



**Tawatinaw Watershed Working Group Meeting  
Minutes**

February 4, 2023  
Draft Meeting Minutes

**Attendees:**

Allyn Nelson
Jurgen Pohl
George Ellen
Harvey Scott
Helmut Roeben
Janice Pitman
Jim Lange
Kim Zimmermann
Monica Dahl
Petra Rowell
Rob Minns
Rosemary Neaves
Sarah MacDonald
Wayne Brehaut

**Meeting Summary:**

A group met on February 4, 2023, to discuss watershed stewardship opportunities in the Tawatinaw River watershed. A round table of introductions was held before the group talked about past projects, on-going projects, and projects they would like to see. The group discussed funding opportunities. After that, everyone decided to stay a working group for now and meet 4-6 times per year. The next meeting will be held late March.

**1. Introductions**

- a. A round table of introductions was made.

**2. Roundtable of past, on-going and upcoming projects in the watersheds.**

- a. A round table of past projects, current interests, and ideas for future projects was made (see page 2). The list of projects was then grouped under similar headings. Some discussion about priorities was then had. The group agreed that our areas of focus should be that we should restore fish habitat (potentially someday bringing back grayling) and education initiatives, with more discussion and investigation needed before taking on a more comprehensive monitoring or major habitat restoration projects.

Theme	Potential Projects	Potential Funding Source
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organize a tour of healthy and impacted riparian areas/ a bio blitz / xmas bird count.</li> <li>- Organize all existing reports, videos etc. on a webpage.</li> <li>- Produce a factsheet with programs and resources available to producers and acreage owners in the Tawatinaw.</li> <li>- Promote responsible recreation and/or responsible conservation through signage, social media, etc.</li> <li>- Promote old growth forests and native grasses through signage, social media, etc.</li> <li>- Provide workshops on beaver management, water approvals, private woodlot management, etc.</li> <li>- Organize student field trips to the Tawatinaw River watershed.</li> <li>- Host a shoreline cleanup event in high litter areas.</li> </ul>	Land Stewardship Center Watershed Stewardship Grant
Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use GIS to visually show how land use and land cover has changed in the Tawatinaw over time.</li> <li>- Repeat Mark Spafford water quality study.</li> <li>- Get a water level gauge installed at Nestow.</li> <li>- Do e-DNA testing to determine fish absence/presence / Trap out crayfish (include youth?)</li> <li>- Teach folks to use the watercourse crossing ap (or get staff to go out and do for all crossings?)</li> </ul>	ALPAC GIS data
Restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with a local landowner to undertake a riparian restoration.</li> <li>- Work with the Town of Athabasca to improve riparian health at the mouth of the Tawatinaw</li> </ul>	ALUS program/AWC's Shorelines Initiative/LSC Green Acreages Program
Policy and Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Produce an educational factsheet about relevant legislation affecting landowners and waterbodies.</li> <li>- Do a comparison of municipal policies and bylaws affecting development near water in the Tawatinaw/ study looking at barriers to riparian buffers</li> </ul>	DUC research funds?

### 3. Roundtable to discuss priority projects.

The group decided it would be best to prioritize projects at the next meeting in March.

### 4. Funding opportunities:

- a. Land Stewardship Centre's Watershed Stewardship Grant – Petra and Sarah will let the group know when this grant opens for 2023; will fill it out for an education type project; and will circulate it to the group for feedback before submitting it.
- b. Ducks Unlimited Grant – Petra and Sarah will look into it a bit more but it may be a good grant for longer term research type projects

- c. Alternative Land Use Services program – Rob and Sarah are both involved in the ALUS program and encourage landowners to come forward if they have a project idea / are seeking funding. You can read more about the project here:  
[https://alus.ca/alus\\_community/barrhead-westlock-athabasca/](https://alus.ca/alus_community/barrhead-westlock-athabasca/)
- d. Similar to the ALUS program, acreage owners can apply for funding through the Green Acreages program. Read about it here:  
<https://www.landstewardship.org/enable/programs/green-acreages>

**5. Governance and decision-making structure**

- a. The group agreed to stay as an informal working group for the time being; may become a formal society sometime in the future. Agreed that they should have a Terms of Reference to discuss at an upcoming meeting.
- b. They'd like to meet 4-6 times a year. In person or virtual is fine. Athabasca Train Station works for everyone, but also see the value in having public events around the watershed and meetings in other communities.
- c. Would also like a website to park all relevant information in one place.

**6. Next steps**

Sarah will organize another meeting for the end of March.

Meeting adjourned.