

# ANNUAL REPORT



2024-2025



## Message from the Co-Chairs

Collaboration with local governments and stakeholders is a key pillar of our work and essential to implement Watershed Management Planning.

As a non-profit organization and Watershed Planning and Advisory Council (WPAC), the Battle River Watershed Alliance (BRWA) Board of Directors is made up of individuals, organizations, and government representatives dedicated to caring for these lands we call home.

We are pleased to share that the WPACs, including BRWA, were recognized in the Alberta Emerald Award Shortlist for collaborating with the Alberta Water Council on the Building Resiliency to Multi-Year Drought toolkit. This toolkit enabled WPACs to support rural communities. It is heartening to see recognition for this collaborative effort.

As another two partner-driven initiatives wrap up, we thank Camrose, Lacombe and Flagstaff Counties for supporting the projects with funding from an Alberta Community Partnership Grant. BRWA met over 200 people to discuss the latest *State of the Watershed Report* and prioritize new education and outreach programs. BRWA also engaged with Planners in the watersheds to release new guidelines on land use planning.

The board is grateful to all our staff, funders, partners, and volunteers who made this year a success.

- Alan Corbett and  
Ryley Andersen

## Directors

### Agriculture

Terry Vockeroth, County of Paintearth

### Business/Industry

Ryley Andersen, BRWA Co-Chairperson

### Health & Wellness

Marilyn Weber

### Individual

Alan Corbett, BRWA Co-Chairperson

Greg Smith, BRWA Treasurer

Peter Pullishy

### Government Representatives

Jamie Bruha, Alberta Environment & Protected Areas

Bruce Cummins, MD of Wainwright (Nov-Mar)

Dale Pederson, Beaver County

Preston Weran, Town of Blackfalds

### Ex-officio

Melissa Orr-Langner, Alberta Agriculture & Irrigation

Catherine Peirce, BRWA Exec. Director

### Retiring Directors

Khalil Ahmed, Battle River Research Group (2020-2024)

Dustin Owens, Heartland Generation (2020-2024)

Alex Retfalvi, Heartland Generation (2024-2025)



*Photo Caption: (L to R) Terry Vockeroth, Ryley Andersen, Alan Corbett, Melissa Orr-Langner, Marilyn Weber, Jamie Bruha, Peter Pullishy, Khalil Ahmed, Greg Smith, Dale Pederson. Not in image: Bruce Cummins, Bill Lawson, Dustin Owens, Preston Weran. Stoney Creek Centre, Camrose, AB*

**VISION:** We exist to have a watershed that sustains all life by using sound knowledge, wisdom, and wise actions to preserve our watershed for future generations.

**MISSION:** We achieve our vision by providing relevant science, social science, policies, and education for a diverse community of people to create solutions to our watershed's challenges.

**OUR WORK:** Our work focuses on two major themes of engagement and sustainability. These themes inform three key areas: Watershed Management, Watershed Engagement, and Watershed Stewardship. Our fourth overarching strategic area is Alliance Management.



# Message from the Executive Director

As I write this message, most of Alberta is digging out from a spring storm that brought over 20 cm of snow. Spring precipitation is welcome after another year of drought in the Battle River and Sounding Creek Watersheds.

Drought and water availability were a key focus in 2024-25 as staff collaborated with our partners and local governments to address water management. The BRWA Land and Water Committee responded to the provincial government's Water Availability Engagement, reinforcing the goals of *Water for Life: Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability*:

1. Safe, secure drinking water;
2. Healthy aquatic ecosystems; and
3. Reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy.

Please read on in the annual report to learn more about our work. I am grateful to the staff, the Board, members of the community, and local governments who dedicated time and resources to watershed management this past year. A few key highlights:

- Roundtable on Indigenous-led monitoring projects to foster new opportunities for capacity building
- Connecting People and Science Webinar Series and Workshop, with participation from over 250 members of the CitSci Alberta Community of Practice
- Workshop and release of the new Guide to Watershed Management in Land Use Planning for Local Governments in the Battle River and Sounding Creek Watersheds

I would like to make a special mention of the youth working with BRWA including summer staff, Belle Dodds and Kiara Abma, and U of A Augustana, Community Service Learning students Miana Popik, Carla Le, and Stephanie Shyshka, as well as the Augustana students who shared their passion for biodiversity and the environment at the Watershed Festival. Thank you for your continued commitment to watershed management and community engagement.

- Catherine Peirce



(L to R) Susanna Bruneau, Sarah Skinner, Sheila Logelin, Catherine Peirce, Kiara Abma



(Above) Summer students;  
(Below) CSL students.

# Stewardship

## OTIS (OuTstanding In Stewardship) Award Winners 2024

Stewardship is our collective responsibility to care for land, air, water, and biodiversity in a way that conserves all of its values, be they ecological, economic, social, or cultural.

### Individual

**Ian Rawlinson**, Mayor of the Summer Village of Crystal Springs, has successfully implemented many Pigeon Lake Watershed Management Plan recommendations, a strong testament to his commitment to lake health, the environment, and the community. With Ian's leadership, the community has a new wastewater system, funded a study on blue-green algae treatments, invested in a monitoring buoy, hosts annual shoreline clean ups, and supports stewardship in land use planning to protect and monitor the lake.



### Agriculture

**Terry and Peggy Vockeroth** have been managing their grazing lands in the County of Paintearth for decades with a strong conservation ethic. Terry is a passionate supporter of riparian conservation and restoration, encouraging other landowners to adopt similar practices. In addition to the work supported by the BRWA RiparianCare project, the Vockeroths installed additional fencing to protect more riparian areas. Having riparian area champions like Terry and Peggy is crucial to maintaining these vital ecosystems.



### Organization/Business

**The Town of Viking** revitalized a municipal water reservoir with the Filtered Raw Water Pumping Station in 2024. As the town's previous water source, the water reservoir and pumping station is now used to accommodate agricultural and fire protection needs in the area to mitigate current and future drought conditions. This pumping station enables the Town of Viking to remain an important residential and business centre in a rural Alberta area.



### Youth

**Belle Dodds** is a graduating student from University of Alberta Augustana. Belle has fostered a meaningful connection with the watershed and those that call it home. Belle has led the Augustana Wildlife Club using her fun and passionate spirit to engage with peers on wildlife and watershed issues. Her infectious love of the natural world makes you want to care about the world around you.



**Nominations for 2025 open July 1st.**





## RiparianCARE (2023-2025)

The program provided financial and technical support for six landowners and a municipality to implement riparian conservation and restoration projects. The results help protect water sources, improve cattle health, enhance pasture utilization, and reduce land development impacts.



**\$163,662**

Invested in conservation and restoration to protect shoreline, wetlands, and riparian health

PROGRAM COMPLETED

**2** livestock fencing projects



**40** trees planted in Stoney Creek to improve riparian functions in municipal greenspace and encourage community engagement

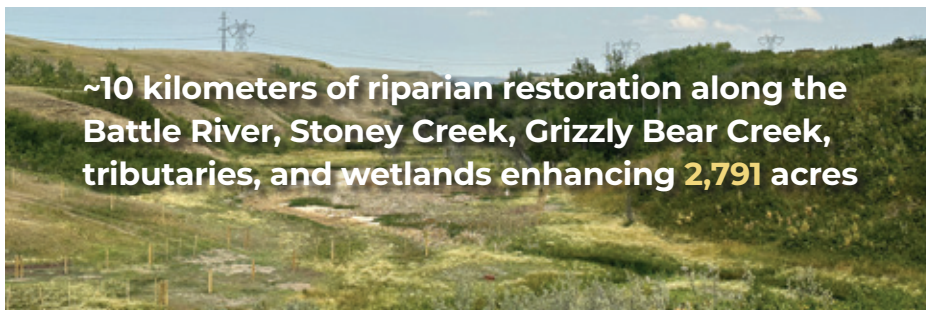


**6** off-stream livestock watering systems



This program was made possible through collaborative funding from landowners, BRWA and the Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program, Government of Alberta.

~10 kilometers of riparian restoration along the Battle River, Stoney Creek, Grizzly Bear Creek, tributaries, and wetlands enhancing **2,791** acres



## Battle River and Sounding Creek Stewardship Community of Practice

The goals of the Community of Practice are to foster a stewardship ethic, connect learning to action, promote and showcase stewardship actions, and foster support and collaboration amongst community members and organizations. The group visited two stewardship sites in 2024:

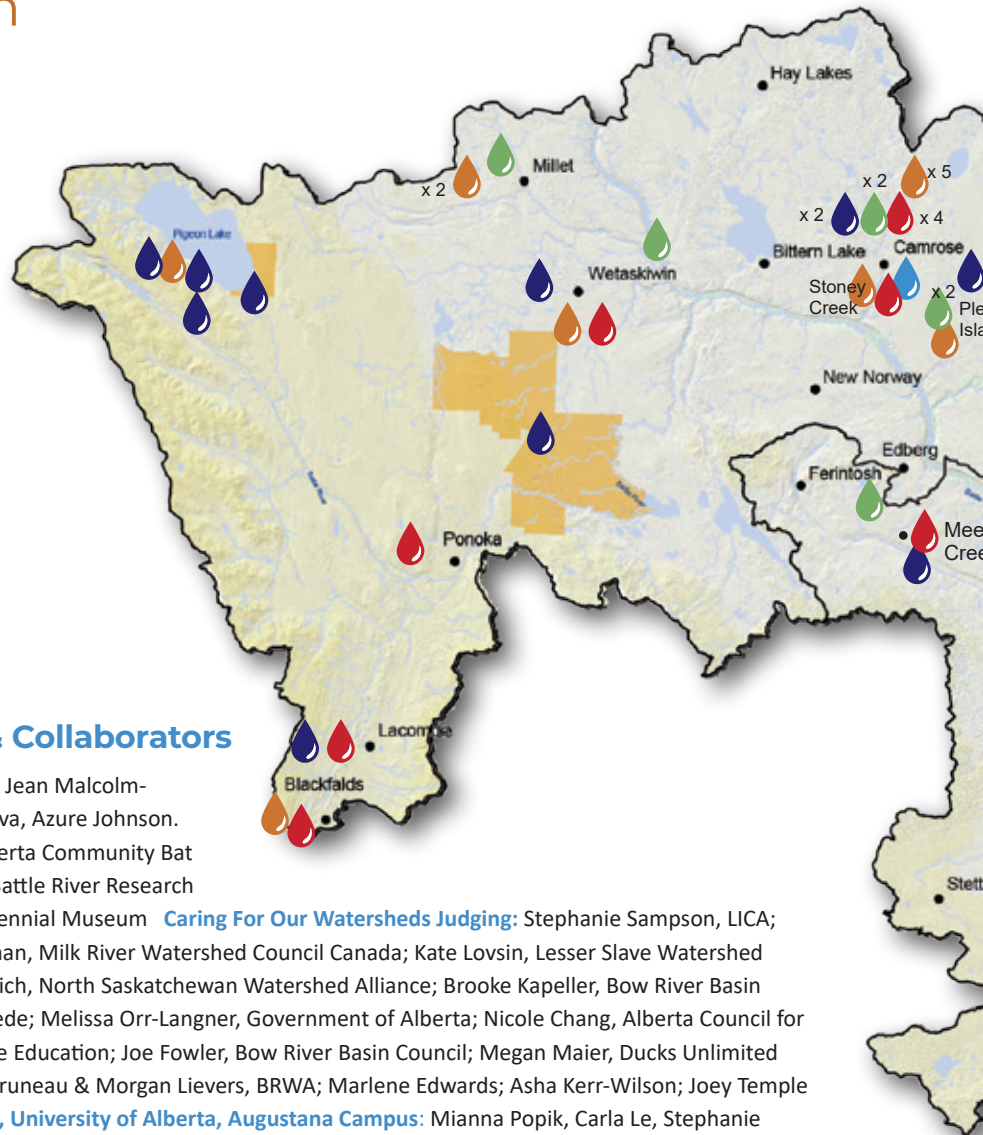
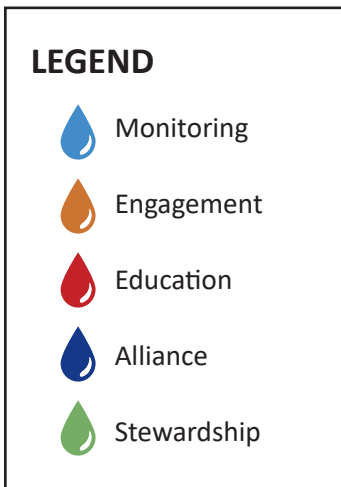
- The Scandia Roadside Native Prairie Restoration Project in Camrose County is a community-led initiative to steward prairie ecology and biodiversity. The volunteers have removed invasive species and reintroduced wildflowers and other native species, with a goal of creating a future network of ecological corridors throughout the municipality.



- Terry and Faith Gabert's pasture land is conserved in partnership with Nature Conservancy Canada. The site promotes native prairie grassland conservation along Meeting Creek.



# Watershed Engagement & Action



## Volunteers, Committee Members & Collaborators

**Watershed Festival Volunteers and Exhibitors:** Volunteers: Jean Malcolm-McDonald, Alexandra Thurm, Shaun Hunter, Olya Klepacheva, Azure Johnson. Exhibitors: Alberta Parks, Strathcona Raptor Sanctuary, Alberta Community Bat Program, Camrose Public Library, Alberta Capital Airshed, Battle River Research Group, Augustana Wildlife Club, Camrose and District Centennial Museum

**Caring For Our Watersheds Judging:** Stephanie Sampson, LICA; Ashley Johnson, Athabasca Watershed Council; Tyler Eresman, Milk River Watershed Council Canada; Kate Lovsin, Lesser Slave Watershed Council; Michelle Gordy, Scott Millar, and Rosey Radmanovich, North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance; Brooke Kapeller, Bow River Basin Council; Cory Wald, Nutrien; Megan White, Calgary Stampede; Melissa Orr-Langner, Government of Alberta; Nicole Chang, Alberta Council for Environmental Education; Katherine Hill & Colin King, Inside Education; Joe Fowler, Bow River Basin Council; Megan Maier, Ducks Unlimited Canada; Glinis Buffalo, Glinis Buffalo Consulting; Susanna Bruneau & Morgan Lievers, BRWA; Marlene Edwards; Asha Kerr-Wilson; Joey Temple

**Community Service-Learning Student Placement Program, University of Alberta, Augustana Campus:** Mianna Popik, Carla Le, Stephanie Shyshka. **Land and Water Committee:** Dale Pederson, Beaver County; Anjah Howard & Doug Lyseng, Camrose County; Terry Vockeroth, County of Paintearth; Cathie Erichsen Arychuk, County of Vermillion River; Alan Corbett, Alberta Drainage Council; Bart Muusse, Ducks Unlimited Canada; Howard Shield & Melvin Thompson, Flagstaff County; Jamie Bruha, Arin MacFarlane-Dyer & Melissa Orr-Langner, Government of Alberta; Dwayne West, Lacombe Cree Nation, Glinis Buffalo Consulting; Will Challenger & Scott Flett, Town of Wainwright; Belle Dodds, University of Alberta Augustana Campus; Aaron Leckie, City of Melia, Pigeon Lake Watershed Association; Greg Smith, BRWA Board Member. **Education & Engagement Committee:** Justin Babcock, Ponoka County; Kim Barkv

Bowie, Agricultural Producer; Jamie Bruha & Janine Higgins, Government of Alberta; Kelsey Spicer-Rawe & Kerri O'Shaughnessy, Cows & Fish; Joey Temple; Susan BRWA Board Member. **Battle River and Sounding Creek Stewardship Community of Practice:** June Osborne & Brenda Bohmer, Scandia Roadside Restoration S Beaver Hills Biosphere; Megan Maier, Ducks Unlimited Canada; Meghan Jacklin, Edmonton and Area Land Trust; Amanda Koot, Pigeon Lake Watershed Association; Chris Elder, County of Vermillion River; Claudia Lipski-Cameron, Buffalo Lake Nature Club; Ruiping Luo, Alberta Wilderness Association; Katelyn Ceh, Nature Cons

Fish; Ken Lewis, Red Deer County/Lacombe County; Sheldon Frissell, Wainwright Wildlife Society; Ryley Andersen; Diane Hanson; Shiana Younger, Rural Routes to of Paintearth; Lucien Royer, Miquelon Watershed Stewardship Committee; Marilyn Weber; Chinook Applied Research Association; Cathy Goulet, Battle River Alliance **Committee:** Greg Smith, Catherine Peirce, Sheila Logelin **Policy Committee:** Alan Corbett, Greg King, Catherine Peirce, Greg Smith, Terry Vockeroth, Preston We Andersen, Greg Smith. **Board of Directors:** Khalil Ahmed, Battle River Research Group (Apr 2024 - Dec 2024); Terry Vockeroth; Ryley Andersen, BRWA Co-Chairperson 2024 - Sept 2024); Alex Retfalvi, Heartland Generation (Oct 2024 - Jan 2025), Marilyn Weber, Alan Corbett, BRWA Co-Chairperson; Peter Pullishy; Greg Smith, BRWA Dale Pederson, Beaver County; Bruce Cummins, MD of Wainwright, Jamie Bruha, Government of Alberta, Melissa Orr-Langner, Government of Alberta (Ex-Officio) Watershed Synergy Group; Beaver Hills Biosphere Stewardship Community of Practice; Citizen Science Alberta Community of Practice Steering Committee; Peaceful Valley Advisory Committee; Camrose Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee; Pigeon Lake Watershed Management Plan Steering Committee; Nutrien - Caring for Our Watersheds Coordinators Committee; Regenerative Agriculture Lab; Wetaskiwin-Leduc ALUS Partnership Advisory Committee; Watershed Planning and Advisory Council Managers Committee, Education and Outreach Committee, and Technical Committee





County; Glinis Buffalo, Samson  
 County of Camrose; Amanda Koot & Rick  
 well, Wetaskiwin-Leduc ALUS; Greg  
 n Kokas; Diane Hanson; Greg Smith,  
 Society; Pamela Billey & Erin Anderson,  
 on; Kim Barkwell, County of Wetaskiwin;  
 ervancy Canada; Kristina Boehler, Cows and  
 o Climate Solutions; Terry Vockeroth, County  
 ance for Economic Development **Finance**  
 eran **Executive Committee:** Alan Corbett, Ryley  
 erson; Dustin Owen, Heartland Generation (Apr  
 RWA Treasurer, Preston Weran, Town of Blackfalds;  
 o). **External Committees:** Battle Lake





# Watershed Management



## Guide to Watershed Management in Land Use Planning for Local Governments

The Guide, designed for municipalities and Indigenous governments, offers examples for implementing BRWA watershed management recommendations in land use planning to support watershed resilience and sustainability. This project was made possible with support from an Alberta Community Partnership Grant, partnering with Camrose County, Flagstaff County, and Lacombe County. Additional funding was provided by BRWA and the Battle River Community Foundation.



## State of the Watershed - Community Conversations

BRWA released the Health in the Watershed Engagement What We Heard Report in June 2024. It outlines recommendations for state of the watershed monitoring and reporting arising from broad community engagement efforts that included the Health in the Watershed Summit and meetings with municipal and Indigenous governments.

One of the action items was to “Continue relationship building and co-leadership discussions with Indigenous governments, and enhance capacity for Indigenous watershed management and monitoring.” To help advance these conversations, BRWA hosted a Roundtable on Indigenous Monitoring Projects with the Maskwacis Cree Nations, Otipemisiwak Métis Government, and partner organizations to learn more about current projects, shared priorities, and opportunities for collaboration, support and capacity building.



*Samson Cree Nation aquatic habitat and fish monitoring at Mimiw Sakahikan (Pigeon Lake)*



# Watershed Engagement & Education



## Caring for our Watersheds Contest

This education program engages students in preserving and improving their local watersheds through student-led solutions.

- 598** Students contributed to proposals
- 299** Proposals submitted
- 18** Schools represented
- 25** Teachers supporting student submissions

**Finalists from across Alberta: Bonnyville, Calgary, Cardston, Edmonton, Leduc, and Lloydminster**

## CFW Implementation Projects

Four student projects took their ideas and turned them into real-world changes that benefited their communities. Each of the efforts of these young leaders resulted in tangible changes within their watersheds through educating their peers, supporting pollinators, repurposing used oil, and conserving water.

**Nutrien**



## Changing Curriculum

**2,100+** Participants

After running since 2011, the Discover Your Wetlands (DYW) program will be replaced with Weather Watchers in the Watershed to keep pace with the changing grade 5 science curriculum. BRWA will continue to offer DYW pond dipping in summer programs.

**Education  
Engagement**

**1,644**  
students/youth

**774**  
teachers

**258**  
schools

## Number of students/youth by program

- 206** Discover Your Wetlands (Grade 5)
- 221** X-Sream Science (Grade 7-9)
- 135** Habitat Tour (Grade 6)
- 321** Waste in Our Watershed, WOW Camrose (Grade 4)
- 72** Waste in Our Watershed, WOW Wetaskiwin (Grade 4)
- 91** Summer programs
- 598** Caring for Our Watersheds

We would like to acknowledge the support for education programs from Nutrien, Enbridge, Cargill, Charities Aid Foundation America, and Heartland Generation.

**Learn more  
about BRWA  
Education  
Programs:**





# Watershed Engagement & Education



Métis Fest,  
Métis  
Crossing



Discover Your  
Wetlands,  
Lacombe



Habitat Tour,  
Big Knife  
Provincial  
Park



Azure Johnson  
at the Midge  
Lambert  
Memorial  
Watershed  
Festival



Weed Pull,  
Pipestone Creek  
Conservation  
Lands



Midge  
Lambert  
Memorial  
Watershed  
Festival,  
Pleasure  
Island Fish  
Pond



Viking Raw Water  
Pumping Station  
Opening



CitSci Alberta  
Workshop,  
Edmonton

BRWA hosted events and contributed to many partner-led events including the Midge Lambert Memorial Watershed Festival; Islet Lake Outdoor Expo; Pigeon Lake's Love the Lake Family Fun Day; Paddle the Battle, Castor Creek; IBA Caretaker and Bird Watching; Camrose Community Tree Planting; County of Vermilion River Wetland Adventure Day; Pipestone Nature Walk; Camrose Museum Watershed Day; Caring For Our Water – A Métis Tradition.

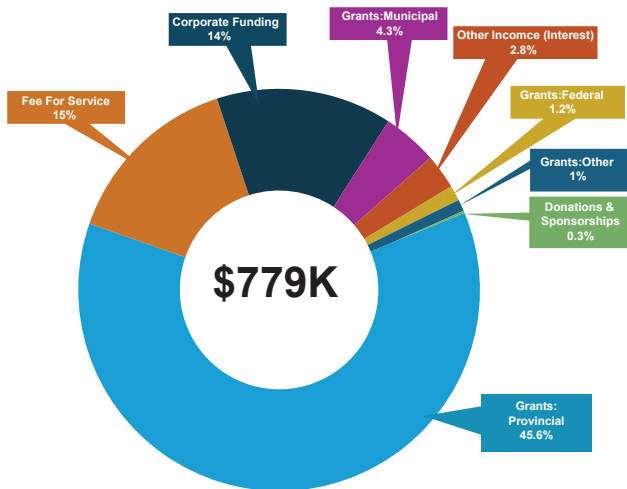
***Thank you volunteers and participants!***



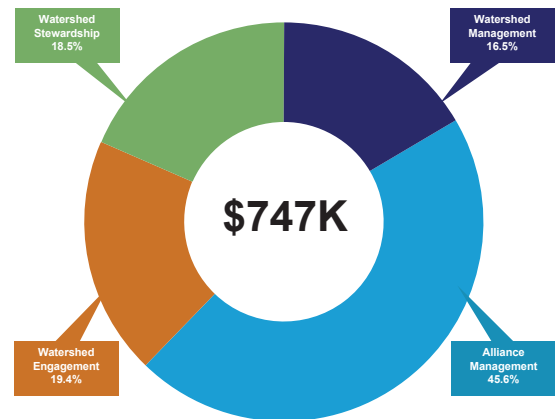
# Alliance Management

## Financials

### Revenue



### Expenses



## Partners & Funders 2024-2025

We are grateful to the following for their generous financial contributions:

Beaver County, Camrose County, City of Camrose, County of Paintearth, Flagstaff County, Lacombe County, Leduc County, County of Vermilion River, Municipal District of Wainwright, Ponoka County, Town of Blackfalds, Town of Wainwright, Hamlets of Bittern Lake, Chauvin, Edgerton, Halkirk, Paradise Valley, and Rosalind, Summer Villages of Argentia Beach, Crystal Springs, Golden Days, Grandview, Itaska Beach, Ma-Me-O Beach, Norris Beach, Poplar Bay and Silver Beach, Kim Sturgess (CEO of WaterSmart), the Battle Lake Natural Area Preservation Society, and the funders highlighted below.





*Above: Paddle the Battle, Castor Creek; Front cover: X-Stream Science, Monitor Creek*

## Land Acknowledgement

The Battle River and Sounding Creek watersheds have been the home, meeting ground and travelling route for many Indigenous Peoples since time immemorial. We gratefully acknowledge the ancestral territory and ongoing presence of Indigenous Peoples and Nations within these watersheds. Their experiences, teachings, knowledge and wisdom inform and enrich our collective efforts to care for the land and water of this region. These watersheds are located in Treaty 6 and 7 territory, and the Otipemisiwak Métis Government Districts 2, 3, 8, 11, and 12. Fulfilling the spirit and intent of these treaties is an ongoing process, and the Battle River Watershed Alliance is committed to building strong and respectful relationships with the Indigenous Peoples of this land, with all living beings, and with the land and water on which we all depend.



### Connect With Us:

The Battle River Watershed Alliance office is located at  
ᐱᓄᓂᓴᓴᓴ ᓴᓴᓴᓴ (asiniskaw sipisis - Stoney Creek) in Treaty 6 territory

Mirror Lake Centre  
5415 49 Ave, Suite 3, Camrose AB, T4V 0N6  
www.battleriverwatershed.ca  
OTIS@battleriverwatershed.ca  
1 (888) 672-0276

**Facebook, YouTube, Instagram:** @BattleRiverWatershed

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