



July 2019

Diverse, Responsible & Connected

Issue #18

Flow of the Peace

What Flows

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AGM Update

On May 24th, we hosted our 9th Annual General Meeting at the Sawridge Inn & Conference Centre in Peace River.

The day consisted of nomination of board members, updates about the organization and its work, technical projects, educational programs, outreach opportunities and planning initiatives.

There was also a presentation from Andrew Paul who works as the Provincial Environmental Flow Specialist for Alberta Fish and Wildlife. His presentation focused on the history of environmental flow management in Alberta. Andrew has been working as an aquatic ecologist within Western Canada for 25 years, his work has encompassed the fields of conservation biology, community restoration, non-native species invasions, population ecology and river ecology.



Forest Fires, the Watershed & Source Water

Save the Date:
October 30, 2019
Grande Prairie

Forest Fires are prominent in the Boreal forest and their effects are immediate and can be severe. The changes in watershed function have implications for Source Water and how we protect it.

Featuring Guest Speakers:
Dr. Uldis Silins & Dr. Colin Cooke

To be added to the event distribution list please contact:
mpwa.admin@telus.net



For more information on the AGM please contact our office at (780) 324-3355 or email mpwa.admin@telus.net.



From the Executive Director 's Desk By Rhonda Clarke-Gauthier

As we move into another year of operations, we continue to focus on some ongoing projects such as Source Water Protection Planning of the Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer, Riparian Health Improvement Projects (streambank stabilization, monitoring Redwillow, livestock crossings), organizing a Source Water Protection Plan initiative for Wapiti River, Education opportunities for youth in the form of school presentations and 'Walk through the Forest Days', and organizing volunteers for LakeKeepers monitoring to name a few. We are also planning for new activities that address a number of the recommendations found in the MPWA IWMP (Integrated Watershed Management Plan). If you have thoughts regarding these projects or other potential activities, please contact the office.



This vast watershed presents a number of concerns around water quality and quantity. The effects of fire on the watershed has become a bigger discussion topic (we are planning a fall event addressing this item). As well, Some areas of the watershed are experiencing drought and others excess water (and sometimes both in the same neighbourhood). As these events occur, people need to address how we can better protect and manage our water resources – what are the things that happen on the landscape (planned or unplanned) that have major and long lasting consequences to our water supply? How can we work to better protect the water? What can we change, maintain, or improve to ensure we have safe secure drinking water, healthy aquatic ecosystems, and reliable quality water for sustainable economy? These are big questions and procrastination is not anyone's friend in these discussions. The MPWA with the assistance and contributions from many of the stakeholders of the watershed, produced an IWMP (Integrated Watershed Management Plan) that has a number of recommendation within it the provide a path towards ensuring beneficial management practices are being upheld to deal with a number of watershed concerns. This plan can be found on our website.

Enjoy your summer in the beautiful landscape of the Peace and Slave Watersheds!

Staff Tour of BC's Peace Country

In June, the MPWA staff had the opportunity to travel into BC and explore our neighbouring province's Peace Country. As some of you may know, the headwaters of our watershed start in the Rocky Mountains of British Columbia before flowing into Alberta; however we rarely make it across the border to see where our water comes from.

One thing British Columbia Peace has that Alberta Peace does not are dams; along our tour we were able to view Peace Canyon Dam, tour of the W.A.C Bennet Dam and visit the construction area of the future Site C Dam. Site C Dam is the third dam to be on the Peace River and is estimated to be completed by 2024. Site C will generate approx. 35% of the energy produced at W.A.C Bennet Dam but with only 5% of the reservoir. However, even though the imprint on the landscape will be smaller it will still have a big impact on communities within the area and throughout BC and Alberta.

During the tour we also met with the Kiskatinaw River Watershed in Dawson Creek. The Kiskatinaw watershed is the drinking water supply for the City of Dawson Creek, Pouce Coupe and rural water users with an upward of 200,000 people relying on the water from Kiskatinaw River. Their watershed group has taken on several water management and planning initiatives over the years. If you would like to view some of there initiatives please visit their website: <https://www.dawsoncreek.ca/departments/infrastructure/water-environmental/watershed-stewardship-program/>



W.A.C Bennet Dam

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.

Watershed Coordinator Adam Norris

Thanks to the members of North Peace Tribal Council and the lower watershed First Nations who met with us in Fort Vermilion on June 11th. We reviewed progress on the Integrated Watershed Management Plan and discussed opportunities to collaborate on water issues. We were lucky to have made it up to the area between evacuations due to the wildfires. Our thoughts are with those evacuated and affected by the fires.



One topic of discussion was the Wabasca Wetland mapping project, for which MPWA continues to bring the different pieces together. Part of gaining understanding of the wetlands in the Lower Peace and how Peace River Flow Regime affects these wetlands. Another topic regarding ongoing concerns about drinking water and we will continue to work on source water protection initiatives. This may be a plan or another approach to ensure that communities have access to safe, secure drinking water.

A lot of components are requisite for safe drinking water and the watershed management aspect of source water protection is the focus of the MPWA. Recognizing again the prevalence of fires in our region and the effect of wildfire, we are planning a Wildfire and Source Water Forum for October 30th in Grande Prairie. Burns quickly remove vegetation from the landscape and alter how water is taken up or not by vegetation, this in turn changes how quickly water runs off the land and what it carries with it.

We continue to seek opportunities to engage in projects which aid in implementation of our policy and planning recommendations. As a Watershed Planning and Advisory Council, we focus on watershed processes and addressing multiple water needs. Subsequently, we search out projects that can further implementation, demonstrate how implementation could take place, or as opportunities to share place-based education and training.

Please contact us if you have ideas about collaboration, projects or Integrated Watershed Management Plan recommendation implementation.



Burned forest south of high level



Fish passage sign at Beaverlodge Weir

MPWA Staff



Rhonda Clarke—Gauthier, P.Ag.—Executive Director



Adam Norris, M.Sc., P.Biol.—Watershed Coordinator

Focuses on planning & technical project work



Megan Mader— Education & Outreach Coordinator

Focuses on various educational programs, resources & opportunities

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Education & Outreach Coordinator Update Megan Mader

During the spring, we went to 10 schools within our watershed (Grande Prairie, Beaverlodge, Fairview, Grimshaw and Peace River). In total 20 presentations were done to grade 4, 5, & 6 and focused on watershed and wetland education; which lines up with the grade 5 curriculum. We also presented to many students at the Grande Prairie Walk Through the Forest at the Wapiti Nordic Trails. MPWA volunteered at the Wetland Education booth for one of the days and presented to numerous grade 5's about the 5 different types of wetlands and the positive benefits wetlands bring to the environment



In June, we also attended the FINs (Fish in Schools) release at Peace River Wilderness Park where we were able present to the classes about watershed health and how it can impact fish and their habitat.

You may have seen our booth at a variety of tradeshows (Grande Prairie Sports Expo, Peace Petroleum show, SARDA Ag Show, Clearhills County tradeshow, Peace River Chamber of Commerce). We attend these events to interact with the public from many sectors about water, water concerns and best management practices.

New to the Board



Jill Henry

Jill has been a resident of the Peace region since 1985. She was raised on a ranch near Bruderheim and attended the University of Alberta where she received a BSc in Agriculture, majoring in Rangeland Ecology and Animal Science. Upon graduation, she worked as a Public Lands Agrologist in Mackenzie County, Birch Hills County, Saddle Hills County and MD of Spirit River. In 1990 she moved to a farm in the La Glace area and together with her husband they established a full service fertilizer dealership. Jill is currently the Rural Extension Officer at the County of Grande Prairie, where she reports to the Agricultural Service Board and promotes watershed stewardship to local producers. She is a member of the Alberta Institute of Agrologists (PAg) and the Association of Alberta Agricultural Fieldman.



Catherine Newhook

Catherine Newhook was born in Nova Scotia and raised in Prince Edward Island by the water. Family brought her out West and in 1984, she found her forever home in Goodfare, Alberta. Cathy and her husband have four children together. She is a natural resource technician and her love for nature and conservation began in 1984 when her and her partner started a tree planting company, Next Generation Reforestation. NextGen plants an average of 22 million trees a year in the Boreal Forest. Cathy was a founding member of the West County Watershed Society and has been president for the last 10 years. WCWS represents the communities and watersheds West of Grande Prairie, Alberta including the Beaverlodge, Redwillow and Wapiti Rivers. Cathy is driven by the idea of ensuring communities have access to clean, sparkling rivers for fishing, kayaking, recreation and resource use for generations to come.

For complete bio's of each director, please visit our website: www.mightypeacewatershedalliance.org

Board Members 2019-2020

Government	Industry	Non-Governmental Organizations	Aboriginal Communities
Federal-Transboundary Relations -Dave Coish Alternate: Kayedon Wilcox	Agriculture -Jill Henry Alternate: Eric Jorgensen	Conservation/Environment -Bob Cameron	Métis Nation of Alberta -Vacant
Provincial -Dan Benson	Forestry -Ian Daisley Alternate: Daniel Potts	Watershed Stewardship -Cathy Newhook	Metis Settlement General Council -Vacant
Large Urban Municipality -Chris Thiessen Alternate: Michelle Gairdner	Oil & Gas -Sarah Belak	Research/Education- Catherine Brown	Upper Watershed First Nation -Vacant
Small Urban Municipality -Elaine Manzer Alternate: Vern Lymburner	Utilities -Ashley Rowney	Public Member-at-Large (2) -Richard Keillor -David Walty	Middle Watershed First Nation -Vacant
Rural Municipality -Elaine Garrow Alternate: Ray Skrepnek	Mining -Vacant	Tourism/Fisheries/Recreation -Vacant	Lower Watershed First Nation -Jim Webb Alternate: Jamie Meneen