



ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022



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Greetings from the RDRWA

Welcome to the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance's Annual Report for 2021-2022. Despite the twists and turns of living through the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, an unprecedented summer of wildfires, heat domes and some of the driest conditions on record in Alberta, we are immensely proud of all that we have been able to accomplish in support of watershed management this year. A few things we think are worth celebrating in 2021-2022 include:

- **Raising Awareness:** More and more people are recognizing the importance of watersheds. Since launching our short film [Source Waters](#) in March, it has racked up 2000 + views! Be sure to check out the RDRWA's [YouTube](#) Channel for other videos.
- **Connecting with Water:** Local rivers and streams remind us of why this work is important. In 2021 we followed the Medicine River with drones, filmed native trout in the upper headwaters, and explored riparian areas included in technical projects.
- **Strengthening Partnerships:** New people are reaching out to the RDRWA wanting to get involved. The RDRWA has a productive Board of Directors, amazing staff, active committees, and continues to strengthen relationships with new and existing partners.
- **Thinking Strategically:** 2021 saw excellent policy and education collaborations by Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils, an important new report about [Alberta's Water Futures](#), and preparations for Phase Two of an Integrated Watershed Management Plan for the Red Deer River watershed. Taken together, this work strengthens watershed management and our ability to proactively address key challenges.

The Red Deer River Watershed Alliance also bids a fond farewell to outgoing Executive Director, Josée Méthot, who moved on from the RDRWA in March to accept a new position. On behalf of the staff and the Board, we thank Josée for her dedicated work and wish her well in this next chapter!

As always, we want to thank all of the organizations, partners, and our members for your continued support of the work of the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance! We hope you will be as excited as we are to see what the next year has in store, and we look forward to reconnecting with you in new ways throughout 2022-2023.

About The RDRWA

DID YOU KNOW?

The Red Deer River Watershed Alliance (RDRWA) was created in 2005 as a non-profit society. We serve as the designated Watershed Planning and Advisory Council for the Red Deer River watershed, under the Government of Alberta's Water for Life Strategy.

We act as a collaborative forum for stakeholders from across sectors to work together in support of healthy waters, landscapes, and communities. We all have a role to play in watershed management, and the RDRWA helps community members and key sectors find meaningful opportunities to make a difference.

Rosebud River Valley
Photo courtesy of Rosebud River
Watershed Stewardship Group

Our Vision

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

Our Mission

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

Our Goals

01

Provide a forum for information exchange and dialogue

02

Raise awareness of watershed issues.

03

Promote the use of best practices and integrated management of land and water resources.



Red Deer River near Dry Island Buffalo Jump
Photo by Rosemarie Ferjuc

Board of Directors

The RDRWA's Board of Directors is a multi-sector Board with representatives from across sectors.

Environment/Stewardship

- Tjarda Barratt – Alberta Wilderness Association
- Helge Nome – Alberta Freshwater Alliance Society
- Murray Welch – Medicine River Watershed Society

Agriculture/Business/Industry

- JoAnne Volk – Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers
- Kent Dyck – NOVA Chemicals
- Mike Gallant – Kerr Wood Leidal Associates Ltd.

Municipal Government

- Dianne Wyntjes – City of Red Deer
- Daryl Swenson – Special Areas Board
- Christine Moore – Red Deer County
- Peggy Johnson – Mountain View County

Provincial/Federal/Academic

- Dan Karran – Olds College
- Robert (Bob) Mills – Individual
- Mike Iwanyshyn – Natural Resources Conservation Board

First Nations/Aboriginal

- Ashley Patterson

Members at Large

- Adam Minke – Individual
- Jim Smith – Individual

Ex-Officio Members

- Amanda Halawell – Alberta Environment and Parks
- Brandon Leask – Alberta Agriculture and Forestry

COMMITTEES



Rowley, population 9
Photo by Rosemarie Ferjuc

The RDRWA ran five committees: Executive; Governance; Outreach, Board Recruitment, and Watershed Health, Issues, and Project (WHIP) committees.

Notably, the Outreach and WHIP Committees tackled a broad range of subjects in 2021-2022, working with partners from many organizations to learn about issues and advance solutions. Examples of topics addressed include Indigenous engagement, sand and gravel (aggregate) extraction, aquatic invasive species, temporary surface pipelines, water conservation, coal mining, water allocation, water quality and many more.

OUR TEAM



Kelly Dodds

Executive Assistant



Rosemarie Ferjuc

Watershed Engagement and
Communications Manager



Josée Méthot

Outgoing Executive Director



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.

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.



Abandoned farmstead near Drumheller
Photo by Rosemarie Ferjuc













Bighorn Falls, Ya Ha Tinda
Photo by Rosemarie Perdue

Measuring Progress

The RDRWA led multiple successful programs in 2021-2022 in support of a healthy, dynamic, and sustainable watershed, working alongside partners from across sectors.

2021-2022 Priorities At A Glance

ONGOING	STATUS	MAJOR PROJECTS	STATUS
Host Core Events (AGM, Fall Forum, Spring Forum)		Complete Medicine-Blindman Riparian Project and engage partners	
Enhance RDRWA Communications			
Ongoing Monthly E-Newsletter and Social Media		Hosted a major event showcasing flood and drought resilience strategies.	
School Programming and New Delivery Partnerships		Support Municipalities and Stewardship Groups	
Strengthen collaboration with fellow Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils		Initiate riparian mapping project in the Lower Headwaters and Central Agricultural zones.	
Initiate and develop the final phase of an Integrated Watershed Management Plan (Phase 2)		Develop communications and engagement products (e.g. native trout video, riparian video, Riparian Portal)	
Indigenous Engagement			



Executed



In Progress



On Hold



Rejected

What we have been up to, and what we have planned for next year.

AT A GLANCE

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2021-2022

- Increased community awareness of watershed management and the RDRWA through programs and media.
- Harnessed approximately \$90,000 of in-kind support from partners and volunteers.
- Strengthened municipal engagement through Council presentations and programs.
- Advanced mapping of riparian areas via Watershed Restoration and Resiliency (WRRP) projects.
- Engaged multiple sectors and partners to develop videos about native trout and riparian areas.
- Participated in the Alberta Water Council's Alberta Water Futures project team and strengthened cross-WPAC collaboration.



PRIORITIES FOR 2022-2023

- Continuing core events, communications activities, and multi-sector committees.
- Delivering two Watershed Restoration and Resiliency (WRRP) projects related to riparian mapping and municipal engagement.
- Hiring a new Executive Director and building the RDRWA team.
- Hosting community planting days in priority locations.
- Laying the groundwork for an Integrated Watershed Management Plan (Phase 2).

Oyster Lake at sunset, Banff National Park
Photo by Rosemarie Ferjuc

ENGAGEMENT AND LITERACY

2021-2022 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. This past year we hosted 3 flagship events:

RDRWA FALL FORUM



When in Drought? New Strategies for Municipal Drought Management and Resilience in Alberta profiled the drought context in central Alberta and in neighbouring jurisdictions, as well as the role that natural assets, like forests or wetlands, can play in supporting local resilience.

The Honourable Jason Nixon, Minister of Environment and Parks welcomed attendees to the forum spoke to the Government of Alberta's role as a key partner in Water for Life, as well as the importance of Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils and key initiatives, including the Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program (WRRP).



Jason Nixon

Minister of Environment and Parks

Annual General Meeting

The Alliance was thrilled to welcome Dr. Monica Emelko (University of Waterloo) and Dr. Uldis Silins (University of Alberta) as our keynotes, who spoke on the effects of landscape disturbances such as wildfire on Alberta's water supplies and strategies for source water protection.



Monica Emelko



Uldis Silins

Spring Forum

Forging Connections For Native Trout: Connecting Land Use, Water Quality, Native Trout, and People.' allowed attendees to gain a greater understanding of the status of native trout and other fish species in the Red Deer River watershed, as well as the connections between land use, water quality, conservation and practical, actionable solutions.

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.

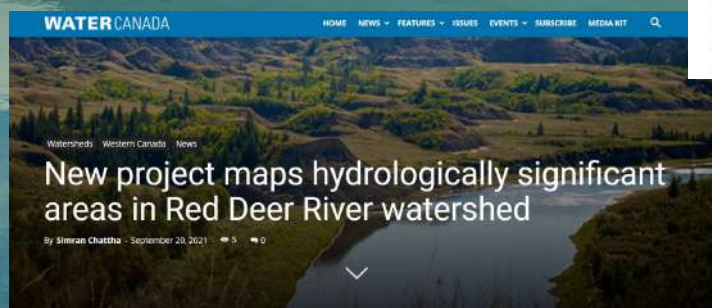
Over the past year, we presented to a wide range of groups, including schools, watershed stewardship groups, and post-secondary institutions.

This year we were also very excited to launch two new short videos with funding from the Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program, the Alberta Real Estate Foundation, Alberta Ecotrust Foundation, the Red Deer and District Community Foundation, DOW Canada and Rocky View County. This suite of communications products has amplified the RDRWA's impact to improve regional water literacy, by bringing together watershed science and local stories.

Raising Awareness

The RDRWA was pleased to see a number of our key initiatives profiled in the media this past year, both in print and radio.

We will continue to work to raise awareness of key watershed issues and projects in 2022-2023.



POLICY AND PLANNING

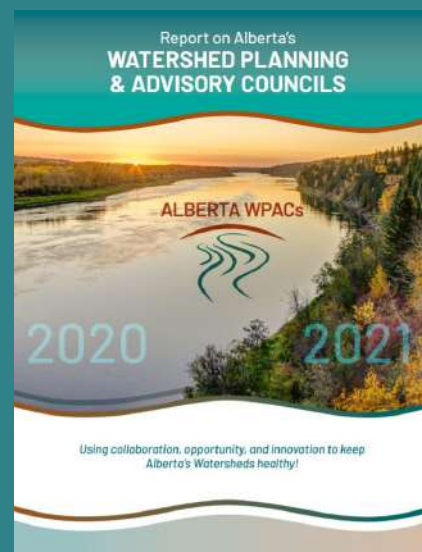
The RDRWA works with many partners in support of the goals of the provincial Water for Life Strategy. We also support the strategic priorities of the Government of Alberta, and work closely with fellow Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils and the Alberta Water Council. This year, we also focused on improving programming for municipalities, recognizing their role as major land-use decision-makers and community leaders.

The RDRWA is increasingly being included in key Government of Alberta engagement and communications initiatives, and we welcome the opportunity to support these efforts. In 2021-2022, we shared information to our members related to multiple Government initiatives (e.g., flood engagement, recreation engagement, temporary surface pipelines, coal, mining strategy, aquatic invasive species, water conservation, etc.), and participated in various engagement events and surveys. We also presented to a number of municipal elected officials and staff working in urban and rural municipalities across central Alberta.

Strengthening WPAC Collaboration

The Alberta Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils (WPACs) recently released a WPAC Compendium profiling WPAC efforts across Alberta. The provincial WPACs also co-hosted a World Water Day event on March 22, 2022. The theme was "Groundwater: Making the Invisible, Visible".

The RDRWA coordinated welcoming remarks from Minister Nixon, and three speakers presented a variety of perspectives on the importance of groundwater resources.





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.

Phyllis Lake
Photo courtesy of Monica Schmidt

RIPARIAN MAPPING PROJECT

Riparian lands have substantial ecological, economic, and social value, and as such, the effective management of these habitats is a critical component to the maintenance of watershed health. In an effort to better manage riparian habitats within the Red Deer River watershed, the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance (RDRWA) retained Fiera Biological Consulting to assess riparian habitat using a GIS-based approach, along approximately 5,285 km of shoreline within the Lower Headwaters and Central Agricultural Zones of the Red Deer River watershed, which includes the Buffalo, Kneehills, Little Red Deer, and Threehills sub-watersheds.

In addition to the RDRWA's previous study of the Medicine-Blindman Rivers sub-watersheds, the RDRWA recently released the results of our new technical report for this new project. The report provides essential information to municipalities and other partners to help spatially target the conservation and restoration of riparian areas. Specifically, the report helps assess the intactness (condition) of riparian shorelines, recognizing that intact riparian areas provide protection in the face of flood and drought risks. The report also includes data summaries for major counties within the study area.

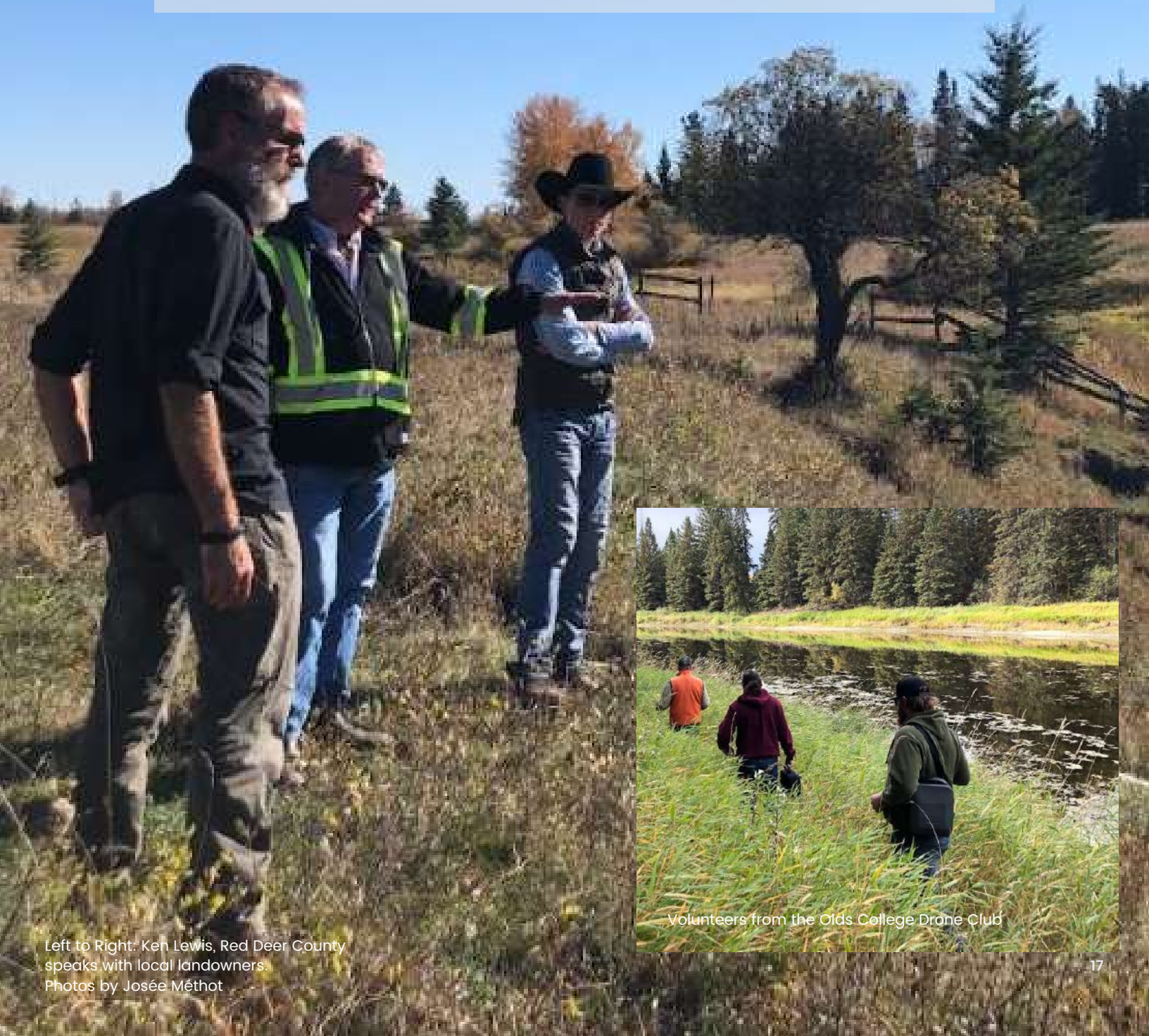
The RDRWA will continue to work with key partners to identify potential on-the-ground projects and to raise awareness about riparian areas and other natural assets in 2022-2023.



RIPARIAN VIDEO

To complement our WRRP riparian mapping project in the Medicine-Blindman Rivers, the RDRWA also began work to film a short video to showcase the importance of riparian areas and partner efforts to conserve and protect natural assets.

Special thanks to the Olds College Drone Club, whose members volunteered their time to assist with capturing drone footage for the video.



Left to Right: Ken Lewis, Red Deer County speaks with local landowners.
Photos by Josée Méthot

Volunteers from the Olds College Drone Club

UP NEXT IN 2022-2023

The RDRWA's work in 2022-2023 will be guided by our Three-Year Strategic Plan (2021-2024), which was approved by the Board of Directors in January 2021 and which establishes operational, programmatic, and financial goals for the RDRWA. Highlights from the 2022-2023 Work Plan include:

Communications and Engagement

- Continue core events, communications activities, and multi-sector committees.
- Strengthen municipal partnerships through engagement with Councils and staff.
- Host two riparian restoration planting days in Fall 2022.
- Develop new videos on topics including native trout and riparian management.

Special Projects

- Continue our riparian mapping and engagement project in the Lower Headwaters and Central Agricultural Zones; provide partners with tools for riparian stewardship.
- Lay the groundwork for an Integrated Watershed Management Plan (Phase 2).
- Explore partnerships to strengthen school outreach via virtual programs.

Resources

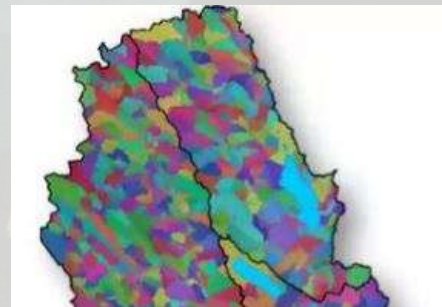
Riparian Mapping Results

- View the results of our riparian mapping projects and access the Hydrologically Significant Areas mapping portal.

Spotlight Video Series

- The RDRWA released two new short videos on watershed issues: climate change, and municipal planning. View the videos on our YouTube Channel.

For more resources, visit www.rdrwa.ca



Acknowledging National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day

***September 30th, 2021
marked the very first
National Day for Truth and
Reconciliation. The day has
been commemorated in past
years as Orange Shirt Day,
originally started in 2013
by Phyllis Webstad.***

Orange Shirt Day is an Indigenous-led grassroots day to commemorate the experiences of Indigenous children in residential schools, to witness and honour the journey of the survivors and their families, and to commit to the ongoing process of reconciliation. It is estimated that between 4,000 – 6,000 Indigenous children died at residential schools (with efforts underway to determine exactly how many), with the last residential school closing in 1996. Locally, the Red Deer Industrial School operated from 1893 to 1919, and had one of the highest child mortality rates of any school.

Orange Shirt Day offers a dedicated time to reflect and learn about residential schools, to connect history with ongoing injustices against Indigenous Peoples in the present day, and to commit to taking positive action. The designation of September 30th as National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (NDTR) marks one step towards the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 94 Calls to Action. The date was declared a statutory federal holiday with the passage of Bill C-5 in June of this year, in response to Call to Action 80 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC).

For the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance, we acknowledge that there is no reconciliation without truth; there is no reconciliation without a commitment to listen and bear witness. We recommend that all of our partners read the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's landmark final report, beginning with the Introduction section (pages 1- 23). The documentary film, *Water: The Sacred Relationship*, is another important resource for these discussions. The filmmakers ask: Can water be the common ground that begins to reconcile the relationship between Indigenous People and the rest of Canada?

The RDRWA also recognizes that reconciliation is a verb, requiring real action. We know that wearing orange shirts, while an important act of allyship, can never be enough. The Red Deer River watershed spans Treaty Seven and Treaty Six lands, and is home to Region Three of the Alberta Métis Nation. At the core, the RDRWA's work in watershed management is about land, about water, and about the people who make up our communities. We are committed to listening to, learning from, and building trust with Indigenous communities. We would like to offer our ongoing commitment to help safeguard water and watersheds as a symbol of our commitment towards active reconciliation.

We offer this commitment in the spirit of partnership, while recognizing the autonomy and leadership of Indigenous Peoples. We are also committed to learning from the waters, the lands, the wildlife and ecosystems, that form the Red Deer River watershed.

FUNDERS

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
Alberta Ecotrust Foundation
NOVA Chemicals

Clearwater County
Lacombe County
Municipal District of Big Horn
Mountain View County
Red Deer County
Special Areas Board
Starland County
Summer Village of Burnstick Lake
Summer Villages (Jarvis Bay,
Sunbreaker Cove, Half Moon Bay,
Birchcliff, Norglenwold)
Summer Village of Parkland Beach
Summer Village of Rochon Sands
Town of Bentley
Town of Blackfalds
Town of Eckville
Town of Stettler
Town of Sundre
Village of Acme
Village of Beiseker
Village of Delia
Village of Halkirk
Vic Walls - Border Paving



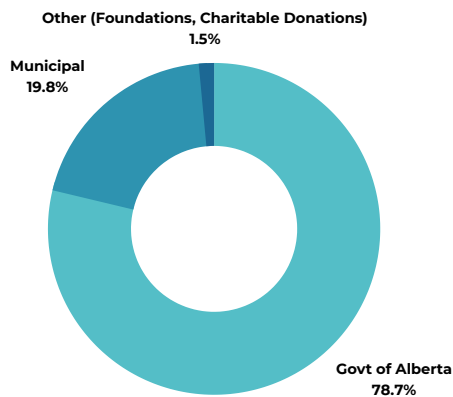
We are grateful for the ongoing support from our municipal partners across the Red Deer River watershed.

As key partners in watershed management, many of our municipal partners choose to support the work of the RDRWA through annual funding of 50 cents per capita. Thank you!

2021- 2022 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

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.

RDRWA 2021-2022 FUNDING BY %



Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets
Year Ended March 31, 2022 (unaudited)

REVENUE

Government of Alberta	357,162
Municipal	89,735
Other contributions and income	6,702
Total (\$)	453,599

EXPENSES

Board and Governance	2,169
Human Resources and Administration	229,488
Office Space and Operations	66,577
Programs and Outreach	125,986
Total (\$)	424,220
Operational Surplus	29,379

OTHER INCOME

Interest Income	1,118
Total (\$)	1,118
Excess of Revenue Over Expenses	30,497

Statement of Financial Position

	March 31, 2022 (unaudited)	March 31, 2021 (unaudited)
Assets	685,910	648,155
Liabilities	147,605	140,347
Net Assets	538,305	507,808
Total (\$)	685,910	648,155

Get Involved!

Become a member of the RDRWA

Membership is free! We offer both individual and organizational memberships.

Sign up at www.rdrwa.ca

Learn more about watersheds

Visit our new Resources page at www.rdrwa.ca to discover RDRWA or our partner resources.

Use your voice to advance conversations about water and land use in central Alberta. Participate in RDRWA events and stay up to date on engagement opportunities.

Build community

Check out our online community calendar on our website to view upcoming workshops, education, and environmental stewardship programs on offer from RDRWA and our partners.

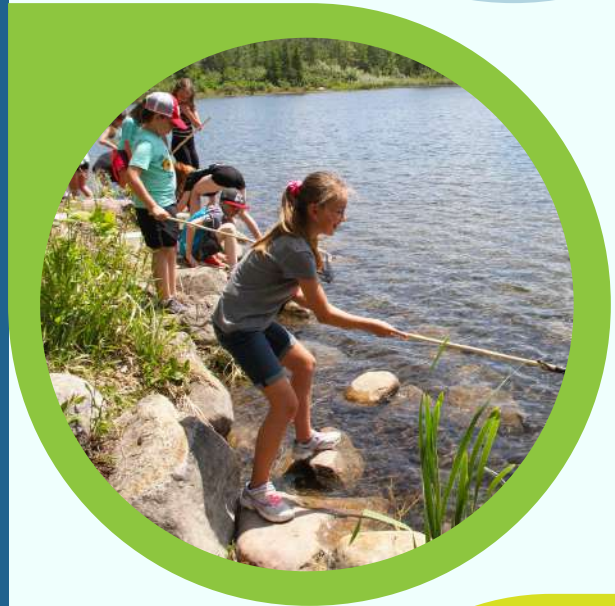
Subscribe to our E-newsletter

We publish our E-newsletter, *The Source* each month, and each edition is filled with the latest local and national water news, academic articles, employment opportunities, events and more. It's free to subscribe! [Sign up today](#) to stay up to date on all the latest news!

Donate to the RDRWA

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

SIGN UP TODAY!



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.



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Twitter: @RDRWA

Facebook: Red Deer River Watershed Alliance

