



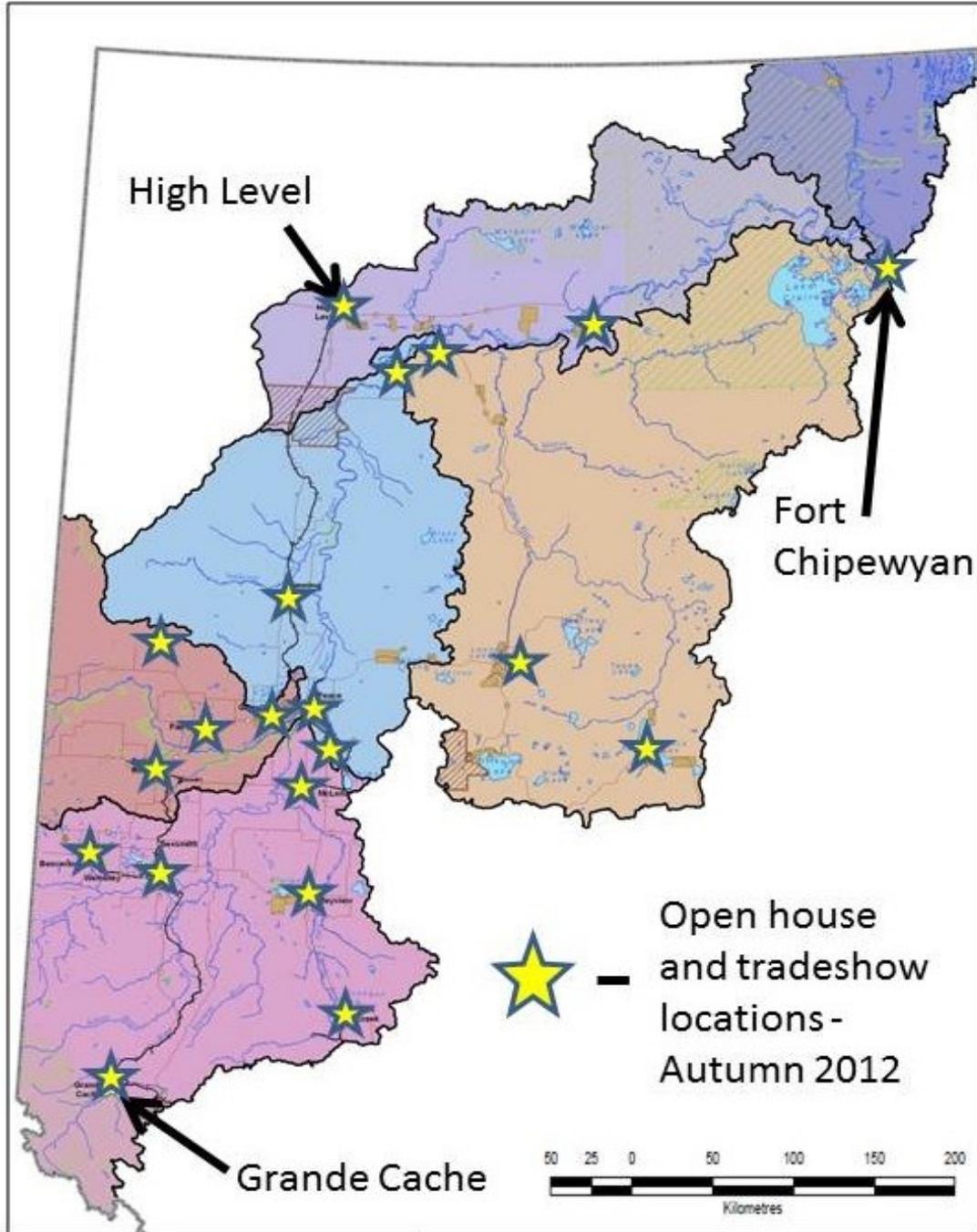
**Mighty Peace  
Watershed Alliance**

Diverse, Responsible & Connected



# ***2012-2013 Annual Report***

## Mighty Peace Watershed and Sub-basins



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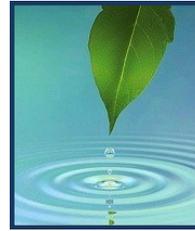
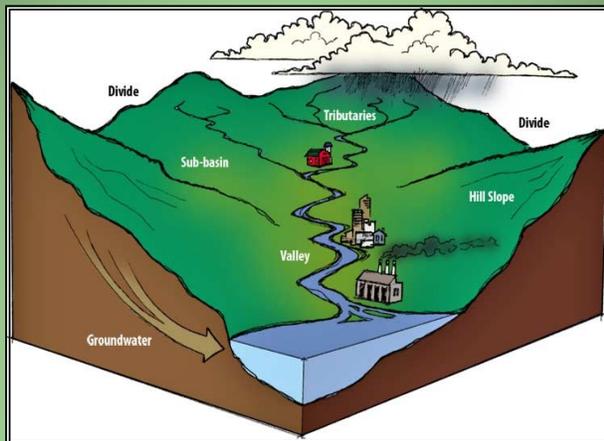
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## Might Peace Watershed Alliance (MPWA)

### WHAT IS A WATERSHED?

The term watershed refers to the geographic boundaries of a particular water body, its ecosystem and the land that drains to it. A watershed includes groundwater aquifers that discharge to and receive discharge from streams, wetlands, ponds, and lakes.

Everyone lives in a watershed. You influence what happens in your watershed, good or bad, by how you treat the natural resources, the soil, water, air, plants, and animals. What happens in your small watershed also affects the larger watershed downstream.



The Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance (MPWA) was formed in 2011 and was designated by the Government of Alberta (GOA) as the official Watershed Planning and Advisory Council (WPAC) for the Peace/Slave River Basin under Alberta's Water for Life Strategy.

The Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance is the 11th WPAC to be formed in the province and was created to address the key outcomes of Alberta's Water for Life Strategy:

- Safe, secure drinking water
- Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems
- Reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy

This multi-sector, not-for-profit society is committed to planning for an ecologically healthy watershed while ensuring environmental, economic and social sustainability.

The Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance is a group of active stakeholders and communities that use consensus, adaptive management, and innovation to understand and promote living within the watershed. The Board will report on the state of the watershed, lead watershed planning activities, promote best management practices and develop educational programs.

### Why I participate.....

I am a member of the Board because our industry (forestry) believes in being responsible stewards of the environment. We operate in a sustainable manner and need to be engaged with groups such as the MPWA. We do this to better understand the watersheds we are located in and to discuss watershed issues with its stakeholders. - **Brian Gilliland, Forestry**

As a board member that represents the Utilities Sector, we (I), see it as important to actively participate with the MPWA and work towards achieving the goals set out in the *Water for Life* strategy: Safe, secure drinking water; healthy aquatic ecosystems; reliable quality water supplies for a sustainable economy. - **Ashley Parker, Utilities**



## **About the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance**

The MPWA is guided by its vision, mission, goals and shared values:

### **VISION**

*The Peace is a healthy, sustainable watershed that supports our social, environmental and economic objectives.*

### **MISSION**

*To promote watershed excellence, the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance will monitor cumulative effects from land use practices, industry and other activities in the watershed and work to address issues through science, education, communication, policy and by supporting watershed stewardship.*

#### **Why I participate.....**

I think I sit on this Board because it is important that we Aboriginal people walk the walk as well as we talk. If the land, air and water are necessary and needed then let's all attempt to ensure it is there for all our children and the future children in our communities. Step up to the plate and try to get the Governments' attention so we as a group can make it happen....nothing happens unless everyone shows some courage to take the right steps! - **Willard Roe, Métis Nation of Alberta**

MPWA's new TAG LINE:

#### ***Diverse, Responsible & Connected!***

**\*Diverse** group of people representing diverse interests.

**\*Responsible** for bringing those interests together.

**\*Connected** to all stakeholders across the watershed area.

### **SHARED VALUES**

The Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance will:

#### **Respect a diversity of peoples and values:**

By demonstrating individual and collective respect for the air, land and water and by appreciating the diversity of values and opinions found in the Peace watershed.

#### **Be an ambassador for the Peace watershed:**

By promoting our vision and mission, demonstrating integrity, accountability and practicality, and practicing effective communication, knowledge-building and consensus decision-making.

#### **Be a trustworthy and credible source of information:**

By being well-informed and providing sound advice through an adaptive watershed approach that integrates traditional, local and scientific knowledge in information-gathering and problem-solving.

#### **Be fair and transparent to all:**

By seeking balanced representation and listening to all stakeholders in an open, transparent manner.

#### **Be inclusive and collaborative:**

By facilitating inclusive and collaborative processes and partnerships, promoting membership and interaction, and providing opportunities for all stakeholders to be involved.

#### **Be innovative and action-oriented:**

By being motivated, resourceful and action-oriented in finding new, innovative ideas and win-win solutions.

#### **Foster Stewardship:**

By encouraging and enabling individuals and organizations to be good stewards of the watershed.



## Message from the Chairman

The past year has seen the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance staff and board travelling the length and breadth of the watershed from Grande Cache to Fort Chipewyan, Wabasca to Beaverlodge and Eureka River. Twenty-one communities in all were visited by board and staff. We heard concerns from people of Fort Fitzgerald on the Slave River, near the NWT border, who drove three hours on the winter road to our Fort Chipewyan open house. They have continuing concerns surrounding proposals for developing hydro resources of the Slave and water contaminants coming down from developments upstream in the watershed.

Concerns in the most developed part of the watershed centered on the security of a quality water supply. The town of Valleyview and the regional supply system for Falher, Donnelly and Girouxville rely on the Little Smoky River but must restrict withdrawals to times of high flow and high turbidity. A number of small system water treatment operators told us of the trials of upgrading staff qualifications as treatment standards advance. Older residents told us of their trips by canoe down our basins major tributaries. Former board member, Harvey Sewepagaham of the Little Red River Cree First Nation, told me; "You won't really know the river until you travel from Peace River to the Peace Athabasca Delta", as we watched members of his family head out by boat from Garden River to hunt moose. So in the coming year we must begin to meld the lifetimes of experiences of the Peace River watershed residents with science and choose indicators of watershed health that we will report on in our State of the Watershed Report.

We did get to talk to the next generation in a few communities. Most places it was just a few, along with their parents, but in Wabasca we visited three grade six classes in the afternoon before our open house. Watershed understanding is alive and well in our schools and they are a good place to get perspectives on the future.

I'd like to thank Rhonda and Adam for all their efforts on our behalf. Checking email you'll see they were often sent out in the wee hours of the night. Adam's sense of humor is still there at

the end of a 17 hour day on the road. I'd like to thank individual board members who give time away from their jobs and families to further our efforts in the biggest watershed in Alberta. A special thanks to Harvey Sewepagaham and Lindee Dumas for the day long tour he gave Adam and I of Jean D'or Prairie, the Vermillion Chutes and Garden River area. A special thanks to Bill Kostiw and Don Thomas, the other departing board members.

Transition funding for the next year will be provided by AESRD so the several month time lapse between fiscal year end and receipt of new year funds that has bedevilled the organization in previous years will not this year. With the fiscal challenge facing our province we will be facing funding challenges. Having travelled our watershed extensively, we do know how costly it is to properly engage the residents, aboriginal communities and stakeholders to do the work of the MPWA.

I'd like to thank all those board members and alternates who participate on the Communications and Technical Committees as well a number of AESRD employees who participate on the Technical Committee. Communications team members select the materials we give out at open houses, work on our regular newsletters and recently designed materials to reach out to the younger residents of the watershed. Technical Committee members reviewed hundreds of pages of technical documents, requests for proposals for our projects and participated in numerous teleconferences with consultants.

Thank you to all those residents of the Peace River Watershed who came to our open houses and the individuals in the communities who worked with us to organize the events.

Sincerely,



Bob Cameron  
Chairman of the Board





### **Message from the Executive Director**

Time and again you hear people exclaim about the vast size and variation of the area we call the Peace Region of Alberta. The same can be said about the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance. The MPWA covers the area that can roughly be described as south of Grand Cache northward to the northern border of Alberta, from the Alberta border on the west and to Wabasca-Desmarais and Lake Claire. In the east. The Peace River Watershed is filled with a great variety of geography, industry, residents, and activities. As we have moved about the watershed this past year, we are again reminded of the beauty that we are afforded by the river and the landscape. We are also reminded that the work we are doing will benefit the people and the landscape - a continual recognition of the relationship between air, land and water as well as the delicate balance between the environment and those who live, work, and play in the watershed.

The Board of Directors of the MPWA have worked diligently at creating a WPAC (Watershed Planning and Advisory Council) that is inclusive and conscientious in its tasks. The Board continues to be dedicated to the work and are committed to the goals of the 'Water For Life Strategy' – Safe, secure drinking water; Healthy aquatic ecosystems; Reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy. I greatly appreciate the talents, skills, insights and experiences that these individuals bring to the table.

This past summer saw the addition of Adam Norris to our staff compliment. Adam joins us in the role of Watershed Coordinator and works in

the areas of general WPAC responsibilities, research and preparation for projects, outreach, and public engagement. His presence has been a tremendous benefit to this organization and we look forward to working together in the future. While we are still looking for consistent office support, the office continues to be a very busy location in McLennan. The supporters of the MPWA are a major asset to our organization – from financial contributions to many forms of in-kind support – we wish to say thank-you. We can only continue our work with your support and assistance.

The MPWA is excited to move forward with the designated work of a WPAC - firstly a State of the Watershed assessment report and secondly an Integrated Watershed Management Plan. The work will be challenging due to large amount of work and the task of sorting through the data and information to put together a complete and watershed- encompassing State of the Watershed report.

We have enjoyed the opportunity to travel the watershed and meet so many of the residents and stakeholders and we most certainly look forward to continued engagement with the people who live, work and play in this tremendous area of Alberta.



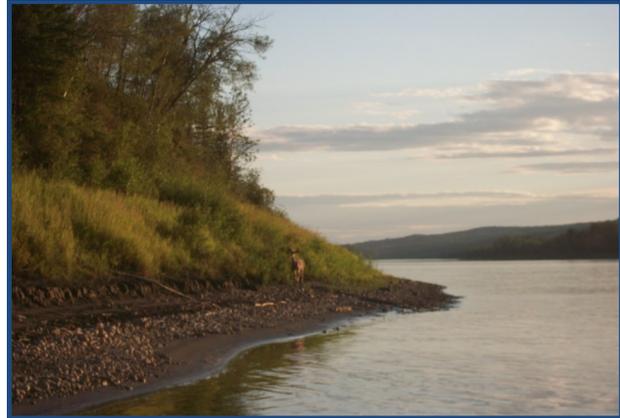
Rhonda Clarke-Gauthier  
Executive Director

## Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance Financial Highlights

Sustained base funding to engage stakeholders, governments, Aboriginal communities and residents in watershed planning continues to be a challenge for the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance. Our primary source of funding has been year-to-year contract with the Government of Alberta. This \$200,000/year contract has been supplemented by contributions in cash and in kind from a small number of partners in industry and our municipal partners. Significant in-kind support has been provided to support MPWA board members. This has really helped to keep our travel and honorarium costs for the board to a minimum.

The base operational funding has been complemented by grant funding from government for specific projects. In the 2012-2013 budget this support was \$95,000.

The Board recognizes that an increase is required in operations funding to support a



sustainable staff function. We are operating with two full time equivalent staff positions plus some contract time. Another full time staff member to bring the minimum staff complement to three is proposed in the 2013-2014 budget. We continue to have discussions with our primary partner and our industry and municipal partners to work toward that goal.

Initial project funding in the amount of \$275,000 is being sought to produce a State of the Watershed Report. The board will continue to work with our partners to increase the project funding available. Also, funding is required for possible on-the-ground and planning projects that MPWA would like to do. The partner support accessed to gather information and to fill gaps in the information available will be reflected in the State of the Watershed Report that we would like to be completed by 2015.

**Geoff Milligan,  
Treasurer**



### ***Financial Snapshot April 1/12-Feb 25/13***

#### ***INCOME***

Sponsorship	29,340.30
Operating Grant (ESRD)	200,000.00
Project Funding (ESRD)	46,000.00
Bank Interest	18.04
Total	275,358.34

#### ***EXPENSES***

Subcontracts – Projects	25,269.80
Salaries, Honoraria & Benefits	123,090.81
Advertising & Promotions	30,121.45
Office & Administration	14,377.25
Travel	36,067.03
Board/Staff Development	1,219.95
Total	230,146.29

Receivables (ESRD Projects)	49,000.00
Projects Funds Payable (as of Feb 25)	19,730.20
Gifts in Kind (Including Office)	217,951.24

***Note: year end is March 31***

**The 2012-2013 Board of Directors**

MEMBER	SECTOR	AFFILIATION
<b>Non-government Organizations</b>		
VACANT	Public-at-large	
Bob Cameron (Chair)	Environmental	South Peace Environmental Association
Jean-Marie Sobze	Research-Education	NAIT Boreal Research Institute nova NAIT Centre for Applied Research
VACANT	Watershed Stewardship	
Kevin McNeil	Recreation-Tourism-Fisheries	
<b>Industry</b>		
Shelleen Gerbig	Agriculture	Smoky Applied Research & Demonstration Association
Brian Gilliland	Forestry	Weyerhaeuser Company Ltd.
Ashley Parker	Utilities	AQUATERA® Utilities Inc.
Kimberley Watson (Vice-Chair)	Oil and Gas	Penn West Petroleum Ltd.
VACANT	Mining	
<b>Aboriginal</b>		
Willard Roe	Métis Nation of Alberta	Métis Nation of Alberta
Curtis Mitchell	Upper Watershed First Nation	Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation
Alden Armstrong	Metis Settlements General Council	Metis Settlements General Council
VACANT	Lower Watershed First Nation	
VACANT	Middle Watershed First Nation	
<b>Governments</b>		
Richard Keillor	Rural Municipalities	Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties – Zone 4
Geoff Milligan (Treasurer)	Small Urban	Town of Peace River
Abdi Said-Omar	Federal-Trans boundary Relations	Alberta Environment and Water
Dan Wong (Secretary)	Large Urban	City of Grande Prairie
John Zylstra	Provincial Government	Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development
<b>Resignations with Regret</b>		
Bill Kostiw (Nov 12)	Public-at-Large	Mackenzie County
Harvey Sewepagaham (Feb 13)	Lower Watershed First Nation	Little Red River First Nation
Don Thomas (Feb 24)	Watershed Stewardship	Clear Hills Watershed Initiative



Bob Cameron



Kimberley Watson



Dan Wong



Geoff Milligan



Jean-Marie Sobze



Shelleen Gerbig



Kevin McNeil



Alden Armstrong



Don Thomas



Ashley Parker



Willard Roe



Richard Keillor



Brian Gilliland



Abdi Siad-Omar



John Zylstra



Curtis Mitchell

## Technical Committee Report

### Scope for the Technical Committee

The technical committee was appointed by the Board of Directors of the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance as a standing committee to assist and advise the board of directors on technical and scientific matters of proposed projects and oversight of technical reports. The technical committee reports directly to the board of directors on a regular basis.

### Members of the Technical Committee for 2012-13:

Abdi Siad-Omar, Bob Cameron, Don Thomas, Rick Keillor, Ashley Parker, John Zylstra, Jean-Marie Sobze, Brian Gilliland, Wayne Kooy, Willard Roe.

The technical committee was actively supported by Adam Norris, Watershed Coordinator, and Rhonda Clarke-Gauthier, Executive Director of the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance.

**Tasks Completed in 2012-2013** - The technical committee had a very busy and productive year. The following projects were successfully managed and completed by the technical team.

**Aquatic Ecosystem Health** - This report was started in the previous year and was completed in this year. This is a comprehensive report that outlines the information available and data gaps regarding aquatic ecosystem health in each of the sub-basins within the bounds of the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance

**Issue Scoping and Project Synthesis Report** - In 2011, the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance had commissioned three technical reports – Drinking Water Quality; Aquatic Ecosystem and Water Supply. These reports summarized what is currently known about these elements, associated issues and challenges and information gaps.

In 2012, the MPWA commissioned an Issues Scoping and Project Synthesis report to integrate and summarize the findings of the technical reports and draw conclusions. The synthesis report was intended to provide a comprehensive picture, key patterns and trends in the watershed. An online survey was also conducted to further gather and verify issues, concerns and challenges facing the Mighty Peace Watershed.

**Public Engagement Forum** – Public engagement, education and outreach are essential components of the mission of the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance. The MPWA hosted 22 public engagement forums across the Peace River watershed in First Nations communities, a Métis Settlement, Urban and Rural communities. The purpose of the public forum was to engage partners, encourage participation and discuss watershed issues, concerns and challenges with residents and stakeholders.

**Wapiti River Water Management Plan Public Consultation Component** – Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, in collaboration with local stakeholders is currently developing a Water Management Plan for the Wapiti River Basin. The Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance is leading the public consultation component and developing the terms of reference for the water management plan. MPWA engaged Charette Pell Poscente Environmental Corp. to draft the terms of reference and facilitate the public consultation process through public open houses and focus group meetings. The ultimate goal of this project is to develop a Terms of Reference and critical to this process is engaging the public and soliciting their feedback and input for the terms of reference.

**Potential Projects for 2013-2014** - The technical committee has reviewed and prioritized the following potential projects for the coming year. The actual details and location will be decided upon the availability of partners and funds. In order of priority the projects are: State of the Watershed report (includes selection of watershed indicators), instream flow needs/ water conservation objectives, source water protection plan, assessment of unregulated drinking water and sewage treatment systems, GIS land use and land cover database, wetland inventory and investigating the history of fish and fishing on the Peace River.

**Abdi Said-Omar, Technical Committee Chair & Adam Norris, Watershed Coordinator**



## **Goals and Highlights of 2012-2013**

*The Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance worked on the 6 Goals that have been established for the organization:*

### **Goal #1 - The Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance is a strong, vibrant, and sustainable organization.**

- Hired a Watershed Coordinator to fulfill duties of project management & the coordination of science and communication under the guidance of the Executive Director.
- Ongoing efforts are seeking to have consistent and effective Administrative support.
- An office was created at the WC Kirkland Building in McLennan (Building leased by the Government of Alberta), with office space provided as an in-kind donation from Alberta Infrastructure.
- Continued work to secure bridge funding to ensure continuous operations between core grants.
- Application for operational year funding submitted to AESRD.
- Application for project funding submitted to AESRD for 2012-2013 year.
- Applications for project funding submitted to two other organizations and in conjunction with partners
- Updated Three year Strategic Plan, completed one year Operational Plan and Budget for 2012-2013.
- MOU with AB WPACs, including WPAC summit, conference & meeting with ESRD Minister.
- Continued efforts to recruit Directors for vacant board positions.

### **Goal #2 - The Board and Members of the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance are well educated about air, water and land issues in the basin and are open to innovative ideas and practices.**

- A synthesis project was undertaken along with an online survey & Public Engagement Forums to learn more about local issues.
- Board of Directors welcomed presenters to their board meetings to gain better understanding of the science and work that is happening within the bounds of the watershed e.g., Wapiti Corridor Planning, ERCB, North Peace Applied Research Association, Update from board members regarding their sectors, tour to northern locations, tour of Aquatera Facility, etc.

- Several Board members participated in the Alberta WPAC Summit and Provincial water conference.

### **Goal #3 - The Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance is well-known and accessible to residents in the basin.**

- The Public Engagement Forums took staff and directors to 21 communities throughout the watershed.
- Attended SARDA & Clearhills tradeshow & Ag Services Board conference.
- Presentations were made to the Clear Hills Watershed Initiative, AAMD&C, Land Stewardship Centre workshop & several councils.
- Distribution of newsletters and brochures to update the communities of the Mighty Peace.
- Participated in the 'Alberta Water Conversations.'
- AGM open to the general public, includes a learning component.

### **Goal #4 - Residents of the Peace watershed have access to safe, secure drinking water.**

- Continue to gather information on the state of drinking water in the Peace watershed.

### **Goal #5 - Water quantity in the Peace watershed is understood and advice on its uses are made to the appropriate bodies.**

- Participated in 'Alberta Water Conversations' and in Wapiti River Water Management Plan.
- Attended BC Hydro open house, PR.

### **Goal #6 - Watershed Stewardship is widely supported by residents throughout the basin.**

- Participated in the Land Stewardship Centre's Stewards in Motion workshop.
- Building capacity for stewardship in the basin through education of the board of current status, data gaps, concerns, needs and possible options for the future.



## Communications Committee Report

Focus for the Communications Committee has been on the creation and execution of an operational plan that aligns with our strategic goals. Our focus is to ensure that the public is well engaged and informed about the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance. To accomplish these goals we looked for ways to strengthen our marketing, kept up with regular newsletters, made sure our website was up to date with the latest information, and sought to be more accessible to the public.

Many public engagement open houses were held in 2012 to inform the public about our progress to date. We also gathered a considerable amount of feedback from the public in regards to local concerns and issues. The MPWA is the largest watershed region in Alberta and a considerable amount of time and effort was put forth by the board of directors and staff to ensure that the entire region was covered. We found the engagement with the public extremely useful and will continue this practice as we work through our projects and eventually develop an Integrated

Watershed Management Plan for the Peace River. One impression that we wanted to address from the public was the perception that the MPWA was a government organization – this is untrue. MPWA is a stakeholder group empowered by the government to provide advice on how our water should be managed. We are currently government and industry funded, but our motivation is to act in the best interest of all the people in the watershed and ensure that the Peace is a healthy, sustainable watershed that supports our social, environmental and economic objectives.

As a final note, we want to thank the public for the warm receptions that we received in their areas. Although attendance levels varied from one community to another, there was a general sense of Canadian hospitality that goes unmatched. We will continue to keep you engaged and will strive to live up to our slogan of being “Diverse, Responsible & Connected”.

**Dan Wong,**  
**Communications Committee Chair**

### Why MPWA.....

The Mighty Peace Watershed is dynamic and changing all the time. For small urban communities the Peace River represents both a threat and an opportunity. For municipalities who see water as the future currency to encourage growth in the region, an understanding of the river and its watershed is critical. The opportunity for growth will be maximized if the resource is both protected and promoted in a sustainable manner.

For communities directly impacted by changes to the Peace River an understanding of the activity in the watershed will be essential to ensuring stability in the flow and health of the river. The next major objective of the MPWA is to establish the State of the Watershed Report. This report will become the baseline for measurement of change and the standard against which the inevitable change in the watershed is measured as either an opportunity or a threat.- **Geoff Milligan, Small Urban Communities**



This year MPWA welcomed **Adam Norris** to the staff team as Watershed Coordinator. Adam is very excited to be working with something as important and challenging as watershed management. His career experience has been in forestry and his education has focused on Ecology, with some involvement in conservation. The purpose of Alberta's *Water for Life* strategy, the framework under which we operate, is something that he is committed to and eager to work toward.



**Financial and In-Kind Supporters**

- Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development
- Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties – Zone 4
- Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development
  - Alberta Infrastructure
  - AQUATERA Utilities Inc.
  - City of Grande Prairie
  - Clear Hills county
  - Clear Hills Watershed Initiative
    - County of Grande Prairie
    - County of Northern Lights
  - Daishowa-Marubeni International Ltd.
    - Fort Vermilion Heritage Centre
    - Fort Vermilion Agricultural Society
  - Grimshaw Gravels Aquifers Management Advisory Association
- Little Red River Cree First Nation
  - Northern Sunrise County
- Municipal District of Opportunity
  - Métis Nation of Alberta
- Metis Settlements General Council
  - Municipal District of Peace
  - NAIT Boreal Research Institute
  - Paddle Prairie Metis Settlement
    - Parks Canada
  - Penn West Petroleum Ltd.
- Smoky Applied Research and Demonstration Association
  - Town of High Level
  - Town of Peace River
  - Town of Valleyview
- Weyerhaeuser Company Ltd

If we have forgotten anyone, we offer our sincere apologies and request you please contact us so that we can remedy it



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