



RED DEER RIVER WATERSHED ALLIANCE

ANNUAL REPORT 2008 / 2009

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Message from the Chair

The Red Deer River Watershed Alliance had another very productive year and we look forward to continuing our work together with our members and stakeholders to promote the importance of watershed management.

I would like to thank the Executive Director, Beverly, for her past year's work the projects that have come to fruition because of her dedication and knowledge. She has attended many events on behalf of the Alliance and coordinated our State of the Watershed (SOW) Report that was completed in March of this year. This report is one of the most comprehensive and detailed SOW reports that have been produced to date. I would like thank all of the committee members on both the Steering Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee for the SOW Report, for their time, commitment, and dedication. I would especially like to thank Tracy Scott for Chairing the Steering Committee.

We would also like to thank Andrea for her hard work, time and dedication in the past year and Donna Trottier for the past year's work and dedication.

Message from the Executive Director

Once again we have made huge steps in raising the profile of the RDRWA and have greatly increased the programs and projects required to meet our mandate. Over the last 3 years we have increased our membership by 130 % and are now at 254 members. We are proud to announce that we have completed our State of the Watershed report and are now in the process of providing the results to decision makers and stakeholders within the Red Deer River watershed community. I encourage you to view the list of Financial Partners to whom we are so very grateful. Without their support and interest in watershed management, we could not succeed.

We recognize and appreciate the efforts of the Watershed Stewardship Groups within the watershed, and the importance that they play as partners in implementing the Water For Life Strategy. Our Program Coordinator, Donna Trottier, and our Office Administrator, Andrea Simpson have worked hard to bring the goals and objectives of the RDRWA to life. Special thanks goes to our Board of Directors, who donate their time and expertise to the activities of the Alliance. Their help and support is greatly appreciated!

The RDRWA would like to thank those organizations for allowing their staff to participate on our Board of Directors. The RDRWA gratefully acknowledges the value of our Board members' time. The success of our organization is directly related to the time these individuals commit to the RDRWA mission and the expertise and dedication they bring to the RDRWA. Even though they have other jobs, they volunteer their time to the Alliance, which is very much appreciated.

Thanks also go to our supporters, the participating municipalities, and the Government of Alberta for the funding that has generously been given. We look forward to their continued support and we are working towards having industry more involved in the Alliance and on the Board. Our key project for the upcoming year is informing those in the watershed about the results of the SOW Report. We encourage those in the watershed to actively participate.



Earl Graham, Chair



Beverly Anderson, BES, MBA-PM

The Red Deer River Watershed Alliance

The Red Deer River Watershed Alliance

In response to the Province's *Water for Life Strategy* and a grassroots recognition of a need for a partnership of interests to promote, achieve and maintain a healthier Red Deer River watershed far into the future, the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance (RDRWA) was formed on June 15, 2005 and incorporated as a Not-for-Profit organization on August 25, 2005. On September 9, 2005, Alberta Environment designated the Alliance as being the Watershed Planning and Advisory Council (WPAC) for the Red Deer River.

RDRWA Vision Statement

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

RDRWA Mission Statement

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

RDRWA Goals

- To provide an inclusive forum for the exchange of information and collaborative dialogue for watershed protection, conservation and improvement.
- To raise awareness on issues impacting the Red Deer River watershed.
- To promote the use of beneficial management practices and the integrated management of land and water resources.

The Alliance gratefully acknowledges the support of the local municipalities within the watershed, the Alberta Government as part of the Water For Life strategy, and the many organizations and industries that provide financial support. Their partnership is critical to the delivery of our programs and projects.

Interest in the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance is growing. More and more stakeholders are learning about the Alliance and seeking to become involved and take action to promote a healthy, sustainable watershed.

The environmental health of the watershed, the health of the residents and the sustained health of the economy are intricately linked. Our quality of life - now and in the future - is affected by how we use our land and water. With the ongoing prosperity of Alberta, forecasts indicate that development within the Red Deer River watershed will continue, perhaps at an accelerated pace. Therefore, growth and development will continue to impact our water and landscapes.

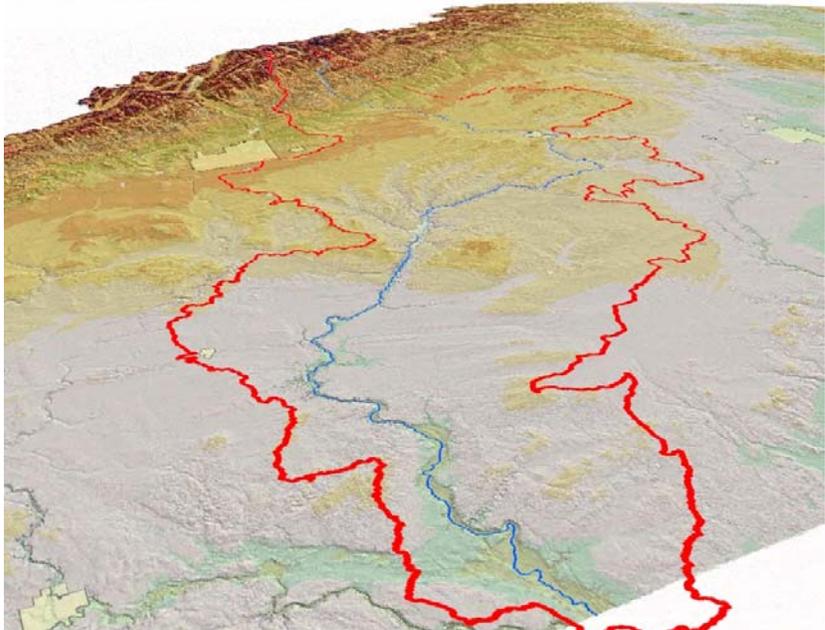
A partnership of people working together will greatly assist a better understanding our watershed and our impacts on it. This same partnership of stakeholders - by striving to achieve common objectives - will promote the overall health of the Red Deer River watershed through this better understanding (e.g. of issues, needs and priorities) and a more integrated approach to resource management and community planning. This will help residents, communities and businesses to make more informed decisions on how to pursue goals and needs while minimizing impacts on the watershed.

The deliberations and actions of an inclusive and collaborative alliance of interested people working together will serve to ensure the Red Deer River watershed is known for its legacy of ecological integrity and economic sustainability.



The Red Deer River Watershed

The Red Deer River watershed forms the largest sub-basin of the South Saskatchewan River basin, occupying about 8% of Alberta's land base. The Red Deer River originates in the Canadian Rocky Mountains in Banff National Park and flows over and through mountains, foothills, rangeland, residential land, industrial land, oil and coal deposits, cities, towns, parks, reserves, forests and croplands across southern Alberta, joining up with the South Saskatchewan River 8 km past the Saskatchewan border. The Red Deer River has a length of 724 km, a drainage area of 49,650 km² and a mean discharge rate of about 70 m³/sec. The Red Deer River is fed by meltwater, glacial streams from Mount Drummond and Cyclone Mountain in the Rocky Mountains and numerous freshwater springs and tributaries. The Red Deer River Watershed includes 55 urban municipalities and 18 regional municipalities.



In 2006 the population of the Red Deer River watershed was 267,863 people. The major urban centres in the Red Deer River Watershed include the Cities of Red Deer (82,772 residents) and Brooks (12,488 residents) and the towns of Strathmore and Sylvan Lake (10,225 and 10,208 residents respectively). The largest rural populations are found in Red Deer County, the Municipal District of Rocky View #44 and Mountain View County.

Based on estimates from the 2001 Census on Agriculture there were about 13,058 farms in the Red Deer River Watershed with an average size of 373 hectares. These farms account for 25% of all farms in Alberta. Farms in the Red Deer River Watershed cover an area of about 48,700 km². About 43% of the land base in the watershed is used to raise crops which include barley, alfalfa, canola and wheat. About 5% of the land is summerfallowed with the remaining land being pasture (about 48%). About 49% of the farms in the watershed raise beef cattle and about 16% of the farms are grain and oilseed farms. Cattle farms are the most common farm type in the watershed however, the Red Deer River Watershed has a higher proportion of dairy, hog and poultry farms than the rest of Alberta.

In addition to municipal and agricultural developments, the Red Deer River watershed is characterized by a diverse commercial and industrial mosaic. Activities associated with the petroleum sector include drilling operations and refining facilities. Only that portion of the headwaters of the Red Deer River watershed, located in Banff National Park, has no oil and gas footprint. On average there are up to 2 oil or gas wells per km² (including abandoned and decommissioned wells) in the remainder of the watershed, although this density can increase up to 5 oil or gas wells per km² in the south-central and south-eastern regions of the watershed and up to 10 oil or gas wells per km² in the Drumheller, Red Deer, White Sands to Big Valley, Brooks-Bassano-Duchess and Eckville regions. (Alberta Sustainable Resource Development 2007).

Commercial developments in the watershed include golf courses, bottling and food processing plants, gardening and landscape establishments, aggregate washing facilities for the construction industry and parks and recreation facilities. Industrial developments in the watershed include fertilizer plants, manufacturing facilities, mines (coal), and forestry related facilities. (Alberta Environment 2007).

The Relevance of a Watershed

Approach?

Water systems reflect the cumulative effects of human activities on the land since the health of waterways is influenced by, and illustrative of, the health of the lands through which they flow. A watershed is readily definable and forms an ecosystem unit that is generally understood. As well, since most management actions can be integrated using a watershed as a common planning unit, a watershed approach to multi-resource planning (and management) makes good sense.

Benefits of a Healthy Watershed

A healthy watershed has wide ranging benefits. These include:

- **Human Health** - clean rivers, lakes and streams provide for healthy enjoyment, including swimming, boating and fishing (and the fish are safe to eat!). Good quality water - both surface and groundwater - is available for our communities, homes, farms and businesses.
- **Ecological (Environmental) Health** - a healthy, intact watershed minimizes the impacts of flooding and erosion and serves to filter sediments and contaminants so they do not reach our streams, lakes and groundwater. A healthy watershed contains diverse habitats for flora, fauna and fish. Healthy wildlife habitat is an indicator of a healthy environment for people, in addition to providing the opportunity for people to utilize and enjoy wildlife resources.
- **Economic Health** - Abundant water provides for our farms, homes, industries, and communities. Clean water allows municipalities, businesses, agricultural producers and industries to operate more cost effectively, saving money for taxpayers and consumers. Also, clean water together with natural spaces, including wetlands, enhances recreation and tourism.

What is watershed management?

As undertaken by a partnership of stakeholders, watershed management is an adaptive, comprehensive and an integrated multi-resource management planning process, which seeks a balance of healthy ecological, economic and cultural social conditions within the watershed far into the future. Therefore, watershed management serves to integrate planning for land and water.



Board of Directors

The RDRWA is comprised of 15 representatives. Each board member serves a 2 year term. The Board held ** meetings during 2008/09. The Board for the time period of June 2008 to June 2009 included the following members:

Environmental and Stewardship

Dale Christian representing the Butte Action Committee. Dale Christian was born in Calgary, AB. With her husband Glenn, they established a mixed-farm at the confluence of the Red Deer and Medicine Rivers. A passion for water has led Dale to become active in the community, attested by her participation groups such as the Butte Action Committee, the Red Deer County Ratepayer Association, Action for Agriculture, and the Stewardship/BMP Committee. She is currently the Communication/Education Committee Chair for the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance. In October 2008, Dale humbly accepted the Red Deer & District Community Foundation's Women of Excellence Award for Agriculture & the Environment. All this helps Dale on her mission she calls, "All Things Water Related."

Jim Martin representing the Dickson Fish and Game Club Jim Martin grew up on a farm near Watrous Saskatchewan. He graduated from SAIT with a Structural Engineering diploma. Jim worked for consulting engineering companies on Hydroelectric Dam construction in Northern Manitoba and Africa. He came to Alberta with the engineering company that designed and oversaw the construction of the Dickson Dam. He stayed as the Dam Operator for the next 17 years, working for Alberta Environment. In 2000 he retired after working for Alberta Infrastructure as a Facility Manager at the Michener Center. Jim joined the RDRWA in 2007 representing the Dickson Fish and Game Club, due to his special interest in water management and river health from many years of working on and with the river. He also represents the RDRWA on the South Saskatchewan Water Supply and Demand Study Steering Committee.

Tracy Scott representing Ducks Unlimited Canada Tracy Scott was raised on a farm near Camrose. He graduated from Olds College in the Ag. Business Program with a major in Finance. He worked as an Agricultural Fieldman for the county of Paintearth, prior to obtaining employment

with Ducks Unlimited Canada in 1990. During his career. Tracy served two terms as President of the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Board of Directors. During those terms NSWA obtained WPAC status, completed its State of the Watershed Report and received an Emerald Award for its accomplishments. Tracy serves as the Board rep on the NSWA Integrated Watershed Management Plan Steering Committee, is a member of the Communications Working Group and chaired NSWA's Watershed Stewardship Group working group. He served as a member of the Red Deer River Basin Advisory Committee since early 2003 and was an initiating partner of the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance (RDRWA). He currently serves on the RDRWA Board and as chair of the RDRWA State of Watershed Steering Committee. Tracy also has a close link to the Battle River Watershed Advisory Council.

Agriculture and Business/Industry

Tom Daniels representing Sundre Forest Products. Tom is a professional forester who is employed by Sundre Forest Products. He has been heavily involved with various organizations locally and provincially including being on the board of directors of the Central Alberta Economic Partnership (CAEP), Alberta Economic Development Authority (AEDA), Rocky Chamber of Commerce, Alberta Water Council and Red Deer River Watershed Alliance. He has a very keen interest to ensure that water is properly managed for future generations and is quite concerned about the lack of science and information that is available about our current water supplies - especially ground water. He lives near Eckville where he hobby farms and feels that his broad depth of experiences could continue to add value to the direction of the Board of Directors of the RDRWA.

Doug Sawyer representing Alberta Beef Producers Doug Sawyer is a 4th generation Rancher at Pine Lake. He ranches with this wife Carole, two children, and his parents. Doug is the Finance Chair for Alberta Beef Producers, Director for the Red Deer Feeders Assoc, an Alternate Livestock Director for the Alberta Water Council, Director for Growing Alberta, a Director for ASN, and a Director for the RDRWA.

Board of Directors

Craig DeCoursey representing Apache Canada Ltd. Craig DeCoursey Has a B.Sc in Biological Sciences with a major in Botany, and minor in Geography. He has 6 years of environmental consulting experience, while doing so he conducting ecosystem mapping, plant surveys, soil surveys and terrain stability mapping. He also has 7 years oilfield consulting experience supervising construction, cleanup, and reclamation of well sites and access roads, handling oilfield waste and disposal, and conducting environmental assessments. Craig is currently employed by Apache Canada Ltd. Craig has a wife Heather of 9 years, and two children Ethan 4, Alexandra 1. Craig and his family live on an acreage west of Irricana, in the watershed.

Municipal Government

Paul Goranson (Treasurer) representing the City of Red Deer. Paul was raised on a farm southeast of Weyburn, in southern Saskatchewan; that is likely where he came to appreciate and grow an interest in water, as it is a semi arid region that never seemed to receive enough rain. He moved to Alberta in 1989 after the Riders won the Grey Cup, thinking it had peaked for a while. Currently his family lives in Red Deer and includes his wife Monique, children Lauren and Dylan, and golden doodle - Thai. Paul graduated from University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, in 1986 with a BSc in Civil Engineering and received an MBA from Athabasca University in 2002. He work for the City of Red Deer as the Director of Development Services which is responsible for the water and wastewater utilities, as well as a number of other areas. He represent the municipal sector on the Alliance and has been the Treasurer since the formation of the RDRWA. With the new focus on water in Alberta, the need for strong representation is key for the watershed. Paul encourages members to get more involved to help manage this critical resource!

Earl Graham representing Alberta Environment. Earl Graham lives with his wife Joy on a farm near Caroline, AB, an area he has called home since birth. But Earl would assure you the monotony ends there. Earl is the chairman of the RDRWA, and can be found sitting on a myriad of committees: the Sindre Petroleum Operators Group community affairs committee; the Sindre Forest Products Integrated Round Table; the Intra-basin Water Co-ordinating Committee; plus

seven other committees for Clearwater County. Earl has kept busy in the past with the Provincial Integrated Land Management Committee, a Municipal Planning Commission, and a retail business self-owned and operated for 35 years. Earl also volunteers as director of Caroline's District Ag Society, Museum and Chamber of Commerce.

Dug Major (Vice Chair) representing Special Areas.. Dug began his career with the Special Areas Board 25 years ago. He has been an Agricultural Fieldsman for Special Area 4 in Consort, the District Administrator for Special Area 2 in Oyen, and since 1991 the Director of Property Administration and Environmental Resources for the Special Areas Board in Hanna. Dug is a Certified Local Government Administrator, and he holds an undergraduate degree in Agronomy. All of these assignments have required him to develop a close connection with the landscape and the landholders. The Red Deer River provides water to a number of hamlets, villages, towns, agriculture, and industrial operations within the Special Areas. Living in the sub-arid area part of the province the people of Special Areas know the value of water. Dug is a founding member of the RDRWA, and has been involved in numerous cross-ministry and inter-agency initiatives over the past 2 decades.

Provincial, Federal and Academia

David Johnson representing Olds College . Dave Johnson grew up in rural Alberta, helping raise livestock and grow seed potatoes. He taught as a secondary school teacher for several years, then worked in West Africa on development projects, particularly on the issues of community water supply and agriculture. Inspired by impacts observed from water projects, he completed a MSc. in 'Water Science, Policy and Management. Currently, Dave is an instructor for water and applied sciences at Olds College in the department of Agriculture, Land & Environment.

Doug Thrussell representing Alberta Environment Doug Thrussell is a Provincial Environmental Strategies Advisor for the Partnerships & Strategies Section of Alberta Environment. He has worked in the water resource management field for over 20 years. Having lived in Edmonton, Grande Prairie and Stony Plain, Doug has called Red Deer home for 12 years. He received a B.Sc. from the University of Alberta

Board of Directors

and is currently working towards a Masters degree in Environment and Management.

Greg Nelson representing Alberta Environment. Born and raised in Calgary, Alberta, Greg Nelson holds a Bachelor of Arts (Environmental Philosophy) University of Lethbridge, and a Master in Environmental Studies (Environmental Management) York University. After graduating, Greg worked for three years at the Foothills Model Forest in their Communications and Extension Program. In 2006 Greg's work took him to the Smithsonian Institute for two weeks as a participant in the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. He later joined Alberta Environment as an Education and Awareness Specialist. In his current role, Greg is a Planning and Partnerships Coordinator, working primarily in the Battle River basin.

Jamie J. Wuite representing Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. James (Jamie) Wuite is the Head of the Farm-Water Supply Section of the Irrigation and Farm-Water Division at Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development (AARD). Raised in Calgary, he joined the Department after 5 years of environmental consulting in both the Calgary and Fort McMurray areas. Jamie holds a B.Sc. in aquatic ecology from the University of Calgary, M.Sc. in Water and Land Resources from the University of Alberta, and the designation of Professional Biologist.

In addition to his work with the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance, Jamie also works closely with similar groups in the other major basins of Alberta, and the Alberta Water Council. In his current role with AARD, Jamie manages a team that addresses on-farm water supply and water quality issues in the agricultural areas of the province. Jamie is also active in the development of provincial water policy in areas such as water allocation, wetland conservation, and land-use planning.

First Nations

Norine Saddleback (formerly Norine Samson) representing First Nations has a Masters degree in Leadership and Administration from Gonzaga U in Spokane Washington.

She is the local Treaty 6 rep. Norine and her family are very culturally orientated, and wish to get others involved. She speaks fluent Cree. She has been on the Board for one year in June. Her goal is to ensure the RDRWA is building a good relationship with the First Nations. Norine wishes to advance the collective interest and interests of the Board for both parties. She would like more communication with the First Nations People. Norine is happy to announce the safe arrival of her new Baby Boy Jett Bauer. Congratulations!

Individuals

Bill Shaw representing himself. Bill was born and raised in Kimberley, B.C. After graduating from high school in Kimberley, he received an Honours Arts degree at the University of Victoria and a Masters Degree (Geography) from the University of Alberta. Bill has been a community planner in the Central Alberta area for 39 years, the first 35 in the public sector. He was recognized as a Fellow by the Canadian Institute of Planning in 2005. His interest in water and watershed management grew when he was on various committees studying flow management of the Red Deer River and the selection of the site to construct the Dickson Dam. With others, Bill was instrumental in establishing the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance, and has served as a director since its inception in 2005.

Vic Walls representing himself. Vic Walls was born and raised in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, where he obtained a B.Sc. in Civil Engineering. Today, he is the president and general manager of Border Paving Ltd. Over the years, he has volunteered his time to committees in the construction industry and the City of Red Deer, and has worked with the Canadian Executive Service Organization on projects with various Indian Bands in Alberta. In addition to being the Secretary Treasurer of the Alberta Sand and Gravel Association, Vic is also a member of the Alberta Chamber of Resources Mineral Development Committee. Inspired by a keen interest in water-related issues, Vic is also a member of the Alberta Chamber of Resources Water Committee.

The Red Deer River Watershed Alliance Milestones

June 15, 2005

The Red Deer River Watershed Alliance formed

August 25, 2005

The Red Deer River Watershed Alliance incorporated as a Not-for-Profit organization

September 9, 2005

Alberta Environment designated the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance as being the Watershed Planning and Advisory Council (WPAC) for the Red Deer River watershed.

January 2006

Established 4 working committees for the RDRWA: Communication/Education Committee, Stewardship Committee, Finance and Fundraising Committee and Membership Committee

May 1, 2006

Hired an Executive Director to coordinate the activities of the RDRWA

November 2006

The Communication/Education committee set up the RDRWA website, purchased a display to promote the RDRWA at tradeshow and conferences and developed the

“Reach Out” newsletter for quarterly distribution.

February 2007

The Stewardship Committee developed a stewardship kit as a tool for watershed stewardship groups.

March 22, 2007

Started the State of the Watershed project with a workshop at the RDRWA General Meeting.

October 2007

Formed the Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Committee for the State of the Watershed project.

January 2008

Hired Aquality Environmental Consulting to complete the State of the Watershed report for the Red Deer River watershed.

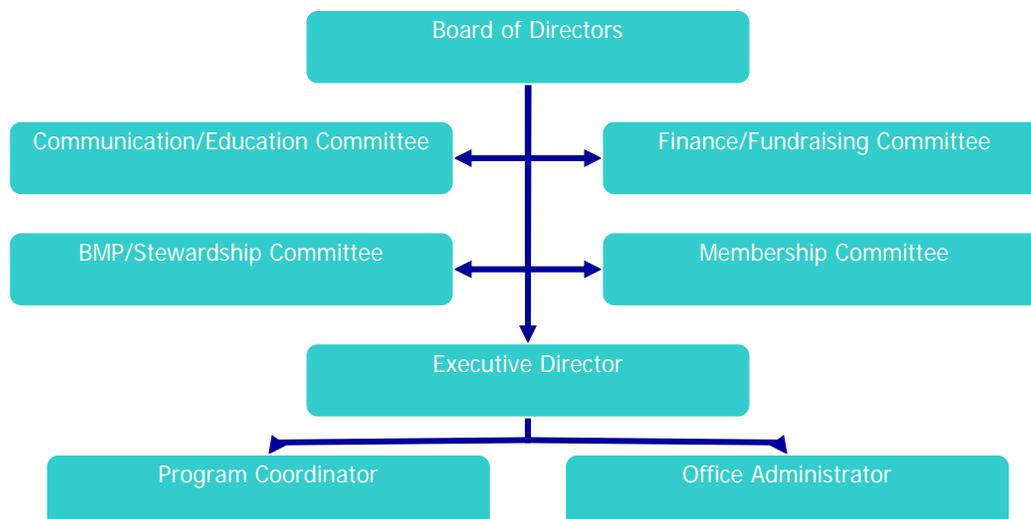
July and October 2008

Consultation with municipalities and stakeholders for the State of the Watershed project.

March 2009

Completed the State of the Watershed Report. (Approved by the Board of Directors on April 3, 2009)

Red Deer River Watershed Alliance (*Organizational Chart*)



Financial Partners

The Red Deer River Watershed Alliance wishes to thank the following contributors for their generous donations:

Government of Alberta



City of Red Deer



Clearwater County	Town of Lacombe	Village of Alix
County of Newell	Town of Oyen	Village of Big Valley
County of Paintearth	Town of Stettler	Village of Consort
County of Stettler	Town of Sunde	Village of Delburne
Kneehill County	Town of Sylvan Lake	Village of Delia
Lacombe County	Town of Three Hills	Village of Elnora
Mountain View County	Town of Trochu	Village of Empress
MD of Acadia		Village of Veteran
Ponoka County	Summer Village of Sunbreaker Cove	
Red Deer County	Summer Village of Birchcliff	
Special Areas Board	Summer Village of Gull Lake	
Town of Bashaw	Summer Village of Half Moon Bay	
Town of Bentley	Summer Village of Jarvis Bay	
Town of Bowden	Summer Village of Norglenwold	
Town of Coronation	Summer Village of Sunbreaker Cove	
Town of Crossfield		
Town of Drumheller	Individual Contributors:	
Town of Eckville	Marjorie & Robert Vetter	
Town of Innisfail	Diane Lindblom	

Communication/Education Committee Report—by Dale Christian, Committee Chair

Committee Chair: Dale Christian

Additional Committee members: Tjarda Barratt (RDRWA member), Kelsey Spicer-Rawe (Cows and Fish), Donna Trottier (RDRWA staff).

During 2008-2009, the Communication/Education Committee met 5 times to track progress and plan further implementation of the Communication Strategy. An Education Plan was developed to provide direction for RDRWA projects and programs.

The Communication/Education Committee supports a variety of public education and engagement activities to collaboratively build capacity, create linkages, and increase awareness, knowledge, understandings and actions in the Red Deer River watershed. The RDRWA education program is tailored to be all inclusive and to increase knowledge on watershed management issues and approaches.

Communication Committee education elements included:

- Environmental Educator's workshop: Learning for Sustainability, From Information to Action. 25 participants attended the workshop
- RDRWA presentations to 5 classrooms
- watershed model construction with 2 classes
- Water testing field trip with 2 classes
- Innisfail grade 5 student agricultural tour presentation on watersheds, riparian areas and bioengineering
- watershed presentation to Red Deer Beavers club
- Cookin' up a wetland , watershed presentation and groundwater demonstration with the Red Deer Junior Forest wardens.
- Developed a Red Deer River watershed poster as part of a watershed education package
- Compiled a RDRWA resource kit



Junior Forest Wardens learn about groundwater

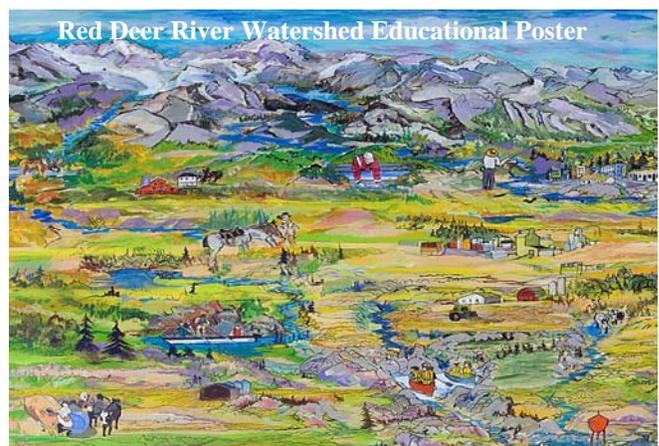


River walk at Dry Island Buffalo Jump Provincial Park

The Committee held 2 tours in the watershed. The Dry Island Buffalo Jump Provincial Park tour offered riparian information, a visit to the paleontology dig site in the park, native plant identification and great views of the river and unique landscapes. The tour at Dickson Dam gave a detailed history of dam, along with operational statistics and a walk around the dam site.

The Communication Committee extended watershed and RDRWA information to members and the public in 2008/9 with 5 speaking engagements, attendance with the RDRWA display at 9 tradeshows and 4 farmer's markets, presentations at 3 County agricultural tours, 4 newsletter publications, 8 electronic newsletters and additions to the www.rdrwa.ca website.

The Committee partnered with local stewardship groups, rural municipalities and Cows and Fish in a digital story telling workshop where 10 digital stories were developed. The Committee also partnered with Olds College in their treatment wetland demonstration and instruction site.



Report from the Stewardship/BMP Committee Chair

Committee Chair: Doug Sawyer

Additional Committee Members: Dale Christian (RDRWA board), Craig DeCoursey (RDRWA board), David Johnson (RDRWA board), Ken Lewis (Red Deer County), Cal Raskach (Recreation Association), Blake Chapman (Stettler County), Marilou Montemayor, Sarah Schumacher (Wheatland County), Patt Churchill, Juanna Thompson (Nature Conservancy of Canada), Debbie Penner (Kneehill County), Donna Trottier (RDRWA staff).

During 2008-2009, the Stewardship/BMP (Beneficial Management Practices) Committee did not meet many times because the Committee had no chairperson. In December 2008, the Committee was revitalized with the appointment of Doug Sawyer to Committee chair and with the enlisting of new members from stakeholder organizations.

Upon Committee revitalization the RDRWA Board of Directors agreed to combine the Stewardship Committee with the BMP committee because of their common goals and objectives. The purpose of the combined committee is:

- To liaise with stakeholder and Stewardship Groups within the Red Deer River Watershed and provide them with support in their watershed management efforts and;
- to compile and promote Beneficial Management Practices that benefit the health of the Red Deer River watershed and that are in line with the RDRWA goals.

For the past 2 summers the RDRWA has hired a summer student to provide support and to work directly with stewardship groups and their support agencies. During the summer of 2008 Jolene Burge filled the role of Summer Stewardship Coordinator. Jolene's activities included participation in the Upper Rosebud River rehabilitation day, presenting at the Annual Rosebud River Watershed Partners Annual Water Awareness Day, water testing with a grade 5 class in Eckville on behalf of the Medicine River Watershed Society, representing stewardship groups at local farmer's markets, attending the Gull Lake Management Soci-



ety's AGM, attending the Alberta Stewardship Network's AGM, developing a stewardship group start-up plan for Newell County, helping the Rocky Riparian Group at the Cows and Fish game during the Ag Theme Park day, providing support at the Pine Lake Conservation Easement information day, presenting to the Innisfail grade 5 classes in the Little Red Deer River watershed, helping build the watershed information kit, and conducting water sampling at 20 sites across the watershed. Jolene also identified potential landowners that the Medicine River Watershed Society could contact to promote their programs.

The Stewardship/BMP committee hosted the annual Watershed Stewardship Group sharing session in January 2009. The meeting provided an opportunity for stewardship groups within the Red Deer River basin, to share their success stories, challenges and progress and to network with other stewards and support agencies. A mini workshop was conducted to gather input from the groups on their priority needs. Feedback from participants suggested stewards would like assistance with:



Brainstorming at the annual stewardship sharing session

- building capacity
- coordinating stewardship group activities
- resourcing technical environmental information
- accessing and sharing information through conferences
- forming partnerships with other stewardship groups who have common issues
- developing watershed management plans to facilitate the decision making process
- promoting shoreline management
- extension of their stewardship messages and success stories

The Stewardship/BMP committee is developing a work plan based on the Committee goals and objectives and on the priorities provided at the Annual Sharing Session. Implementation of the plan has already commenced.

Report from the Finance Committee

Committee Chair—Bill Shaw

We rely heavily on our watershed partners, being the provincial government, municipalities, industry and businesses for financial support. Alberta Environment provided us with \$324,950.00 of core funding for 2008/09 and \$155,000.00 in project funding for the State of the Watershed Report.

In this fiscal year we were also very fortunate to receive \$117,925.00 from 41 municipalities which represents 234,850 residents of the Red Deer River Watershed. We are extremely grateful for this ongoing support from our municipal partners.

The Alliance also made a concerted effort to engage industry and the business sector with a focus on our State of the Watershed project. With their help we were able to raise \$27,749.00. This financial support shows the importance that water and land manage-



Report from the Membership Committee

Committee Chair—Doug Thrussell

Our Alliance is growing by leaps and bounds as communities become more aware of the importance of watershed management and the role that the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance plays in watershed planning. Over the last year, due to the efforts of staff and the Directors, we were able to increase our membership by 17% (Note: 218 members as of Mar 2008; 254 by April 2009)

As the word “Alliance” indicates— we are all about collaborative partnerships with our stakeholders. We believe in being inclusive and we hope that everyone will join as a member to increase the awareness and importance of watershed health of the Red Deer River.



State of the Red Deer River Watershed Report

The State of the Red Deer River Watershed Report has been completed. We are extremely grateful to all of those who donated their time and expertise to make this a very successful project.!

Message from the Chair - State of the Watershed

The Red Deer River Watershed is as diverse and interesting as the people who make it their home. It is the source of abundant wealth for its inhabitants, both in terms of material wealth in the form of natural resources, jobs, homes and industrial development, and in terms of a deeper, more enduring wealth in the form of clean water, healthy ecosystems, incredible biodiversity, abundant food, numerous recreational opportunities and safe, healthy communities. It is a complex, interconnected and interdependent system upon which our very well being depends.

With increasing pressures on its resources our watershed faces numerous challenges in the future, but it also has many opportunities. Many watersheds throughout the world have seen irreversible changes to their health and function. Their options are now limited by past decisions. Fortunately, we're not yet in that position. We still have the opportunity to make sound decisions regarding how we manage our watershed. And sound decisions are informed decisions. This report is our first step together towards becoming more well informed about our watershed, how it works and what needs to be in place to keep it healthy. What we learn will equip us to make tough decisions with the confidence that knowledge brings. With this report we are embarking on the long and complex journey of watershed management, a journey we at the RDRWA look forward to travelling with you, the stewards of the Red Deer River Watershed.

I've often stated that you will not care for what you do not value, and you cannot value what you don't understand. It is our sincere wish that this, the Red Deer River State of the Watershed Report 2009, will help all of us to better understand, and thus, care for our wonderful watershed now and into the future.



Tracy Scott—Chair

Message from the Executive Director

This State of the Watershed Report has provided us with extremely valuable information on the health of the Red Deer River watershed. I extend my sincere thanks to the many people and organizations that volunteered their time, expertise, and resources to make this Report a success. We appreciate the skill of Aquality Environmental Consulting Ltd. in pulling all the information together and providing us with the detailed report.

It is now my hope that provincial and municipal governments, industry, watershed stewardship groups and all residents within the watershed, will grasp this information and use it as a tool to help them make informed decisions regarding land and water management and conservation. We now have the foundation on which to measure success and on which to build an action plan to improve the health of our community, our watershed.



Beverly Anderson, BES, MBA-PM

State of the Watershed Report Supporters

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A special thanks goes to Craig Wright, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, for the tremendous GIS support he provided to this report and to Donna Trottier for providing her ongoing support to all the SOW committees and the project as a whole.

State of the Watershed Financial Supporters

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Other RDRWA Projects 2008/09

Phase 1 of the Beneficial Management Practices for Potential Application to the Red Deer River Watershed—Literature Review has been completed. Phase 2 of the project will apply these BMPs to those specific indicators indentified in the Red Deer River State of the Watershed Report as they apply to four subwatersheds, being: James, Waskasoo, Kneehills, and Alkali.

Accomplishments for 2008/09

In our third year of operation, the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance initiated a number of important and exciting major projects.

ENACT AND EMPOWER

1. The Alliance signed an operating/funding agreement with Alberta Environment for \$479,950 (\$324,950 in Grant Funding & \$155,000 in Project funding)
2. Obtained core funding of \$117,925 through the generosity of 41 municipalities representing approximately 235,850 residents.
3. Held the Annual AGM in Red Deer on June 20, 2008 at which time elections for Board Directors were held.

OPERATE

1. Developed a three year Strategic business plan for 2009/10 to 2011/12.
2. Expanded our contact data base (e.g. members, like organizations, partners, resource people and agencies, school contacts).
3. Established a 2008/09 work program and project priorities.
4. Establish a 2008/09 events program timetable.
5. Combined the Stewardship committee with the BMP committee. Added to all committee memberships and held regular meetings of the Education and Communication Committee, Stewardship/BMP Committee, Fundraising Committee and a Membership Committee.
6. Held regular project team meetings for the State of the Watershed project

ENGAGE AND COMMUNICATE

1. Expanded the RDRWA membership by 17% this year through personal contacts at events and information fairs.
2. Developed and began implementation of an Education Plan and continued implementation of the Communication Strategy.
3. Responded to approximately 48 requests for speaking

engagements/information fairs to highlight RDRWA.

4. Designed / published 4 issues of the RDRWA newsletter called "Reach Out" and 8 issues of the electronic newsletter "reach out".
5. Held two general meetings, one in Red Deer in November to discuss urban watershed management and another Penhold in March to discuss First Nation



watershed management.

6. Held 3 municipal workshops and 6 open houses across the watershed to provide stakeholders with the opportunity to participate in the State of the Watershed project, and watershed management planning.
7. RDRWA website updated regularly.

SHARING KNOWLEDGE

1. Continued building an information data base and made components available via the website.
2. Held workshops to share State of the Watershed results in progress and added the State of the Watershed report to the website.

EDUCATE

1. Developed a new Red Deer River Watershed poster, Watershed Wonders, to educate students and members on watershed information.
2. Hosted an Environmental Education workshop in February.
3. Provided watershed presentations and learning op-

Watershed presentation to Innisfail students



Accomplishments

4. Attended 15 tradeshows/farmer's markets to profile RDRWA to targeted audiences.
5. Held a tour and information session at Dickson Dam and a Red Deer River film night and interpretive river walk at Dry Island Buffalo Jump Park.
6. Distributed watershed fact sheets, the youth brochure, the RDRWA atlas and RDRWA promotional materials.
4. Provided advise on and actively participated in provincial initiatives: Land Use Framework, Alberta Water Council; AWC Governance & Watershed Planning; Integrated Watershed Coordinating Committee
5. Completed the Natural Flow Study and reported to the members at the AGM.

PROMOTE

1. Continued distribution of the RDRWA brochures and promotional items.
2. Developed and distributed additional promotional items including pens, water bottles, tattoos and window decals.

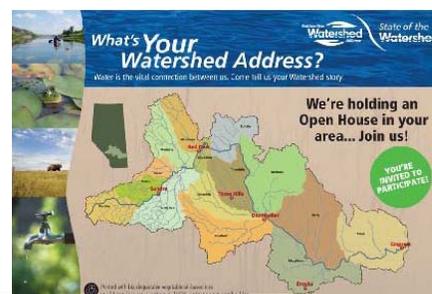
FOSTER STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMS

1. Held our third annual WPAC / Watershed Stewardship Group sharing session on January 29, 2009 in Red Deer.
2. Distributed copies of the Stewardship Kit.
3. Hired a summer stewardship coordinator to provide support to and to work with the stewardship groups and their support agencies in the Red Deer River Watershed.
4. Sponsored the Digital Story Telling workshop to assist stewards in delivering their stewardship success stories.
5. Included stewardship project information in the RDRWA newsletter.
6. Initiated a Beneficial Management Practices research project.

WATERSHED PLANNING

1. Completed the State of the Watershed project including regular meetings of the Steering Committee, Technical Advisory Committee consultation and community stakeholder extension and engagement.
2. Participated in the South Saskatchewan River Basin workshops
3. Participated in the provincial WPAC Summit in October 2008.

State of the Watershed project open houses and municipal consultation workshops



INFLUENCE

1. Participated on the South Saskatchewan Water Supply and Demand Steering Committee.
2. Participated on the Alberta Water Council.
3. Participated on the Intranasal Water Coordinating Committee

Key Projects for 2009/10

A number of key projects are slated for 2008/09. The focus will be on delivering the results from our State of the Watershed (SOW) Report throughout the watershed and initiating the Integrated Watershed Management Planning process. To do this we will need to engage decision makers, land owners, experts and stakeholders interested in the future of the Red Deer River watershed.

Phase 2 of the Beneficial Management Practices for Potential Application to the Red Deer River Watershed will be undertaken to apply the BMPs to four test subwatersheds: James River, Waskasoo, Kneehill, and Alkali. These BMPs will relate to the specific health indicators identified in the SOW Report.

We will also be continuing our efforts to raise the awareness of the Alliance, best management practices, and watershed management through information and educational programs.

A teacher's package on watershed management will be provided to teachers within the watershed. We will continue our efforts to work directly with the Watershed Stewardship Groups within our watershed. To enhance this effort, a summer student will be hired for the summer to work directly with WSG and their programs.

With reduced funding from the Alberta Government, we are having to postpone work on filling in the information identified as Data Gaps as a result of the State of the Watershed Report; the Synoptic Survey of the Red Deer River; and the Watershed Entry Signs. We will be putting in a concerted effort to undertake fundraising to assist the Alliance going forward with some of these necessary projects.