



# Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance

Diverse, Responsible, Connected



## 2020-2021 Annual Report

**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.*

 **Diverse**  
group of people representing diverse interests

 **Responsible**  
for bringing those interests together

 **Connected**  
to all stakeholders in the watershed area



**Message from the Chairman**

This is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of MPWA, and we will celebrate this milestone in spite of COVID -19.

COVID-19 has been very serious for some people, a risk for everyone, and a very major impediment for “business as usual”. However, the MPWA Board, and especially the staff, have persevered and adapted to “keep the lights on” and continue to advance work on projects, both ongoing and new. For that I would like to sincerely thank them and acknowledge their efforts and dedication.

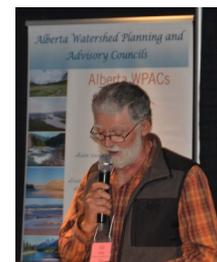
COVID-19 has been a wakeup call, both globally and locally. We humans, just like the natural world that we tend to forget we are part of, are so easily susceptible to unforeseen disruptions and risks, let alone foreseeable disruptions, risks, and even disasters of our own making. However, with thoughtful foresight, will, and some resources, we can do much to avoid causing many disruptions to the essential natural ecosystem services we rely on,

and mitigate those disruptions that seem unavoidable. The resulting outcomes can be positive for all interests – the people, the economy, and the environment.

It is my goal that this is what MPWA help accomplish in the “Mighty Peace” region- that we can proactively create plans, and help others create plans around water issues so as to avoid unwanted outcomes and drive creative win-win results for both the community AND the environment.

However, plans are only words on paper until they are acted upon and implemented. For me, this is the value of MPWA – to turn words into actions, to turn plans into results, and to turn MPWA and the people we serve into agents of positive change.

**Rick Keillor**  
Chairman of the Board



## Message from the Executive Director

The 2020-2021 year was the year of doing work in a new way! This past year provided the opportunity to think outside the box, evaluate how things were being done, and to switch to doing things in a new way to accomplish our goals.

To say it is difficult to maintain connectedness with people when our standard way of connecting is taken away would be an understatement. However; there have been some new levels of connecting and communications that have become available and, in some cases, welcome to our work. In a watershed which spans 30% of the geographic space of Alberta, finding other avenues to discuss issues, concerns, and possibilities regarding all that we do on the landscape and the effects our water resources has been very helpful.

10 years of Watershed Assessment and Planning! We all had great ideas about what the organization could do and should do as a Watershed Planning and Advisory Council under the Government of Alberta's Water for Life Strategy, but the reality has been some much more. The organization took some time to reflect on what has been accomplished in the past 10 years, we are pleased with our work and the goals we have reached, however; the other acknowledgement is that there is so much more to do. More planning, more on the ground work, more education opportunities, more connecting and discussing how we work together for improved and responsible water management are all tasks to continue with. MPWA previously completed a State of the Watershed and an Integrated Watershed Management Plan which are tremendous tools, but truly just the 'tip of the iceberg'. This past year saw the organization build on previous work by spearheading and initiating on the ground projects,

planning processes, and education opportunities.

We are in the middle of a 4-year funding agreement with the Government of Alberta, this has taken some of the pressure off with regarding to base level funding. There are still some hiccups around timing of grant monies but this is a tremendous step forward in the partnership of the multi-sector, multi-stakeholder WPACs and the Government of Alberta. As the Government designated Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils for Alberta's major basins, it is positive to receive funding to support the initiatives.

The 4 major roles as identified in the 'Roles and Responsibilities of the AB WPACs' document (created by AEP and AB WPACs) are: **Convener and Collaborator, Monitoring and Reporting, Policy and Planning, and Literacy and Education.** Each WPAC tries to work within these depending on their resources and organizational priorities. As you can see in the Annual Report and on our website there are a number of projects being worked on across the watershed. Everything from source water protection planning to riparian health and rehabilitation to wetland mapping to education. MPWA has continued to find avenues to provide Education and address Water/Watershed Literacy either as stand-alone projects or in conjunction with other organizations. We continue to look for opportunities to engage and collaborate with stakeholders and partners in ways that are open and acceptable to both sides which promote full conversations.

Since establishment in April 2011, the MPWA continues to grow through reporting, planning, projects, and education initiatives. We look forward to greater engagement with stakeholders and those who work towards improved water quality and quantity throughout the Peace River and Slave River watersheds.

Thank you to the Board of Directors and Staff for their dedication and passion regarding Watershed Management.



Rhonda Clarke-Gauthier  
Executive Director



## Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance Financial Highlights 2020/2021

While 2020/21 was another difficult year due to the COVID pandemic, the MPWA had another successful year. Due to careful and conscientious budgeting we were once again able to sustain a balanced budget, even a small surplus due mainly to the reduction of travel expenses, as we met mainly using internet meetings.

We received \$230,000 from the AEP in the form of a new core grant, \$185,124 from Watershed Resilience and Restoration Plan Grants (carried over from year to year until multi-year project complete), and \$24,314.30 from other major sources including MD of Fairview, Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer Management Advisory Association, Aquatera, Peace River Environmental Society, MD of Peace, County of Grande Prairie, and City of Grande Prairie, . We continue to have great partners in Industry, Municipalities and Organizations, which generated \$206,123 in in-kind donations. These partnerships are the backbone of our organization and with their expertise and input we are able to move forward with the projects and goals of the MPWA.

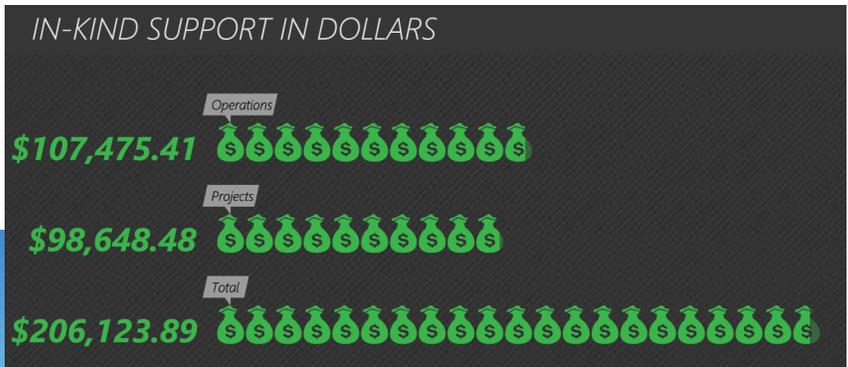
A special thank you to Administration and staff who continued to work on our current projects as we bring them towards finalization.

Lastly, while we have an agreement with AEP we must keep in mind that this is tied to the financial climate of the government and we must continue to work to obtain a better more sustainable agreement that allows us to move forward in the future with confidence.

Financial Snapshot April 1/20 - Mar 31/21	
<b>INCOME</b>	
Sponsorship (20/21)	24,314.30
AEP Grant	260,842.22
WRRP Grants (3)	185,124.24
AB Transportation Project Funds	121,970.66
Contributions (carried forward from Mar 2020)	97,832.87
Bank Interest	175.07
<b>Total</b>	<b>690,259.36</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Subcontracts – Projects	198,660.00
Salaries, Honoraria & Benefits	162,839.83
Advertising & Promotions	2,718.83
Office & Administration	17,695.58
Travel	9,137.26
Board/Staff Development	1,194.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>392,245.50</b>
<p>Note: Watershed Resilience and Restoration Plan (WRRP) Funds are carried forward year to year until end of project.</p> <p><b>*Gifts in Kind (Incl. Office space) \$206,123.89*</b></p>	



**Vern Lymburner**  
Treasurer



## The 2020-2021 Board of Directors

Member	Sector	Affiliation
<b>Non-Government Organizations</b>		
Bob Cameron	Conservation- Environmental	Peace River Environmental Society
Beatrice Amar	Research - Education	GPRC—Grande Prairie Regional College
Cathy Newhook	Watershed Stewardship	West County Watershed Society
Brian Lieverse	Recreation - Tourism - Fisheries	
Richard Keillor (Chair)	Public-At-Large	
Dave Walty	Public-At-Large	
<b>Industry</b>		
Liam Cross	Utilities	Aquatera Utilities Inc.
Daniel Pott	Forestry	Canfor
Sandra Miller	Oil and Gas	Seven Generations Energy
Jill Henry	Agriculture	Peace Region Association of Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen AAAF
VACANT	Mining	
<b>Indigenous Communities</b>		
Alden Armstrong	Metis Settlement General Council	Paddle Prairie Metis Settlement
VACANT	Upper Watershed First Nation	
VACANT	Middle Watershed First Nation	
Jim Webb	Lower Watershed First Nation	Little Red River Cree Nation
VACANT	Métis Nations of Alberta	
<b>Government</b>		
Abdi Siad-Omar	Federal Transboundary Relations	Alberta Environment and Parks
Dylan Bressey	Large Urban	City of Grande Prairie
Vern Lymburner	Small Urban	Town of Valleyview
Krista Park	Provincial Government	Alberta Health Services
Elaine Garrow	Rural Municipalities	Rural Municipalities of Alberta - Northern Zone (MD of Spirit River)

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

We also acknowledge the contributions of named alternates:  
Eric Jorgenson, Darryel Sowen, Long Fu, Michelle Gairdner, Tammy Kehl, Johanna Downing, Becky Devaleriola.

### HOURS OF IN-KIND SUPPORT

434   
Operations

1,038   
Projects

1,472   
Total

## Education & Outreach Report

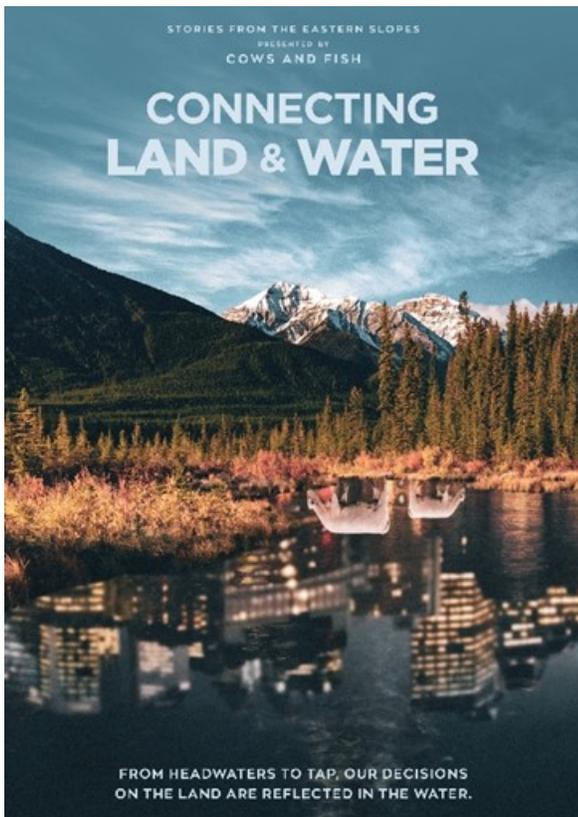
Our travel costs are down – way down. With the move to virtual meetings, webinars and online gatherings, we were not on the road much. Nevertheless, much was done to engage with people to discuss watersheds and watershed management.

One of the highlights was the release of a video for the *Streambank Stabilization and Extension Project*. Obviously, it would have been great to have shared this in person but...A group of 77 people joined online to watch the video and discuss the project. The video has been viewed 705 since then and is available on the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance YouTube Channel - Watershed Restoration.



*Graham Powell, pictured in this clip from the video, was a major part of the Streambank Stabilization and Extension project*

Thanks to Cows and Fish for inviting us in to participate in Connecting Land & Water and 2 events in their Winter Speaker series (Riparian Restoration and Bank Stabilization & Livestock Crossings of Waterways), as well as the 2021 Native Trout Workshop. These virtual



Cows and Fish and Environmental Law Centre Winter Speaker Series

### Exploring Riparian Stewardship and Regulations

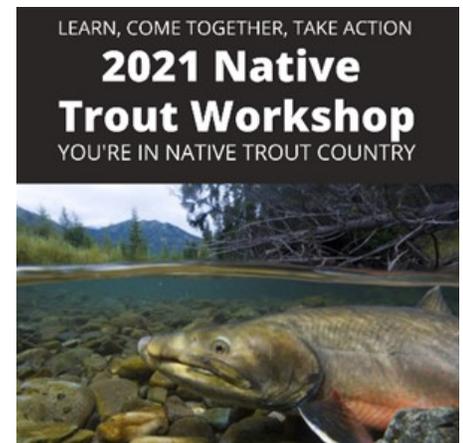
*Do you find it hard to figure out which regulations apply to your riparian improvement projects? So do we!*



events, among others, allowed us to share in water literacy exchanges, watershed management learnings, and successes.

Hearing from people throughout the watershed about the values the watershed provides them, their concerns, and their ideas is critical for MPWA. These virtual events gave us this opportunity when no other option was available. Engagement and interaction are all quite different online but allowed us to maintain connection.

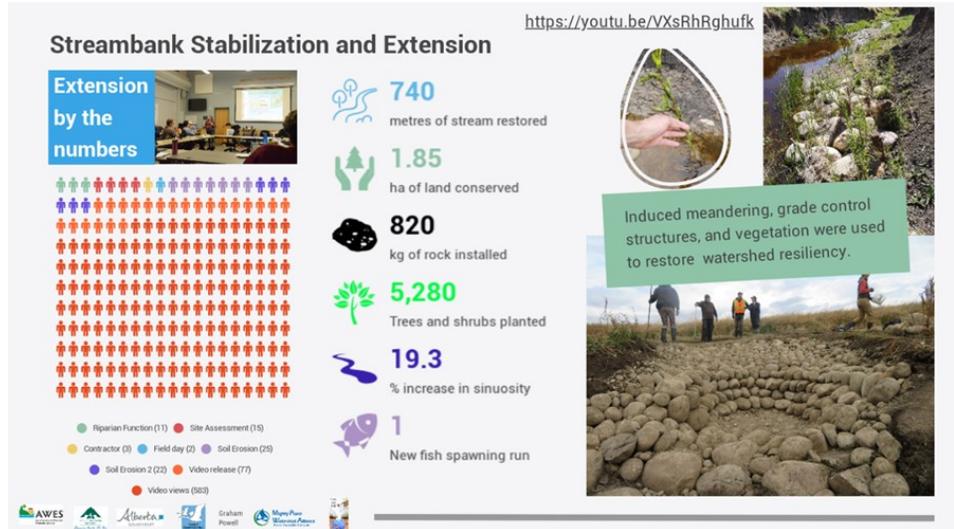
We are involved with the Evergreen Learning and Innovation Society at the Evergreen Wetland Centre. The project team is headed by Ducks Unlimited. As this develops, we are excited about the opportunities to share knowledge and understanding of wetlands to range of people including practitioners, managers and the public. We are looking forward to meeting in-person again and connecting with those in the watershed, but we are glad that virtual technology has become so commonplace that we can continue to use this in the future.



# Technical Committee Report

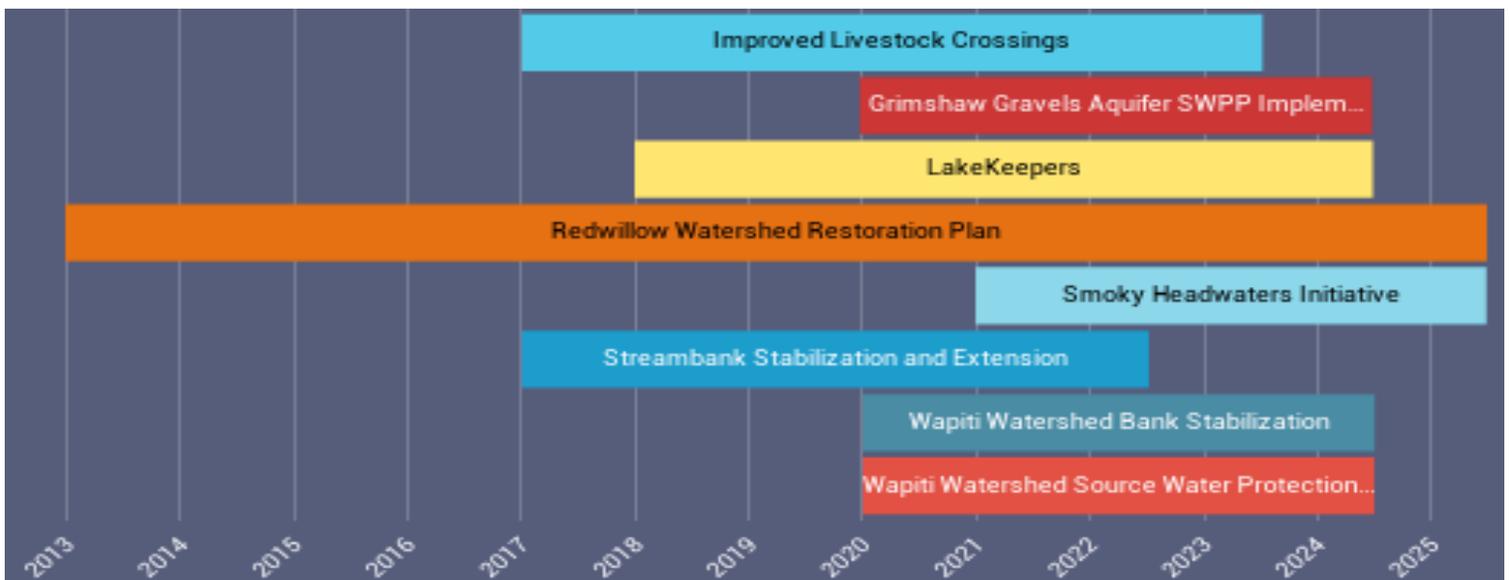
A great big thanks to all the volunteers and partners that allowed the Technical Committee to engage in so many great projects:

- Through LakeKeepers Derek Dyck, John Zacharias, Phil Gorman, Paul Hvenegaard, Peter and Reta Marshall, and Shawn Peters committed many hours to sampling lakes across the watershed in summer and winter.
- Marie-Pierre Ouellet-Pariseau and Thomas De Jong both came to help with winter water quality sampling and gain experience.



Graphic summary of Streambank Stabilization and Extension Project—complete December 31, 2021.

- The MPWA Technical Committee commits time and expertise to overseeing projects, reviewing documents and providing direction - Beatrice Amar, Bob Cameron, Dave Walty, Elaine Garrow, Eric Jorgensen and Rick Keillor.
- Axel Anderson (fRI Resarch), Caleb Sinn (Alberta Lake Management Society), Cheryl Anderson (County of Northern Lights), Colleen Sklapsky (Town of Grimshaw), Janice Redya (MD of Peace), Jill Henry (County of Grande Prairie), Joel Kisner (Aquatera), John Bak (Village of Berwyn), Kerri O’Shaughnessy (Cows and Fish), Liam Cross (Aquatera), Megan Andre (AgroForestry Woodlot Extension Society), Peter Harris (County of GP), Peter Frixel (Clear Hills County), Quentin Bochar (MD of Greenview), Ray Skrepnek (MD of Fairview), Sandra Miller (Arc Resources) and Sarah Bradley (Alberta Conservation Association) worked on project teams with us.



- Landowners that operated with a view to the watershed beyond their own property lines and invited us onto their property – Blaine Patrick, Carlo Toews, Eric Hill, Graham Powell and Mike Kennedy.

It is with much gratitude, that we as the MPWA can list these folks as our main collaborators (I know that there are many more who could be listed) in this last year. This is a sure sign of success in watershed management and the range of projects undertaken by the Technical Committee (see next page).

**Adam Norris**  
Watershed Coordinator



## Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance

<b>2020-2021 Technical Project Work Overview</b>	
<b>Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer Source Water Protection Plan Implementation (Lead – MPWA)</b>	
<b>Goal: Support the implementation of the Grimshaw Gravels Source Water Protection Plan</b>	
<b>Partners</b>	Clear Hills County, County of Northern Lights, Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer Management Advisory Association, MD of Fairview, MD of Peace, Town of Grimshaw, Village of Berwyn
<b>Funding</b>	Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer Management Advisory Association (Municipal)
<b>Status</b>	Continue to work on by-laws, BMPS and water budget for aquifers
<b>Improved Livestock Crossing (Lead – MPWA)</b>	
<b>Goal: Develop affordable, place-based approaches to watercourse crossings and construct several demo structures to improve watershed flood and drought resiliency.</b>	
<b>Partners</b>	AgroForestry Woodlot Extension Society, Alberta Conservation Association, County of Grande Prairie, Cows and Fish, Landowners
<b>Funding</b>	Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program (provincial grant)
<b>Status</b>	Landowner for last crossing identified and workplan for crossing installation is being finalized
<b>LakeKeepers - Summer and Winter (Lead- Alberta Lake Management Society)</b>	
<b>Goal: Collect data on lakes and support a stewardship ethic</b>	
<b>Partners</b>	Alberta Lake Management Society, Peter and Reta Marshall, Derek Dyck, John Zacharias, Phil Gorman, Paul Hvenegaard, Shawn Peters
<b>Funding</b>	Alberta Lake Management Society
<b>Status</b>	Summer 2020 and Winter 2021 complete
<b>Redwillow Watershed Restoration Project (Lead – MPWA)</b>	
<b>Goal: Support the implementation of recommendations to restore fish habitat in the Redwillow Watershed.</b>	
<b>Partners</b>	AgroForestry Woodlot Extension Society, Alberta Conservation Association, Alberta Environment and Parks, County of Grande Prairie, Cows and Fish, West County Watershed Society
<b>Funding</b>	Environmental Damages Fund (federal grant), Corporate donations, habitat offset for Alberta Transportation
<b>Status</b>	Supporting implementation of the watershed restoration plan (2015) recommendations—including erosion control, riparian establishment, monitoring of fish passage improvement works and education.
<b>Streambank Stabilization and Extension Project (Lead – MPWA)</b>	
<b>Goal: Restore a degraded stream through innovative techniques and provide training to practitioners and decision-makers on ways to improve watershed flood and drought resiliency.</b>	
<b>Partners</b>	AgroForestry Woodlot Extension Society, Alberta Conservation Association, County of Grande Prairie, Cows and Fish, Landowner
<b>Funding</b>	Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program (provincial grant)
<b>Status</b>	Complete
<b>Wapiti Watershed Bank Stabilization Project (Lead – MPWA)</b>	
<b>Goal: Restore degraded streambanks to improve watershed flood and drought resiliency.</b>	
<b>Partners</b>	AgroForestry Woodlot Extension Society, Alberta Conservation Association, County of Grande Prairie, Cows and Fish, Landowners
<b>Funding</b>	Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program (provincial grant)
<b>Status</b>	Livestaking and planting has begun at two sites; hydraulic modelling complete at another site and Water Act application to undertake earthworks has been submitted.
<b>Wapiti Watershed Source Water Protection Plan (Lead – MPWA)</b>	
<b>Goal: This Source Water Protection Plan has as its vision, a Wapiti Watershed where proactive watershed management ensures a stable and reliable water resource for the many uses of water in the Wapiti Watershed.</b>	
<b>Partners</b>	Aquatera, Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers/Seven Generations Energy, County of Grande Prairie, MD of Greenview, Sturgeon Lake First Nation
<b>Funding</b>	In-kind
<b>Status</b>	The plan has been finalized and decision-makers are being engaged on implementing recommendations.
<b>Evergreen Wetland Centre (Lead—Ducks Unlimited)</b>	
<b>Goal: Inspire a culture of wetland stewardship and resource development through learning, innovation, and information sharing.</b>	
<b>Partners</b>	Alberta Environment and Parks, Centre for Boreal Research, County of Grande Prairie, Duck's Unlimited, Duncan's First Nation, Evergreen learning and Innovation Society, Grande Prairie Regional College, Hammerhead Resources, Seven Generations Energy, Western Cree Tribal Council, Weyerhaeuser
<b>Funding</b>	Creative Sentencing
<b>Status</b>	Ongoing planning to develop interpretative trails, establish a functioning structure for the project area and continue research opportunities.

## Highlights of 2020-2021

*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.**

- 4 Board of Director meetings in various locations: Peace River, Grande Prairie, and Virtual/Conference calls. Held 2019/2020 AGM in August due to Covid-19 Restrictions. Numerous Committee meetings.
- Consistent professional Staff complement.
- Conversations and planning with Watershed Planning and Advisory Council (WPAC) managers regarding funding, collaborations, policy.
- Board Development opportunities: Flood hazard mapping, winter hydrology, Surface Water Allocation Directive, Water Literacy, Water for Life strategy, Alberta Water Council, Invasive Species, and provided board with independent learning options through a range of webinars on policy and technical subjects.
- Further development of policies and processes.
- Discussions with various councils about MPWA work.
- Exploring funding options, e.g., other grants, sponsorship, etc.
- AB WPAC Managers and Education Coordinators meet to find common goals, share resources, and move initiatives forward.

### **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.**

- Participated in Connecting Land and Water, Winter Speaker Series: Exploring Stewardship and Regulations, Native Trout Workshop
- Involved with Evergreen Wetland Centre and the Evergreen Learning and Innovation Society
- Presentations for and discussions with various groups: Grande Prairie Environmental Network, Big Lakes County regarding Lake Sampling, Rural Municipalities Association—Northern Zone, various Municipalities with updates of projects and organization, Wapiti Watershed Source Water Protection partners, and Partners of the Restoration work in the West County.
- Work towards Surface Water Management Planning.
- Participant on AB Water Council's Source Water Protection Working Group.
- Participated in webinar training on wetlands, BMPs, and Watershed Management.

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

- Participated in RMA( Rural Municipalities Association) Northern Zone Meetings.
- Maintained website, Twitter account & Facebook page.
- Joined with Peace Country Beef and Forage Association to do a podcast.

- Member of Weyerhaeuser's and Mercer's Public Advisory Groups.

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

- Participating in Water North Coalition.
- Source Water Protection Plan for the Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer implementation work.
- Wapiti Watershed Source Water Protection Plan completion and initiation of implementation
- Partner with organizations and landowners to improve water quality through restoration work.
- Preparations for Working Well Workshop with MD of Greenview.

### **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.**

- Completion of Wapiti River Water Management Plan (WRWMP).
- Ongoing conversation with Municipalities.
- Involved with WBNP Environmental Flow Needs Group.
- Extension and monitoring work in Improved Livestock Crossing, Redwillow Watershed Restoration, Streambank Stabilization and Extension and Wapiti Watershed bank Stabilization Projects.
- Working with fRI Research on Smoky Headwaters Initiative.
- Developing a working relationship with Mackenzie River Basin Board.
- Working with groups to investigate CABIN monitoring project.

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

- Project lead for Improved Livestock Crossing and Streambank Stabilization and Extension and Wapiti Watershed Bank Stabilization projects, which engage watershed residents through forums, workshops and one-on-one.
- Participating in LakeKeepers Summer and Winter programs.
- Involvement with Evergreen Wetland Centre.
- Interviews with various organizations to increase stewardship awareness : Let's Go Outdoors, Peace Country Beef and Forage Association,, etc
- Live release of a Streambank Stabilization video on YouTube channel.
- Participate in the Land Stewardship Grant process.

## **Financial and In-Kind Supporters 2020-2021**

AgroForestry Woodlot Extension Society  
Alberta Agriculture & Forestry  
Alberta Conservation Association  
Alberta Environment and Parks  
Alberta Health Services  
Alberta Infrastructure  
Alberta Newsprint Company  
Alberta Transportation  
Alberta Water Council  
AQUATERA Utilities Inc.  
CANFOR  
City of Grande Prairie  
County of Grande Prairie  
Cows and Fish  
fRI Research  
Grande Prairie Regional College  
Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer Management Advisory Association  
Little Red River Cree Nation  
Mackenzie County

Municipal District of Greenview  
Municipal District of Fairview  
Municipal District of Peace  
Municipal District of Spirit River  
Northern Sunrise County  
Ovintiv Canada  
Peace Region Association of Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen—AAAF  
Paddle Prairie Metis Settlements  
Peace River Environmental Society  
Rural Municipalities Association—Northern Zone  
Seven Generations Energy Ltd.  
Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation  
Town of Peace River  
Town of Valleyview  
West County Watershed Society

All the landowners who worked with us on a range of projects  
All volunteers who helped with monitoring

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

## **Collaborators 2020-2021**

Agroforestry Woodlot Extension Society  
Alberta Agriculture and Forestry  
Alberta Conservation Association  
Alberta Environment and Parks  
Alberta Lake Management Society  
Aquatera Inc.  
Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers  
City of Grande Prairie  
Clear Hills County  
County of Grande Prairie  
County of Northern Lights  
Cows and Fish  
Ducks Unlimited

Evergreen Learning and Innovation Society  
fRI Research  
LakeKeepers Volunteers  
Municipal District of Fairview  
Municipal District of Greenview  
Municipal District of Peace  
North Peace Applied Research Association  
Northern Sunrise County  
Peace Country Beef and Forage Association  
Seven Generations Energy Ltd.  
Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation  
Town of Grimshaw  
Village of Berwyn  
West County Watershed Society

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