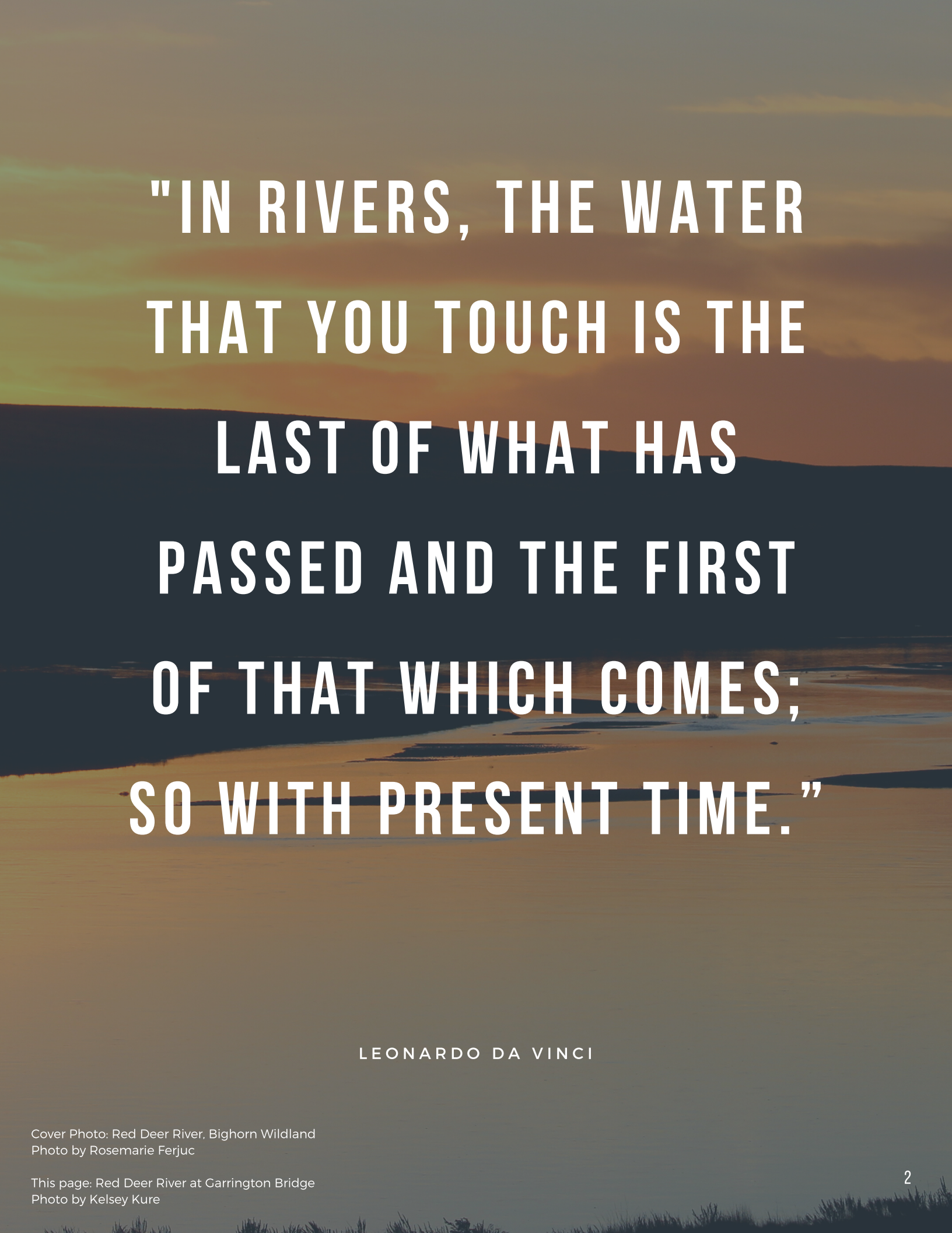




ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020
YEAR IN REVIEW



**"IN RIVERS, THE WATER
THAT YOU TOUCH IS THE
LAST OF WHAT HAS
PASSED AND THE FIRST
OF THAT WHICH COMES;
SO WITH PRESENT TIME."**

LEONARDO DA VINCI

Cover Photo: Red Deer River, Bighorn Wildland
Photo by Rosemarie Ferjuc

This page: Red Deer River at Garrington Bridge
Photo by Kelsey Kure

PADDLING NEW WATERS

GREETINGS FROM OUR CHAIR



Welcome to the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance's 2019/20 Annual Report. We hope this report will give you a sense of the important work we do, made possible by many sectors coming together in support of watershed management.

In many ways, 2019/20 was a year of smooth paddling for the RDRWA. We held successful events on topics ranging from municipal planning to gravel-bed rivers. We brought multiple sectors together to understand trends related to hydraulic fracturing and water management considerations. We worked with partners to map hydrologically significant areas, and kickstarted a project to map riparian areas and prioritize conservation efforts. We delivered presentations to various audiences, and planted 1500 seedlings along the banks of the Blindman River.

We also had to paddle through some rapids in 2019/20. The COVID-19 pandemic forced us to cancel our Spring Forum in March 2020, rethink our school programs, and set-up home offices. Meanwhile, the economic challenges in Alberta have made us reflect and consider how the RDRWA is able to adapt and continue in the face of these challenges.

After six years with the RDRWA, Jeff Hanger also moved on from his role as Executive Director. We thank him for his commitment and leadership throughout the years, and our Board and staff are currently working through the transition.

But, even when the waters are choppy, we remain thankful. As we navigate this journey of watershed management, we are joined by colleagues and friends from across sectors - municipalities, the provincial government, stewardship groups, First Nations, business and industry leaders, academics, and more. We feel inspired by the countless number of people and organizations working to build a brighter future for our lands, waters, and communities. The good work continues. As a Watershed Planning and Advisory Council for the Red Deer River watershed, we continue to uphold the value of sound science and cross-sectoral dialogue. We continue to build partnerships for the long-term. And we continue to deliver a range of projects designed to support a healthy, dynamic, and sustainable watershed. We are looking forward to celebrating our 15 year anniversary as an organization in 2020/21, and we hope you continue on our journey as we paddle new waters!

Kent Dyck

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Dyck'.



Some of the RDRWA's Board members at the 2019 Annual General Meeting.
Left to Right: JoAnne Volk, Phil Boehme, Murray Welch, Kent Dyck, Adam Minke, Bob Mills, Cheri Funke, Christine Moore, Cornelio v'ant Klooster, Helge Nome, Dale Christian

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Phil Boehme - *Alberta Environment and Parks (ex-officio)*

Al Campbell - *Town of Stettler*

Dale Christian - *Red Deer River Naturalists*

Michael Dawe - *City of Red Deer*

Kent Dyck - *NOVA Chemicals*

Cheri Funke - *Town of Sundre*

Mike Iwanyshyn - *Natural Resources Conservation Board*

Amy Jin - *Red Deer College - Student*

Dan Karran - *Olds College*

Brandon Leask - *Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (ex-officio)*

Robert Mills - *Academic*

Adam Minke - *Individual*

Christine Moore - *Red Deer County*

Helge Nome - *Alberta Freshwater Alliance Society*

Cornelio van't Klooster - *Dairy Industry*

JoAnne Volk - *Repsol*

Murray Welch - *Individual*

Dianne Wyntjes - *City of Red Deer*

STAFF



From Left to Right: Rosemarie Ferjuc, Kelly Dodds, Josée Méthot, Jeff Hanger

Jeff Hanger - *Executive Director*

Kelly Dodds - *Executive Assistant*

Josée Méthot - *Watershed Planning Manager*

Rosemarie Ferjuc - *Outreach & Communications Manager*



Red Deer River near Bergen
Photo by Rosemarie Ferjuc

ABOUT THE RDRWA

OUR VISION

THE RED DEER RIVER WATERSHED WILL BE
HEALTHY, DYNAMIC AND SUSTAINABLE
THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF THE ENTIRE
COMMUNITY.

The Red Deer River Watershed Alliance (RDRWA) was established in 2005 as the official Watershed Planning and Advisory Council (WPAC) for the Red Deer River Watershed, as designated under the Government of Alberta's Water for Life Strategy. The Alliance leads on watershed planning, promoting beneficial management practices, fostering stewardship activities, reporting on the state of the watershed and educating users on the importance of water resources.

As the official provincial Watershed Planning and Advisory Council (WPAC) for the Red Deer River watershed, the RDRWA has a responsibility to ensure that we engage with many groups of people with diverse perspectives, values, interests, and concerns; which includes sectors such as agriculture, industry and municipalities, as well as the general public.

As a multi-sector organization, the RDRWA acts as a collaborative forum for stakeholders from across sectors to work together in support of a healthy, dynamic, and sustainable watershed. We all have a role to play in watershed management, and the RDRWA's primary role is one of connection - helping our community members and key stakeholders find meaningful opportunities to make a difference.



YOUR WATERSHED

The Red Deer River Watershed is home to approximately 300,000 people and covers an area of 49,650 km² in Central Alberta.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Red Deer River's headwaters are in the Skoki Valley of Banff National Park and the river then flows over 724 kilometres to join the South Saskatchewan River in Saskatchewan.

The Red Deer River watershed is also made of 15 smaller sub-watersheds – or “bite-sized” areas that nest within the larger watershed. These sub-watersheds include a rich diversity of lakes, wetlands, creeks, tributaries, and the lands that surround them. Land uses and the natural areas in the Red Deer River watershed form a mosaic of interacting landscape elements; a reminder that water and land are intimately connected, just as we are all part of a watershed, connected to the land and water that surrounds us.





Red Deer Planning Workshop
Photo by Josée Méthot

WE ARE A FORUM

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE WATERSHED

2019-2020 was an incredible year for the RDRWA with new projects, new partnerships and a strengthening of the collective WPAC voice that supports all Albertans.

Our regular events are a great place to hear the latest updates on science, policy, and stewardship, while bringing the community together.



Michichi Boardwalk
Grand Opening



Story of the Watershed Project Advisory Network Members
From left to right: Rosemarie Ferjuc, Eric Butters, Derek Leahy, Christine Moore, Dan Karran, Dara Kudras, Josée Méthot, Brad Peter, Jeff Hanger, Kelsey Kure



Tour of Olds College Constructed
Wetland, RDRWA ACM

The Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin hosted their 2019 conference "Lake Winnipeg: Where Waters Meet" from September 30th - October 2nd in Gimli, Manitoba. The theme of this year's conference was "Partnerships for Watersheds" and brought together over 130 delegates from across Canada and the United States to highlight both provincial and transboundary watershed issues within the Lake Winnipeg basin.

The Red Deer River watershed is connected to Lake Winnipeg as part of the larger South Saskatchewan watershed, which stretches from the Rocky Mountains in Alberta all the way to Winnipeg, with the Saskatchewan River Basin's waters eventually entering Lake Winnipeg.

PFSRB CONFERENCE IN GIMLI, MANITOBA

Red Deer River Watershed Alliance (RDRWA) staff members Rosemarie Ferjuc and Josée Méthot, as well as Mike Murray from the Bow River Basin Council (BRBC) travelled to Gimli as part of the Alberta delegation representing our 11 Provincial Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils.



Mike Murray (BRBC), Rosemarie Ferjuc and Josée Méthot (RDRWA) at the PFSRB Conference in Gimli, MB

Rosemarie and Mike co-delivered a presentation on *'Collaborative Watershed Management in Alberta'*, and profiled the unique role of Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils (WPACs) as place-based, multi-sector organizations which foster collaboration at the watershed level, creating opportunities for stakeholders to come together, share resources, and explore innovative solutions to water management challenges in Alberta.



'Planning for Tomorrow' panelists in Sundre
From left to right: Phil Boehme, Jaime Graves,
Jocelyn Thrasher-Haug, Tanya Thorn, Jason Unger

PLANNING FOR TOMORROW

The Red Deer River Watershed Alliance (RDRWA) and the Red Deer River Municipal Users Group (RDRMUG) teamed up to co-host our fall forum 'Planning For Tomorrow: Addressing 21st Century Municipal Water Challenges' in Sundre on November 6th.

Within the Red Deer River watershed, many of our 55 partner urban municipalities and 18 rural municipalities are facing a convergence of pressures around how they deal with land and water-related challenges.

Planning For Tomorrow brought together over 50 municipal leaders and staff to explore innovative ways to better integrate land and water considerations to align with the Modernized MGA and municipal statutory planning.

GRAVEL BED RIVERS

DR. RIC HAUER



The Alliance was thrilled to welcome Dr. Richard (Ric) Hauer, Professor Emeritus of Stream Ecology at the University of Montana as our keynote speaker at our Annual General Meeting on June 14, 2019.

Dr. Hauer's presentation highlighted the importance of gravel-bed rivers and their floodplains, noting that these systems are extremely complex, creating an extraordinary mosaic of habitats that support diverse communities of aquatic, avian, and terrestrial species. Dr. Hauer emphasized that there is more than meets the eye when looking at a gravel-bed river, and he highlighted the need to prioritize the maintenance and restoration of gravel-bed rivers and their floodplains.

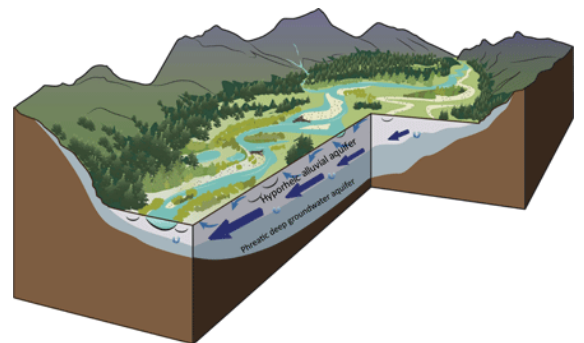


Illustration of gravel-bed river as affected by human structures. Artwork by: E. Harrington, Missoula, Montana

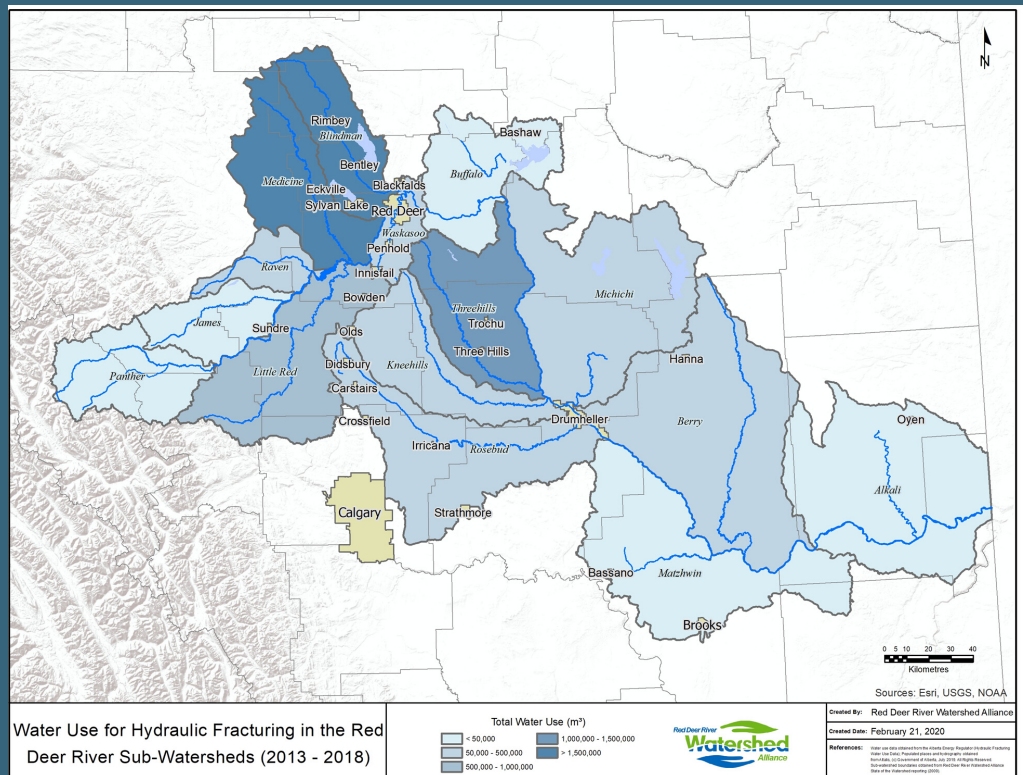
POLICY AND PLANNING



The RDRWA was pleased to release a fact sheet and set of recommendations regarding hydraulic fracturing activity and watershed management considerations in the Red Deer River watershed in early 2020. With hydraulic fracturing activity on the rise in parts of the basin, the RDRWA reviewed key literature, analyzed data related to water use and sourcing, and engaged representatives from across sectors to learn more about issues and opportunities. This work highlights the unique role of the RDRWA as a multi-sector Watershed Planning and Advisory Council, able to work with different sectors to understand issues and find pragmatic solutions.

To learn more about these resources, visit www.rdrwa.ca to download the Fact Sheet and the Management Recommendations.

**OUR APPROACH IS
SCIENCE-BASED
AND GROUNDED IN
MULTI-SECTOR
DIALOGUE.**



WE ARE A RESOURCE

WE WORK WITH A WIDE RANGE OF PARTNERS TO
EXPLORE INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO WATER
MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES.

The RDRWA strives to be a “go-to” resource for partners to learn about the watershed and specific actions that can be taken to support watershed health.

In 2019/20, the RDRWA continued outreach to municipalities as a priority, recognizing the role of municipalities as major land-use decision-makers and community leaders. Our Fall Forum - “Planning for Tomorrow” - brought together a range of perspectives to discuss water-related challenges and opportunities for municipalities. We were also invited to present to the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) Fall Convention about watershed management and opportunities for municipalities.

We also worked with the Red Deer River Municipal Users Group to support their review of municipal development plans in the basin, and continued to participate at key planning tables (e.g., Sylvan Lake Management Committee, North American Waterfowl Management Plan Municipal Action Committee).



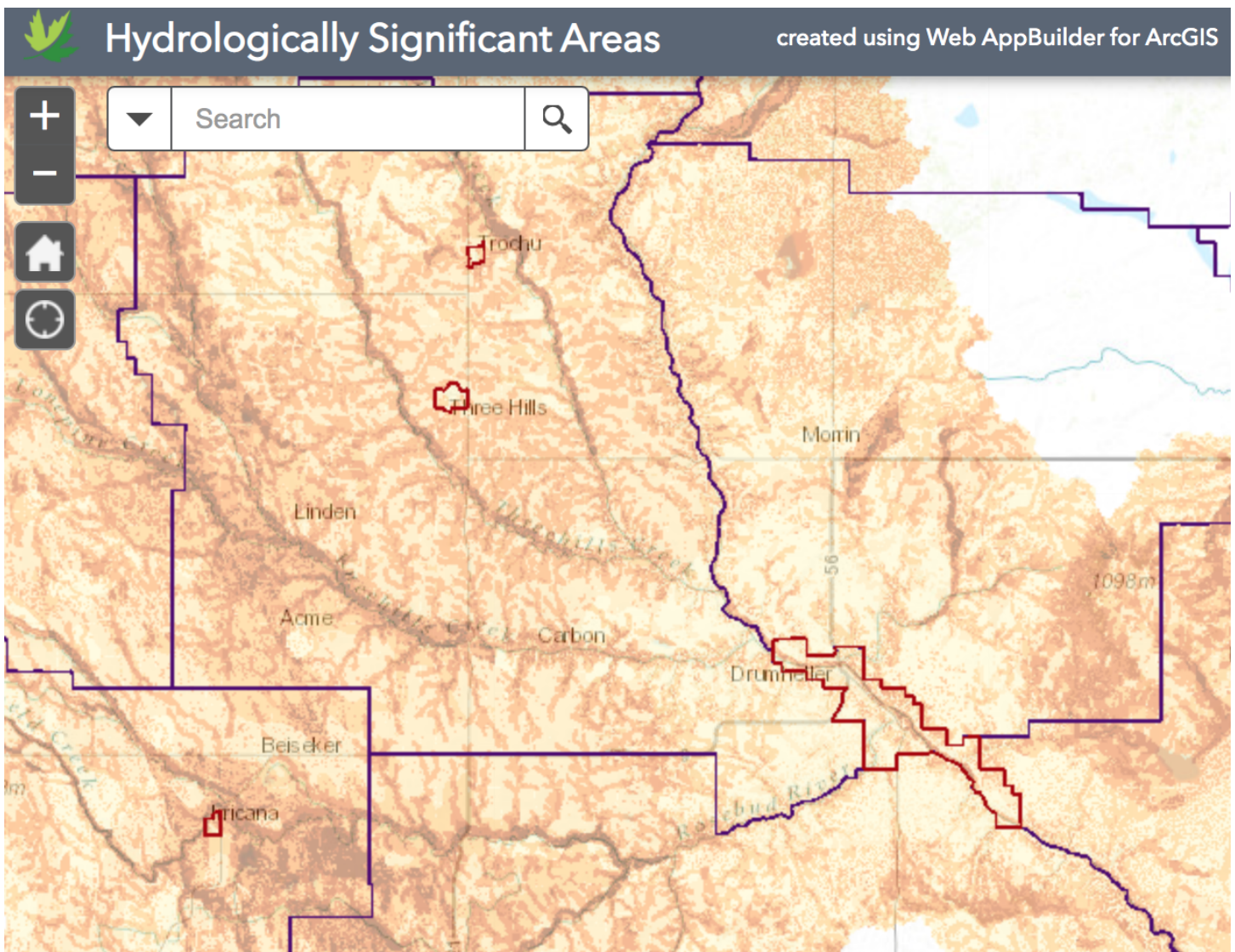


IMAGE SHOWS HYDROLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS IN THE DRUMHELLER REGION (BROWN AND DARK ORANGE AREAS ARE CONSIDERED MORE HYDROLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT). THE ONLINE TOOL CAN GENERATE MAPS FOR DIFFERENT REGIONS AT DIFFERENT SCALES. SOURCE: NATURE CONSERVANCY OF CANADA.

MAPPING HYDROLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS

The RDRWA partnered with the Nature Conservancy of Canada to map hydrologically significant areas (HSAs) across the entire watershed in 2019/20. A hydrologically significant area is an area with natural assets that, if preserved in a natural state, provides beneficial services like water provision, flow regulation, and water purification. We held a workshop with 35 stakeholders from across sectors to discuss the methodology for mapping HSAs, and later we worked with NCC to develop an interactive online tool where people can explore landscapes from a hydrological perspective.

We will launch this tool with NCC in Fall 2020/Winter 2021 as a decision-support tool for a variety of conservation and development activities. Whether you are a producer, councillor, municipal planner or stewardship group - we hope this tool will help you consider projects through the lens of water.



DID YOU KNOW?

The RDRWA continues to engage on a broad range of policy and planning files within the basin. For example, we are involved in active discussions about water security in the South Saskatchewan River Basin with representatives from different sectors and from the Bow, Oldman, and South Saskatchewan sub-basins. We also continue to implement *Blueprint: An Integrated Watershed Management Plan for the Red Deer River watershed (Phase One: Water Quality)*, in areas ranging from water literacy to source water protection.



Freshwater springs of the Raven River
Photo by Rosemarie Ferjuc

EDUCATION AND WATER LITERACY

Through our education and outreach programs, we aim to raise public awareness about issues and stewardship options within the watershed, and encourage public involvement in watershed management.

The RDRWA reached a broader audience this past year, with more people reading our monthly E-newsletter, more social media followers, and an improved awareness of local watershed issues. We also held a successful photo competition with over 150 entries.

Over the past year, we presented to a wide range of groups, including schools, watershed stewardship groups, and post-secondary institutions, plus at the “Partners FOR the Saskatchewan Basin” conference in Gimli, MB, the Synergy Alberta Conference in Olds and at the Rural Municipalities of Alberta conference in Edmonton.

This year we were also very excited to launch our “Stories of the Watershed” project with funding from the Alberta Real Estate Foundation, the Alberta Ecotrust Foundation, the Red Deer and District Community Foundation, and Rocky View County. Over the coming months, through this project we aim to develop a suite of communications products to improve regional water literacy, bringing together watershed science and local stories.



City of Red Deer 'Our Environment, Our Future' Poster Contest Winners



Walk For Common Ground



ALMS Lacombe Lake Aquatic Bioblitz

2019-2020 HIGHLIGHTS



Pond dipping at Alix Lake



Blindman River Community Planting Day



RDRWA Annual General Meeting, Olds College



Piper Creek Restoration Project Stream Health Workshop



Tour of Dickson Dam
Back row, from left to right: Jeff Hanger, Allan Seabrooke, Christine Moore, Michael Dawe, Kent Dyck
Front row: Josée Méthot, Rosemarie Ferjuc

LOOKING AHEAD

2020 MARKS THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RDRWA!

2020 marks a special milestone for the RDRWA as we celebrate our 15th anniversary. Thank-you to all of our members and partners who have made the past 15 years possible. Watershed management truly takes a village.

2020/21 will be an exciting year for the RDRWA, with several major projects underway. Some highlights:

1) Stories of the Watershed project: Stay tuned for a short documentary about the watershed and other communications products that help tell the story of our unique watershed and local communities.

2) Mapping riparian intactness using GIS: This project will map riparian intactness along 1,760 kilometres of shoreline in the Medicine-Blindman sub-watersheds, and will provide essential information to municipalities and other partners to support conservation and restoration.

3) RDRWA Website Redesign: We are looking forward to revamping and launching a new website in Fall 2020.

The RDRWA is looking forward to building new and strengthened partnerships in support of collaborative watershed management in 2020/21.



GET INVOLVED

INTERESTED IN MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

Become a member of the RDRWA.

Membership is free and is a simple way to stay up to date through our monthly e-newsletter. Sign up at www.rdrwa.ca

Discover watersheds.

Take a look at materials and resources on our website (www.rdrwa.ca) to get your feet wet!

Interested in learning more? Ask us!

The RDRWA offers a range of presentations upon request to municipalities schools, post-secondary institutions, service groups, stewardship groups, and more.

Donate to the RDRWA.

Every contribution makes a difference! We are a registered charity and provide receipts for all donations greater than \$20.00.



FINANCIALS FOR 2019-2020

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2020 (UNAUDITED)

Each year, the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance's (RDRWA) financial statements are reviewed by an independent accounting firm and made available to our members and the public.

REVENUE

Government of Alberta	286,885
Municipal	104,040
Other contributions and income	48,078
Total (\$)	439,003

EXPENSES

Salaries, benefits, and training	327,747
Programs and outreach	57,767
General admin and office costs	85,355
Other expenses	6,035
Total (\$)	476,904

REVENUE - EXPENSES

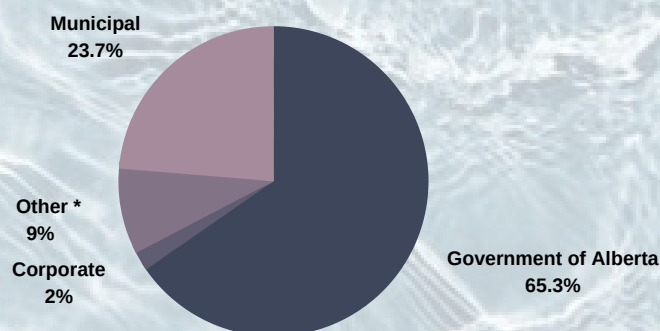
Deficiency of Revenue Over Expenses	(37,901)
Interest from Contingency Fund	6,604
Decrease in Net Assets (from 2019-2020)	(31,297)

Statement of Financial Position

	March 31, 2019 (unaudited)	March 31, 2020 (unaudited)
Assets	711,934	693,722
Liabilities	232,613	245,619
Net Assets	479,321	448,024
Total (\$)	711,934	693,722

FUNDING BREAKDOWN BY %

The RDRWA benefits from the support of partners from across sectors. We gratefully acknowledge all who have contributed to our shared work. This pie chart was derived using data from the overall RDRWA Financials for 2019/2020.



*Other refers to funding from Foundations, RDRWA casino etc.



FUNDERS

Thank you to all of our major sponsors and supporters for your valued financial support!



RDRWA SUPPORTERS

A very special thank you to those companies, organizations and individuals who have provided financial and in-kind support!

Government of Alberta
City of Red Deer
Rocky View County
Alberta Real Estate Foundation
Alberta Ecotrust Foundation

Associated Engineering
Border Paving
Clearwater County
County of Newell
Kneehill County
Lacombe County
Larry Wright
Max Bell Foundation
Municipal District of Big Horn
Mountain View County
Nature Conservancy of Canada
NOVA Chemicals

Rahr Malting Co.
Red Deer County
Red Deer & District Community Foundation
Red Deer River Municipal Users Group
Special Areas Board
Stantec
Starland County
Summer Villages
(Birchcliff, Half Moon Bay ,Jarvis Bay ,
Norglenwold, Sunbreaker Cove)
Town of Bentley
Town of Blackfalds
Town of Oyen
Town of Rimbey
Town of Stettler
Town of Sundre
Town of Three Hills

The Red Deer River Watershed Alliance (RDRWA) is a multi-sector, non-profit organization that promotes the good use and proper management of water within the Red Deer River watershed.



CONTACT US

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Twitter: @RDRWA

Facebook: Red Deer River Watershed Alliance

