, 2022.
- Earlier engagement in 2019 on the draft reuse guidebook identified several regulatory barriers and challenges to be addressed prior to moving forward with a comprehensive water reuse approach.
-

- AEP is currently focusing on removing those barriers.

3. Wetland Research Strategy (New)

- The Office of the Chief Scientist recently facilitated grants to the University of Calgary and University of Alberta in which we identified 'wetlands and wetland conservation' as one of our four focal areas for new research partnerships with post-secondary institutions.

Evaluating approaches for non-restorative wetland replacement programs.

- AEP submitted a proposal for the Alberta North American Waterfowl Management Plan (AB NAWMP) to conduct a jurisdictional scan of wetland banking and non-restorative replacement programs implemented in jurisdictions across North America.
- Currently, the Alberta Wetland Policy defines non-restorative replacement, but no program is implemented to enable non-restorative replacement as a replacement option. Non-restorative replacement includes:
 - Research into wetland restoration measures
 - Provincial level monitoring of wetlands
 - Wetland inventory work and data acquisition
 - Landscape level wetland health assessment or modeling
 - Public education and outreach programs
 - Wetlands for the purposes of long term conservation
- The jurisdictional scan and the 2016 report on "Recommendations for a Wetlands Research Strategy" will inform the

Government of Alberta Update – Water

Government of Alberta's future implementation on non-restorative replacement. AEP expects to receive the jurisdictional scan report by March 31, 2023.

4. Reporting on Environmental Management Frameworks

- AEP publishes annual reports on alberta.ca describing air and surface water conditions and how we are responding to emerging issues in regions across Alberta. The 2020 air and surface water condition and management response reports for the environmental management frameworks for South Saskatchewan and Lower Athabasca regions are expected to be published in summer 2022.

5. Regional Planning (Land Use Secretariat)

- The Government of Alberta will meet the deadline to initiate the LARP 10-year Review before September 2022 as required by the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act*.

6. Wapiti River Management Plan

- AEP is exploring a collaboration opportunity with the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance (MPWA) for implementing the Wapiti River Water Management Plan.
- MPWA has submitted a proposal for a Wapiti Watershed Work Plan that is currently being reviewed by AEP.

7. Biodiversity Indicators – Data and support documentation available (New)

- As part of a commitment to provide open and transparent access to data and information, Alberta Environment and Parks has published province-wide data layers for two biodiversity indicators:

Stream Connectivity and Interior Habitat. Access to these data layers is available on the Open Alberta portal: [Stream Connectivity](#) and [Interior Habitat](#).

- A technical report for Interior Habitat Indicator is currently under review and will be published on Open Alberta portal once finalized. Additional indicators are under development and will be released in 2022/23.
- ## 8. 2021 Drought and Water shortage Event (New)
- In response to the drought and water shortage conditions experienced in 2021, Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) captured lessons learned to improve drought and water shortage resilience.
 - Subject matter experts across the Ministry offered a number of recommendations, that, when implemented, will build resilience in the department and amongst water users to better handle future drought and water shortage events.
 - Work is well underway addressing the recommendations, focusing on:
 - Build Water Literacy
 - Enhance Drought and Water Shortage Preparedness
 - Improve Access to Data and Information
 - Assess Risk
 - Manage Risk
 - Support Water Users
 - In addition to the recommendations, the Alberta Water Council drought simulation exercise will help inform the AEP's Drought and Water Shortage Plan.

9. Surface Water Quality Management Frameworks

- The North Saskatchewan Region (NSR) and Upper Athabasca Region (UAR) Surface Water Quality Management Frameworks are expected to be publicly released in summer 2022.

Government of Alberta Update – Water

10. Alberta Flow Estimation tool for Ungauged Watersheds (AFETUW)

- AFETUW has recently been enhanced to include streamflow estimation during the winter season (previous AFETUW only provided flow estimates during the open-water season).
- Public access was granted in May 2021.
- The water licence query has been updated to allow listing all licence allocations in the province and includes eight additional Environmental Management System water licence fields in the output.
- AFETUW winter flow estimation was added for fall 2022 deployment.
- AFETUW hydrologic data set update is planned for the second and/or third quarter of 2022.
- AFETUW developed to automate optimization and is now being tested by AEP.
- User manual updated and technical reference being written.

11. Alberta Rivers App

- Website and mobile app enhancements were completed in March 2022 and are available for the Apple and Android app stores. The enhancements include adding smaller river basins and the ability to break down larger rivers into colour-coded segments to more precisely identify areas with active flood advisories.
- The Alberta Water Council and its members are encouraged to submit suggestions, questions or concerns on the [Alberta River Basins website](#).

12. Flood Mapping

- Primary technical work on 27 new flood studies has been completed; 21 of which replace, combine, and expand, 31 older studies and six which cover new areas. These new flood studies include more than 1,600km of mapping for 60-plus

municipalities; and for the first time, five First Nations.

- In addition, local authorities reviewed the 60+ affected municipalities, and public engagement for draft flood inundation maps from 20 new studies has been completed. This review resulted in multiple technical map changes to be implemented in revised versions of the flood maps.

13. Aquatic Invasive Species Program

- Aquatic invasive species (AIS) threaten Alberta's freshwater resources. The Alberta Government has invested to minimize impacts through the development of the Aquatic Invasive Species Program supported by five elements: 1) policy and legislation, 2) education and outreach, 3) monitoring of water bodies, 4) watercraft inspections, K9 and decontaminations, 5) response.
- The AIS program is the result of a collaboration of many creative partnerships between ministries, special interest groups and municipal governments in prevention and response to species threatening Alberta waters. The AIS program often reviews the Alberta Water Council (AWC) 2016 report, "Recommendations to Improve Aquatic Invasive Species Management in Alberta" for program improvement opportunities.

Spring 2022 Highlights

- Alberta is under the highest risk of an AIS introduction from surrounding jurisdictions through the movement of watercraft. Therefore, watercraft inspections continue to be a priority element of the AIS program. In 2022 Alberta will inspect watercraft at five locations: Cold Lake, Vermilion, Medicine Hat, Coutts and Carway.
- Through an international agreement signed in 2021 between the state and province, Montana accepts Alberta

Government of Alberta Update – Water

inspections as part of their requirement for out of state boats “to be inspected” prior to launching. For efficiency and support, Alberta inspects watercraft going both north and south at the Coutts international border.

- Clean, Drain, Dry Your Gear and Don't Let It Loose will continue to be the backbone of education and outreach efforts for AIS. Efforts have shifted largely to free social media based opportunities, but staff continue to support other in person opportunities where possible.
- Monitoring continues thanks to our creative collaboration with internal and external partners willing to conduct water sampling, substrate and shoreline inspections in addition to already planned visits to water bodies. Expansion of monitoring plans are being implemented through Lake Keepers (a volunteer network) under the Alberta Lake Management Society.
- A collaborative national response plan is under development for “organisms in trade” to capture the lessons learned and establish improved communications for similar response events like the 2021 moss ball incident that impacted jurisdictions across Canada and North America.
- The Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER) Foundation is a statutory public/private non-profit organization created in 1991 by the United States of Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, and Washington; and the Canadian provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan including the Northwest Territories and Yukon. The next PNWER meeting is July 24-28, 2022 in Calgary.
- From agriculture to workforce development, PNWER tackles a breadth of regional issues through working groups, invasive species being one.
- PNWER assists in developing strategy to prevent boat movement from infested waters in the mid-west to western states

and provinces. PNWER advocates for federal funding to support state/provincial AIS programs. The Inter-Provincial-Territorial Agreement for Coordinated Regional Defense against Invasive Species, is a group focused on improving western communication, prevention through early detection/rapid response efforts, development of control/management options to reduce or eliminate invasive species in western Canada, and leveraging collaborative funding opportunities. Members include a director and one technical staff from each province of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the Yukon.

- Recent outcomes of the collaboration include securing funding through the Canada Nature Fund for AIS work. This funding supported socio-economic risk assessments for Prussian carp and flowering rush, as well as the purchase of Canada's first CD3, a waterless watercraft cleaning system, which has been set-up for public use at Lake McGregor.

14. Watershed Sciences Update

- The Resource Stewardship Division (RSD) and Office of the Chief Scientist (OCS) released an initial suite of surface water indicators on Alberta's Environmental Science Program website (AESP). The AESP website provides the primary venue for provincial scale reporting on the condition of Alberta's environment as required under section 15.1 (1) of the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*. The three indicators present data and information on the condition of water quality and quantity in lakes and rivers across Alberta, including spatial and temporal trends of:
 - **Chloride** concentrations in Alberta's rivers from 2016 to 2019
 - **Trophic status** of Alberta's lakes from 1980 to 2019

Government of Alberta Update – Water

- **Water yields** in Alberta's rivers for 2020 and trends in water yield from 1981 to 2020

Recent publications

- Laceby, J.P., Chung, C., Kerr, J.G. 2022: Chloride in Surface Waters of Alberta's Rivers - Condition of the Environment Report 2021 Government Report: 96
- Orwin J.F., Klotz, F., Taube, N., Kerr, J.G., Laceby, J.P. 2022: Linking catchment structural units (CSUs) with water quality: Implications for ambient monitoring network design and data interpretation. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 312: 114881
- Emmerton, C.A., Drevnick, P.E., Serbu, J.A., Cooke, C.A., Graydon, J.A., Reichert, M., Evans, M.S., McMaster, M.E. 2022: Downstream modification of mercury in diverse river systems underscores the role of local conditions in fish bioaccumulation, [Ecosystems \(online\)](#)
- Enayetullah, H., Chasmer, L., Hopkinson, C., Thompson, D., & Cobbaert, D. 2022: Identifying Conifer Tree vs. Deciduous Shrub and Tree Regeneration Trajectories in a Space-for-Time Boreal Peatland Fire Chronosequence Using Multispectral Lidar. *Atmosphere*, 13: 112
- Ficken, C. D., Connor, S. J., Rooney, R., & Cobbaert, D. 2021: Drivers, pressures, and state responses to inform long-term oil sands wetland monitoring program objectives. *Wetlands Ecology and Management*: 1-20

15. Education Programs

- Fisheries education remains a priority for AEP. This spring, educational efforts focused on trout and walleye stocking. Moving into summer efforts will shift to focus on safe fish handling and identification, low flow/high temperature time-of-day fishing closures in Southern Alberta. "My Wild Alberta" on Facebook remains a key communication tool in

addition to mywildalberta.com.

- The Fish in Schools (FinS) program continues to deliver core AEP fisheries management messages that enable students to develop their systems thinking skills, and to consider the balancing of social, economic, and recreational values of Alberta's natural resources. The program has been short listed as a nominee for the Alberta Emerald Awards that took place on June 1.
- The Native Trout Communications Collaborative is continuing to promote the AlbertaNativeTrout.com webpage, and has developed additional outreach materials to promote the Alberta Native Trout brand and get people excited and invested in protecting native trout and their habitats.
- Bow Habitat Station continues to support the delivery of water education messages including through the delivery of the inaugural Alberta Biodiversity Festival co-hosted with the Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo May 13-15. Nearly 3,500 Albertans engaged in on-site and virtual activities highlighting the biodiversity found in aquatic habitats across Alberta with a focus on Alberta's native fish, invasive species, recent conservation initiatives and responsible recreation messages.

16. Monitoring Recreational Waters (Alberta Health) (New)

- As of May long weekend, the recreational water quality monitoring season for 2022 has commenced. An update to the Safe Beach Protocol has been approved and will be posted at: <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/9781460145395>
 - Operators of priority sites for fecal contamination and cyanobacterial bloom monitoring have been invited to participate in water sample collection activities.
 - Alberta Health Services is

Government of Alberta Update – Water

collating operator responses and working with the Alberta Lake Management Society to cover sampling at priority sites where operators are not able to participate.

- Recreational water sample collection instructions are available publically at: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/eph/Page8302.aspx>
- Alberta Health Services will be providing bloom visual identification and sampling training to site operators and volunteers on May 31, 2022.
- Weekly releases of bloom monitoring data will occur this summer and can be found at <https://open.alberta.ca/opendata/cyanobacterial-blooms-in-alberta-recreational-waters>

17. Alberta Environmental Public Health Information Network (Alberta Health) (New)

- In March 2022, the Alberta Environmental Public Health Information Network (AEPHIN) was updated with two new visualization on heat and air quality. Further updates are planned for this fall related to drinking and recreational water. AEPHIN can be found at <http://aephin.alberta.ca>

18. Water Innovation Program (Alberta Innovates)

- The June 14 2022 AWC Board meeting includes an update on activities from the Water Innovation Program
- Following stakeholder surveys and interviews in April-May 2022, AI has updated Water Innovation investment priorities with the intent to launch an open competition for new projects this summer. The tentative schedule is to launch the competition in late June – July 2022 to enable funding new projects in April 2023.

19. Coal Policy (Energy)

- The Coal Policy Committee's (CPC) engagement report and final report with recommendations were released to the public on March 4, 2022. The final report provided eight principal recommendations and five associated observations.
- In response to the recommendations, government is expanding the restrictions on coal exploration and development in the Eastern Slopes until land-use planning can be completed.
- Through a Ministerial Order, coal exploration and development activities in the Eastern Slopes will now be restricted on all Category 2, 3 and 4 lands.
 - The Ministerial Order does not extend to activities already in progress for active mines and advanced coal projects, nor does it impact activities related to security or safety. The order also allows abandonment and reclamation activities to resume in Category 2 lands and continue in Category 3 and 4 lands.
 - The restriction will remain in effect until direction on coal activities has been embedded in new or updated land-use plans.
- All existing legislation related to coal activities and Alberta's rigorous regulatory system remain in place. Advanced coal projects must still go through the full regulatory process before approval. Projects are reviewed for cumulative effects on the environment and may be subject to size and water use limits.
- With respect to land use planning, Alberta Environment and Parks committed to embed the coal categories from the 1976 Coal Policy into the Eastern Slopes Policy in the coming months, and then to provide additional clarity through the development of new regional, sub-regional or issue-specific plans.

Government of Alberta Update – Water

- Current land-use planning is focused on the development of sub-regional plans in areas with caribou recovery objectives as well as the 10-year review of the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan. The need for land-use planning across the province is appreciated by the Alberta government and we are continuing to evaluate the next areas of focus.

No Recent Updates

- Wetland Replacement Program
- Regional Planning
- Native Trout Recovery Program
- Fisheries Management Winter Engagement
- 310-LANDS (5263) Phone Line



Executive Director's Activity Report:

April 1 – June 30, 2022

Overview:

- With pandemic rules relaxing, staff are enjoying the re-emergence of in-person meetings and in particular, participated in a number of school "Pond Days" in May and June. This quarter also saw preparations for the June 11 Annual General Meeting (AGM) and June 23 board meeting.

Admin, HR, etc.:

- The office lease, insurance, and WCB were all renewed for 2022-23. A local Athabasca IT company (Elektricity) provided a check up and update of all 4 AWC computers.
- Accounting firm KRP completed the 2021-22 annual financial review in time to present the AWC financial statements at the AGM. They also filed the annual charitable return and GST report.
- The 2021-22 AEP grant report was submitted before April 15. Petra also met with AEP staff (Brian Free and Cam Lane) to review the past year. This year's (2022-23) AEP core operation grant of \$200,000 was received in early June.
- We continue to hold staff meetings most Monday mornings at 10:00 am via Zoom and once a month, in person in Athabasca, with a review of the past week, and discussion of any health and safety issues, workplans and meetings and events for the coming week(s).
- Sarah was successful in a grant with Canada Summer Jobs and subsequently hired student Aneilia Ayotte to help out with research and field activities for the summer.
- Staff have been participating in a number of training opportunities including wetland classification, swift water safety, benthic sampling and riparian plant identification, etc. Also, Sarah is participating in the national [Roberta Bondar STEM Career Development](#) program.

Board/Governance:

- Petra took a number of board governance webinars offered by Alberta Community Development, learning that the 4 key roles of a board are:
 - Define and advance the organizations purpose
 - Ensure, develop and conserve resources (financial, human and property)
 - Provide oversight (exercise effective control)
 - Engage in outreach with stakeholders (manage relationships)
- With this in mind, she then organized board members information binders which the board will be engaged in a review of over the next year (initiated at the June 23 board meeting).

- The AGM was held virtually on June 11 and saw the election of several returning and new board members. The board then re-elected its slate of officers at the June 23 board meeting, a hybrid meeting with a mix of attendees in Athabasca and online via Zoom. Staff are working to find funds to acquire new IT to support improved hybrid meeting experiences in the future.

Committee Updates:

Executive Committee, Chair Dan Moore

- The AWC Executive Committee meets with the Executive Director the first Thursday of every month to discuss aspects of day-to-day operations (e.g., insurance needs, fundraising opportunities, staff performance reviews, etc.) and to prepare the agenda and other materials for quarterly board meetings and the AGM.
- With input from Executive Committee, Petra is working on creating an AWC Pay Scale, as well as firming up job descriptions, qualifications, staff benefits, etc. to make the AWC more competitive in recruiting and retaining staff.

Technical Committee, Chair Dan Moore

- The Technical Committee held a virtual meeting June 22 with a focus on how the AWC can become the best managed watershed in the world – starting with looking at our state of the watershed (SOW) assessment reports and discussing what the next iteration should look like. Staff will draft a SOW Terms of Reference for the committee to review and approve this fall. The AWC is also leading an initiative to convene an Alberta WPACs Technical Committee whose first task will be to look at SOW metrics and a province-wide SOW reporting platform.

Communications, Education and Community Engagement (CECE) Committee, Chair Paula Evans

- The CECE Committee didn't meet this quarter but worked by emails to advise the Education and Outreach Coordinator and to provide input on the Athabasca Dispatch newsletter and other materials.

Education and Outreach Projects

- Ashley continues to organize the monthly e-newsletter, weekly social media posts, blog and website updates. She also completed the [2021-22 Annual Report](#) and is working on the next Athabasca Dispatch (which will focus on point source pollution).
- After being at the Athabasca and Westlock libraries, the traveling watershed display spent a month at the Bold Centre in Lac La Biche. Petra and Ashley manned an AWC display at the Lac La Biche Agriculture Appreciation Night (June 29).
- Ashley meets and/or corresponds with the other WPAC Education and Outreach coordinators regularly. She travelled to Camrose May 10-11 to receive training in the X-Stream Science program for high school students.

- In May and June, staff assisted with school Pond Days at Fort Assiniboine, Lac La Biche, Thunder Lake, Lac La Nonne and Chip Lake.

Science projects:

- Sarah continues to facilitate the Pembina Technical Working Group (representing 12 organizations) who are developing a Pembina state of the watershed report. We also continue to partner with Highway2Conservation on a planting project at French Creek, a small tributary of the Pembina River.
- Sarah has accepted an advisory role on the ALUS Program's Partnership Advisory Council for Athabasca County, County of Barrhead, Westlock County, and Thorhild County.
- We are also trying to stimulate interest in a Tawatinaw watershed stewardship group.
- The Berland-Wildhay Watershed Connectivity [Planning initiative](#), a stakeholder group looking at waterbody crossing mitigation in this East Slopes watershed, met 3 times but is now taking a break from meetings over the summer field season. It will reconvene in the fall.
- SAIT student Laura Nethery has completed her Community Drinking Water Resilience survey project and the report will be posted to our website soon.
- The NSERC application organized by William Zhang, University of Alberta was successful and this 5-year \$950k project to develop an under-ice water quality model for northern rivers had its first kick off meeting with project partners AWC, UofA, NSWA, EPCOR and AEP.
- Staff are assisting AEP's Lisa Schaubel with designing an East Slopes Stream Temp project.

Other Partnerships / Sector and Community Engagement:

- AWC Director Morris Nesdole represented WPACs on the Alberta Water Council board as well as being on the drought and source water protection planning teams.
- AWC Director Laura Pekkola continues to support a WPAC project team developing a watershed 101 series of videos.
- Petra meets with the other WPAC managers regularly. WPAC managers met with AEP Deputy Minister Bev Yee to discuss the role of WPACs in the new Water for Life Action Plan.
- Petra is representing all 11 WPACs on the Alberta Energy Regulators Multi-stakeholder Engagement Advisory Committee (MSEAC) which meets quarterly. Most recently, engagement has focused on the regulatory framework for brine-hosted minerals.
- Petra made a presentation to Yellowhead County June 21, outlining where the AWC fits in Alberta's water management framework, what projects we are conducting that may be of interest and asking the county for their input on future areas of work. Questions/discussion points included the desire to see resources provided to ag producers to implement BMPs, the need to balance recreation pressure and lake health, and WPAC funding.
- Petra made a similar presentation to Athabasca County on June 30. Discussion points included low flows/ putting a flow gauge in the Tawatinaw River; the impact of beavers on flow/ beaver

management; the County is pleased to see the AWC participating in the new ALUS advisory group and bringing dollars and resources to approved projects.

Communications Report:

Measure	March 31, 2021	March 31, 2022	June 30, 2022	Sept 30, 2022	Dec 30, 2022	Mar 30, 2022
Membership:						
# individuals	120	173	187			
# organizations	34	40	40			
Monthly Newsletter:						
# of subscribers	368	455	340			
Open rate	36%					
Website:						
Monthly website users	468	711				
# of Page Views	1116	15350	4686			
Sessions / length	4742 / 2 m0s	7755 / 1m35s	2557/ 1m28s			
Bounce Rate	54.43	61.68	58.39			
Facebook:						
# of posts made	4		23			
Facebook Followers	468	608	623			
Facebook Likes	406	502	513			
Twitter:						
# of Tweets made	19					
Twitter followers	404	479	497			
Monthly Twitter Reach						
Instagram:						
# of posts						
Instagram Followers	405	573	596			
Monthly Reach	175					
Linked In:						
# Connections	84					
Publications:						
- Newsletters			3			
- Reports			-			
- other			-			
Media articles:						

Engagement (Key Meetings and Events) Report:

Date	Event	AWC Staff	Total # of non-staff attendees		Length (hrs)	Location
			We hosted	Other hosted		
2022-23			We hosted	Other hosted		
Apr 4	In-person staff meeting (Athabasca)	3				Athabasca
Apr 7	Executive Committee mtg	1	4		1.5	Zoom
Apr 11	Staff meeting and webinar practice	3			1.5	Zoom
Apr 12	IWMP webinar	3	8		2.0	Zoom
Apr 14	Wildhay Berland Working Group	3	16		3.0	Zoom
Apr 18	Staff meeting	3			1.0	Zoom
Apr 19-20	WPAC Managers mtg Nisku	1 (Petra)		10	7.0	Nisku
Apr 19	SAIT Capstone presentations	2 (Ash, Laura)		15	2.0	UofC
Apr 21	Mtg with AEP (Brian, Cam, Abdi)	1 Petra		3	1.5	Teams
Apr 28	Pembina Working Group	2 (Sarah, Ash)	8		2.0	zoom
Apr 29	Berland Organizers mtg	1 Petra		2		zoom
May 1	In person staff meeting Athabasca	4				Athabasca
May 5	Berland Working Group mtg	4	16		3.0	Zoom
May 9-10	AB WPAC E&O Committee	1 Ashley				Camrose
May 17-18	MSEAC committee	1 Petra		20	16	Calgary
May 20	NSERC Project kick off mtg	1 Petra		6	1.0	Zoom
May 24	Ft. Assiniboine Pond Day	2 Sarah, A		75	7.0	Ft. Assin
May 25-26	French Creek Planting	4	1		21	French Cr
May 27	WPAC Managers mtg with AEP DM	1 Petra		6		Teams
May 27	Water North Coalition mtg	1 Petra		20		
May 30	Staff in person Athabasca	4				Athabasca
June 1	Thunder Lake Pond Days					Thunder
June 2	Lac La Nonne Pond Days					LLN
June 3	DUC Wetland ID course					Elk Island
June 7	Chip Lake Pond Day	2		100	7.0	Chip Lake
Jun 10	ELC event reimagining rivers	1 Petra		40	6.0	UofA
Jun 11	AWC AGM	4		15	2.5	zoom
Jun 15	In Person Staff mtg / IT check up	4			2.0	Athabasca
Jun 16	Chat with Andre, AWC bus planning	1 Petra			1.0	
Jun 20	WaterSmart Northern Rivers project	2 Pet, Sarah		5	2.0	zoom
Jun 21	Presentation to Yellowhead County	1 Pet		15	0.5	Edson
June 22	NSWA AGM	1 Pet		75	3.0	Edm
June 22	AWC Tech Committee	4	8		2.0	zoom
June 23	Hybrid Board Meeting	3	10			Athabasca
Jun 28	Stream Temp Project Workshop	4	12			zoom
Jun 29	ALUS PAC meeting	1 Sarah		10	3.0	
Jun 29	LLB Ag Appreciation Dinner	2 Pet, Ash		300	3.0	LLB
Jun 30	Presentation to Athabasca County	1 Petra		12		Athabasca

Financial Report:

AWC Income Statement to June 30, 2022		
REVENUE:	Annual Budget	Actual to Date
Donations - website	\$ 500.00	\$ 28.41
Donations - Other	\$ 2,000.00	
Grants (amts rec'd this year)		\$ 27,540.00
AEP Grant	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 200,000.00
Interest Revenue	\$ 200.00	\$ 81.13
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 202,700.00	\$ 227,649.54
Rent/Utilities / internet	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
Telephone / Videoconference	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 267.60
Website (domain, hosting)	\$ 250.00	
Computers & Software	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,115.26
Bank Fees	\$ 150.00	\$ 11.00
Insurance	\$ 2,700.00	
Printing		\$ 35.45
Courier & Postage	\$ 250.00	\$ 18.58
Office Supplies	\$ 500.00	\$ 275.92
Advertising & Promotions	\$ 500.00	\$ 170.61
Gifts of Appreciation	\$ 250.00	
Accounting Expense (Audit)	\$ 5,000.00	
memberships, fees	\$ 100.00	
GST Expense (not reclaimable)	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 52.81
Honorariums	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 100.00
Travel - Mileage	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 819.62
Travel - Accommodation	\$ 500.00	
Travel - Meal Allowance	\$ 500.00	\$ 78.75
Hosting	\$ 2,000.00	
Staff training and development	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 695.09
Staff Salaries	\$ 156,500	\$ 49,082.07
EI Expense (Employer contribution)	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 1,085.84
CPP Expense (Employer contribution)	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 2,615.13
Staff Benefits Program	\$ 2,400.00	\$ 600.00
WCB Expense	\$ 400.00	
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$ 202,500.00	\$ 58,023.73
NET	\$ 200.00	\$ 169,625.81