

# Surface Water Workshop

Rycroft Ag Hall <https://goo.gl/maps/LP2pAXSBzuPo2Rfs7>

February 17<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 pm -5:30 pm

No charge

1:00 pm Registration

1:30 pm **Welcome**

**-Rhonda Clarke-Gauthier**

1:50 pm **Trees/Forest – Asset and Liabilities to your municipality**

**-Toso Bozic**

Trees/forests on private or public lands provide crucial functions in water and watershed protections to farmers citizens and municipalities. Water quality is critical to the health of living organisms, including humans. Forests around rivers, lakes streams and wetlands are crucial to protect and enhance water systems in Alberta. There are a number of benefits from forests on quality and quantity of water resources including:

- Reduce excessive water and soil erosion in farm fields and protect municipal road infrastructure
- Recharge ground and surface water
- Provides critical river, lakes, stream and wetland ecological stability
- Filters out and traps significant amounts of pesticide, herbicide and fertilizer before they reach waterways
- Forest around water provides important habitat for many wildlife species

Very few rural municipalities see trees/forest as an asset and to be equal to roads, signs, bridges and other infrastructures. Over the period of time, traditional infrastructure de-valuate and requires costly repair or replacement. Trees on the other hand increase their value as they get older and natural regeneration is free of cost. Environmental and social values of trees are well known but seeing trees as an economic/financial asset is very little understood.

Trees can be also liabilities by damaging certain infrastructures and can pose hazards to people as well. Most of the rural municipalities lack regulatory aspects when it comes to trees/forest. Very few rural municipalities have developed any local tree bylaws, policies and regulations. But as there are more and more conflicts, legal litigations, and provincial or federal acts and laws- municipalities should do diligent work and assess if there is need for developing tree bylaws or policies.

This presentation will provide real life examples on trees as asset, liability, and legal aspect of owning trees/forest.

- 2: 40 pm **Farming and runoff** **-Graham Powell**
- Every farming decision is trade-off of costs and benefits. Taking over the family farm, I had to look at some issues that arisen and figure out the cost of business as usual versus alternatives. Allowing room for water seems like a trade-off to my benefit by reducing erosion losses and my inputs of trying to fix runoff problems. This is the story of the before and after and its impacts on me.
- 3:00 pm **Break and refreshments**
- 3:15 pm **The Infrastructure Problem** **-TBD**
- Municipalities are spending a large proportion of their budgets on maintaining and repairing infrastructure that is repeatedly damaged by surface water runoff. For larger events, disaster funding is secured to help with the costs but these funds may not always be available in the future. What options are there for reducing losses due to surface water runoff?
- 3:35 pm **The Curious Case of Canadian Wetland Economics** **-John Pattison-Williams**
- Wetlands are both loved and hated, either seen as the solution to many environmental problems or a wasted resource limiting agricultural production. Mixing examples from both scientific research programs and farming experience, this presentation will explore the trade-offs that the various stakeholders in wetland conservation experience: including beef farmers, grain farmers, municipal governments, provincial governments, and non-government organizations
- 4:25 pm **Panel discussion** **- All**
- 5:15 pm **Closing remarks** **-Rhonda Clarke-Gauthier**

### **Speaker Bios:**

**Graham Powell** – Graham Powell is a third generation farmer in the La Glace area, producing grain and cereal crops. He is interested in doing the best possible management of his farm operation. After farming is done, curling is one his favourite activities.

**John Pattison-Williams** - Dr. John K. Pattison-Williams is a researcher with the Department of Resource Economics and Environmental Sociology at the University of Alberta, and president of Pattison Resource Consulting Ltd., a company specializing in the interaction between environmental conservation and economic development. John holds a Doctorate in Natural Resource Management from the Natural Resources Institute (NRI) at the University of Greenwich; a Master of Science in Agricultural Economics from the University of Alberta; and a Bachelor of Science from Augustana Faculty of the University of Alberta. John is active in consulting and volunteer roles internationally and in western Canada, as Director

of the Biodiversity and Research Grants Program of the Alberta Conservation Association, served on the Boards of the Battle River Watershed Alliance and Alberta Conservation Association, and volunteering for committees of the Prairie Habitat Joint Venture and Alberta Beef Producers. John maintains an active research and teaching schedule and is a Professional Agrologist. He and his spouse Naomi and 2-year-old son Micah are living and working on the mixed family farm in Kingman, Alberta.

**Toso Bozic** - Toso Bozic is a founder of ATTS Group Inc. and Yard Whispers consultancy business with 26 years' experience in every aspect of trees and forestry. Toso graduated from the University of Belgrade in Yugoslavia and holds a degree in Forest Engineering, he is member of Professional Agrologist and obtained an ISA Certified Arborist and ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ) . Extensive communication experience through 2,700 public speaking events, multiple TV and radio interviews. Author over 300 articles, guides, fact sheets, and technical materials.

Toso has many personal interests including refereeing soccer (over 7000 games), astronomy, geology and photography

**Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance (MPWA)** – MPWA works under the “Alberta Water For Life Strategy” with focus on gathering stakeholders and partners to plan for safe, secure drinking water, healthy aquatic ecosystems, and ensuring reliable supplies for a sustainable economy. The areas of concern that our stakeholders (Government – Federal, Provincial, and Municipalities; Indigenous People and Communities; Non-Government Organizations – Research/Education, Conservation, Watershed Stewardship, Recreation, Fisheries, Tourism and Public Members at Large; Industry (Agriculture, Forestry, Oil/Gas, Utilities and Mining) have identified include water quality and quantity availability, non-saline groundwater, wetlands and wetland loss, and the Peace River flow Regime. Surface water management is an important conversation to have as surface water affects soil, land structure, wetland functioning, damage to producer and municipal infrastructure. Conversations and planning need to address retention and drainage, wetlands, forested land, liner disturbances, beneficial management practices in industry and personal lives.