



Mighty Peace

Watershed Alliance

Diverse, Responsible, Connected

2016-2017 Annual Report



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Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance (MPWA): The Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance was designated, since its formation in 2011, by the Government of Alberta (GOA) as the official Watershed Planning and

Advisory Council (WPAC) for the Peace and Slave River Basins under Alberta's Water for Life Strategy. The MPWA was created to address the key outcomes of the Strategy:

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

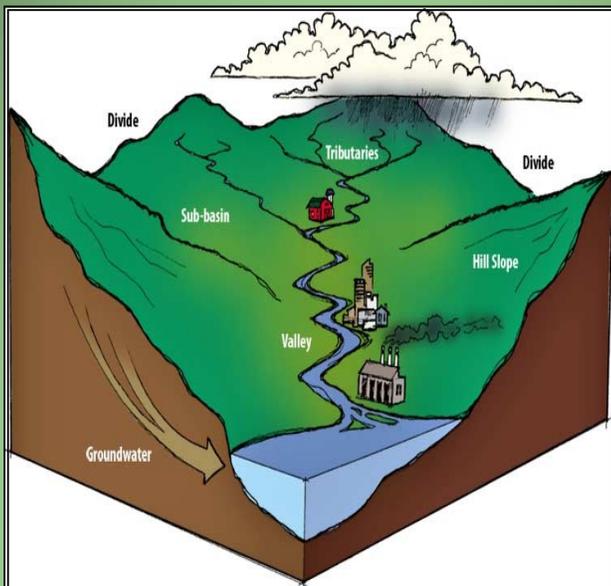
This multi-sector, not-for-profit society is committed to planning for an ecologically healthy watershed while ensuring environmental, economic and social sustainability.

The Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance is a group of active stakeholders and communities that use consensus decision-making, 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.

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.



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.

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:

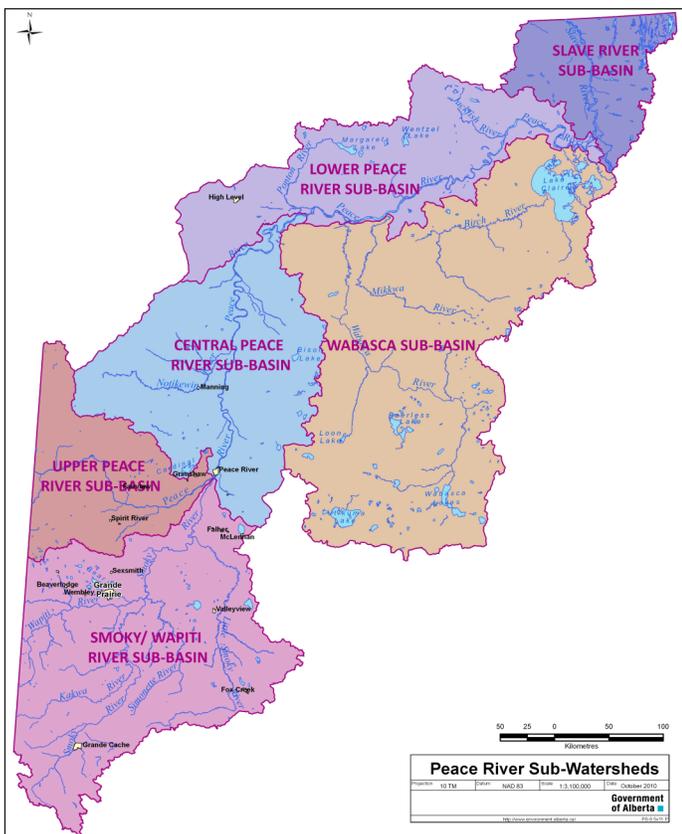
By facilitating inclusive and collaborative processes and partnerships, promoting membership and interaction, and providing opportunities for all stakeholders to be involved.

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.



Diverse, Responsible & Connected!

- **Diverse* group of people representing diverse interests.
- **Responsible* for bringing those interests together.
- **Connected* to all stakeholders across the watershed area.



Message from the Chairman

To begin with I would like to thank the Board of Directors and staff for the opportunity to work with them over the past year, it was an honour and a privilege to serve with such a diverse and committed group of people.

I am happy to report that the two priority areas identified at the last year's annual meeting have seen significant progress: core funding and the Integrated Watershed Management Plan. (IWMP).

We addressed the issue of funding through engagement with the department as well as correspondence to the Minister and a follow up meeting with her. The Minister subsequently announced that a three-year funding program would be implemented.

The DRAFT IWMP has been approved by the board and we are now in the process of heading back out to the stakeholders for consultation and input on it. Thanks to the committee for their hard work developing the plan.

In closing I would ask again: Please look after my river.

Alden Armstrong
Chairman of the Board



Why is Integrated Watershed Management Planning important to my sector...

Planning is the backbone of how we move forward into the future ensuring there is sufficient water for everyone whether it be First Nations, municipal, industry, environment and agriculture to name a few. We will strive to develop a plan to enrich our lives and make our region a better place for future generations.

—Vern Lymburner, Alternate, Small Urban



Message from the Executive Director

Another year has come and gone, what a tremendous year this has been with a variety of projects on the go, many miles travelled, a multitude of engagement opportunities, and major advancements in planning initiatives. The people we have discussed watershed concerns with are as varied as the landscape of the Mighty Peace Watershed.

The Board continues to be dedicated to the work of the organization therefore, spend a great deal of time and effort working, reviewing, learning, educating, reviewing policy, and planning for Integrated Watershed Management. They 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.** All people who are associated with the watershed have a common need for good quality and adequate quantity of water. The work of the MPWA is to engage multiple sectors to plan for future water uses and needs, while protecting water quality and quantity. We would encourage all people of the watershed to think about how they live, work, and play, and see if there are improvements that can be made that will benefit our watershed.

The Watershed Alliance continues to work in areas of education, awareness, providing accurate information, and watershed planning. The board works under a consensus decision making model to ensure that voices from many perspectives - industry, government, non-governmental agencies, aboriginal communities, and the public at large – can be heard and sectors have the opportunity for participation in the planning process for the watershed. MPWA strives to engage stakeholders to find workable actions, beneficial management practices, and provide advice for policies and guidelines.

For the 2016-2017 year, the Staff of the MPWA (Rhonda Clarke-Gauthier - Executive Director, Adam Norris – Watershed Coordinator and Megan Graham – Education & Outreach Coordinator) worked with the board of Directors on a number of projects and initiatives. The Board's role is to frame the goals and objectives of the organization while the staff put the pieces in progress. The staff team continues to lead and support a number of initiatives and general organization responsibilities. I appreciate the continued hard work and dedication of the staff for this not-for-profit, multi-stakeholder organization.

The prominent areas of work include:

- 1) Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) – An IWMP is a complex piece of work that can look at absolutely everything that happens on the landscape that affects water quality and quantity – we are pleased to release the Draft IWMP at the May 2017 AGM. This year saw the establishment of 2 new working groups and the completion of the DRAFT IWMP. The release of the draft will kick-off another round of engagement opportunities with stakeholders regarding this piece of work and the implications of the plan.
- 2) Environment Canada's Environmental Damages Funds projects (Redwillow and Heart River Watershed Restoration Plans).
- 3) The Wapiti River Water Management Plan.
- 4) Continued engagement with councils, stakeholder groups, and residents through meetings, presentations, and forums.
- 5) Increased education opportunities by offering workshops, school presentations, and attending tradeshow.
- 6) Participating in broader processes such as Land Use, Alberta WPACs, Water North Coalition, Play-based pilot projects, etc.
- 7) General Organization and board functioning.

I appreciate the dedication of the Board of Directors and the named alternates who participate in the processes, full day meetings, and education opportunities. Their perseverance to strive towards sound ways forward to protect our water resources while ensuring Albertans can live, work and play in this watershed is duly noted. There are no easy conversations in a multi-stakeholder consensus decision making board. I commend these people for their passion and willingness to do this very important work on behalf of all inhabitants within the geographic scope of a watershed that covers approximately 30% of the Province of Alberta. The experience, insights and knowledge that the Watershed Planning and Advisory Council Board of Directors bring to the table is invaluable.

A very big thank you is sent to all the supporters of the MPWA as you are a major asset to this organization, whether financial contributions or various forms of in-kind support. MPWA can only continue to do work on behalf of Albertans through your support and assistance.

Rhonda Clarke-Gauthier
Executive Director



Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance Financial Highlights 2016/2017

The Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance (MPWA) continues to forge ahead despite financial challenges and a downturn of the economy. As the youngest of eleven Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils, and boasting the largest land base of all the WPAC's in Alberta, we have completed several milestones and benchmarks. It is the dedication and support of directors and participating stakeholders that drives this progress.

The MPWA secured \$433,683.95 total grant and sponsorship dollars in 2016/17; \$394,391.61 of AEP grant, \$34,144.34 of Environmental Damages Fund (EDF – Federal Government) and \$5,148.00 other funds. The AEP grant funds the operation expenses of the MPWA as well as partial funding of various projects. The project that the AEP money was specifically used for was the advancement of the Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) Project. The \$34,144.34 EDF money was used to complete a Heart River Watershed Restoration Plan and projects, as well as continued work on the Redwillow Restoration Plan and Fish Passage. While the amount of AEP grant dollars may seem adequate, it is only 75% of the total ask. Once again there was a struggle regarding the timeliness of receiving the funds as it was early August before funds were distributed.

The AEP process allows for an initial deposit of 80% of the awarded funds with the remaining distributed following the completion of the interim report. This creates challenges as planned actions cannot move forward until funds are available. The MPWA was again forced to complete its annual work plan in about 8 months. The funding agreement states that there must not be any carryover. In actual fact, if the MPWA did not allow for a carryover, it would close its doors from April 1 until funds are in place. This could be a real detriment to acquiring and retaining staff in the long term.

The MPWA remains heavily supported through in-kind support, however, the ability of industry, Municipalities, and other groups to support the group financially with the economic downturn in the area has been limited. Costs for the group to move around the watershed and connect with the residents of the area are high because of large distances. The MPWA conducts business by conference calls as much as possible. Internet contact still remains poor in many areas and is not always a reasonable alternative for face to face meetings yet.

Financial support for local projects the MPWA manages has been excellent. As a young not-for-profit group, we are building on our good reputation for spearheading projects and multi-stakeholder planning. I suspect that financial support will follow.

We would like to thank AEP as our primary partner and supporter. We would also like to recognize and thank our various municipal, industry and not-for-profit partners for their financial and in-kind support. In 2017, we plan to engage with the communities and gather feedback on the draft IWMP. We look forward to meeting you and discussing your thoughts and ideas on how to maintain and build the Mighty Peace Watershed.

Shelleen Gerbig
Treasurer



Financial Snapshot April 1/16-Mar 31/17

INCOME

Sponsorship	5,148.00
AEP Grant	394,391.61
Environmental Damage Funds	34,144.34
HCSB Hiring Credit	220.20
Bank Interest	96.74
Total	434,000.89

EXPENSES

Subcontracts – Projects	117,633.98
Salaries, Honoraria & Benefits	191,855.94
Advertising & Promotions	11,881.06
Office & Administration	24,725.26
Travel	56,356.48
Board/Staff Development	4,919.05
Total	407,371.77

Note: Environmental Damages Funds are carried forward year to year until end of project 2016/2017.

***Gifts in Kind (Incl. Office space)
\$305,457.68***

The 2016-2017 Board of Directors

Member	Sector	Affiliation
Non-Government Organizations		
Bob Cameron	Conservation- Environmental	Peace River Environmental Society
Jean-Marie Sobze	Research- Education	NAIT Boreal Research Institute- novaNAIT Center for Applied Research
Cathy Newhook	Watershed Stewardship	West County Watershed Society
Dave Hay	Recreation- Tourism- Fisheries	
Richard Keillor (Treasurer)	Public-At-Large	
David Walty	Public-At-Large	
Industry		
Ashley Rowney (Secretary)	Utilities	AQUATERA® Utilities Inc.
Ian Daisley	Forestry	Alberta Forest Products Association
Natalia Rossiter-Thornton	Oil and Gas	Seven Generations Energy LTD.
Shelleen Gerbig (Vice Chair)	Agriculture	Smoky Applied Research & Demonstration Association (SARDA)
VACANT	Mining	
Aboriginal		
Alden Armstrong (Chair)	Metis Settlement General Council	Metis Settlement General Council
VACANT	Upper Watershed First Nation	
VACANT	Middle Watershed First Nation	
Jim Webb	Lower Watershed First Nation	North Peace Tribal Council
Sylvia Johnson	Métis Nations of Alberta	Presidents Region VI
Government		
Abdi Siad-Omar	Federal Transboundary Relations	Alberta Environment and Parks
Chris Thiessen	Large Urban	City of Grande Prairie
Elaine Manzer	Small Urban	Town of Peace River
Dan Benson	Provincial Government	Alberta Agriculture and Forestry
Elaine Garrow	Rural Municipalities	AAMDC- Northern Zone- MD of Spirit River



Abdi Siad-Omar



Alden Armstrong



Ashley Rowney



Bob Cameron



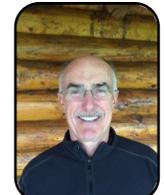
Chris Thiessen



Cathy Newhook



Dan Benson



David Walty



Dave Hay



Elaine Garrow



Elaine Manzer



Ian Daisley



Jean-Marie Sobze



Jim Webb



Natalia Rossiter-Thornton



Rick Keillor



Shelleen Gerbig



Sylvia Johnson

Thank you to the Board members. We are very thankful and appreciative for your contributions.

We also acknowledge the contributions of named alternates: Barry Dibb, Bin Xu, Courtney Hughes, Eric Jorgenson, Jennifer Ezekiel, John Zylstra, Jon Anaka, Lindee Dumas, Lindsay Stephens, Michelle Gairdner, Ray Skrepnek, Robert Thompson, Roxie Rutt, Sebastien Dutrisac, Stan Delorme, Tony Saunders, Vern Lymburner.

Technical Committee Report

Scope of the Technical Committee

The Technical Committee (TC) was appointed by the Board of Directors of the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance as a standing committee. Their role is 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 Committee for 2016/17:

Abdi Said-Omar, Ashley Rowney, Bob Cameron, Elaine Garrow, Jean-Marie Sobze, John Zylstra, Ian Daisley, Lindsay Stephens, Richard Keillor, 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 2016/2017

The Heart River Watershed Restoration Project came to an official end with the completion of the restoration plan and implementation projects. Collaboration with partners from this project continues on other work.

The Redwillow Watershed Restoration Project has finalized their Restoration Plan and is awaiting appropriate water conditions to work on fish passage improvement. This project involves many partners.

The Alberta Parks and Environment led Wapiti River Water Management Plan is pushing to finalize water conservation objectives based upon extensive technical work. Then the Wapiti River Water Management Plan Steering Committee will engage those in the watershed on the plan before finalizing it.

MPWA has been an active stakeholder on the Alberta Energy Regulator's Area Based

Regulatory panel for the MD of Greenview looking at the use of fresh water in non-conventional plays. This project is now complete and the report is out.



Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP)

An IWMP Steering Committee has guided the IWMP process. Over the past two years, four working groups were convened and provided recommendations to the Board who then created a Draft IWMP based on their work. Thanks to all the working group members. The Draft IWMP will be released at the 2017 AGM.

Projects for 2017/2018

The IWMP will continue to be a primary focus in 2017/18 as engagement on the Draft Plan occurs. New projects include starting work on a source water protection plan for the Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer. As well funding has been secured to work on a Stream Rehabilitation Project and an Improved Livestock Crossing Project both in the County of Grande Prairie. We are excited about the ongoing and expanding collaboration with partners to get project work done. Project scoping is occurring for a couple of projects in the Wabasca sub-watershed about wetlands and ground/surface water interactions.

Adam Norris
Watershed Coordinator





Education and Stewardship Committee Report

The former **Communications Committee** is now identified as the **Education and Stewardship Committee**. The focus is to be on:

1. Education and Awareness of water, stewardship, and watershed health.
2. Outreach to engage with stakeholders of the Watershed.
3. Improved Communications through website, factsheets, brochures, social media, etc.
4. Encouraging sponsorship of MPWA and its watershed planning and work.

There have been a number of changes and improvements to the organization website. Recently added features such as an interactive map, a watershed flow animation, and a narrated video are a few of the updates. Take a few moments to check the website out at www.mightypeacewatershedalliance.org for information on the organization, the projects, the State of the Watershed, and the Integrated Watershed plan.

Please share your comments about the IWMP and the website with the Directors and the Staff.

Why is Integrated Watershed Management Planning important to my sector...

IWM planning is important because different regions within our sector are dependent upon various sources of good water quality and volumes to maintain our healthy towns, villages and hamlets from the main stem of the Peace to various streams, rivers and ground water sources. Anything affecting the sources of our water effects the health of our residents.

-Elaine Manzer, Small Urban



Why is Integrated Watershed Management Planning important to my sector...

The IWMP sets the collectively agreed to priorities for watershed improvement, begins the structured implementation of actual on the ground actions and encourages participation through acknowledgement and linkages to partner watershed project successes

-David Walty, Member at Large

Education & Outreach Report

Within the past year the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance has had amazing opportunities to go out and meet with the public within the watershed.

MPWA had the chance to go to local schools within the Peace Watershed to educate the students on water quality and conservation. We also attended local events to share resources with the public.

Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance participated in a number of tradeshow (Peace River Tradeshow, Grande Prairie Spring Home and Garden, Fall Home and Leisure, Clear Hills Country, Peace Country Classic and Smoky River Agriculture Show) where we had the opportunity to hand out education resources and engage with the public so they could learn more about their local watershed and projects.

At the tradeshow we were able to provide education about the current projects such as our Integrated Watershed Management Plan.

MPWA also hosted two public forums this year; one on Source Water Protection Planning (why planning is important and the steps needed to do a plan) with guest speakers from Alberta Health and Town of Grande Cache. 35 people attended. The second forum was on Invasive Species and Recreational vehicle use with guest speakers Janine Higgins from Alberta Environment and Parks as well as Sonja Raven from the County of Grande Prairie.

For the upcoming 2017-2018 fiscal year the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance is looking forward to engaging the residents of the Peace Watershed and continuing to create more education opportunities for the public.



Megan Graham
Education & Outreach
Coordinator



Why is Integrated Watershed Management Planning important to my sector

IWMPs provide advice to the Government of Alberta on policy and regulatory decision-making authority for land and resource management that impact agriculture.

-Dan Benson, Provincial Government



Highlights of 2016-2017

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.

- Met with the Minister of Energy & MLA for Dunvegan Central Peace Notley.
- Met with Ministers of Environment and Energy in Aug.
- 7 Board meetings in various locations: McLennan, Grande Prairie, Falher, Peace River, Wabasca; plus Conference calls.
- Discussion with Regional AEP about priorities .
- Conversations and planning with Watershed Planning and Advisory Council (WPAC) managers and Alberta Environment & Parks - about funding & solutions, structure, purpose.
- Board Development opportunities: 13 members attended WPAC Summit in Calgary, Two 2-day facilitated board workshops, Source Water Protection Updates for Grande Cache and Wabasca, Seven Generations Energy Tour.
- Further development of policies and processes.
- Discussions with various councils about MPWA work.

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.

- Presentation by Bigstone Cree Elder Albert Yellowknee.
- Participated in AEP/WPAC Forum, Alberta Ecotrust's Breakthrough Gathering, & Recreational Lakes Forum.
- Struck 2 working groups—Peace River Flow Regime & Groundwater —as part of IWMP process. Draft recommendations were received.
- MPWA hosted Invasive Species & Recreation workshop & Source Water Protection workshop.
- Presentations for and discussion with various groups: NEW water Ltd, College of AB Professional Forest Technologists, CAPP Water Table, Peace Country Beef and Forage Association, Mackenzie Municipal Services Agency, Tolko, Wapiti Area Synergy Group, North Peace Tribal Council, and High Level Forestry Advisory Committee, AEP regional staff.

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

- Participated in 1 Alberta Association Municipal Districts & Councils—Northern Zone Meeting and 1 Northern Alberta Elected Leaders Meeting.
- Produced 2 newsletter, articles for SARDA's Back 40, maintained website and Facebook page, attended tradeshow (Grande Prairie Home & Leisure, GP Home

& Garden, Peace River & District Chamber of Commerce, Peace Country Classic Agri-Show, & Smoky River Ag Tradeshow).

- Continued Awareness and Education Campaign for Heart River (HWRP) and Redwillow Watershed Restoration project (RWRP).
- Guided toured through Fox Lake and surrounding area (North Peace Tribal Council) - discussions regarding water and watershed concerns.
- Presentation to PENWAR (Pacific Northwest Economic Region) Summit regarding WPAC successes.

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

- Hosted a Source Water Protection Planning Forum in Grande Prairie with guest speakers Debra Mooney and Jennifer Guth with the Government of Alberta.
- Continue to work with the Wapiti River Watershed Management Project (WRWMP).
- Presented to Water North Coalition and participated in meetings.
- Continue work with the partners in the RWRP and HWRP, both plans were in the implementation phase.
- Met with Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer Management Advisory Association to discuss IWMP and source water protection planning.

Goal #5 - Water quality, quantity and seasonal rate of flow in the Peace watershed is understood and advice on its uses are made to the appropriate bodies.

- Ongoing WRWMP work
- Ongoing conversation with AMISK, Parks Canada, and Municipalities.
- Participated in AER's Area Based Regulation Panel for the MD of Greenview regarding fresh water use.
- IWMP working groups from Sept to Jan.
- Attended Wetland Policy Changes presentations at Hines Creek, Cleardale and Rycroft.

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

- Attended West County Watershed Society's AGM
- Engaged in conversations at Tradeshow
- Rain Barrel Sales and Awareness Program
- Hosted a Invasive Species & Recreation workshop in Grande Prairie with Guest Speakers Janine Higgins with Alberta Environment and Parks and Sonja Raven with the County of Grande Prairie

Financial and In-Kind Supporters

Agroforestry Woodlot Extension Society
Alberta Agriculture & Forestry
Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties
– Zone 4
Alberta Conservation Association
Alberta Environment and Parks
Alberta Geological Survey
Alberta Infrastructure
Alberta Newsprint Company
Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society (Cows
and Fish)
AQUATERA Utilities Inc.
City of Grande Prairie
County of Grande Prairie
County of Northern Lights
EnCana Corporation
Environment Canada
Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer Management Advisory
Association
Knelsen Sand and Gravel
Mackenzie County
Métis Nation of Alberta

Metis Settlements General Council
Municipal District of Fairview
Municipal District of Greenview
Municipal District of Peace
Municipal District of Smoky River
Municipal District of Spirit River
NAIT Boreal Research Institute
Northern Sunrise County
North Peace Tribal Council
Parks Canada
Peace Country Beef and Forage Association
Q99 Radio Station
SARDA Ag Research
Seven Generations Energy Ltd.
Shell Canada
Smith's Landing First Nation
Town of Peace River
Town of Beaverlodge
Town of Fox Creek
Victory GIS
West County Watershed Society

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



Southview Lookout
September 19, 2013
Credit: Adam Norris

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