



# RED DEER RIVER WATERSHED ALLIANCE

## ANNUAL REPORT 2006 / 2007

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## Message from the Chair

The Red Deer River Watershed Alliance has had a very productive year, and we look forward to working together with our members and stakeholders in the years to come to promote the importance of water management.

This year we achieved a number of accomplishments. Some of our key initiatives included the development and production of a newsletter; "Reach Out" published quarterly covering information and articles from our watershed groups and schools in each of the "reaches" of our watershed. We created a Stewardship Kit to help Watershed Stewardship Groups set up programs and projects. With the help of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development and Alberta Environment, we have developed a comprehensive Atlas showing layers of watershed information. We are actively involved in the provincial Watershed Planning Framework, the provincial Land Use Framework, the Southern Watersheds / South Saskatchewan River Basin meetings and the Interbasin Water Coordinating Committee for the province.

I would like to thank our Manager, Beverly for her past year's work, and the projects that have come to fruition because of her dedication and knowledge. She has attended many workshops on behalf of the Alliance and has coordinated many of our committees and projects.

The RDRWA would like to thank those organizations for allowing their staff to participate in 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.

We have held two General Meetings this year; one was held in Sundre in October 2006 and most recently we met in Drumheller in March 2007. It is very important for us all to try to attend these meetings to voice any concerns we may have and to remain informed as to what the Alliance is working toward. I hope to see more of you joining us for these General Meetings in the future for some rewarding and worthy projects.

The Red Deer River Watershed Alliance would like to thank our supporters, the Province with all the different ministries and participating municipalities for the funding that has been generously given. We look forward to their continued support and we will be working towards having industry more involved on a project by project basis as well as board participation.

The key project for 2007-08 will be the State of the Watershed Report. We have drafted the Terms of Reference for the State of the Watershed Report which we will be reviewing with stakeholders at the AGM and in other forums.

**Earl Graham**

**Chair**

## 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.

The Alliance gratefully acknowledges the support of the Alberta Government and the many departments that are involved in implementing the Water For Life strategy. Their partnership is critical to the delivery our programs and projects.

Interest in the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance is growing. Membership has increased by 58% over the last year. More and more stakeholders are learning about the Alliance and seeking to become involved to help shape directions and actions to promote a healthy, sustainable watershed.



## RDRWA Board of Directors 2006/2007

<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Chair	Earl Graham	Clearwater County
Vice	Dug Major	Special Areas
Treasurer	Paul Goranson	City of Red Deer
*****		
Director	Richard Bennett	Olds College
Director	Keith Branter	Sundre Forest Products (06/06—02/07)
	Tom Daniels	Sundre Forest Products (03/07—05/07)
Director	Dale Christian	Butte Action Committee
Director	Vince Herron	Alberta Fish & Game Association
Director	Kate Horner	Member-at-Large (06/06—12/06)
Director	Doug Sawyer	Alberta Beef Producers
Director	Tracy Scott	Ducks Unlimited
Director	Bill Shaw	Member-at-Large
Director	Philip Simpson	Samson Cree Nation
Director	Jack Swainson	Alberta Conservation Tillage Society
Director	Douglas Thrussell	Alberta Environment
Director	James Wuite	Alberta Agriculture & Food

## Board of Directors

All RDRWA declared members are welcome to run for a position on the Board of Directors at the RDRWA's Annual General Meeting normally held in June of each year. The RDRWA Board held 11 meetings during the fiscal year.



The Board of Directors shall consist of no more than fifteen (15) Directors and the Past Chairman, as follows:

- (a) a maximum of three (3) members from the Environmental category;
- (b) a maximum of three (3) members from the Agriculture and Business/ Industry category;
- (c) a maximum of three (3) members from the Municipal Government category;
- (d) a maximum three (3) members from the Provincial, Federal and Academia category;
- (e) a maximum of one (1) member from the First Nation category;
- (f) a maximum of two (2) members from the Individual category; and the Past Chairman, who shall be an ex-officio member.

## RDRWA Membership

The future successes of the Alliance will multiply significantly as participation in the Alliance grows. More involved people will promote a better understanding of the watershed, including the variety of needs for land and water use. Cooperative efforts will lead to consensus building and more meaningful watershed management, resulting in greater care for the watershed. Greater care will result in enhanced environmental quality and sustainable economic opportunities, thus serving to enhance the quality of life within the watershed.

This year the RDRWA has increased its membership by 58%. We now have 174 members. These members represent municipalities, industry, First Nations, provincial government, the environmental sector, tourism sector, stewardship groups, interested individuals, and other stakeholders.

### WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED

Everyone, including:

- Residents / general public
- Agricultural groups and producers
- First Nations
- Local Stewardship Groups
- Tourism Operators & Tourists
- Forestry companies
- Oil, gas & petrochemical companies
- Other industries & businesses
- Utility companies
- Educational institutions
- Municipalities—rural & urban
- Provincial & Federal government
- Anyone who works, resides or plays in the watershed

## **Vision Statement**

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

## **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.

## **Organization Goals**

RDRWA goals are:

1. To provide an inclusive forum for the exchange of information and collaborative dialogue for watershed protection, conservation and improvement
2. To raise awareness on issues impacting the watershed
3. To promote the use of beneficial management practices and the integrated management of land and water resources
4. To foster the preservation and enhancement of the quality of water supplies and water systems in the watershed
5. To champion the wise management of the quantity of water supplies in the watershed.



## **What is the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance**

An alliance of interested stakeholders, working together, is seen as an effective way to promote the long-term health of the Red Deer River watershed. A healthy watershed leads to healthy residents.

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 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.

## **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.

## 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.

## **FINANCIAL PARTNERS**

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

Alberta Environment	Town of Drumheller
City of Red Deer	Town of Eckville
Clearwater County	Town of Lacombe
County of Newell No.4	Town of Stettler
County of Paintearth No.18	Town of Three Hills
County of Stettler	Town of Trochu
Kneehill County	Village of Alix
Lacombe County	Village of Consort
Mountain View County	Village of Delburne
Municipal District of Acadia No.34	Village of Elnora
Ponoka County	Village of Empress
Red Deer County	Village of Veteran
Special Areas Board	Summer Village of Birchcliff
Starland County	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

## Accomplishments for 2006/07

Being the first full year of operation of the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance, the focus was primarily on becoming established as the official Water Planning and Advisory Council for the Red Deer River Watershed.

### ENACT AND EMPOWER

1. The Alliance signed an operating/funding agreement with Alberta Environment for \$120,000.00
2. Obtained core funding through the generosity of 35 municipalities representing approximately 206,500 residents.
3. Hired a manager on May 1, 2006



### OPERATE

1. Opened the RDRWA office at 4918 51 Street, Red Deer, Alberta on August 1st and secured the required furniture and equipment
2. Opened a bank account and established financial procedures.
3. Secured the necessary communication needs: phone (403) 340-7379 and fax numbers (403-356-9189), email address (info@rdrwa.ca), and stationary with new contact information
4. Establish draft operational procedures
5. Hired an administrative assistant
6. Established contact data base (e.g. members, like organizations, partners, resource people and agencies, school contacts)
7. Established a 2006/07 work program and project priorities.
8. Establish a 2006/07 events program timetable.
9. Established an Education and Communication Committee, Stewardship Committee, Fundraising Committee and a Membership Committee and their associated Terms of Reference.
10. Held a Grand Opening of the new Alliance office on September 22, 2006

## ENGAGE AND COMMUNICATE

1. Expanded the RDRWA membership by 58% through personal contacts at events and information fairs
2. Initiated a Communication Strategy
3. Responded to 10 requests for speaking engagements/information fairs to highlight the RDRWA
4. Designed and developed a RDRWA newsletter called "Reach Out" and published 3 issues (September, December, and March)
5. Held two general meetings, one in Sundre in October to discuss the inter-relation of forestry and water; and another General Meeting in Drumheller in March to initiate the Red Deer River State of the Watershed initiative.
6. Established and designed a comprehensive website: [www.rdrwa.ca](http://www.rdrwa.ca)
7. Held our first Annual General Meeting in Innisfail on June 9, 2006

## SHARING KNOWLEDGE

1. Commenced building an information and data base and made components available via the website.

## EDUCATE

1. Developed a new Alliance brochure and prepared information pamphlets on aspects of watershed management
2. Developed 3 stand-alone display panels highlighting key messages and established speaking presentations for use in schools, community meetings, group meetings, business meetings, etc.



## FOSTER STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMS

1. Obtained watershed and sub-watershed base maps
2. Held our first WPAC / Watershed Stewardship Group meeting on October 25, 2006 in Red Deer
3. Compiled information on watershed stewardship and published copies of the Stewardship Kit

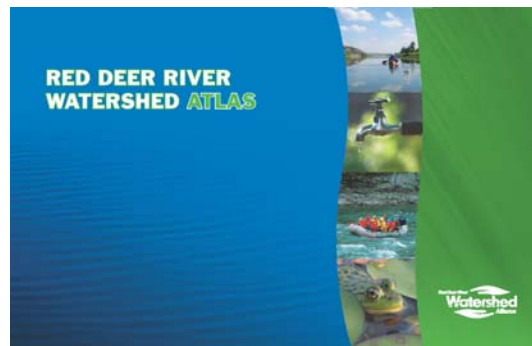


## WATERSHED PLANNING

1. Participated in the South Saskatchewan River Basin workshops
2. Participated in the provincial WPAC Summits (Oct'06 and Feb'07)
3. Provided advise on and actively participated in provincial initiatives: Watershed Planning Framework and the Provincial Land Use Strategy
4. Produced the RDRWA Watershed Atlas – in partnership with MUG and Alberta Beef Producers

## Presentations / Displays:

- West Country Ag Tour
- Prentice Community Advisory Board
- Red Deer River Municipal Users Group
- Greenspaces – Red Deer
- Stewardship Conference – Cochrane
- Friends of the Little Red Deer River – Cottonwood
- Olds College Career Day
- Cows and Creeks: Ranching Opportunities - Caroline
- Lindsay Thurber Gala for Global Warming
- Speaker at CRWA Conference – Red Deer



## **Key Projects for the Upcoming Year 2007/08**

A number of key projects are slated for 2007/08. The focus will be on our State of the Watershed (SOW) Report. This initiative is requirement of all Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils along with the subsequent Integrated Watershed Management Plan. The SOW will be a comprehensive review of the Red Deer River's watershed health. To do this we will need to engage experts and stakeholders interested in the Red Deer River watershed.

We will also be leading a group of multi-stakeholders in the review of the Red Deer River Riparian assessment, developing a Water Conservation Guide in partnership with the Red Deer River Municipal User Group, and continuing our efforts to raise the awareness of the Alliance, best management practices, and watershed management through information and educational programs. We will continue our efforts to work directly with the Watershed Stewardship Groups within our watershed. To help use with these growing commitments we will be hiring a full-time Program Coordinator.

Pending provincial funding we will be undertaking a study on the natural flow of the Red Deer River. This information will assist us with evaluating and monitoring our instream flow needs and will contribute to our database as part of our State of the Watershed report.



