

# CELEBRATING 10 *Years*



Photo Credits: (left-right) Anne Stevick, Ruth Christie, Rochelle Coffey

**OLDMAN  
WATERSHED  
COUNCIL**

# Happy 10th Anniversary OWC!

We've come a long way and it's time to celebrate!

OWC has had a fantastic year of learning and growth. As a young organization celebrating our 10th anniversary we are proud of our accomplishments over the last decade and are very excited about the future!

I am also very proud of our staff, Board of Directors and Team members for recognizing that it is time to evaluate our projects and rejuvenate them now that we have the IWMP to guide our work. There are so many passionate people involved in OWC and by channeling our passion strategically we will have a much greater impact.

Much has changed since I became involved in OWC as a volunteer in 2007. Internally we have made big strides in fund development and organizational efficiency and externally we have a new NDP government to work with and technology that has changed communications and outreach forever. The future looks very promising and I know we are up to the challenge!

The strength of OWC truly is the diversity of people we work with so I thank you for your time, energy and commitment to OWC!  
It has made a difference.

Shannon Frank, Executive Director



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# OWC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Doug Kaupp, Chair  
Municipalities - City of Lethbridge



Andrew Hurly, Vice-Chair  
Academia



Anne Stevick, Treasurer  
Member-at-Large



Keith Francis  
Irrigation Sector



Heather Sinton  
Provincial Government



Rod Bennett  
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Dr. Claudia Sheedy  
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Brian Brewin  
Municipalities - MD's & Counties



Richard Burke  
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Shirley Pickering (resigned)  
Member-at-Large



LeRon Torrie  
Agricultural Producers



Missing: Paulette Fox  
First Nations

# OWC STAFF

Shannon Frank  
Executive Director



Connie Simmons  
Planning Manager



Bev Bellamy  
Administrative Assistant



Leta Pezderic  
Program Coordinator



Anna Garleff  
Communications Specialist



Andrea Vaxvick (resigned)  
Development Coordinator



# FINANCIAL DONATIONS



## THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS/ SPONSORS/ PARTNERS

The Oldman Watershed Council thanks you for caring and making a difference in your watershed.

You and your contributions in dollars, passion, time, skills and energy are what make the council and its projects impactful. We are truly a great community and team.

We look forward to the year ahead, filled with many more accomplishments working together for the health of our watershed!

**TOGETHER  
WE MAKE  
A  
DIFFERENCE!**

**Total Dollar  
Value of  
In-Kind  
Donations:  
  
\$247,770**

# IN-KIND DONATIONS

Donors	\$ Value
Action Surface Rights Association	920
Agriculture And Agri-Food Canada	2,900
Alberta Agriculture and Forestry	105,489
Alberta Conservation Association	366
Alberta Environment and Parks	36,667
Alberta Health Services	2,555
Alberta Lake Management Society	50
Amos Art Projects	50
Aquality Environmental Consulting Ltd.	50
ATCO Power	4,555
Bluegrass Landscaping Ltd.	520
City of Lethbridge	5,748
Environmental Law Centre	100
Farming Smarter	900
Headwaters Action Team	36,171
Katt Panic Makeup Artistry	200
Lethbridge College	3,401
Lethbridge County	300
Makeup And Hair Artistry by Lauren Pitt	300
Mayors & Reeves Association of Southwest Alberta	3,348
Members At Large	19,247
Nature Conservancy of Canada	1,424
Pawsibilities	50
Piikani Nation	630
RBC	50
Southern Alberta Group for the Environment	14,074
Taber Irrigation District	2,404
Trout Unlimited Canada, Oldman River Chapter	856
University of Lethbridge	4,443
Vibrant Life Eco Solution	50



# HEADWATERS ACTION PLAN

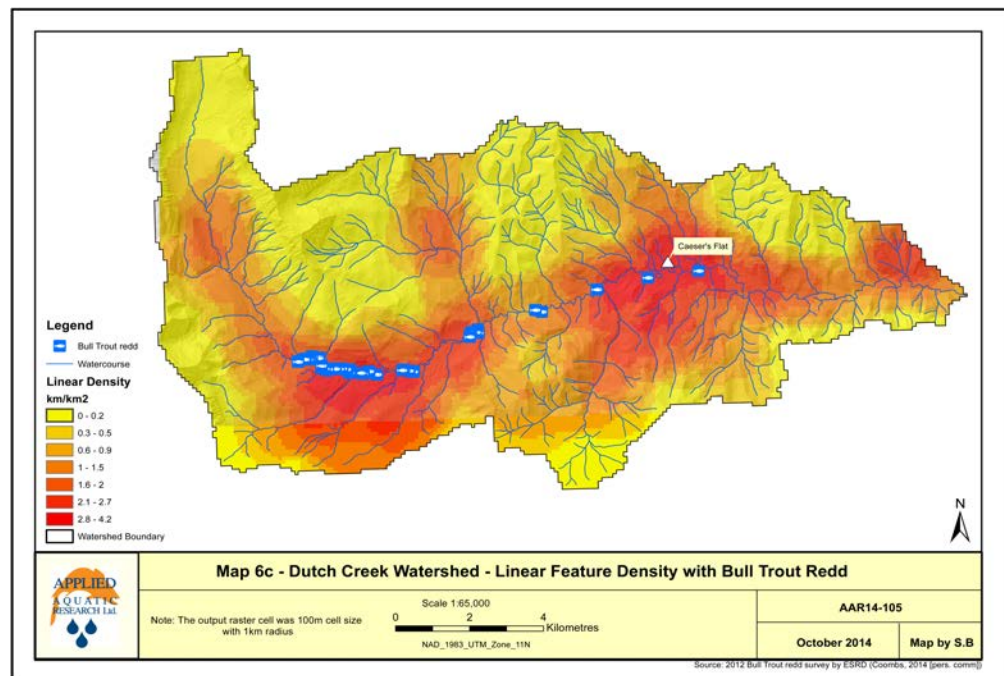
This year was focused on putting the plan into action and so a multi-stakeholder Headwaters Action Team (HAT) was formed to lead the effort to implement the top 4 priority actions selected from the Headwaters Action Plan. OWC's role is to coordinate and facilitate the HAT and assist with projects where possible.

The Headwaters Action Team Charter was developed and approved by all HAT members in July 2014, and a work plan was developed to address each priority action over the next two years.

## Priority Action 1 - Complete a Classification of Linear Features project.

The Headwaters Action Team, scientists and Government of Alberta planners pooled information and expertise to develop a linear feature field classification protocol and field test it in the Dutch Creek sub-watershed. The results provide a solid field assessment of the state, use and density of linear features in the Dutch Creek sub-watershed and which features are the most problematic to watershed health. This information is important for consideration in the Livingstone area Linear Footprint Management Plan/ Recreation Management Plan under development by the Government of Alberta and the results were shared with the planners leading that initiative. Also, the field tested protocol, final report and data are a valuable template that can be refined for use in similar watersheds.

*Linear features are all roads, trails, seismic lines, pipelines, etc. that fragment the landscape and in high densities can cause water quality and fish and wildlife populations to decline.*





**Priority Action 2 - Complete a fine scale cumulative effects assessment of fish populations and habitat streams.**

This is a long term initiative being led by the Government of Alberta. Partner organizations on the HAT, such as the Alberta Conservation Association, Trout Unlimited Canada and Cows and Fish are providing information and assistance where possible. Projects are ongoing that will provide fish population data and fish habitat/riparian restoration in key spawning streams in 2015-16.



*Westslope Cutthroat Trout - native trout species at risk  
Photo credit: Jonny Armstrong*

**Priority Action 3 - Assist Environment and Parks (EP) with education and awareness program (Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!) for stakeholders and the public on how to prevent aquatic invasive species from entering Alberta.**

To help EP raise awareness about the threat of 3 aquatic invasive species, zebra mussels, quagga mussels and Eurasian water milfoil, OWC held an education session lake-side. A television news video resulted from the event which was shared extensively through social media. Written materials were also distributed throughout the summer at events and 2 volunteers monitored Beauvais Lake and Lee Lake for mussels, in coordination with the Government of Alberta's monitoring program. Awareness efforts will continue each summer.



*Headwaters Action Team - awareness and education on the threat of AIS.*



**Priority Action 4 - Explore options for recreation user fees to fund enforcement, education and stewardship projects.**

This priority action is being led by the Environmental Law Centre who has compiled information about how other jurisdictions in western North America manage recreation on public land and what Alberta can learn from these experiences. Next steps are being determined.

*Angling upper Oldman River - Maycroft Gap*

# #OLDMANGOEST

Good news! The OWC is producing a film that will become a signature communication piece for southwest Alberta. The core message is: "We are all downstream".

It will not be a typical educational film; rather, it will create a space for people to have an experience and draw their own conclusions through presentation of the story. The goal of the film is to communicate clearly where the water comes from, where it goes and what happens in between. This is important in a watershed with great stakeholder diversity.

About 15 minutes in length, the film will be presented at: exhibitions and trade shows; schools; Watershed Planning & Advisory Council summits; municipal, county and provincial government meetings; in conservation and environmental arenas; and more. It will be made openly available on our website.

Significantly, there will be a number of spin-off videos created that will focus on OWC's core messaging and will be broadcast on our YouTube channel.

The Film Project Launch in November 2014 was at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery. It was extremely well attended by both the public and the media. The event underscored the relationships with 5 Founding Partners (two of which were forged via Twitter channel): Real Estate Centre, University of Calgary Faculty of Law, Canadian Institute of Resource Law, Alberta Irrigation Project Association and South Central Welding.

The OWC now has a TV clip (courtesy of Global), a podcast (courtesy of CKXU) and numerous print articles that can be re-circulated and used to promote the OWC in general terms.

In addition, \$5,000 was contributed by the City of Lethbridge – our first Collaborative Partner. Additional Collaborative Partners are sought and we will welcome them aboard as the project unfolds.

This project is also the recipient of generous donations from many individuals, Chawkers Foundation, the Community Foundation of Lethbridge and Southwestern Alberta, St. Mary River Irrigation District, Taber Irrigation District and Bar None Ranch (Glen & Kelly Hall).



# STOHOLLYWOOD

*Filming at the  
City of Lethbridge  
Wastewater  
Treatment Plant*



The OWC has brokered Collaborative arrangements with Spray Lakes Sawmills, Western Ranchlands and the Livingstone Landowners Group to use their existing footage to reinforce our relationships with those groups and also save money on the project.

We have produced an initial video using material from ALCES (Dr. Brad Stelfox), which introduces the watershed at a detailed level. Please visit our YouTube channel.

Filming has now taken place in several locations: Timber Ridge, Setaspell Outpost, Taber area, Headwaters region, Piikani reserve - and in-studio, capturing interviews from more than 30 "All-Stars" – watershed experts and long-time supporters of the

OWC. This footage will be cut into the upcoming videos.

The spin-off videos will focus on the 8 OWC goals:

1. Strengthen Commitment of Residents
2. Habitat
3. Water Quality
4. Water Quantity
5. Headwaters
6. Groundwater
7. Invasives
8. Emerging Contaminants – as well as Volunteer Engagement and Fundraising, and, of course, the OWC and the Watershed itself.

The videos will be geared for 3 distinct demographics - children, public and scientists.

Filming is scheduled throughout the summer until the end of July in various locations throughout the watershed, where unique aspects of watershed management and health will be captured with the help of local experts as tour guides (OWC collaborators) in each area.





# Celebrating 2005 -

## Watershed Management Planning

Engaging people to set targets for watershed health and identify community actions and make recommendations to decision makers that will achieve them.

- Goal 1 - Communications Action Plan
- Goal 3 - Headwaters Action Plan



A snapshot  
OWC Plan  
from  
past 10

## Youth Education

Creating opportunities for youth to understand how they can make a difference now and remain engaged adults.

- Caring for our Watersheds with Agrium
- Deep Roots educational videoconferencing with Prairie Conservation Forum
- Yellow Fish Road with City of Lethbridge



## Changing Practices

Providing practical support and inspiration to encourage change for a healthier watershed.

- Prairie Urban Garden
- Watershed Legacy Program
- Home and Garden Show
- Headwaters Action Team
- Shoreline Cleanup
- Storm Water Quality





# Big 10 Years - 2015

Snapshot of  
Projects  
in the  
10 years



## Research and Monitoring

Understanding our watershed so we can provide expert advice to those making decisions in its management.

- State of the Watershed Report
- Storm Water Quality Monitoring
- Groundwater Studies
- Linear Features Classification
- Headwaters Indicators Report

## Organization Efficiency

Increasing our capacity to do more effective work and have a greater impact.

- New website/Social media outreach
- Guest blogging community
- Strategic work planning/Staff development training
- Streamlined governance practices
- Photo library
- Fundraising

## Showcasing Excellence

Celebrating individual and collective accomplishments in good watershed practice and inspiring others to do the same.

- Film Project
- Holding the Reins
- Watershed Tours

# COMMUNICATIONS &

## OUR COMMUNITY OUTREACH BY THE NUMBERS

Over the past year, OWC has greatly expanded its communication and outreach capacity through the hiring of a Communications Specialist, Anna Garleff. We have increased the number of communications tools we use and thus greatly increased and diversified our audience across the watershed, province and nationally. This audience is hungry for information and is greatly interested in OWC's work.

We have gained a whole new audience for our work and are framing our messages in a way that is more accessible to people. We are becoming an established hub of information for the community, municipal governments, Government of Alberta and many others – sharing our work in a way that is more accessible, shareable and useable to a variety of people in all walks of life in a way that captures people's attention.

The expansion of our network and community outreach through increased communications capacity is paying off - and we need to keep the momentum going. We are contributing more than ever to well-informed decision making around watershed issues and supporting local leaders who are implementing solutions. We continue to build new partnerships with organizations that are capable of providing dependable information and expertise and who believe in the value of educating our communities.

50 partner organizations and  
75 individual volunteers directly  
involved in our work

854 people subscribe to  
the OWC E-Newsletter

1,073 followers on Twitter  
after 1 year of operation;  
3,142 messages sent

446 likes on Facebook after  
one year of operation

14,191 page views  
on our blog after  
one year of operation

500 people attend 4-6  
community events each year

15-20 newspaper articles  
and TV interviews featuring  
the OWC



# & OUTREACH

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## **Begin at the beginning – what’s the baseline of existing outreach?**

Before launching any new initiatives, we began by designing a survey which uses both qualitative and quantitative measures to take to events, tradeshow and so on, which engages participants in 10 questions about watershed management and health. Over 300 surveys have been completed so far.

Next, a statistical tracking tool was created to monitor our efficacy as our Communications and Outreach programs grew – and for later on, to gauge a campaign’s efficacy.

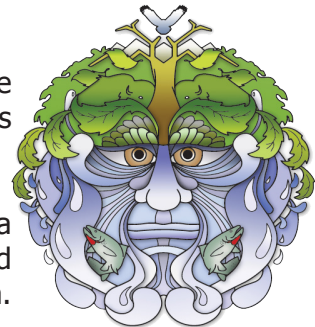
## **We’ve grown our following – in the thousands.**

Our suite of social media tools now includes: Google Chrome, Google Drive, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, Flickr, Google+, Blogger and LinkedIn. Our new demographic outreach is throughout Canada and beyond, in the thousands, weekly. We can also now offer online merchandising via Facebook and our Blog attracts guest authors from throughout the watershed.

## **The Oldman has a new face – and a new website!**

A new, complete, branding element was created that will also form the core of a powerful, new interactive display that is now at the beginning of its creation. You can read more about him on the backcover of this Annual Report!

We have designed a new, interactive website, which will also accommodate a comprehensive historical timeline, a new suite of maps and complete photo and video library as we build it up over time. Please visit: [www.oldmanwatershed.ca](http://www.oldmanwatershed.ca).



## **Communication is collaboration.**

During this past year, we have forged connections in person with many related organizations. Several are now contributing to the OWC as bloggers, volunteers or sponsors. The emphasis has been on involvement and collaboration, not just a mere understanding of one another’s parallel activities.

We have also written a second iteration of our ‘Social Media Binder’ which is a training manual for staff and collaborating organizations.

We offered a full day of volunteer training for about 30 participants and a second training session to a select group of OWC volunteers on public outreach and communication.

## **Volunteers and Internships.**

In January 2015, we hired, mentored and trained a Communications Intern via the University of Lethbridge’s New Media program – Jayme Cabrera Lopez. Kelsey Cartwright was on board as part of Agrium’s Caring For Our Watersheds program. About 850 volunteer hours have gone into Communications this fiscal year.

# INVESTIGATION OF HIGH NITRATE CONCENTRAT

- High nitrate concentrations have been found in drinking water wells near Fort Macleod.
- The Canadian drinking water guideline for nitrate has been set at 10 mg/L for people and 100 mg/L for cattle. Some studies indicate more than 20 mg/L nitrate is potentially harmful for cattle over the long term.
- OWC contracted Joan Rodvang of LandWise Inc. to complete the study from February 2013 to Fall 2014 to determine the source of the nitrate and develop recommendations to improve drinking water quality for local residents.
- Data collection and analysis indicated that some of the nitrate is natural, generally at deeper depths because of the geology of the region, and some is human caused contamination, generally at shallower depths.
- Nitrate can be removed from drinking water using reverse osmosis or ion exchange resins, but this can be challenging and expensive so the most important recommendation is prevention.
- Much of the area is highly vulnerable to contamination from surface sources and so agricultural best management practices are critical, such as careful storage, timing and application of fertilizers.
- Results were presented to local residents in March 2015 at the Ardenville Hall.
- More info at [www.oldmanbasin.org](http://www.oldmanbasin.org)

Funding provided by:



*While drilling in a piezometer we hit a highly productive groundwater zone.*



**Photos by  
Joan Rodva**



*Pinched out gravel shows how close to the surface the gravel zones are.*



# VARIATIONS IN GROUNDWATER NEAR FORT MACLEOD

A big thank you to the following individuals and organizations who assisted with the study:

The landowners in the area who allowed us to test their wells.

Robert Rippin, Alberta Health Services

Richard Stein

Laura Good, University of Calgary

Cathy Ryan, University of Calgary

Samantha Managh, Honu Consulting

Chilako Drilling

Cheryl Fujikawa, Southern Alberta Group for the Environment

Barry Olson, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development

Brian Hills, Alberta Environment and Forestry

Jeff Gutsell, Alberta Environment and Forestry

Brian Meller, Lethbridge College

Claudia Sheedy, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada

John Diiwu, Alberta Environment and Forestry

Paulette Fox

Mike Iwanyshyn, Natural Resources Conservation Board

Geoff Nash, Alberta Environment and Forestry

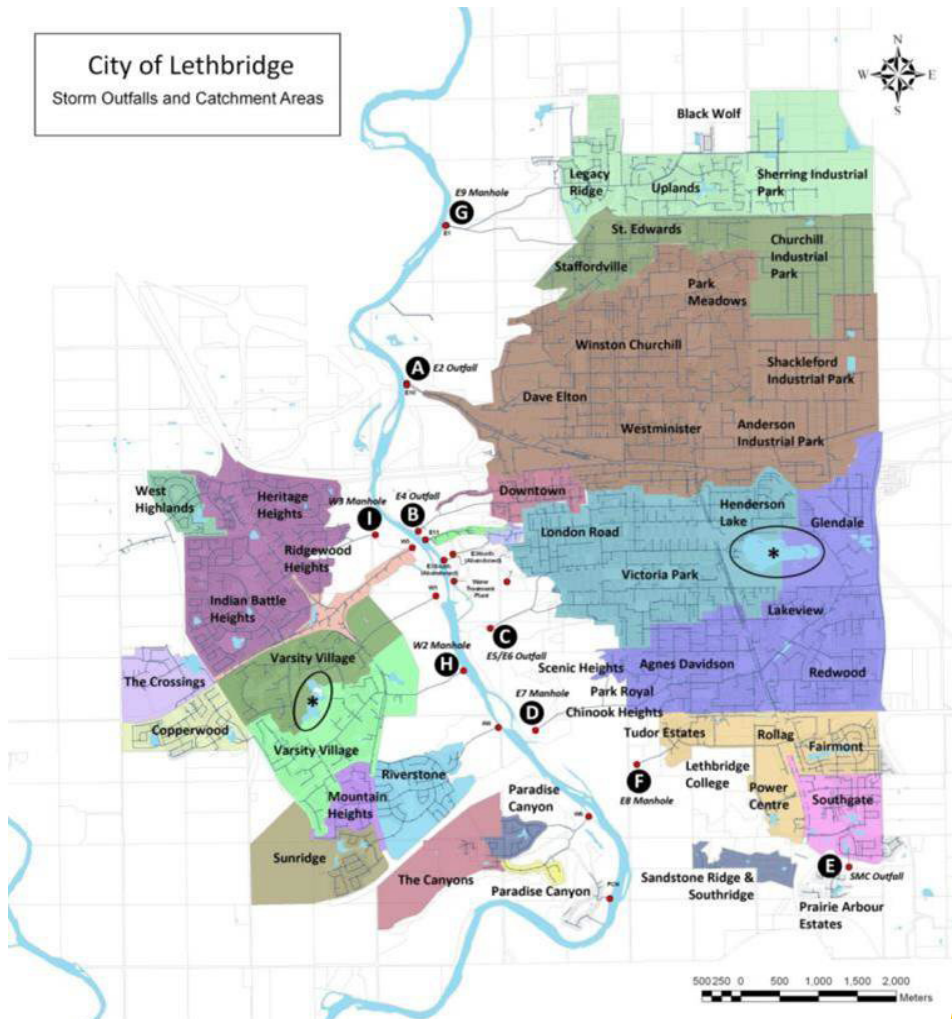
MD Willow Creek

Ron McNeil, LandWise Inc.

Ron Schmidt and Grant Buyers, Dollman's Waterwell Drilling

A big thank you to Joan Rodvang, Landwise Inc., who completed the study and went above and beyond the contract to produce a very thorough report.

# STORM WATER PROJECTS



Runoff from every neighbourhood in Lethbridge ends up in 1 of 9 storm water outfalls along the river.

Storm water monitoring and education has been a focus for OWC since our inception. In addition to the 2 main projects summarized below we also give out hundreds of informational brochures every year, provide educational signage to groups installing demonstration Prairie Urban Gardens and raise awareness through social media.

## Storm Water Monitoring

This 3-year monitoring project involves sampling and testing water from 9 Lethbridge storm water outfalls for bacteria, nutrients and pesticides from April to September each year. Sampling was completed in 2014 and a 3 year summary report will be available in summer 2015.

Results vary by neighbourhood but clearly show that bacteria, nutrients and pesticides are running off our lawns and ending up in the Oldman River untreated, which negatively impacts water quality.

The results provide important information for storm water management in the City of Lethbridge and will be used in Fall 2015 to evaluate and guide OWC's storm water education programs.

# PRAIRIE URBAN GARDEN TOUR

Thank you to our Project Partners for their generous contributions:



CITY OF  
*Lethbridge*



Canada



TD Friends of the  
Environment  
Foundation



JoJo Garden Design & Consulting  
and OWC Members at Large

70 people attended our 5th Prairie Urban Garden Tour in June 2014 to learn the 7 principles of xeriscaping and to be inspired to create their very own prairie urban garden at home. 11 garden owners showcased their xeriscape to attendees and explained how they use drought tolerant plants, rain barrels, compost, mulch and sight planning to conserve water and limit their use of chemicals.

Feedback from tour participants was very positive with the majority promising to put all they learned into practice in their own yards.





# WATERSHED LEGACY PROGRAM

The Watershed Legacy Program supports agricultural producers who are implementing stewardship projects on their land. Most successful projects involve restoring riparian areas through fencing, weed control, off stream waterers or hardened stream crossings. Through a granting process OWC provides a maximum of 50% of the cash costs of a project to successful applicants and also assistance with sharing their story with the broader community.

In 2014-15 OWC supported 2 projects:

1. Start-up costs and riparian health assessments for a large project that involves using sheep to control invasive species on 200+ acres of land along the Oldman River.
2. Partial catering costs for the 9th Blueweed Blitz along Pincher Creek that involves about 100 volunteers to hand pick blueweed for one day in July.

Thank you to these donors for their generous support:  
Bev & Mark Bellamy, Leta & Tyler Pezderic





# CELEBRATING COLLABORATION TOUR



In September 2014 twenty people from twelve different organizations gathered at the Timber Ridge Conservation Site jointly owned by Alberta Conservation Association and Glen and Kelly Hall to celebrate all that collaboration can achieve.

The Timber Ridge Conservation Site is a model of how much can be accomplished when people work together. Timber Ridge boasts 800 acres of pristine native grassland providing a home to bears, cougars and many other plants and animals, including 150 cow calf pairs that help make the place financially sustainable. The day was filmed and participants were interviewed to create short videos and provide footage for OWC's Film Project.

The Site truly is a model of collaboration: OWC provided funding through the Watershed Legacy Program for rig mats to be installed at stream crossings to lessen hoof damage and improve riparian zones. ACA monitors wildlife with trail cameras while students from Lethbridge College are studying limber pine survival. Artists and scientists from all over Alberta visit regularly for various research and art projects. It is the Hall's dream to one day have school buses of kids coming for tours to learn where their food and water comes from.

A big thank you to everyone that made the tour possible:

Alberta Conservation Association, Timber Ridge, Alberta Agriculture & Forestry, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Meyers Norris Penney



Timber Ridge in the Porcupine Hills boasts lush grasslands and forests that support wildlife, cattle and clean water for 4 creeks.  
Photo Credit: Morton Molyneux

# COMMUNITY PART

The OWC is a proud partner in many projects and organizations. As a community based non-profit it is important that we are involved in collaborative efforts and are a voice for the watershed and the people who live here.



Southern Alberta Land Trust Society

Stewardship is our Nature

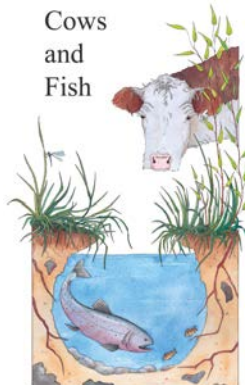
## Southern Foothills Study

OWC participated on the Project Team and provided funding for the phase 3 report of the Southern Foothills Study, A Future Worth Protecting. The study used ALCES® (A Landscape Cumulative Effects Simulator) to model what the landscape west of highway 2 will look like into 2060 under various management scenarios.

The Southern Foothills Study was centered around the question of “How do we respect and protect the essential qualities and existing valuable assets of this landscape while still allowing for an evolution of land uses”. It examined the future trajectory of existing land uses and found that key environmental indicators showed a slow but steady loss of environmental health. The projected future decline is in addition to already significant negative changes.

Read more here ([http://www.salts-landtrust.org/sfs/sfs\\_reporting.html](http://www.salts-landtrust.org/sfs/sfs_reporting.html)).

Thank you to Alberta Ecotrust Foundation for funding OWC’s portion of the project and to Southern Alberta Land Trust Society for spearheading the project!



## Restoring Stream Banks

OWC staff lent a hand to plant willows and cottonwoods along Allison and Smith Creeks in Crowsnest Pass and we also filmed the event to showcase collaborative work with Cows and Fish and tell the story of native fish, water quality, and riparian health through our Film Project. The footage will be used to create videos and our signature film. A big thank you to Cows and Fish for spearheading this project!



# PARTNERSHIPS



*Volunteers having a good time  
and lovin' the watershed!*

## Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup

In partnership with the Helen Schuler Nature Centre, OWC promoted this event to attract volunteers and found a sponsor to provide refreshments for participants. Twenty bags of garbage were collected from a stretch of the Oldman River in Lethbridge 1.5km long; that's nearly 1 bag of garbage for every 75m of shore! The cleanup crew found a discarded river raft with its rope entangled around a bird, likely causing its premature death. A big thank you to the 59 participants who cleaned up our shore!



Thank you to the Real Canadian Superstore for providing refreshments.



## Stewards in Motion

OWC provided funding and assistance with organizing a Stewards in Motion workshop in Claresholm in partnership with the Land Stewardship Centre, Environmental Law Centre and Miistakis Institute. The workshop provided practical information and resources to 30 stewards who are tackling watershed issues so that they have the support they need to succeed. By understanding the context of the issue and who the players are and collaborating with them, these stewards are now better equipped to achieve their goal.



## Alberta Water Council

The AWC is a provincial non-profit that provides policy recommendations to the Government of Alberta and tracks progress on the Water for Life Strategy. The Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils of Alberta have a seat on the AWC's Board of Directors and the OWC is now serving as alternate on this Board. OWC is also involved in AWC's Source Water Protection Team who are developing recommendations to better integrate water and land management processes related to source water protection.



## Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent

OWC participates on the Roundtable's Leadership Team to provide strategic direction and oversight for this collaborative network that involves groups in Montana, British Columbia and Alberta. The Roundtable is a network to facilitate collective learning and collaboration across borders and holds an annual conference and provides funding for projects that enhance culture, community and conservation in the Crown. OWC has been fortunate to receive Adaptive Management Initiative Grants from the Roundtable to support the implementation of our Headwaters Action Plan.



## Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Extremes in the Americas

The Oldman watershed is one of the study areas and OWC is a partner organization providing advice and a link to the community so that researchers could interview local people and share the results with those who need it. So far 3 workshops and 1 webinar have been held and factsheets are underway.



## Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program

The OWC participates on the WRRP Advisory Team to provide advice and recommendations to the Government of Alberta to guide the development and refinement of WRRP and its alignment with the Agriculture Watershed Enhancement program under Growing Forward 2. By participating we can help ensure that the outcomes of these two programs are aligned and best serve the needs of those actively involved in watershed restoration and management.



## Environment Lethbridge

OWC participates on EL's Executive Team to guide this new organization as it gets established. As a very similar organization to OWC, we are in a good position to provide advice and have been spearheading the development of EL's 3 year strategic plan and corresponding budget. As EL gets established we expect to have a close working relationship to achieve similar goals.



## **Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce Natural Resources and Environment Committee**

OWC participates on this committee to network with local businesses and assist with raising awareness amongst businesses of steps they can take to lower their environmental impact, all while benefiting their business. The Committee will be showcasing local success stories and also provides information and advice to guide Chamber policies.

## **Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils of Alberta**

The 11 WPACs of Alberta meet regularly to learn from each other and to maintain a strong

### **Alberta WPACs**



provincial voice with the Government of Alberta. We are also currently working together on 3 projects: establishing an online WPAC library of reference documents, comparing staff benefit plans to see if we can save on costs and exploring sustainable funding models for WPAC operations.

## **South Saskatchewan River Basin Intra-basin Water Coordination Committee**

The OWC participates on this committee to provide advice to the Government of Alberta on managing water during periods of water shortage and how to best meet the Master Agreement on Apportionment, which shares water between the Prairie Provinces.



## **Crown Managers Partnership (CMP) and Crown of the Continent Conservation Initiative**

### **CMP Landscape Patterns Workshop II - April 29-30, 2014.**



The OWC participated in workshops 1 & 2 to determine priority areas for further collaborative work within the Crown of the Continent. Within Alberta, the Oldman headwaters region and Highway 3 were two of the 4 priority areas selected for collaborative work with focused working groups.

### **Crown Managers Partnership, Crown of the Continent Conservation Initiative and The Wilderness Society - November 18-20, 2014.**

Through collaborative efforts with the Headwaters Action Team, the OWC is participating within a Crown-wide climate adaptation focus on 'Piloting Adaptation Strategies to Reduce Vulnerability and Increase Resilience for Native Salmonids in the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem'.

# CARING FOR OUR WATERSHEDS

In Fall 2014, the OWC partnered with the University of Lethbridge Applied Studies program to find a student to help educate youth about the Oldman watershed and to encourage involvement in Agrium's Caring for Our Watersheds youth contest. Environmental Science major Kelsey Cartwright was chosen for the Environmental Educator position.

An interactive presentation was developed to teach students about the Oldman Watershed and water use. Youth were also introduced to the Caring for Our Watersheds youth contest, which asks students in grades 7-12 to submit a written proposal with a realistic answer to the question: "What can you do to improve your watershed?"

We were able to reach 120 youth in classrooms from Lundbreck to Vauxhall, youth winter program participants at the Helen Schuler Nature Centre, local Girl Guides and also teachers at the Southwestern Alberta Teacher's Convention.

The contest finals were held at Ralph Klein Park in late April where three ideas from the Oldman Watershed made it into the top 10 of 148 entries. Nicholas Locken and Bradyen Brausse came in 4th with their proposal titled "Microbeads", Riley Tirkaylo placed 8th with "Lights Out and Join the Dark Side" and Shane Hudson and Brady Waisman placed 10th with "Composting Waste Management." These ideas address issues of plastics in our water supply, light pollution and greenhouse gas emissions by landfills.

Agrium awarded each finalist a cash prize, a matching reward for their school and money to implement their ideas.





# LOOKING AHEAD

## – A Snapshot of April 2015 - March 2016

- OWC will continue to improve its efficiency and effectiveness by creating a performance evaluation system for all projects, continuing to diversify our revenue sources, streamlining our financial and in-kind tracking systems and moving to cloud-based systems.
- Over the past year OWC has built several new communications tools to better reach our community and we will continue to build up these tools and train staff and volunteers how to use them successfully.
- Engaging motorized recreationalists is OWC's focus for summer 2015 to understand their needs and ask them what solutions will meet their needs while also maintaining headwaters health. OWC will be seeking advice from recreationalists through interviews and focus groups.
- Storm water quality has always been a priority for OWC and there are several initiatives occurring that need to be strategically integrated to determine a focus for the next 3-5 years. Past projects will be evaluated and a program plan will be created, beginning in Fall 2015 (pending funding).
- Implementing the Headwaters Action Plan will continue with focus on 4 key collaborative activities: encouraging the Government of Alberta to implement a user fee system for recreation on public land, monitoring lakes for aquatic mussels, improving habitat for native trout and participating in the Government of Alberta's recreation management plan processes.
- The Watershed Legacy Program is highly successful and will be expanded to support all stewards who are improving the watershed. The impact of the WLP will be multiplied by creating a practical system to support the many in-kind and financial requests that OWC receives (pending funding).
- Preparation will begin to develop a Water Quality Action Plan with the community. There are many groups already working on water quality issues and many plans already in place so OWC needs to determine its focus. Emerging contaminants, such as pharmaceuticals and pesticides, will be included in the action plan (pending funding).

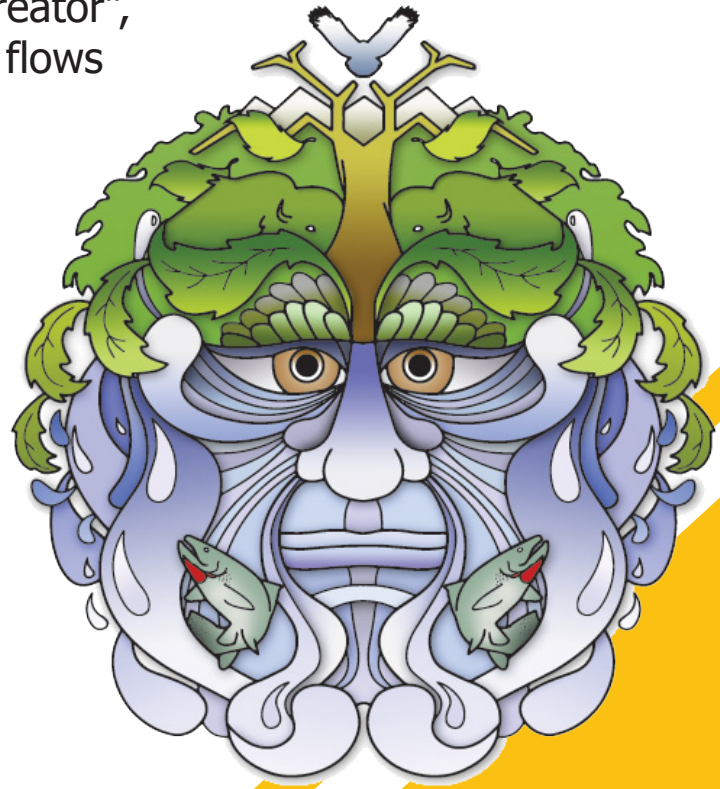
Bearing the Niitsitapi name of “The Creator”, the Oldman River in southern Alberta flows from its Rocky Mountain headwaters, through the Plains, to the confluence at the South Saskatchewan River.

The Oldman’s face includes three iconic indicator species:

Golden Eagle,  
Prairie Bison and  
Westslope Cutthroat Trout.

The watershed is home to farming, ranching, industry, recreation and great cultural diversity.

The Oldman Watershed Council provides a science-based forum for all voices and values to be heard. Together we are improving watershed management and health for the enjoyment of many generations to come.



### Oldman Watershed Council

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