

BATTLE RIVER

WATERSHED ALLIANCE

2018-2019
ANNUAL
REPORT



ABOUT THE BRWA

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 who 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.

Board Members

Academia

Les Parsons, *University of Alberta - Augustana*

Agriculture

John Pearson, *Landowner*

Business/Industry

Barb Bosh (Board Chair), *ATCO Power*

Jim Geddes, *Energy Consultant*

Environmental NGO

Lorne Ferguson (Board Treasurer), *Camrose and District Fish and Game Association*

Diane Hanson, *Rural Outreach & Agricultural Renaissance Society*

Individual

Al Corbett (Board Vice-Chair)

Midge Lambert

Peter Pullishy

Municipal Government

Corinne Kelts, *Special Areas*



Municipal Government (continued)

Preston Weran, *Town of Blackfalds*

Ryley Andersen, *MD of Wainwright*

Provincial/Federal Government

Melissa Orr-Langner, *Alberta Agriculture & Forestry*

Shane Mascarin, *Department of National Defense*

Ex Officio

Jamie Bruha, *Alberta Environment and Parks*

Jeremy Enarson, *City of Camrose*

Hugh Sanders, *Individual*

2018 Staff Team

Research & Stewardship, Susanna Bruneau

Summer Program Assistant, Carson Hvenegaard

Education and Outreach, Nathalie S. Olson

Summer Program Assistant, Maven Boddy

General Manager, David Samm

Watershed Management, Sarah Skinner

Office Manager, Sheila Logelin



MANDATE: WATER FOR LIFE

The Government of Alberta's Water for Life strategy (2004) guides the province's watershed goals.

Good watershed management will ensure these three main outcomes:

1. Safe, secure drinking water supply



2. Healthy aquatic ecosystems



3. Reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy



In 2006, the Government of Alberta designated the BRWA as the Watershed Planning and Advisory Council (WPAC) for the Battle River and Sounding Creek watersheds. We are one of 11 WPACs in Alberta (there is a WPAC for each of the major watersheds in the province).

Water for Life outlines 5 main roles for WPACs:

Report on the State of the Watershed



Watershed Management Planning



Develop Best Management Practices



Support Stewardship Activities



Education and Outreach



To reach the Water for Life goals, WPACs work closely with partners from the Government of Alberta, Alberta Water Council, and Watershed Stewardship Groups, as well as local stakeholders. See more about our partners on page 14.

Follow the above Water for Life icons throughout this report to see how the BRWA is working towards these goals and WPAC roles.

About our Watersheds

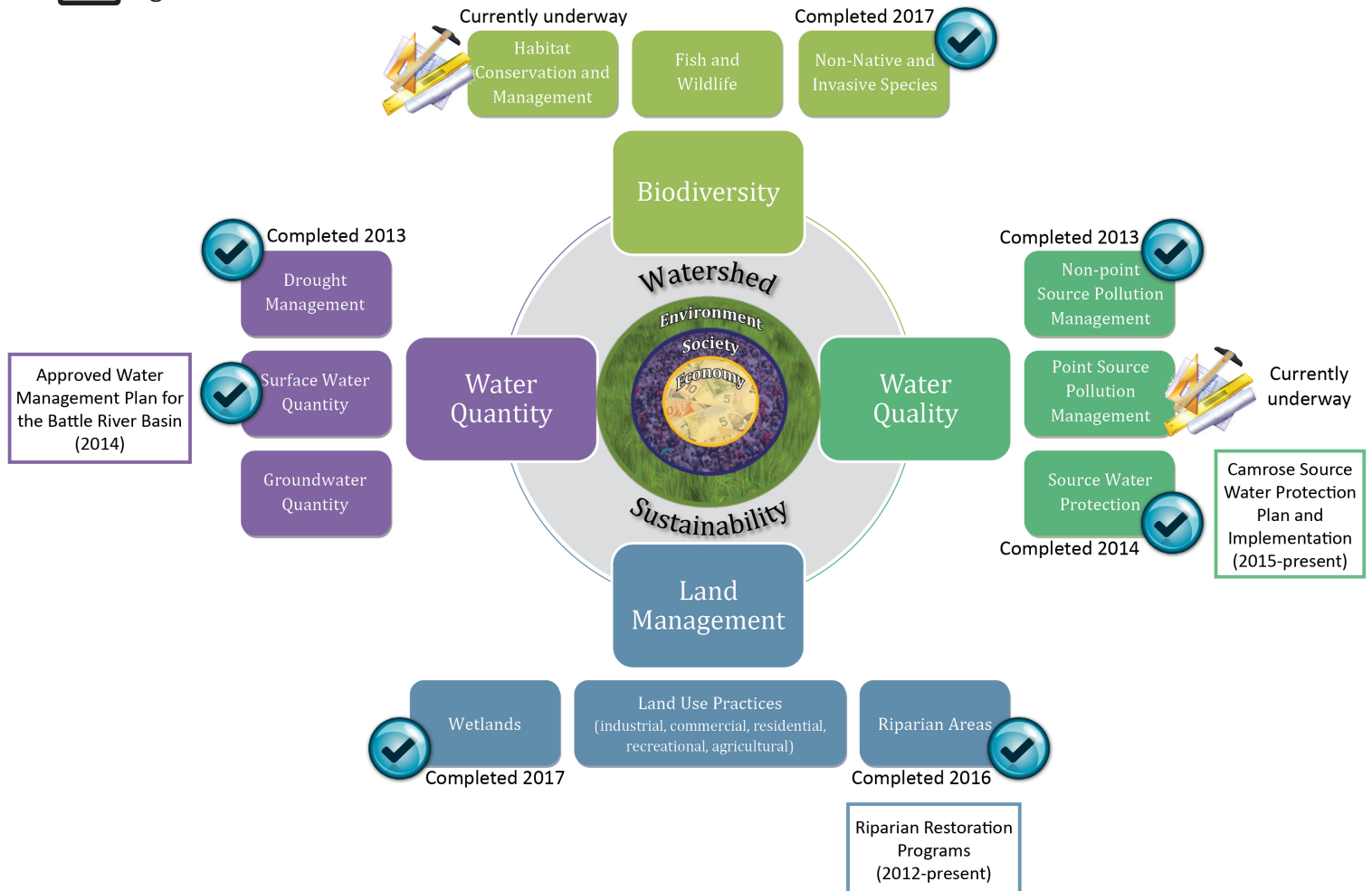
The Battle River and Sounding Creek are unique prairie-fed watersheds. Home to over 120,000 people and spanning the boreal, prairie and parkland natural regions of Alberta and Saskatchewan, these watersheds are rich in history, culture and ecology. Beginning at Battle Lake and meandering across Alberta and Saskatchewan for some 1100 kilometers, the Battle River eventually joins the North Saskatchewan River at Battleford, Saskatchewan. While Sounding Creek has no outlet beyond Manitou Lake in Saskatchewan, it is a key water source for the people and wildlife that call the Special Areas home.

We face many challenges in our watersheds, such as degraded water quality, limited water supply, and increasing land use pressures. However, we are a resilient community of people who are able to work together to find solutions to the challenges that face us.

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT



The diagram below displays the 4 main focus areas and 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.



Events like the 2019 Battle River Biodiversity Forum are one way that watershed residents can participate in watershed management discussions.

The background research reports for the "habitat conservation and management" and "point source pollution management" components are currently underway. Once this background research is complete, the BRWA will work with residents, municipalities, the Government of Alberta, and other stakeholders to develop recommendations (policy advice and implementation guidelines) for how we can collectively manage point source pollution and wildlife habitat across our watersheds.

The BRWA's WMP process is conducted in partnership with local stakeholders, including businesses, landowners, governments, and researchers. We gratefully acknowledge the funding from the Government of Alberta (Environment and Parks) that supports this ongoing work.



Municipal Watershed Forum, Wetaskiwin

Municipal Watershed Forums



Municipal partnerships are crucial to the work of land and water management in our watersheds.

In April 2018, the BRWA hosted two Municipal Watershed Forums to connect with municipal staff and councillors from across the region. We were able to share an update on the BRWA's work, learn more about current municipal initiatives, and have conversations about our collective priorities for watershed education, stewardship, and management.

Municipal representatives at the forum identified the following areas of watershed management as priorities: protecting water quality for recreation, drinking water, and other uses; maintaining good quality agricultural land; improving the health of shorelines, streambanks, and wetlands; working with landowners to implement restoration projects; ensuring access to adequate water supplies; preventing the spread of invasive species; managing stormwater and wastewater; building resilience to extreme weather events such as floods and droughts; and supporting watershed education programs.

Signs of Life: Battle River Biodiversity Forum



Participants identify biodiversity hotspots on maps of the watershed.

A World Water Day Celebration!



For World Water Day 2019 (March 22), the BRWA hosted a Battle River Biodiversity Forum to highlight biodiversity and citizen science in our watersheds.

Speakers from the BRWA, Alberta Lake Management Society, Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute, Cows and Fish (Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society), and Lakeland College shared insights into watershed health through the lens of the diversity of life found across the region. They also provided information on a number of regional initiatives that are involving residents ("citizen scientists") to collect information on everything from aquatic plants, aquatic invertebrates, and invasive species, to water quality, reptiles, and amphibians.

It was a great day spent expanding our view of how the health of our watershed affects not just our own health, but the health of all life forms with which we share this space.

COMMUNITY EVENTS



On the edge of the Battle River, Big Knife Provincial Park is a natural getaway in the heart of our watershed.

We rely on our partners from agriculture, industry, government, and charitable organizations to offer our community events and activities. We would like to thank the following partners: Battle River Community Foundation, Cargill, City of Camrose, Community Environment Action Grant, Community Facilities Enhancement Program, and the Government of Alberta.

Watershed Festival



Held at Big Knife Provincial Park at the end of August, this annual event brought people from across the watershed together for hiking, canoeing, a pollinator walk, kids games, crafts, and an obstacle course, topped off with a BBQ lunch and Saskatoon pie.

"I thoroughly enjoyed the variety of outdoor activities during the Battle River Watershed Festival. The entire event was very well organized, providing opportunities in the outdoors for the young and the young-at-heart. It was a perfect day on the water to explore the meandering Battle River and share time and conversation with fellow paddlers. Thank you to all the staff and any volunteers who planned and organized a fabulous day at the park." - Festival participant from Forestburg

Saskatoon Pie Events



2018 was a bountiful Saskatoon pie year! The annual Saskatoon Pie Baking Competition was hosted at the Downtown Camrose Farmers Market. Community judges had a very hard time sampling all 28 pies entered! We also hosted two appreciation events for our partners at Cargill and the City of Camrose. To thank them for their ongoing support, we supplied homemade Saskatoon pies and shared information about our current projects.

Annual General Meeting



Our 2018 AGM was held at the BRWA's new office location in the Mirror Lake Centre. We are very pleased to be able to hold events in this shared office, with space for indoor and outdoor activities. BRWA members enjoyed presentations by staff about our recent activities, and a presentation on water quality by the Alberta Lake Management Society. Of course, lunch by the Park n' Ride food truck and OleO's ice cream was also appreciated!





Forestburg residents gather to discuss energy, climate change, and finding common ground.

Finding Common Ground Documentary & Conversations



Our Finding Common Ground Bike Tour and Documentary project wrapped up this year. We hosted 12 community conversations in which we showed the 25-minute film of highlights from the 3-day bike tour and various energy visits. Pausing the film, we discussed the pros and cons of different power generation types, personal and community actions to prevent greenhouse gas emissions, and how we as a community can find common ground. Audience members had a lot of great ideas, which can be seen in the "What We Heard" report, available on our website. The documentary can be found on the BRWA's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/battleriverwatershed

"I feel that all energy, whether it's renewable [or] non-renewable...all of our energy needs should be environmentally and fiscally responsible. Regardless of its source." - participant from Galahad

Our work in Finding Common Ground is not done yet! Finding Common Ground 2.0: Energy Ambassadors Tour will be coming to the watershed in the fall of 2019. You are welcome to join in!

Stoney Creek Nature Playground

In partnership with the City of Camrose and Alberta Health Services, the BRWA helped to imagine and build a nature playground, sensory pathway, and outdoor classroom/ amphitheatre at the Stoney Creek Park. The playground is designed to encourage people of all ages to enjoy being outside, connecting to nature, and provide a place for community to gather. Visit the playground next time you're looking to get outside in Camrose!

Paddle the Battle

Our two summer students got to know the Battle River by exploring its turns and shallows by canoe. They have created four "Paddle the Battle" brochure guides to help local watershed residents get out and enjoy our river. These guides identify good locations to put in and take out, as well as approximate times, sights, and cautions. This guide will continue to be built in 2019.



WATER FOR LIFE IN ACTION

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

Youth Programs



Through the various programs listed below, 1,309 youth learned about their watershed.

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

Community Events



We engage watershed residents in a variety of activities to learn about Water for Life goals. These community events engaged approximately 929 stakeholders.

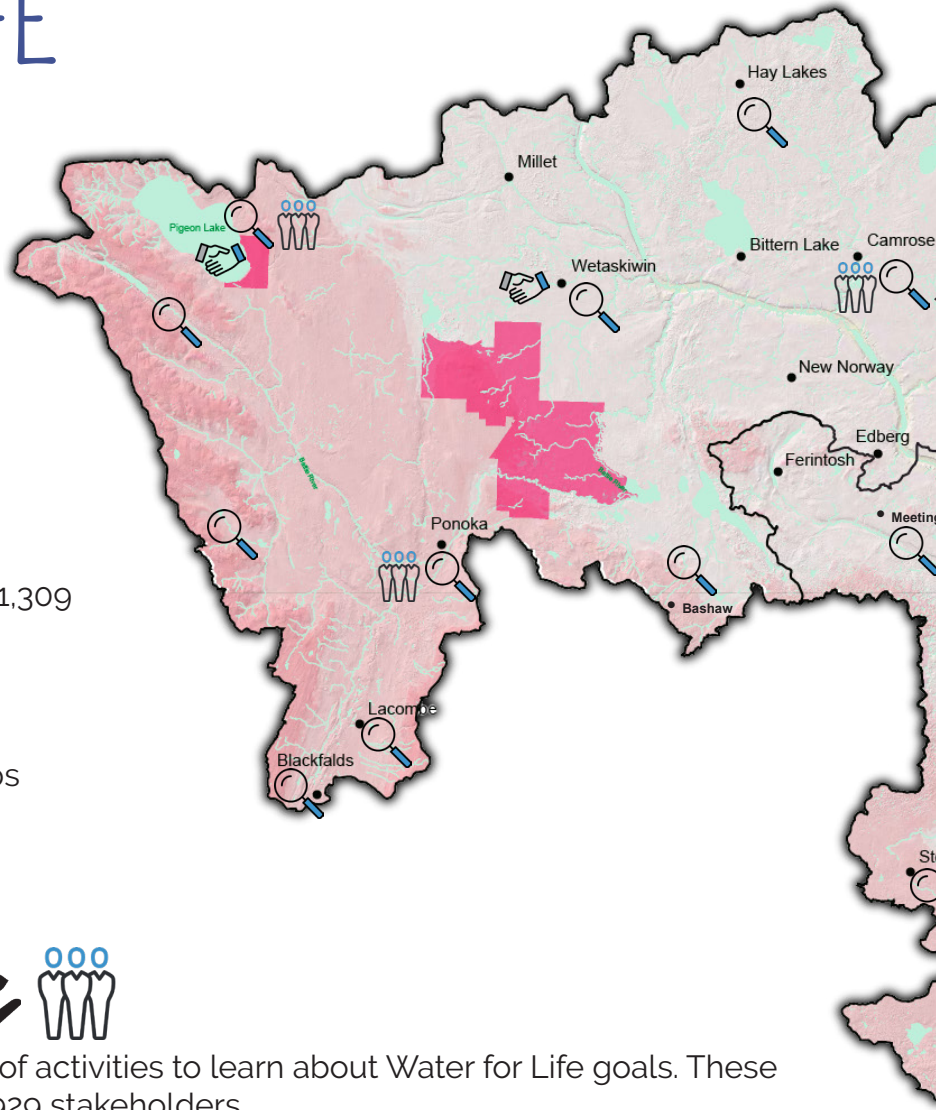
- Annual General Meeting, Stoney Creek Nature Playground Grand Opening, World Water Day Presentation; Camrose
- Battle River Watershed Festival; Big Knife Provincial Park
- Finding Common Ground Screenings; Camrose, Castor, Forestburg, Ponoka, Stettler, Viking.
- Saskatoon Pie Events - Saskatoon Pie Baking Competition, Cargill Food for Thought, City of Camrose Pi Day, ECHO Network Saskatoon Social; Camrose

We also helped at our partners events including: Camrose Arts in the Park, Purple Martin Festival, Exploring Land and People, Wheeling Through the Watershed, Pigeon Lake Love the Lake Day, and Buffalo Lake Bio Blitz.

Watershed Management Planning & Implementation



- Buffalo Trail Riparian Restoration Program Field Day; County of Paintearth
- Signs of Life: Battle River Biodiversity Forum; Heisler
- Pigeon Lake Watershed Management Planning; Pigeon Lake
- Municipal Watershed Forums; Wetaskiwin and Wainwright





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.

YOUTH PROGRAMS

X-Stream Science at Burma Park

The BRWA offers a variety of youth education programs designed to meet curriculum connections and the needs of students and schools, including being free-of-charge. This is possible thanks to our educational partners, including: Alberta Conservation Association, Battle River Community Foundation, Cargill, Enbridge, Nutrien, and Xylem.

X-Stream Science



Our citizen science water quality monitoring program continues to grow and expand. In 2018, two Community Service Learning (CSL) students from the University of Alberta's Augustana Campus developed a method for data collection and display. Students and teachers can now upload their data via a Google form available on our website. That data is automatically converted into a spreadsheet which populates content into a Google map. The map is available on the BRWA's X-Stream Science webpage for the public and students to view and see the water quality test results.



Discover your Wetland



The Discover your Wetland program invites grade 5 students from across the watershed to get out of their classroom and get their hands wet and their boots dirty! By exploring a local wetland, the students are able to learn about the local wildlife and aquatic invertebrates, plants and riparian areas, and the ecological goods and services that wetlands provide. These future wetland stewards understand the importance of protecting our natural areas, including how wetlands clean and filter our drinking water and provide healthy aquatic ecosystems. Natural and man-made wetlands can also support resilient communities and economies.

Wetland Conservation Site



The BRWA has been working with the Camrose and District Fish and Game Association to improve the Pleasure Island site for wetland education programs. This partnership will allow us to have a "home-base" for our Discover your Wetland programs.





Caring for our Watersheds Finalists

Caring for our Watersheds



Students from across the watershed and central/northern Alberta entered their own project idea in a 1000-word proposal about what they could do to help improve their watershed. The 2018 Caring for our Watersheds contest had 285 students and 120 proposals. The students' ideas varied from pollinator gardens to biodegradable plastic bags to riparian tree plantings and educational events. Most impressively, students have been implementing their ideas with support from their schools, community partners, and the Caring for our Watersheds implementation funding.



Waste in our Watershed



Designed specifically for grade 4 students in the City of Camrose, this tour shows the liquid and solid waste streams, and highlights how students can lighten their environmental footprint and keep their watershed clean and healthy. Over 190 Grade 4 students participated this year!



Getting the Word Out: The New BRWA Website

The BRWA website went through a major renovation this year. Working with RED the Agency, we identified our target audiences (including students, landowners, researchers, municipal staff and councillors, and the public). Our website is divided into the same categories as this annual report - Youth Programs, Stewardship, and Watershed Management Planning - all having their own sections. We hope you will explore the site, and are able to easily find all of your watershed information and inspiration needs.

Visit us at www.battleriverwatershed.ca



STEWARDSHIP



Buffalo Trail Riparian Restoration Program

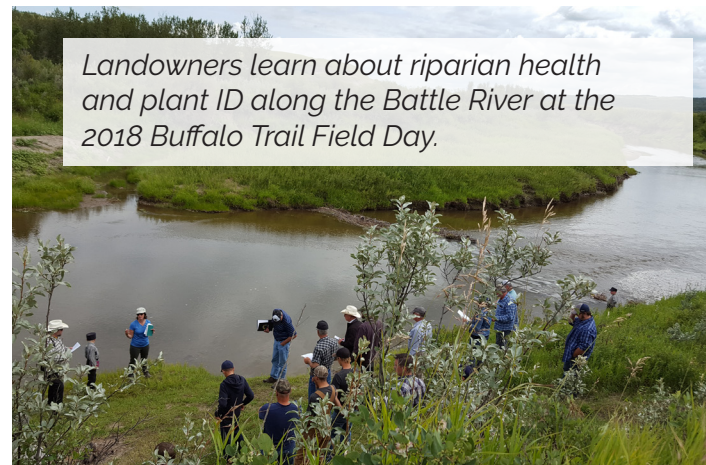


The BRWA continued to implement its Buffalo Trail Riparian Restoration Program in 2018-2019.

Two landowner projects were completed in 2018, which included the installation of one livestock watering system and three kilometres of riparian fencing. Four riparian health inventories were also completed. These inventories provide a snapshot of riparian health and help us identify which management actions could be taken to maintain or improve the health of these lands.

The BRWA also hosted a Buffalo Trail Field Day in July 2018 to share information about funding programs, riparian health, and watering system options with local landowners.

This program is made possible through partnerships with various organizations and municipalities, as well as with financial support from the Government of Alberta's Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program.

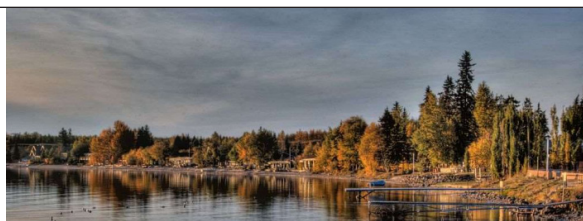


Landowners learn about riparian health and plant ID along the Battle River at the 2018 Buffalo Trail Field Day.

Pigeon Lake Watershed Management Plan



The BRWA has worked with the Pigeon Lake Watershed Association (PLWA) for around a decade! For most of its history, the PLWA has been a 100% volunteer-run Watershed Stewardship Group. Through the passion and dedication of its members, the PLWA has taken impressive steps in providing watershed education, stewardship, research, and management around Pigeon Lake.



PIGEON LAKE

watershed management plan 2018

Pigeon Lake Watershed Management Plan Steering Committee
May 04, 2018

Working Together for a Healthy Watershed, Healthy Lake, and Healthy Community

In 2018, the Pigeon Lake Watershed Management Plan Steering Committee (of which the BRWA is a member) released the Pigeon Lake Watershed Management Plan. This plan has now been adopted by all municipalities around the lake, and endorsed by the BRWA and a number of other organizations. The Mamawo Mimiw Sakahikan Working Group was also formed as a means for the Maskwacis Cree Nations to explore partnerships and priorities related to the plan.

The plan's central purpose is to "develop a comprehensive, science-based strategy to coordinate action for the protection and improvement of Pigeon Lake, its shore lands, and its watershed". Work is already underway to implement various

aspects of the plan, and the BRWA is thrilled to continue to partner with the PLWA, the Alliance of Pigeon Lake Municipalities, the Government of Alberta, and others to progress this important initiative.

OTIS AWARD



For Being OutStanding In Stewardship

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



Individual Winner: Don and Marie Ruzicka

Don and Marie have stewarded Sunrise Farm, northwest of Killam, since 1983. In 1995, a course in Holistic Management changed their lives. They believe that good land management results in healthy plant communities and nutritious farm products. There has been a resurgence of biodiversity on their farm as native grasslands and wetlands are restored and habitat buffer areas are planted. Along with their community and education efforts, they have made a tangible difference on the land, and have inspired the next generation.



Business Winner: Tin Forest Farm

Alana and Justin Schamber purchased land near Wetaskiwin in 2010. They have maintained the farm's wetlands, which cover about a third of the property, preserving the ecological integrity of the surface water and creek that run through the area. They have worked with ALUS to fence off wetlands to exclude livestock. They also work to raise awareness about local food and connect people to the land through farm tours and kids camps. The Schamber family sees themselves as caretakers of the planet, ensuring that what happens on their farm is good for the environment, the animals, and people.



Organization Winner: Nica's Hair Salon

Nica's Hair Salon is a family-run business in Camrose. Owner Lori Kushnerik hated seeing the waste the salon produced, especially the harmful chemicals that would go to the landfill or down the drain and into the water system. Working with Green Circle Salon, she is now able to send away foils, colour tubes, papers, and plastics for recycling. Not only that, but hair clippings are reused to create "Hair Brooms", which are used during oil spills to clean the water. Nica's is an example to businesses that we can all take steps to be stewards of our watershed.

Youth Winner: Wainwright Girl Guides Clubs

The Wainwright Girl Guides Clubs help girls challenge themselves, find their voice, meet new friends, and make a difference in the world. The group, which includes many units of ages 5-18, does an annual litter pickup at Bevans Nature Park. They take regular nature hikes and study the natural world while working to protect it. In the past few years, they have helped build a Bluebird Trail near Provost, and built bat houses for Arm Lake. These girls are not only taking a hands-on approach to making their home litter-free, but they are supporting biodiversity and being leaders in their community.




Girl Guides
of Canada
Guides
du Canada

WATER FOR LIFE PARTNERS

As a Watershed Planning and Advisory Council (WPAC), the BRWA is one of 4 partners identified in the Water for Life strategy. Watershed Stewardship Groups such as the Pigeon Lake Watershed Alliance (featured on page 12) complete on-the-ground action to protect our watersheds. The Alberta Water Council (featured below) collects and shares data and provides guidance on watershed priorities and policy implementation at the provincial scale. The Government of Alberta is the overarching partner and provides leadership, funding, and in-kind support to each of the other partners. Collaboration amongst all of these groups is key to successful watershed education, stewardship, and management.

Alberta Water Council

The BRWA has been actively involved in various initiatives of the Alberta Water Council over the years. Most recently, we have participated as members of the two current project teams of the Alberta Water Council: 1) Protecting Sources of Drinking Water in Alberta, and 2) Building Resiliency to Multi-Year Drought.




Driedmeat Lake is an important water source that is used for a number of purposes, including supplying drinking water for the City of Camrose and many Camrose County residents.



The goal of the "Protecting Sources of Drinking Water in Alberta" project team is to document existing source water protection approaches and provide guidance for protecting public, private, and individual drinking water sources in Alberta. This work will support the BRWA's ongoing source water protection efforts, including continued implementation of the Camrose Source Water Protection Plan and the potential development of source water protection plans in other regions of our watersheds.

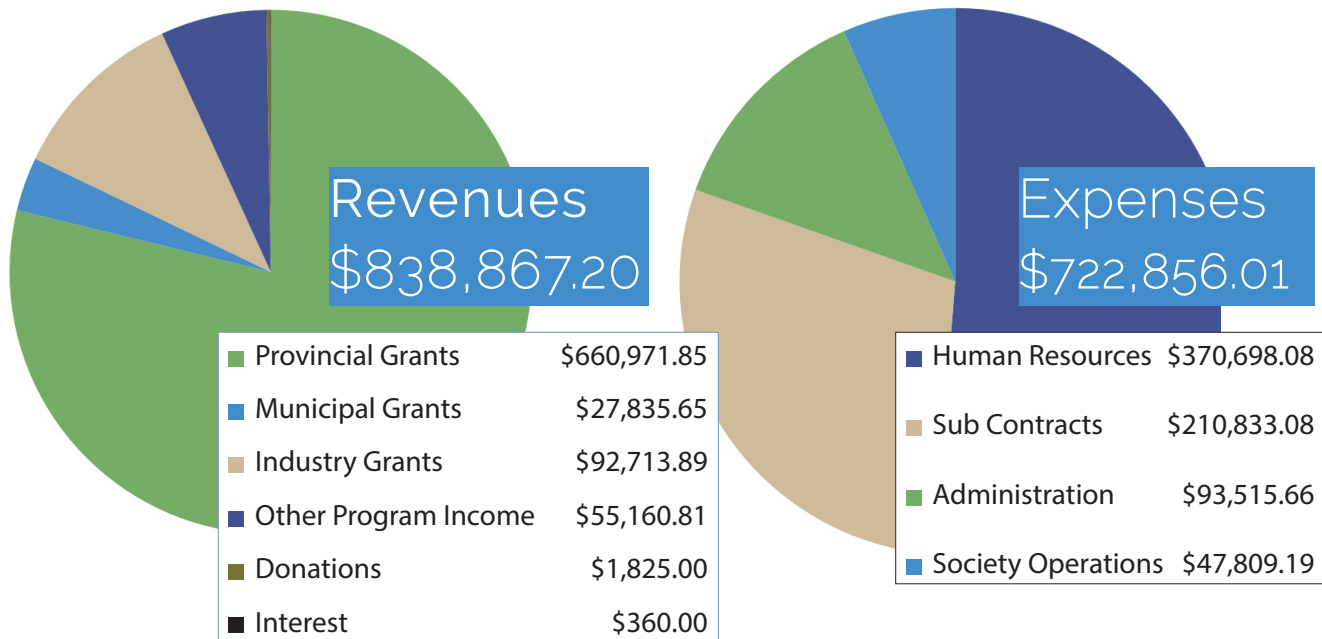


The goal of the "Building Resiliency to Multi-Year Drought" project team is to produce a guide and workshop materials to assist WPACs as they engage municipalities and communities within their watersheds to better plan for, mitigate, respond to, and recover from multi-year droughts. This is especially relevant to the prairie-fed watersheds of the Battle River and Sounding Creek, where water availability can fluctuate greatly from month to month and year to year.



Drought along the Battle River in 2009. Water availability is closely tied to the amount of precipitation received throughout the year.

2018-2019 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 watershed 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.**



BATTLE RIVER

WATERSHED ALLIANCE

Keep in Touch!



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CONNECTING
PEOPLE TO
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ACTION