

YEAR IN REVIEW



"Even if you never have the chance to see or touch the ocean, the ocean touches you with every breath you take, every drop of water you drink, every bite you consume. Everyone, everywhere is inextricably connected to and utterly dependent upon the existence of the sea."

-Dr. Sylvia Earle

"For many of us, water simply flows from a faucet, and we think little about it beyond this point of contact. We have lost a sense of respect for the wild river, for the complex workings of a wetland, for the intricate web of life that water supports."

-Sandra Postel

Greetings from the RDRWA team, and welcome to the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance's 2017-2018 Annual Report.

Watershed management has been on the minds of many this past year; with severe drought and water scarcity in South Africa, invasive species, recent flooding here in our watershed, flood mitigation in Calgary and all the necessary research, planning and response efforts associated with these issues.

As a Watershed Planning and Advisory Council, the RDRWA strives to support the people and organizations that call our watershed home, and to support those efforts that help to make our watershed healthy, sustainable and dynamic.

You will read some of the highlights of our work in the following pages- from our Splash! event to our two-day Rally for the River. Throughout the course of the year, we have reached many new people, reached out to new organizations, and tried new approaches. The work of our Project Blue Thumb Social Innovation Lab was pivotal in guiding the RDRWA's decision to undertake a bold new approach to watershed management through the development of six Action Pathways; merging the traditional roles of watershed planning with innovation, and action-oriented outcomes.

You will see some traditional events such as our Forums and education programs, plus some new initiatives like the Navigate Youth Environmental Summit, (reaching 120 students in one day), Digital Story-telling and our "Love Letter to Your River" campaign. We have updated our monthly E-Newsletter, improved our social media presence, and are the first WPAC in Alberta to have erected highway road signs marking key entry points into the watershed.

We also led on building a Basin Advisory Committee to review the South Saskatchewan River Basin Water Management Plan - with the intent of ensuring that the plan will continue to work to meet the needs of our watershed now and in the future.

We have new staff, new Board members, new followers, and new ways to protect, love and appreciate our watershed; ways that haven't been tried before!

We hope that you will see a little bit of yourself in our work, and that this report becomes your link to joining us to help maintain a healthy watershed in the future.

### **OUR STAFF**

**Executive Director** Watershed Planning Manager Outreach & Communications Manager **Executive Assistant**  Jeff Hanger Josée Méthot Rosemarie Ferjuc Kelly Dodds

Watershed Planning & Program Coordinator Education Program Coordinator Outreach Assistant Jessy Rajan Alexandra Zanussi Shawn Abraham

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

#### AFFILIATION MEMBER

Red Deer County Jean Bota (Chair) NOVA Chemicals Kent Dyck (Vice-Chair) Independent Natasha Wright (Treasurer)

Town of Stettler Nature Conservancy of Canada Curtin University Alberta Agriculture & Forestry Brandon Leask Wheatland County Brenda Knight Alberta Beef Producers **Butte Action Committee** City of Red Deer Independent (First Nation/ Métis) Donna Hovsepian Natural Resources Conservation Board

Independent (First Nation/ Métis)

Repsol Oil & Gas, Canada Inc.

Alberta Environment & Parks

Al Campbell Alia Snively Anna Lewis Chris Israelson Dale Christian Dianne Wyntjes Independent Gates Bilodeau Mike Iwanyshyn Jennifer Poor

Joanne Volk

Phil Boehme (Ex Officio)



# CONTENTS

Introduction	6
Splash Canada 150	8
Empowering Future Leaders	1C
Outside The Classroom	11
Learning From Our Community	13
With A Little Help From Our Friends	15
Financial Report	16
Funders	17
Ambassador Awards	18
Get Involved	19

# INTRODUCTION

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

#### MISSION

The Red Deer River Watershed Alliance is an inclusive, collaborative partnership that promotes a healthy watershed to ensure a legacy of ecological integrity and economic sustainability.

#### VISION

The Red Deer River watershed will be healthy, dynamic and sustainable through the efforts of the entire community.

#### GOALS

- Provide a forum for information exchange and dialogue
- Raise awareness on watershed issues
- Promote the use of best practices and integrated management of land and water resources.



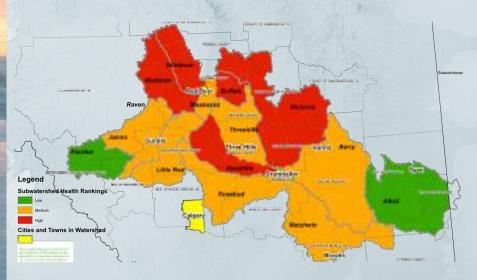
# Your Watershed

The Red Deer River watershed encompasses over 49,000 square kms in Central Alberta with approximately 300,000 residents.



At the RDRWA, we view watershed management as an approach that balances the health of ecology, humans and the economy.

#### STATE OF THE WATERSHED



The state of our watershed report (2009) indicated that our watershed was healthy - with concerns.

Sub-watersheds of particular concern at the time were: Blindman, Kneehill, Buffalo, Michichi and Medicine.

PAGE 07 | YOUR WATERSHED

CANADA 150

SPLASH! was an event to celebrate Canada's 150th anniversary through a water lens. Hosted on Earth Day -April 22nd, 2017, the event aimed to give people a better understanding of the role of the river in their lives. It was led by the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance. the Waskasoo Environmental Education Society, and the City of Red Deer alongside a range of partners. This event was held at Historic Fort Normandeau - a venue rich with the history of First Nations, Métis peoples, and European settlers. SPLASH! was about bringing people from a range of backgrounds together around a shared love of water.













#### A Different Lens

The themes of SPLASH! were "Love, Story and Place". We invited people to write Love Letters to the River, we ran a living library with story tellers and Stephanie Poor, a jingle dancer from Salteaux First Nation. Manitoba tied the connections together with her performance; a healing dance - more like a prayer for the land, water and people. This traditional dance brings light to a pre-colonial relationship between humans and water that is also important to acknowledge.

- [1] Sample love letters to the water
- [2] Stephanie Poor speaks to the healing dance, describing the
- [3] This area was set up fo writing the love letters.
- [4] Stephanie Poor engaged the rest of us in a round dance along the river
- [5] Brianna Lizotte, a local fiddler from the Metis Nation of Alberta, shares some of her songs.

PAGE 9 | CANADA 150: SPLASH!



# EMPOWERING FUTURE LEADERS

At RDRWA, we work to engage our future leaders at an early age through our various school programs in the spring and summer as well as a variety of events throughout the year.

#### SCHOOL PROGRAMS

This year, RDRWA's Kindergarten-Grade 12 education programs reached nearly 800 students and 12 summer camps in 13 communities across the watershed. 2017 also saw the RDRWA reach new 3 new communities and marked the first time we delivered education programs in Wheatland County.

#### H20PIA

On March 20th, we hosted close to 200 Grade 8 students for a fun day of hands-on learning at our "H20pia" event. Deer Valley Meadows proved to be the perfect location for students to explore a variety of water-focused themes, learn about human impacts on our water resources, and how we monitor and interpret data to inform our planning and decision-making processes. The day's success was due in large part to our incredible presenters from Cows and Fish, Alberta Environment and Parks, Battle River Watershed Alliance, Trout Unlimited Canada and Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, who generously shared their knowledge and expertise with all who attended.

# NAVIGATE 2018: YOUTH WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

unique opportunity for students and teachers equipped with tools to implement a O'Chiese First Nation represented the Red Deer River Watershed.











# **OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM**

awareness on watershed issues, we work to watershed. While our Lake Days and forums nature. We believe that these relationships

#### LAKE DAYS

1 131

RDRWA hosted our Winter Lake Day on near Gull Lake. Despite the very wintry Alberta Lake Management Society (ALMS), Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, and Alberta information and learn more about some of Environmental Damages Fund.

#### **HIKING LEARNING JOURNEY**

This second annual event took us to some of the most pristine parts of Red Deer. We journeyed through the Waskasoo trail system; from Kerry Wood Nature Centre to Maskepetoon Park via Bower Ponds. Along the way, we were enlightened by knowledge from various key speakers including Kerry Wood Nature Centre's own, Tanya Wells who guided an interpretive walk through the Gaetz Lake Sanctuary. We also had the privilege of hearing stories of reclamation by a local, retired historian, Michael Dawe.

#### SPRING FORUM

The Red Deer River Watershed Alliance hosted our 2018 Spring Forum on March 22nd, which is World Water Day, a global holiday celebrating the sustainable management of our water resources. This year's theme - Nature for Water - explored how we can use nature to overcome the water challenges of the 21st century. Building on this theme, the RDRWA brought together five experts in their respective fields, who presented on key issues related to water and land use challenges within the Red Deer River Watershed. The 32 attendees also had an opportunity to learn about different ecological tools and resources available to municipal councillors and planning staff, as well as resources and grants available to the general public.



# LEARNING FROM OUR COMMUNITY

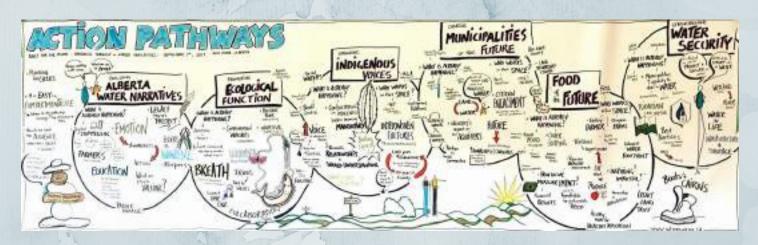
#### PROJECT BLUE THUMB

In 2015 the RDRWA, in partnership with Alberta EcoTrust developed Project Blue Thumb - the first Social Innovation Lab to look at water quality; engaging a diverse team of citizens and groups to take action on water quality issues with a creative, collaborative and systems-based approach. Over the years the participants helped the RDRWA devise new approaches to watershed management, leading to the development of six Action Pathways.









#### **ACTION PATHWAYS AND RALLY FOR THE RIVER**

The final workshop, Rally for the River, was held in September, 2017. The outcome led to finalized Action Pathways: an approach to focus and catalyze shared watershed management efforts. These action pathways comprise the current strategic plan that will guide the RDRWA.

The six themes of the action pathways are: Building Alberta Water Narratives, Promoting Ecological Function, Creating Municipalities of the Future, Upholding Indigenous Voices, Strengthening Water Security and Supporting Food Production of the Future.



# WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

In a watershed, all land, water, human and non-human communities within its boundaries are interconnected. While using an approach that combines the economic, environmental and social pillars, we aim to highlight those connections. The connections with our community members and partner organizations allow us to put forth innovative programs and projects.

#### **ALMS: LAKE TESTING**

2017 marked another successful year of our partnership with the Alberta Lake Management Society(ALMS) to monitor water quality in lakes across the Red Deer River watershed over the course of three years. Our partnership with ALMS has enabled the RDRWA to engage more closely with local residents, who volunteer their time to collect water quality samples five times over the course of a summer, and also provides valuable data about the health of our recreational lakes. In 2017, ALMS monitored Alix Lake, Haunted Lake, Pine Lake, Gleniffer Lake, and Burnstick Lake. This year, ALMS is seeking volunteers to assist with the water quality monitoring of Blackfalds Lake, Buffalo Lake, Medicine Lake and Sylvan Lake. Thanks to the Environmental Damages Fund (EDF) for their ongoing support of this unique citizen science program!

#### **DIGITAL STORIES**

In partnership with Cows and Fish, Red Deer County and Clearwater County, we compiled and digitized stories of local stewards and community leaders. Stories were collected from farmers, ranchers and conservationists in an effort to highlight the importance of relationships with the land to build and maintain a strong watershed.

#### WATER MANAGEMENT

We led the process for a 10 year review of the SSRBWMP on behalf of the Red Deer Basin. A Basin Advisory Council (BAC) was formed, consisting of a wide range of representatives from partner and stakeholder organizations, and supported by AEP. The BAC convened three times, diligently went through all of the data that was made available to them, and submitted a summary report with key recommendations in early April 2018.

PAGE 15 | COMMUNITY



# **FINANCIALS**

# 2017/2018

REVENUE		
Government of Canada	290,000	
Municipal	113,284	
Other	76,890	
Total (\$)	480,174	

EXPENSES	
Staff: Salaries, Benefits, Training	259,788
Programs and Events	72,367
General: administrative/ office	94,924
Other	6,239
Total (\$)	433,318

REVENUE-EXPENSES		
Surplus	46,856	
Interest from Contingency Fund	2,946	
Change in Net Assets	49,802	

	nt of Financi	
	March 31, 2017 (unaudited)	March 31, 2018 (unaudited)
Assets	667,982	620,843
Liabilities	253,556	156,615
Net Assets	414,426	464,228
	667,982	620,843

### FUNDERS











Funded by the Government of Canada



Thank you to all of our major sponsors, supporters, and volunteers for helping the RDRWA thrive!

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

Alberta Beef Producers **ATCO** 

**Border Paving** 

Canada Summer Jobs

Carbon School

Clearwater County

County of Newell

Ellis Bird Farm

**Kneehill County** 

Lacombe County

Little John's Potable Toilets

Municipal District of Bighorn

Mountain View County

**NOVA Chemicals** 

Rahr Malting

Royal Bank Canada

**Red Deer County** 

Red Deer & District Community Fdn

Repsol Oil & Gas, Canada Inc.

Special Areas Board

Starland County

Summer Village of Birchcliff

Summer Village of Gull Lake

Summer Village of Half Moon Bay

Summer Village of Jarvis Bay

Summer Village of Norglenwold

Summer Village of Parkland Beach

Summer Village of Rochon Sands

Summer Village of Sunbreaker Cove

TD Friends of the Environment Fdn

Town of Bentley

Town of Blackfalds

Town of Drumheller

Town of Oyen

Town of Rimbev

Town of Stettler

Town of Sylvan Lake

Town of Three Hills

Town of Trochu

Troubled Monk Brewery

Village of Big Valley

Village of Delburne

Village of Halkirk

Wheatland County

PAGE 17 | FUNDERS

#### PAGE 18 | AWARDS



Ray Reckseidler was presented with an award by Bill Shaw

Ken Lewis accepting an award on behalf of ALUS from Jeff Hanger, Executive Director

#### **LEADERS IN OUR COMMUNITY**

Keeping a watershed safe, healthy and sustainable takes every member of the community. Some members go above and beyond and we, at the RDRWA, take note of personal commitments to protecting, preserving or enhancing the health of the Red Deer River watershed. This can either be an individual or an organization. At our Spring Forum in March, 2018, we presented Ambassador Awards to ALUS Canada and Ray Reckseidler, pictured above.

We are excited to highlight exceptional members of our community. This year, we took a new approach; we debuted digital storytelling.

Through telling stories of stewards of the land and water, we are more than recognizing individual efforts; we're sharing their stories. We hope this could inspire and motivate community members to help work towards a healthier watershed.

## **GET INVOLVED**

#### **BECOME A MEMBER**

Membership is a free and easy way to stay up to date through our monthly e-newsletter and you will get to vote in our AGM.

#### **TAKE ACTION**

Learn more about your watershed and take action through materials on our website.

#### **ADVANCE CONVERSATION**

Use your voice and participate in RDRWA events with partners across the watershed.

#### **ADVANCE BLUEPRINT**

Recommendations outlined in Blueprint require support and leadership from individuals to move forward.

#### **VOLUNTEER**

We are always looking for volunteers to help! Follow us on social media to stay up to date on opportunities to work with us!

#### **CONTACT US**

Email: info@rdrwa.ca Phone: 403.340.7379 URL: www.rdrwa.ca Twitter: @RDRWA

Facebook: Red Deer River

Watershed Alliance

The Red Deer River Watershed Alliance is an inclusive, collaborative partnership that promotes a healthy watershed to ensure a legacy of ecological integrity and economic sustainability.

4918 59th St. Red Deer, AB, T4N 2N1 Phone: 403.340.7379/ Fax: 403.356.9189 Email: info@rdrwa.ca/ Website: www.rdrwa.ca

