



December 2012

Diverse, Responsible & Connected

Issue #4

*Flow of the Peace  
"Current Eddies"*

**UPSTREAM**

**Open Houses**  
**Jan. 08/13: 4-8 pm**  
 Wabasca/Desmarais  
 Community Hall  
**Jan. 15/13: 11 am—3 pm**  
 Fort Chipewyan  
 Mamawi Community Hall  
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**Land Stewardship Center presents: Stewards in Motion** – Connecting with Municipalities to advance Grass Roots Change. Speaker Guy Greenway, Miistakis Institute who will be speaking on the intersection between municipalities and stewardship. Registrations at [www.landstewardship.org/stewards-motion/](http://www.landstewardship.org/stewards-motion/)

**January 31 /13: 9am- 3 pm**  
 TEC Center, Evergreen Park , GP  
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**CWRA & AB WPAC Conference—March 12-14 in Red Deer.** Water and the Environment: Watershed Planning and Management in Alberta, which reflects Alberta’s growing emphasis on the integrated planning and management of land and water resources. For further info - <http://cwra-ab-events.org/conf.html>  
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**Annual General Meeting  
 March 22/2013**  
 Sawridge Inn & Conference  
 Centre, Peace River, AB  
 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

**Look at us Flow...**  
 The MPWA has had a busy fall as we (board of director members and staff) have moved around the watershed hosting open houses, attending various council meetings, and traveling in and around the area talking with residents and stakeholders. We have been working towards finding out what the local residents know about the water and the watershed.

One of the questions we have had from people is: What can/will the MPWA do for me? Interesting question. The current tasks of the MPWA is to gather information to develop a State of the Watershed Report – this assessment will let us know what the current state of the watershed is (land and water). It will also set the foundation for moving towards an Integrated Watershed Management Plan. This Plan will address the ways that we may move forward to deal with the current and future needs of water in the Peace Watershed. Your thoughts, opinions, concerns and questions are critical to us so that we may gain a better understanding of this vast watershed. While there are similar issues in many areas of the Watershed, there are some very distinct issues and concerns in others. South to Grand Cache , North to Wood Buffalo National Park, West o the BC border, East to Wabasca/Desmarais—loosely describes this watershed. Our work will lead to a plan that will be submitted to the GOA to be used in making future decisions with regards to development, allocations, Best Management Practises, etc. This is why your input is critical in our work and how our work will impact you.

Feel free to connect with us at the office or through the website to find out what is happening with the MPWA and your watershed.

**"TIS THE SEASON TO SHAKE  
 HANDS, SING SONGS, & SHARE  
 STORIES" --  
 MERRY CHRISTMAS &  
 HAPPY NEW YEAR 2013  
 FROM MPWA BOARD OF  
 DIRECTORS AND STAFF.**

Newsletter produced with support from ESRD

**What Flows**

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**New Addition**

**Staff**

**“Paula Griffin”**

Paula is from Grande Prairie & she is very excited to be working for MPWA as our new Executive Assistant/Admin Support . Paula says “that the past few days has opened the door towards a new learning curve in my life. My previous career experience in administration, accounting, and marketing provides me with a good base to successfully move forward into the world of Watershed management. I look forward to meet all of you board members, friends, staff of MPW”. Besides work, Paula has (2) daughters to keep her busy ...Kaity & Maddie aged 14 yrs and 4 yrs old.



**Membership with the MPWA is free!**

Consider being a member to receive updates and newsletters. Forms are available on website or through office.



**Watershed Planning**



We are presently gathering information about our watershed as well as the concerns of residents to provide direction for our organization. Next we will do a State of the Watershed Report – a snapshot of the condition that the watershed is currently in. Then we will work towards an Integrated Watershed Management Plan. This plan will not only consider what we know about our watershed and the concerns people have, but also the interests of all those who use water. It’s a framework for watershed management in the Peace region. This plan will be submitted to the Government of Alberta for approval and to be considered by the government when dealing with watershed management issues in the area. After this we will focus more on monitoring and education.

**Adam Norris,**  
**Watershed Coordinator**



**Board Members**

Government	Industry	Non-Governmental Organizations	Aboriginal Communities
Federal-Transboundary Relations * -Abdi Siad-Omar	Agriculture -Shelleen Gerbig	Conservation/Environment -Bob Cameron	Métis Nation of Alberta -Willard Roe
Provincial -John Zylstra	Forestry * -Brian Gilliland	Watershed Stewardship * -Don Thomas	Métis Settlement General Council * -Alden Armstrong
Large Urban * -Dan Wong	Oil & Gas -Kimberley Watson	Research/Education -Jean-Marie Sobze	Upper Watershed First Nation * -Curtis Mitchell
Small Urban -Geoff Milligan	Utilities -Ashley Parker	Member-at- Large * -Vacant	Middle Watershed First Nation * -Vacant
Rural Municipality -Richard Keillor	Mining * -Vacant	Tourism/Fisheries/Recreation * -Kevin McNeil	Lower Watershed First Nation -Harvey Sewepagaham

**Elections:** *There are several board seats that will be up for election at the March 22, 2013 AGM. The positions are for a 2 year term. Those up for election are denoted above with an \**



## *Updates of Current MPWA Projects*

The most prominent project that we are currently doing is the **Public Engagement Forums**. This project aims to gather local knowledge about the watershed as well as to provide us with a sense of the concerns out there regarding the watershed and potential solutions. A further component of this project is increasing the profile of the MPWA. An extensive advertising campaign has accompanied these open houses so that I rarely talk to someone without them mentioning that they heard us on the radio. The events have had an attendance ranging from no one to almost 50 people. Through the process we have developed relationships with a range of people across the region.

So far the main concerns are safe, secure drinking water (a goal of the *Water for Life* strategy), appropriate moisture for agriculture, agricultural runoff, industrial use of water (fracking is a big concern) and changing hydrological regimes (such as changes in precipitation, stream flows and lake levels). This provides us guidance for moving forward, choosing new projects, research and continued public engagement.

Our Issues Scoping and Project Synthesis report is moving along quite well and the online survey is a good tie in to the Public Engagement Forums. We encourage all and sundry to do the online survey at our website [www.mightypeacewatershedalliance.org](http://www.mightypeacewatershedalliance.org) and help us to better understand our watershed and the issues we need to act on. The final report for this project will be done in February and will also help us understand the gaps in our knowledge.

A third project that we are involved with is the Wapiti River Management Plan. This process is being led by Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development and involves the major users of the lower Wapiti River. This project is starting to move ahead and the MPWA will be involved with developing the Terms of Reference.

### **Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance**

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Note: "like" us on [Facebook!](https://www.facebook.com/mightypeacewatershedalliance)

## *Wapiti Corridor Planning Society—Key Messages*

### **Guest Submission - Jim Hammond**

- The Wapiti Corridor Planning Society's goal is to create, through an open, transparent and inclusive process; a multi-use vision, plan, and recommendations for the Wapiti River Valley from Pipestone Creek to the Smoky River that accommodates, protects and balances both the current and future needs of the area and its people.
- The Wapiti Corridor Plan was developed by a large group of local residents who represented a good cross section of members of the local population who have interests in the Wapiti Corridor land base.
- The "Plan" had more involvement of the local population in its creation than any previously developed plan for the area.
- The Wapiti Corridor plan was developed recognizing the "demands" of the close urban center of Grande Prairie on the land base, and the impact of recreational equipment such as OHV's on others; it provides the opportunity to change land use practices to those that better meet the needs of the area.
- The acceptance and implementation of the Wapiti Corridor Plan will result in "less environmental damage" to the land base. It will also result in "less conflict" between various users of the Wapiti Corridor.
- If the recommendations of the Wapiti Corridor Plan are implemented, there will be more recreational opportunities developed in the Corridor.

*For more info email: [wcps@wapiticorridor.ca](mailto:wcps@wapiticorridor.ca)*

### ***Notice 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.

***Chairman Report—The Adventures of the Watershed***

Since late August, members of the board of the MPWA have been accompanying our Watershed Coordinator, Adam Norris, at many of the scheduled open houses throughout our watershed. As chairman I've tried to attend as many as possible myself. I've attended the Grande Prairie, Peace River, Valleyview, Beaverlodge, Falher, Spirit River and Eureka River open houses. Adam and I also attended community events called "Get to know you nights" in High Level and La Crete in mid-September.

On Sept 13<sup>th</sup>, Board member Harvey Sewepagaham and Jean D'Or resident Lindee Dumas gave Adam and I a tour of Jean D'or Prairie, the Fox Lake ferry, Vermillion Chutes area, as well as the community of Garden River (just inside the west boundary of Wood Buffalo National Park). We learned of boil water advisories in Jean D'or Prairie, flood threats to the community from the creek that supplies their water, and got to see a traditional use area on the Peace River. Then we set out on the worst road to any community in Alberta -the road to Fox Lake. Fox Lake is a community of 2500 people on the south side of the Peace River. This Community can be reached by a two small ferries, one private and a new one owned by the band but the road from Jean D'or Prairie to the ferry is an adventure experience worthy of the 1950's. Thankfully the road was dry. We didn't cross on the ferry but did witness the large portable pump running to fill the community's reservoir with water from the Peace River. En route we drove up to within a mile of the Vermillion Chutes and saw the limestone outcrops below the chutes. It's late November as I write this but don't know whether vehicles can safely cross the Peace yet. As one can imagine there's a period in spring when people from Fox Lake can't cross the disintegrating ice or travel the winter road south of the river into the community from Ft. Vermillion.

Then it was on to Garden River, a community of around 500 inside Wood Buffalo National Park. The community is currently negotiating for reserve land to be set aside within the park. Band members have trapping and hunting rights within the park except for buffalo, which the

park was established to protect. Harvey's uncle was just embarking for a moose hunt on the river while his wife and grandsons watched. The river is wide there and full of constantly moving sandbars so the boat was slowly making its way into the deeper channel as we chatted with Harvey's family members. The youngest of the grandsons, just three, was quite sad about not getting to go along. His older brother, the ripe old age of five, said it was because he would scare the moose. When I asked the youngest if he could call a moose he gave just as good a call as I could.

I've told this story because the challenge we face is for the future - in the bright eyes of those two young boys. We're charged with bringing the diverse human experience of the water in our watershed, as recorded in the memories of basin residents, and science together in words on paper. We do this so that we can confidently say we've done our level best at determining the state of the water and watershed for 30% of Alberta's landscape. Early in the new year, we'll have words on paper from what people shared through our on-line survey and at our open houses.

On another note, virtually every conversation I've had in my community really gets rolling when I ask, "How deep is your well?". Debolt is an area of deeper wells ranging from 300 ft (close to Crooked Creek) to 500 ft (close to me) and getting to 800 ft (close to the Smoky River). Many rural families can share stories about lovely white clothing stained or greyed by high iron content in their water supplies. Also, there are ongoing trials of well failure in the depth of winter. Many still truck water in their own vehicles from the rural water points at Crooked Creek, Goodwin and Puskwaskau.

The stories of this watershed are varied and we look forward to hearing many more.

**Bob Cameron,  
MPWA Chairman**



***Notes from the Executive Director's Desk!***

There have been a number of items on my mind since our last newsletter—funding opportunities, finding the right staff compliment, current and possible upcoming projects, resident and stakeholder thoughts and concerns about water and the watershed, education opportunities...and the list continues. There are many discussions to be had and information to gather.

I would like to thank the board for their participation in the open houses and all of the people who came to share information with us. If you missed us, or have other information or ideas to share, please connect with us through mail, phone or email. I think it is safe to say that Adam has seen many unique areas in the last 2 months.

As for staff, I am pleased to welcome Paula, admin support, to the MPWA.

**Rhonda Clarke-Gauthier**



***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.**