



ANNUAL REPORT

2022 - 2023



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Welcome to the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance Annual report for 2022-2023. The report includes a summary of the past year and a look ahead at what is to come. Below are some key highlights:

Governance and Operations

- Developed a four-Year Strategic Plan to incorporate guidance from our new Mandate & Roles agreement with the provincial government.
- Acquired new staff and leadership.
- Increased and diversified our financial support.

Partnerships

- Accumulated > \$115,000 of in-kind support from our partners and volunteers.

Watershed Assessment and Planning

- Assessed >8,000 km of riparian shoreline to support riparian health benefit. initiatives such as source protection, flood and drought resilience in the watershed.

Water literacy and Education

- Increased our social media presence on Facebook, Twitter and website (> 3,000 views each).
- Completed three professional videos promoting watershed health.

Convener and Collaborator

- Returned to in-person events.
- Engaged with >800 individuals through presentations and attendance at watershed events.

On behalf of the Red Deer River Executive committee, thank you to all of the organizations, partners, members and volunteers for your continued support towards the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance's work. We hope you will be as excited for next year as we continue to connect on watershed issues and begin to assess the State of the Watershed. Together we will continue to maintain, improve and promote watershed health in the Red Deer River Basin.

INDIGENOUS LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We recognize all the Indigenous Peoples whose footprints have marked these lands from time immemorial. We respectfully acknowledge that the Red Deer River Watershed in which we live and work spans what is now known as Treaty 6 of the Dene Suliné, Cree, Nakota Sioux and Saulteaux peoples, and Treaty 7 of the Blackfoot [Siksika, Piikani, Kainai], the Tsuu T'ina, and the Iyârhe Nakoda [Bears paw, Chiniki and Wesley] peoples and Métis Nation of Alberta Regions 2, 3, and 4.

We keep in mind that Indigenous people have been here for almost 10,000 years and Europeans have been here less than 300 years. Together we can learn and honour the Traditional Knowledge and ways of knowing of Indigenous Peoples and work to further the recognition as the original stewards of the land and water.



ABOUT THE RDRWA

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 basin, under the Government of Alberta's Water for Life Strategy.

Get to know the Red Deer River Watershed

The Red Deer River watershed is part of the South Saskatchewan River Basin and home to approximately 300,000 people.

The watershed drains lands with a rich diversity of lakes, wetlands, creeks, and tributaries. It is often defined by surrounding topography and land uses. These factors can have significant impacts on the watershed's overall health and water resources.

The Red Deer River watershed covers an area of approximately 50,000 km² in central Alberta and the river flows from the Rocky Mountains eastward over 724 km to join the South Saskatchewan River.

The South Saskatchewan River continues through Saskatchewan to Lake Winnipeg, en route to Hudson's Bay.

WELCOME TO YOUR WATERSHED



The Red Deer River's headwaters are in the Skoki Valley of Banff National Park.



The watershed includes five Natural Regions - Rocky Mountains, Foothills, Boreal, Parkland, and Grassland.



Over 50% of the total water yield in the Red Deer River originates from snow and rain in the Rocky Mountains and Upper Foothills.



The Red Deer River watershed covers 8% of Alberta's landmass.





OUR VISION, MISSION, GOALS

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 (RDRWA) is an inclusive, collaborate partnership that promotes a healthy watershed to ensure a legacy of ecological integrity and economic sustainability.

Watershed Planning Advisory Council Goals:

- Serve as convener and collaborator on watershed issues
- Promote water literacy and education
- Conduct state of watershed reporting and integrated watershed planning



OUR 2022 - 2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The RDRWA's Board of Directors is a
multi-sector Board

Environment and Stewardship

Helge Nome - Alberta Fresh Water Alliance
Murray Welch - Medicine River Watershed Society

Agriculture and Business/Industry

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

Municipal Government

Peggy Johnson - Mountain View County
Christine Moore - Red Deer County
Kraymer Barnstable - City of Red Deer
Daryl Swenson - Special Areas Board*
Trent Caskey - Special Areas Board

Provincial, Federal, and Academic

Amanda Halawell - Alberta Environment and Protected Areas
Dan Karran - Olds College
Robert (Bob) Mills - Individual
Mike Iwanyshyn - Natural Resources Conservation Board*

Aboriginal and or First Nations

Thalia Aspeslet

Individual

Adam Minke - Individual
Jim Smith - Individual

Ex-Officio Members

Brandon Leask - Alberta Agriculture and Forestry*

(*) - Resigned in the fiscal year



2022-2023 RDRWA Staff

Francine Forrest began as the Executive Director for the RDRWA in August of 2022. With support from the Executive Committee and staff Kelly Dodds (Executive Assistant) and Rosemarie Ferjuc (Watershed Engagement and Communications Manager), we accomplished a lot this past year.

Additionally, Kelly and Rosemarie both achieved long-term service achievement awards with the RDRWA of 10 and 5 years, respectively.

Rosemarie moved on from the RDRWA in February and the RDRWA is grateful for her communication materials which will continue to benefit the RDRWA for years to come.

2023 Students and Outreach Support

Miguel Mendoza and Reuben Grendas, students from SALT's Integrated Water Management program, completed their capstone project to update and improve the the Red Deer River Basin maps under the mentorship of Francine and board director, Adam Minke.

Darian Coulter (Outreach Watershed Coordinator) and Amy Charles (Indigenous Outreach and Knowledge Coordinator) were recently added to the RDRWA team.

OUR 2022 - 2023 TEAM AND NEW HIRES

2022 - 2023 STAFF



Francine Forrest -
Executive Director



Kelly Dodds -
Executive Assistant



Rosemarie Ferjuc -
Watershed Engagement and
Communications Manager

R D R W A COMMITTEES

The RDRWA has five committees: Executive, Governance, Board Recruitment, Outreach and Watershed Health, Issues and Projects (WHIP) committees.

The Executive, Governance, and Board Recruitment Committees met throughout the year to manage board and organizational affairs, and helped manage the organizational transition.

The Watershed Health Issues and Projects (WHIP) and Outreach Committee work closely with RDRWA staff to achieve operational goals.

















The WHIP Committee supports the RDRWA team by coordinating strategies, sharing information, and engaging in planning, initiatives and projects related to watershed health. The committee met twice this year to discuss local and regional watershed development projects that were brought to our attention. Follow up presentations and information were posted on our website under our watershed activities page and shared through various communication channels.

The Outreach Committee strives to achieve outreach, education, engagement, and stewardship goals. The committee met three times to update one another on special events, education, stewardship initiatives. Meetings increase community understanding and support for the RDRWA's vision and strategic priorities. Additionally, they offer assistance to watershed stewardship groups as needed.



MEASURING PROGRESS

The RDRWA led multiple successful programs in 2022 - 2023 that were in support of a healthy, dynamic and sustainable watershed, working alongside partners from across sectors.

ONGOING	STATUS	MAJOR PROGRAMS/PROJECTS	STATUS
Host Core Events (AGM, Fall Forum, Spring Forum).		Riparian Mapping and Engagement: Host riparian planting events and engage partners in the lower headwaters and central agricultural zones.	
RDRWA Communications (e.g., website, e-newsletter, presentations, social media).			
RDRWA Committees.		Expand Riparian Mapping Project: Initiate riparian mapping project in the Raven, Rosebud, and Michichi subwatersheds.	
School-based programming and delivery partnerships.			
Strengthen collaboration with fellow WPACs.		Stewardship in Action: Support municipalities and watershed stewardship groups.	
Engagement with Indigenous communities, key partners, and stakeholders.		Communications and Engagement: Launch recent videos (native trout, riparian areas).	
Engagement with core Water for Life partnerships (e.g., WPACS, AEPA, AWC).			
Funder engagement and reporting (e.g., AEPA, municipalities, grant providers, etc.).		Integrated Watershed Management Plan: Continue conversations regarding Phase 2 of an IWMP with RDRWA Board and Funders.	
 Executed  In Progress  On Hold			

COMMUNITY LITERACY AND EDUCATION

As a WPAC we work to raise awareness about water, watersheds, and the roles that various sectors play in watershed management. This year we focused on communication and education efforts by successfully modernizing multiple areas of our programming to support water literacy efforts in central Alberta.

Achievements:

Developed two engaging educational videos on important watershed topics with our partners:

- Thinking Upstream: Native Trout in the Red Deer River Watershed
- Measuring What Matters – Riparian Areas in the Medicine-Blindman Rivers Watershed


These videos increased community awareness about key watershed topics and RDRWA projects and supported cross-sector efforts to raise water literacy and improve public engagement levels. Videos developed will be used for years to come.

- **E-newsletter:** We produced 10 e-newsletters reaching 130 monthly subscribers with a diverse readership.
- **Partnerships:** The RDRWA and the Kerry Wood Nature Centre continue to partner on the delivery of a Freshwater Ecosystems program 'The Quest for the Best Water Test' for Grade 8 students in the Red Deer region. This year the RDRWA provided additional equipment and communication support for the event and we are looking to expand access to programs for rural communities.
- **Website updates:** The RDRWA strives to act as a resource for community members to learn about key watershed topics. This year we continued to maintain and improve the website with information and recorded presentations on local and regional watershed activities (e.g. Special Areas & MD of Acadia Irrigation project) and emerging issues such as climate change model predictions in the Red Deer River Basin.
- **WPAC Collaboration:** WPACs continued to collaborate on initiatives, through managerial and Education & Outreach meetings, and the newly formed State of the Watershed Technical Advisory Committee. Together, these efforts are strengthening shared goals, and helping to leverage investments and enhance efficiencies.



**Our Spring Forum presentation with
Kerry Wood can be found on our
website through scanning this code!**

RDRWA AS A CONVENOR AND COLLABORATOR



The RDRWA operates as a multi-sector organization and regularly brings partners together to support an ongoing dialogue about watershed issues and opportunities in the Red Deer River watershed. In 2022-2023, we returned to in-person events following our online Annual General Meeting. We hosted a range of excellent speakers that sparked enthusiasm and discussion on various watershed topics.

Annual General Meeting (June 15, 2022):

This virtual event featured Keynote Speaker Cindy Sawchuk, an Aquatic Invasive Species Operations and K9 Program Lead with Alberta Environment and Protected Areas.

Fall Forum 'Reconnecting with the Red Deer' (October 20, 2022):

At this in-person event, speakers such as Jane Eaket a Water Resources Engineer with Alberta Environment and Protected Areas, Caleb Sinn the Program Manager with the Alberta Lake Management Society, Ghost Watershed Alliance Society Executive Director Marina Krainer, and Trout Unlimited Canada's Provincial Biologist Lesley Peterson highlighted their local watershed monitoring initiatives, flood hazard mapping, lake monitoring using satellite imagery, and native trout recovery initiatives.

Spring Forum 'World Water Day Celebration' (March 22, 2023):

Here, attendees heard inspiring speeches on water stewardship, education and assessment initiatives in the Red Deer River basin. Speakers included: Alice Koning with Kerry Wood Nature Centre, Murray Welch with the Medicine River Watershed Society, and from Tanya Rushcall and Terry Chamulak both with Alberta Environment & Protected Areas.



Left to Right: Fall Forum at Ellis Bird Farm, Medicine -Blindman River, Community Planting Event

THE STATE OF THE WATERSHED RIPARIAN MAPPING PROJECT

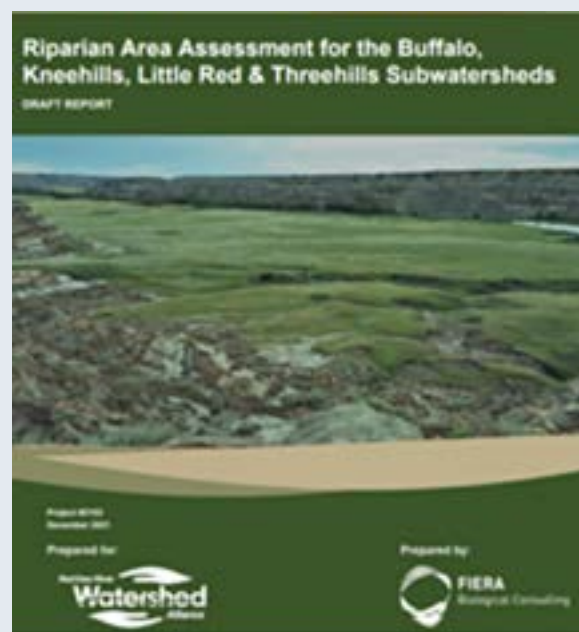
Healthy riparian areas provide many benefits including: source protection, important habitat, aesthetic enjoyment and flood and drought resilience. With support from Watershed Resilience Restoration Program Grants, RDRWA continued riparian mapping assessment and restoration work in 2022-2023. We have mapping information for over 8,000 km of shoreline in the Red Deer River Basin. Key highlights from our three grants are as follows:

The Medicine-Blindman Watersheds

- Completed this riparian project with the video Measuring What Matters. It was released at our Fall Forum and online.

The Lower Headwaters and Central Agricultural Regions

- Completed the technical Riparian Area assessment report and uploaded data into the riparian portal for stakeholder use.
- A new riparian video was completed in May and was shared with our stakeholders.
- Strengthened relationships with municipalities and stewardship groups through a project Steering Committee.
- Hosted a successful community riparian planting event in October of 2022 in partnership with Agroforestry and Woodlot Extension Society (AWES) and Kneehill County. 18 volunteers planted over 2,000 seedlings.
- Completed a new riparian video to broaden our engagement.



The Rosebud, Raven and Michichi Watersheds

- Commenced riparian data compilation and lidar work for the project.

Project communications continue to conserve and restore riparian areas throughout the basin.



The mapping report can be found on
our website through scanning this
code!

THE STATE OF THE WATERSHED ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

- The work of the RDRWA continues to be defined by our Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP; Blueprint). This plan provides strategic, long term actions to protect the health of the Red Deer River watershed and supports the three goals of the Water for Life Strategy.
- Given, it has been over eight years since the last State of the Watershed report (2009) and as per the direction from our Watershed Planning and Advisory Council Mandate and Roles document (GOA 2022), the RDRWA will be re-assessing the State of the Watershed. Information will be used to evaluate past watershed efforts and focus future initiatives.
- In 2022-2023, RDRWA began to initiate some collaborative partnerships with our academic, WPAC, NGOs and government partners as we embark on our State of the Watershed work. Some water quality, quantity and ecosystem initiatives RDRWA staff or board directors engaged or participated in, included:
 - Surface Water Quality Management Framework for the Red Deer River
 - South Saskatchewan Regional Operations Model
 - Eastern Slopes CABIN model to assess aquatic ecosystem health
 - Medicine River Watershed Stewardship water sampling program, and
 - WPAC State of the Watershed Technical Advisory committee

UP NEXT IN 2023 – 2024

The RDRWA's work in 2023-2024 will be guided by the vision, mission, and goals of the organization, as well as the Four-Year Strategic Plan (2023 - 2027). The Four-Year Strategic Plan aligns with the WPAC Mandate and Roles document (GOA, Sept 2022) and was developed with input from RDRWA staff and board directors, and builds on past work and strategic planning. It has the following four goals: expand engagement and develop relationships, secure adequate funding, build and strengthen organization, conduct state of watershed assessment and planning. The RDRWA's 2023/24 Work Plan aligns with the strategic plan and has been provided to AEPA as part of this interim report package. Core priorities within the work plan are summarized below.

ONGOING		MAJOR PROGRAMS/PROJECTS	
Convenor and Collaborator:		Watershed Assessment and Planning:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Core events (AGM, Fall Forum, Spring Forum)		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Scope and source funding for State of Watershed Report.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Engagement with Indigenous Communities and key stakeholders (e.g., municipalities, stewardship groups, etc.)		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Riparian mapping and engagement:<ul style="list-style-type: none">WRRP2 - Lower Headwaters and Central Agriculture zone Little Red Deer Kneehills, Threehills and Buffalo – work with partners to incorporate information into planning and action. Host riparian planting event.WRRP3- Raven, Rosebud and Michichi subwatersheds. Complete riparian mapping. Engage with local stakeholders.Continue communications and engagement on incorporating results with various stakeholders.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Engagement with core Water for Life partnerships (e.g., WPACs, AEPA, Alberta Water Council).			
Literacy and Education:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Communications (e.g., website, e-newsletter, social media)			
Governance:		Literacy and Education:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Funder engagement and reporting (e.g., AEPA, municipalities, grant providers, etc)		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Deliver outreach and education programs with partners and a focus on experiential activities.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">RDRWA Committees.			



2022 - 2023 FINANCIALS

Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets Year Ended March 31, 2023 (unaudited)

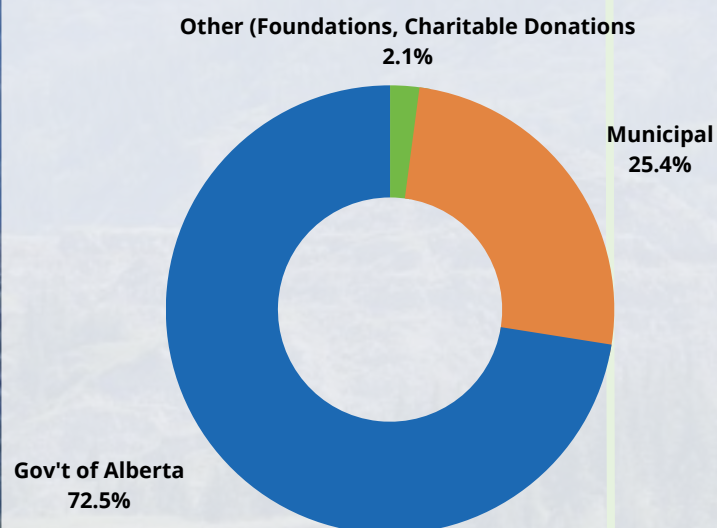
REVENUE	
Government of Alberta	276,933
Municipal	97,083
Other Contributions and Income	7,948
Total (\$)	381,964

EXPENSES	
Board and Governance	3,012
Human Resources and Administration	195,325
Office Space and Operations	68,757
Programs and Outreach	32,066
Total (\$)	299,160

OTHER INCOME	
Interest Income	4,325
Total (\$)	4,325
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	87,129

Statement of Financial Position	March 31, 2023 (unaudited)	March 31, 2022 (unaudited)
Assets	881,301	685,910
Liabilities	255,866	147,605
Net Assets	625,435	538,305
Total (\$)	881,301	685,910

RDRWA 2022 - 2023 FUNDING BY %



THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

MAJOR SUPPORTERS



SUPPORTERS

Clearwater Country
Country of Newell
Lacombe Country
Mountain View Country
NOVA Chemicals
Red Deer County
Special Areas Board
Starland County
Summer Villages (Jarvis Bay,
Sunbreaker Cove, Half Moon Bay,
Birchcliff, Norglenwold)

Town of Bentley
Town of Blackfalds
Town of Oyen
Town of Stettler
Town of Sundre
Town of Trochu
Village of Beiseker
Village of Delia
Village of Halkirk
Wheatland County
Bill Shaw
Vic Walls - Border Paving

**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!**

An aerial photograph of a city, likely in central Alberta, showing a mix of urban development and green spaces. A prominent water tower is visible on the right side of the image. The city is surrounded by dense forests with trees showing autumn colors. A highway runs along the bottom of the frame.

GET INVOLVED

Learn more about the watersheds:

Visit our new Resources page 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.

B E C O M E A M E M B E R

Scan the QR code below or search
www.rdrwa.ca to sign up!



Become a member of the RDRWA:

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

Become a member to:

- Join an active community of people supporting the watershed.
- Vote at the Annual General Meetings and special meetings.
- Run for our Board of Directors.
- Access information and learn about the Red Deer River Watershed.
- Assist with fundraising and volunteering events.

CONTACT THE RDRWA

The Red Deer River Watershed Alliance (RDRWA) is a multi-sector, not-for-profit organization that promotes the good use and proper management of water within the Red Deer River watershed. The 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 and Action Plan (2003; 2008).



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Red Deer River Watershed Alliance

