



BATTLE RIVER
WATERSHED ALLIANCE

2017-2018
ANNUAL
REPORT



WELCOME

It is my pleasure to present to you, on behalf of the directors and staff of the Battle River Watershed Alliance, our Annual Report for 2017/18. I hope this publication provides insight into the variety of activities we have undertaken to improve the health of our watersheds.

One of our most significant achievements this past year was the completion of the watershed atlas: *Traversing Terrain and Experience* (see page 11). It was a great feeling to see the first printed copy sold and to see the positive reaction people expressed when reading the atlas.

Our Watershed Management Planning continues as we research and make recommendations for watershed sustainability (see page 4-5). This year BRWA completed two Watershed Riparian Restoration Programs at Ponoka and Iron Creek and we are grateful for the continued support of the Government of Alberta's Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program in the upcoming Buffalo Trail Riparian Restoration Program.

Outreach staff continue to set an amazing pace for programs with school-aged children, teachers, and community members with outstanding programs such as X-Stream Science, Waste in our Watershed, Discover Your Wetland, and Caring for our Watersheds. Next year we will enter into a long term arrangement with the Camrose Fish and Game Association to organize and host our wetland education programs from their site east of Camrose. Stay tuned!

I am also thrilled about our new office in the Mirror Lake Centre. Our space will border Mirror Lake in the heart of Camrose and the additional space and proximity to green space right outside our door will create new possibilities for watershed education. Stop by to see our new home.

I would like to thank BRWA staff for taking so much initiative and working extremely hard to meet goals and deadlines. I also thank the Board of Directors (page 3) for the strong support it has given me and all staff, and all of our funding partners (page 15). And last but not least, we thank the members of advisory committees, contacts, stakeholders, and all people who write or call in with feedback. Thank you for supporting our work and thank you to all who do your part to ensure a healthy watershed.

~ David Samm, BRWA General Manager

BRWA Staff (Left to Right)

Office Manager, Sheila Logelin

Watershed Planning Coordinator,

Sarah Skinner

Research & Stewardship Coordinator,

Susanna Bruneau

Education and Outreach Coordinator,

Nathalie S. Olson

Summer Program Assistant,

Tannis McNabb

General Manager, David Samm



BRWA BOARD

Board Members

Academia

Les Parsons, *University of Alberta*

Agriculture

John Pearson, *Landowner*

Wayne Richardson, *Landowner*

Business/Industry

Barb Bosh (Board Chair),
ATCO Power

Jim Geddes, *Energy Consultant*

Environmental NGO

Lorne Ferguson (Board Treasurer)
Camrose Fish and Game

Diane Hanson

*Rural Outreach & Agricultural
Renaissance Society*

Individual

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Midge Lambert

Al Corbett (Board Vice-Chair)

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Corinne Kelts, *Special Areas*

Provincial/Federal

Government

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Alberta Agriculture and Forestry

Shane Mascarin

Department of National Defense

Ex Officio

Jamie Bruha

Alberta Environment and Parks

Jeremy Enarson, *City of Camrose*



2017-2018 Board Members

A Message from our Chair



Barb Bosh, at the ATCO
Power Battle River Generating
Station

As this annual report wraps up and summarizes another year I had a chance to reflect and consider all the BRWA does and is. It is a longstanding, diverse organization who works with a large number of partners to support the watershed health now and in the future.

I have been involved with the BRWA for a number of years. The development and change the organization has gone through over the years is exciting to observe and participate in. Our education and outreach programs are very successful and there have been on-the-ground restoration projects as well. Invasive species are a risk to all watersheds and we are not immune. Awareness of this issue is very important along with monitoring and responding to issues as they arise.

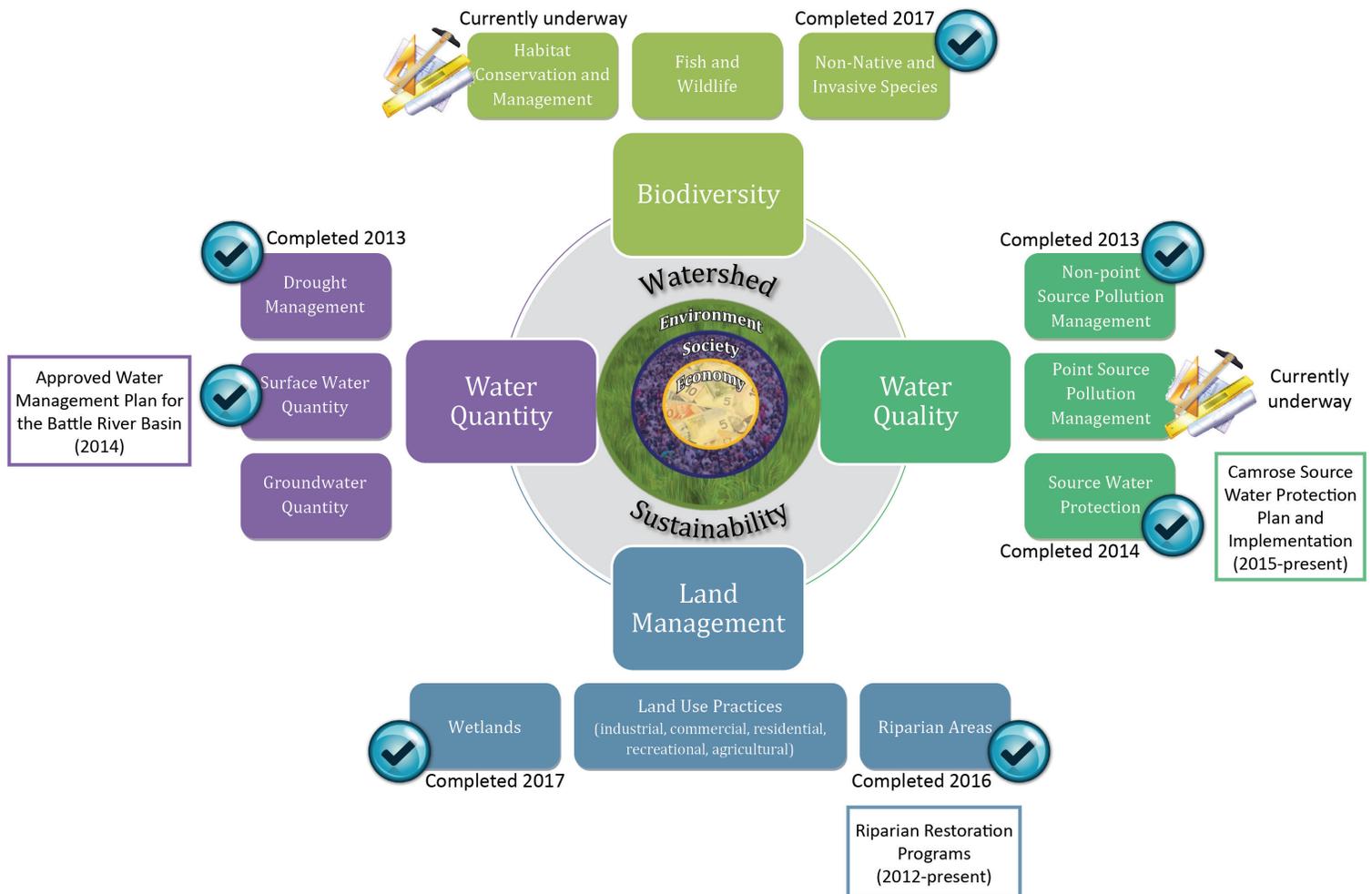
I would like to highlight two projects from this year. Firstly, the Traversing Terrain and Experience Atlas. If you don't have one already, please consider purchasing one via our website. It contains some amazing photography, history and stories all from the Battle River and Sounding Creek watersheds. Another large project was the Finding Common Ground Bike Tour and Documentary. Both of these projects were very well organized and completed successfully. The staff did a great job managing all their regular priorities along with these two large projects.

While I am writing this and considering the future, I am also looking out my window at some of the highest Battle River water flows in a long time. In fact, I have never seen this much water downstream of Dried Meat Lake. Since 1958, only the year 1974 had higher water levels in the Forestburg Reservoir. The years 2007 and 2011 were close but not quite as high. This is a strong contrast to the drought years of 2002-2004, which indicates to me that variability in the Battle River watershed system is normal. How we manage and adapt now and in the future will ensure continued success in our watershed challenges.

~ Barb Bosh, BRWA Board Chair

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

The diagram below displays the 12 components of the BRWA's Watershed Management Planning (WMP) Process and the work completed to-date. Each component includes a background research report, policy advice, and implementation guidelines.



Environment, Community and Health

The health of ourselves, our communities, and our watershed are all connected.

In 2017, the BRWA became part of a cross-Canada research project looking at the connections between the health of people, communities, and the environment. This Environment, Community, Health Observatory (ECHO) Network works with universities and organizations from across Canada and Oceania. The five-year project will help us expand our understanding of the social, economic, and health aspects of watershed sustainability.



Members of the ECHO Network at the launch event in Prince George, BC

WORK IN PROGRESS

Aquatic Invasive Species Presentation at Riverdale Park, MD of Wainwright

Non-Native and Invasive Species

From giant goldfish to invasive mussels, wild boars to noxious weeds, limiting the spread of invasive species is one way we can protect the health of our watersheds.

In 2017, the BRWA released our policy advice and implementation guidelines for invasive species management in our watersheds, which includes addressing both aquatic and land-based invasive species.

Important actions that we can take include:

- participating in invasive species monitoring programs,
- cleaning, draining and drying our boats and equipment when moving between water bodies, and
- cleaning our footwear, tires, and gear to prevent the spread of land-based weeds.

Through these and many other actions, we can prevent the spread of invasive species and maintain the health and integrity of native ecosystems.

Habitat Conservation and Management

Wolf Willow on the Battle River at Burma Park, near Brownfield

Habitat management is crucial to maintain biodiversity.

Habitat is broadly defined as the sum of resources needed for all aspects of a species throughout its lifetime, and all the living and non-living elements they interact with. Habitat needs are specific for each species, from our insect pollinators to land predators to the fish in the river.

Though much emphasis has been placed on protected areas like provincial and national parks, there are other means of managing habitat on the working landscape, such as through conservation easements and shelter belts. These areas provide excellent habitat and corridors that ensure animals have safe places to live and thrive.

Wildlife, birds, insects, amphibians and other animals all share the environment with us and our livestock. By working with all watershed stakeholders, we hope to identify how we can maintain space for wildlife and ensure continued success as we all make our living off the land and water resources.

OTIS AWARD

For Being OutSTanding In Stewardship

The BRWA started the OTIS Award in 2013 to recognize the positive actions of stewards in our watershed. This year we are proud to present 4 OTIS awards to the following stewards:



Individual Winner: Tom Tomaszewski

Tom is a founding member of the Camrose and District Fish and Game Association, and lead the group to purchase Pleasure Island - 122 acres of land east of Camrose. Thanks to Tom's leadership, many improvements have been made to the property, including a 2112-foot walkway, a fishing dock, a washroom, benches and picnic tables, and the planting of several hundred trees. Tom has volunteered hundreds of hours to help install purple martin houses throughout Camrose, as well as the swallow and bluebird houses at Pleasure Island.

Business Winner: MSW Farms

MSW Farms is a family-owned and operated farm located along the Battle River north-west of Ponoka. Owners Mark and Tina Stewart have undertaken a number of stewardship projects, including installing 4 off-site watering systems and over 2 km of riparian fencing, and planting nearly 7,000 trees. Through these actions, MSW Farms has demonstrated how agricultural practices and watershed stewardship go hand-in-hand.

Organization Winner: Buffalo Lake Naturalists

This club, based out of Stettler, works to encourage local Albertans to increase their appreciation and knowledge of the natural world, while helping to protect it. The club hosts a variety of activities which are open to the public, including monthly presentations, field trips, and conservation and monitoring projects such as the Christmas Bird Count and butterfly inventories. They are also Caretakers for several Important Bird Areas. You can find out more on their Facebook page.

Youth Winner: Katelynn Cook

Katelynn is an Environmental Science student at the University of Alberta, Augustana Campus. Katelynn has volunteered in numerous school clubs and programs. She has volunteered to take youth on multi-day canoe trips, participated in a beaver monitoring project, and designed and delivered environmental education programs for families and youth. Katelynn is helping to inspire the next generations of environmental leaders, as well as walk lightly on the earth while enjoying all its beauty.



STEWARDSHIP IN ACTION

Riparian Restoration Programs

This year, the BRWA wrapped up our Ponoka Riparian Restoration Program. We were able to work with a number of local landowners and provide funding for projects that help improve the health of the Battle River and the many creeks, lakes and wetlands in the watershed. This included:

20 riparian health inventories completed

11 kilometres of riparian fencing and **11** livestock watering systems installed

200 acres of riparian area protected

10,600 trees planted in the Battle River valley

Now, we're getting started on a new Buffalo Trail Riparian Restoration Program to work with landowners in the eastern reaches of the watershed on similar projects. We launched the new program with a field day at Riverdale Mini-Park, located in the Battle River valley north of Wainwright. Participants learned about riparian health and how to identify native and invasive aquatic and land-based plants. The BRWA is looking forward to continuing to work with local landowners to implement projects that support riparian health, water quality, and fish habitat in the watershed.

Yellow Fish Road

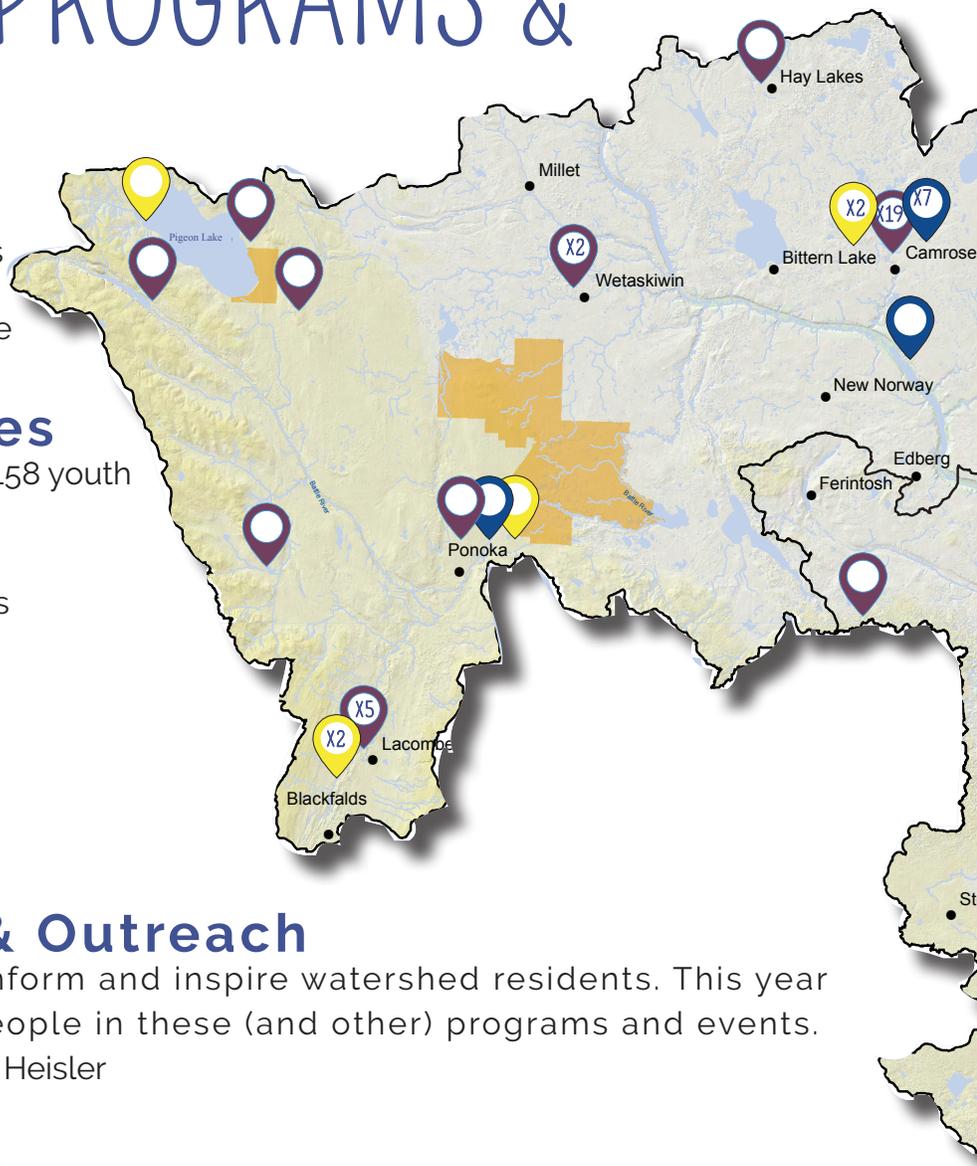
Trout Unlimited Canada's "Yellow Fish Road" program involves painting yellow fish next to storm drains as a reminder that storm water from our communities returns directly to our local creeks and wetlands.

In September 2017, the BRWA hosted a Yellow Fish Road event with 50 students from the Augustana Campus of the University of Alberta. The students painted about 430 storm drains and handed out over 1000 information flyers across the City of Camrose!



WATERSHED PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

The BRWA strives to host activities across the watersheds for a variety of audiences. This map shows this year's events in these areas of our work:



Educational Activities

Place-based and experiential, we had 2,158 youth participate in our education programs

- Augustana Guest Lectures
- Caring for our Watersheds Presentations
- Discover your Wetland Field Trips
- Experience your Watershed Field Trips
- Summer Camps
- Terrace Ridge Watershed Day
- Waste in our Watershed Tours
- X-Stream Science Field Trips

Community Events & Outreach

We host a variety of activities to inform and inspire watershed residents. This year we engaged approximately 990 people in these (and other) programs and events.

- Annual General Meeting and Train Ride; Heisler
- Arts in the Park; Camrose
- Battle River Watershed Festival; Ponoka
- Hike, Bike, Paddle and Dance Events; Big Knife Provincial Park, Dried Meat Lake, Camrose
- Finding Common Ground Bike Tour; Camrose to Forestburg, Heisler and Hardisty
- Saskatoon Pie Baking Competitions; Viking, Ponoka
- Finding Common Documentary Premiere and Screenings; Daysland, Forestburg, and Camrose
- Paintearth Calving Clinic information booth; Brownfield

Watershed Management Planning (WMP) & Implementation

Our WMP work plans for and implements beneficial management practices for watershed health and sustainability.

- Alberta Environment and Parks Meeting; Lacombe Lake
- Buffalo Trail Riparian Restoration Program Field Day; MD Wainwright
- Environment, Community, Health Observatory Network
- Lacombe Lake Stewardship Group Meeting; Lacombe Lake
- Pigeon Lake Watershed Management Planning; Pigeon Lake
- Yellow Fish Road Program; Camrose
- Water Invaders-Water Defenders (World Water Day Event); Ponoka



Don't let this Alberta map fool you; the watershed does not end at Saskatchewan! Watersheds know no political borders; they are defined by geography. The Battle River continues to Battleford, Saskatchewan, where it meets the North Saskatchewan River. The water, and everything it carries, eventually drains into Lake Winnipeg and Hudson Bay.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH



X-Stream Science Program on Iron Creek

The Battle River Watershed Alliance runs a series of educational and outreach programs under our "Experience your Watershed" umbrella. These programs are place-based, experiential, and build a student's appreciation for the natural world and our place in it.

This year, we hosted 54 educational activities with youth in our watershed, reaching 2158 students. These activities, described on these two facing pages, can also be seen on our map on page 8-9.

X-Stream Science (Grade 7-12)

This program engages students in hands-on water quality monitoring and experiential education. Eight schools were involved this year, collecting data at sites across the watersheds, including: three locations on the Battle River (at Battle Lake, north of Wainwright, and near Brownfield), Iron Creek near Sedgewick, Stoney Creek north of Camrose, the Whelp Creek diversion channel to Lacombe Lake, and Monitor Creek near Consort. Comparing the data across sites and over time will help us and our students understand and improve the health of our rivers and tributaries.



"OUR STUDENTS WERE COMPLETELY ENGAGED THROUGH THE ENTIRE EXPERIENCE...AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO SEE WHAT SCIENCE IN THE FIELD IS ACTUALLY LIKE." -GRADE 11 BIOLOGY TEACHER

Discover your Wetland (Grade 5)

Wetlands are an unsung hero of our watersheds. They store and filter water, provide homes to wildlife, and capture carbon. Over 295 students in 12 classes in our watershed discovered their own local wetland this year, where they came face-to-face with the local biodiversity and learned about the many ecological goods and services wetlands provide.

"WE RELY ON THIS PROGRAM EVERY YEAR. SO GLAD [THE BRWA] ARE WILLING AND ABLE TO COME!" -GRADE 5 SCIENCE TEACHER



EDUCATION AND OUTREACH



Caring for our Watersheds (Grade 7-12)

This program, sponsored by Nutrien, empowers students to develop one project idea that would help improve their watershed. The BRWA has been the program coordinator of this regional contest, offered across central and northern Alberta, since its inception in 2009. We worked with about 500 students this year, some of whom turned their ideas into reality. These implemented projects include tree plantings and awareness campaigns, proving that anyone, no matter their age, can help improve their watershed.

Waste in our Watershed (Grade 4)

In nature, nothing is wasted. We humans sure have a lot to learn! Last year, 271 grade four students in the City of Camrose had the opportunity to visit the wastewater lagoon and water treatment plant, the Battle River and Stoney Creek, the recycling depot, and the landfill. Throughout the trip, students learn about the 5 R's: refuse, reduce, reuse, reclaim, recycle. They learn about how nutrients and pollutants move through our watershed, and what actions we can all take to keep our watersheds healthy.



Lacombe Schools

We had two opportunities to support watershed literacy initiatives for students in Lacombe this year. Terrace Ridge Watershed Day, a biennial event, had all 315 students learn about earth, air, water and fire. We were also invited to host a station at the H2Opeia event, organized by the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance for all 178 grade eight students from that junior high school.

Traversing Terrain and Experience: Atlas of the Battle River and Sounding Creek Watersheds

Many years in the making, this beautiful, 11" x 11" hardcover, sewn-binding book contains 120 pages of stories, art, photography, geography, and interesting facts about our amazing home. We were very lucky to have writer and designer Heather Marshall work with us and many other community members and contributors to create this book. Every school and library in the watershed has received a copy (or two!) of the Atlas, thanks to the Battle River Community Foundation and Vision Credit Union who covered those costs. The Atlas is available for \$35 through the BRWA website.



Atlas author Heather Marshall with contributor Greg Nelson at the book's launch party in Camrose.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Battle River Railway Transportation to Annual General Meeting, June 2017

The Battle River Railway provided transportation for 80 guests to our 2017 **Annual General Meeting** in Heisler. Boarding at the Camrose County Nature Conservation Centre, guests enjoyed seeing the watershed from this unique perspective, as well as a variety of onboard entertainment.

Saskatoon Pie Events

The annual Saskatoon Pie Baking Competition continues to engage new audiences. We love how this event encourages watershed residents to gather this uniquely prairie berry and create a homemade pie. We had 23 delicious pies entered into our contests in Ponoka and Viking this year, with every baker taking home a prize.

To share our watershed's favourite berry, we hosted a "Food for Thought" event for the Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). Over 50 MLAs and their staff came to enjoy a slice of our Saskatoon pie and hear from our guest speakers: Bruce Hinkley (MLA for Wetaskiwin-Camrose), Mark Smith (MLA for Drayton Valley-Devon), Barb Bosh (ATCO Power, BRWA Board Chair) and Shannon Phillips (MLA for Lethbridge-West and Minister of Environment and Parks).



Battle River Watershed Festival

The 2017 festival took place in conjunction with the Town of Ponoka's Day in the Park celebration. Festival goers enjoyed a variety of outdoor festivities including bug dipping, painting, bubble soccer, a trivia game, and the Battle River Saskatoon Pie Baking Competition.

Partners' Events

We work with partners to collaborate on or support their events and projects. This year we participated in:

- Alberta Education - Curriculum Redevelopment Workshops
- Augustana Science Fair
- Camrose Naturalization Meetings
- Camrose Nature Playground Project
- County of Paintearth Field Day
- Love the Lake Day (Pigeon Lake)
- NAWMP Wetland Education Committees
- Pigeon Lake First Nations Water Group
- Seeds of Change Film Festival
- Wetlands and Your Farm (County of Wetaskiwin and Leduc County)



COMMUNITY EVENTS

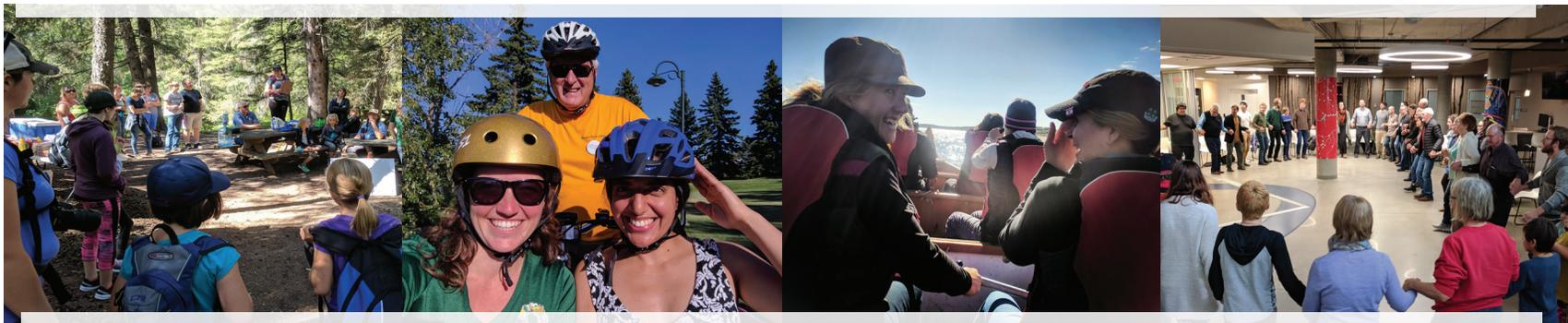


Paddle at Dried Meat Lake

Hike, Bike, Paddle, and Dance

Over the summer of 2017 we offered community members four opportunities to experience their watershed. These free events included an interpretive hike at Big Knife Provincial Park, a family-friendly bike ride and scavenger hunt, paddling voyageur canoes at Dried Meat Lake, and participating in a round dance at Augustana.

We could not have done these events alone. Thank you to Alberta Parks, Camrose Public Library, Spirit of the Land conference organizers, and U of A Augustana outdoor program and aboriginal office. Funding for this initiative was made possible by the Community Fund for Canada's 150th, a collaboration between the Battle River Community Foundation and the Government of Canada.



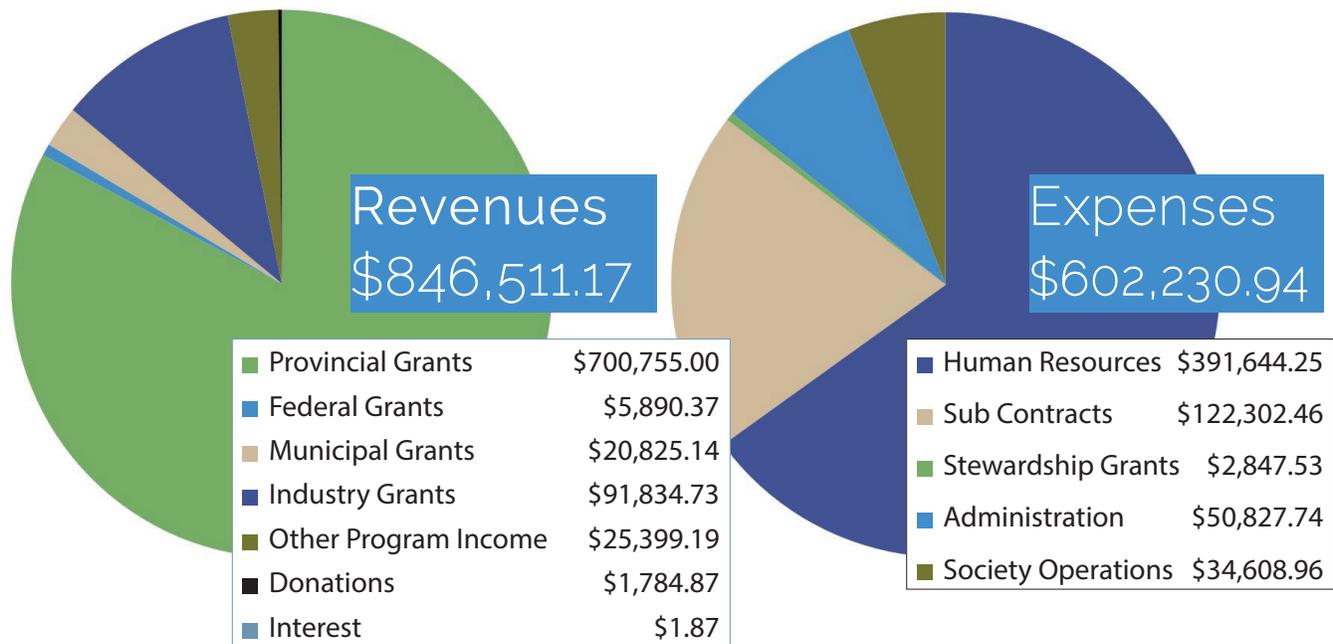
Finding Common Ground

The Battle River region is rich with energy options and opportunities. So during this time of changes in our climate and economies, how do we power our way forward? In September 2017, 25 community members took off on a three-day bike trip to explore current and future energy production in east-central Alberta. Along the way, we visited seven energy production sites, heard from 14 guest speakers, covered 186 kms, and had many conversations. Filmmaker Alison Bortolon of Radical Productions was also along on the journey and created a 25-minute documentary about the tour. The film was premiered at Daysland's Palace Theatre on February 26th, and is now being shown across the watershed to members of the public. Visit our website for more details on the tour, and to request a screening of the movie in your town. Funding for this project was provided by the Government of Alberta's Community Environment Action Grant.



Tour participants visit the Capital Power Halkirk Wind Farm

2017-2018 FINANCIALS



Members who would like a complete audited financial statement for the BRWA should contact Sheila Logelin at 780-672-0276. You can also find it on our website under publications.

The Battle River Watershed Alliance is a collaborative effort. We could not help improve the health of the area for all it's inhabitants without partnerships with our funders, local governments, schools, landowners, and the many other groups working to care for this place. For that, we thank you.

SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS

Business & Industry

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 Agriculture Financial Services Corporation
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 Battle River Implements
 Bouma Meats
 Bunge Canada
 Cargill Canada
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 Penn West Petroleum Ltd.
 Populus Community Planning Inc.
 RED The Agency
 Real Canadian Superstore
 Stafford Plumbing
 UFA

Government

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
 Alberta Agriculture and Forestry
 Alberta Environment and Parks
 -Community Environment Action Grant
 Beaver County
 Camrose County
 Canadian Forces Base Wainwright
 City of Camrose
 City of Edmonton
 City of Lacombe
 County of Paintearth
 County of Stettler
 County of Vermilion River
 County of Wetaskiwin
 Environment Canada
 Flagstaff County
 Lacombe County
 MD of Provost
 MD of Wainwright
 Montana Tribal Administration
 Ponoka County
 Special Areas Board
 Samson Cree Nation
 Summer Village of Argentia Beach
 Summer Village of Crystal Springs
 Summer Village of Golden Days

Government (Continued)

Summer Village of Grandview
 Summer Village of Poplar Bay
 Summer Village of Ma-Me-O Beach
 Summer Village of Norris Beach
 Town of Hardisty
 Town of Killam
 Town of Ponoka
 Town of Sedgewick
 Town of Viking
 Village of Alliance
 Village of Bawlf
 Village of Bittern Lake
 Village of Botha
 Village of Consort
 Village of Donaldia
 Village of Edberg
 Village of Edgerton
 Village of Ferintosh
 Village of Forestburg
 Village of Gadsby
 Village of Halkirk
 Village of Hay Lakes
 Village of Lougheed
 Village of Strome
 Village of Paradise Valley

Individuals

Don & Marie Ruzicka
 Gaylene Halter
 George Poruchnek
 Hugh & Marg Sanders
 Mundel Family

Organizations

Agroforestry and Woodlot Extension Society
 Alberta Beef Producers
 Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural
 Communities
 Alberta Conservation Association
 Alberta Council for Environmental
 Education
 Alberta Real Estate Foundation
 Alberta Ecotrust Foundation
 Alberta Lake Management Society
 Alberta Riparian Habitat Management
 Society (Cows & Fish)
 Alberta Trappers Association
 Association for Life-Wide Living of Alberta
 Augustana Campus, University of Alberta
 Battle Lake Watershed Synergy Group
 Battle River Community Foundation
 Camrose Arts Society
 Camrose & District Horticultural Society
 Camrose & District Support Services
 Camrose Open Door Association

Organizations (Continued)

Cargill Cares
 Centre for Race & Culture
 Ducks Unlimited Canada
 Friends of Little Beaver Lake
 Girl Guides Of Canada, Wolf Willow District
 Inside Education
 Iron Creek Watershed Improvement Society
 Land Stewardship Centre
 Owl Link Media Corporation
 Paintearth Economic Partnership Society
 Prairie Mines & Royalty ULC.
 Parkland Airshed Management Zone
 Pigeon Lake Watershed Association
 Ponoka Fish & Game Association
 Red Deer River Watershed Alliance
 Rotary Club of Camrose
 North American Waterfowl Management Plan
 North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance



BATTLE RIVER

WATERSHED ALLIANCE

We are the people who live, work and play in the Battle River and Sounding Creek watersheds. We are landowners, community members, business people, researchers, and decision makers. We are the people that will ensure a stable economy, healthy natural areas, and resilient communities in this place that we love.

Our Vision

By using sound knowledge, wisdom, and wise actions, we ensure that the Battle River and Sounding Creek watersheds sustain abundant life, now and for future generations.

Our Mission

The BRWA provides relevant science, social science, policies, and education for a diverse community of people to create solutions to our watershed's challenges.

Keep in Touch!



@BattleRiverWatershed



@BattleRiver

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www.battleriverwatershed.ca

We've Moved!

Find us at the Camrose Mirror Lake Centre:

5415 49 Ave, Camrose, AB T4V 0N6.

We are downstairs, facing the lake.

