



North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance

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August 22, 2016

Mayor Rodney Shaigec
Mayor, Parkland County
53109A Hwy 779
Parkland County, AB T7Z 1R1



Dear Mayor Shaigec,

I am pleased to send you this update on the planning activities of the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) and to request your financial support for 2017.

In 2005 the NSWA was appointed by Alberta Environment as the ***Watershed Planning and Advisory Council*** for the North Saskatchewan River (NSR) basin under *Water for Life: Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability*. There are 12 subwatersheds in this basin.

The NSWA has made good progress under this mandate and in 2012 we released an *Integrated Watershed Management Plan* (IWMP) for the North Saskatchewan River basin. This major undertaking provides advice and direction to protect the long-term supply and quality of water resources for future generations. IWMP implementation is now underway through strategic watershed partnerships with municipalities and stewardship groups. Through these partnerships the NSWA works towards its goals:

- To educate and increase the public's understanding of watershed protection and its importance by developing and providing programs on the protection and improvement of water quality, water quantity, and the health of the North Saskatchewan Watershed
- To conduct research relating to the protection of the North Saskatchewan Watershed and to disseminate the results of such research

In 2012, the NSWA also supported the preparation of the *Vermilion River Watershed Management Plan*. This was the first sub-basin planning project in the North Saskatchewan River basin. We worked closely with the rural and urban municipalities in the Vermilion sub-basin to identify local water management issues and to create a locally-developed and supported watershed plan. There are several wetland and riparian area restoration projects now underway for the Vermilion River sub-basin. The new *Vermilion River Watershed Alliance (VRWA)* was incorporated as a non-profit Society in 2015. NSWA provides technical and administrative support to the VRWA.

The *Sturgeon River Watershed Alliance (SWRA)*, a partnership of three rural and seven urban municipalities in that sub-basin, continues work towards the development of a watershed

management plan. The *Headwaters Alliance* is a similar collaboration of five rural and three urban municipalities in the upper portions of the North Saskatchewan River watershed. Both *Alliances* will assess local watershed conditions and issues, and develop harmonized land policies to support long-term sustainability of regional water resources. The *Blackmud/Whitemud Water Management Team*, an inter-municipal initiative to develop long-term storm water management plans is being facilitated by NSWA. The NSWA is also working closely with lake stewardship groups and several municipalities to advance lake watershed planning and management for a number of key recreational lakes west of Edmonton.

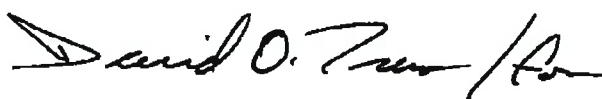
The NSWA has developed significant watershed planning capacity and knowledge, and is positioned to support collaboration on local watershed planning. Our goal is to identify and prioritize other subwatersheds in the North Saskatchewan River basin for future planning initiatives, and we are pleased to work with municipalities to help shape those priorities. Rural and urban municipal governments are strongly represented on the NSWA Board of Directors and on the sub-watershed *Alliances*.

Eleven rural and sixteen urban municipalities provided direct financial support to NSWA in 2016. The City of Edmonton and EPCOR provide strong support for NSWA operations. In-kind contributions from municipalities are also acknowledged. The Government of Alberta provides an annual operating grant to NSWA. Our 2015-16 Financial Statement is posted on our website at www.nswa.ab.ca/content/nswa-society.

The NSWA greatly appreciates your past financial support, and we are requesting your continued support for the forthcoming calendar year. We would appreciate positive consideration by your Council for a \$0.50 per capita contribution to NSWA for 2017. We have taken the liberty of enclosing an invoice.

NSWA would be pleased to discuss any watershed issues of concern to your municipality and to provide a briefing if requested by your Council or Administration. Please feel free to contact Mr. David Trew, Executive Director (Phone: 587-525-6823 or email: david.trew@nswa.ab.ca) in this regard. We have enclosed a copy of NSWA's 2015-16 Annual Report for further information. Other information can also be found on our website <https://www.nswa.ab.ca/content/nswa-society>.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David O. Trew / for".

Reeve Pat Alexander, President
North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance Society

Cc: Chief Administrative Officer, Mr. Michael Heck, Parkland County



Invoice

Invoice To
Parkland County 53109A Hwy 779 Parkland County, AB T7Z 1R1

GST/HST No. 890443419



Photo Credit - Images Alberta—2015

ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016

your watershed, your voice



North
Saskatchewan
Watershed
Alliance

NSWA ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

The North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) is a multi-stakeholder watershed protection and improvement partnership formed in 1997 and incorporated as a non-profit society in 2000. The NSWA provides a forum to recognize and address issues affecting the North Saskatchewan River (NSR) watershed in Alberta. It also initiates and supports activities that impact the watershed positively. The NSWA became a Registered Charity in March 2016.

NSWA membership includes individual citizen members and organizational members. Organizational membership categories are: federal, provincial, and municipal governments; industry; utilities; agricultural producer groups; environmental and conservation groups; recreational, cultural and tourism groups; educational and research institutions; First Nations and Métis.

In 2005, the NSWA was appointed by the Government of Alberta as the Watershed Planning and Advisory Council (WPAC) for the North Saskatchewan River basin in Alberta. As a partner in *Water for Life: Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability* (2003), the NSWA was given a mandate by the government to report on the State of the Watershed (completed in 2005) and to prepare an Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP – completed in 2012). The IWMP provides watershed management advice to address issues raised by stakeholders and to achieve the three goals of the *Water for Life* Strategy: safe, secure drinking water; healthy aquatic ecosystems; and reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy.

NSWA'S VISION

"People working together for a healthy and functioning North Saskatchewan River watershed – today and tomorrow."

NSWA'S MISSION

- To educate and increase the public's understanding of watershed protection and its importance by developing and providing programs on the protection and improvement of water quality, water quantity, and the health of the North Saskatchewan Watershed
- To conduct research relating to the protection of the North Saskatchewan Watershed and to disseminate the results of such research



*Frog Lake - D. Aldana - Images
Alberta Camera Club*

NSWA MEMBERSHIP

The NSWA collaborates with as many stakeholder groups as possible and encourages all sectors, user groups and interested citizens from across the watershed to become involved in watershed management. During 2015-16 the NSWA continued to engage individuals, municipal jurisdictions and other stakeholders on NSWA projects and activities (see complete listing in this report). Board members are elected at the Annual General Meeting and commit to two years of service from the date of the AGM. The following individuals served on the NSWA Board during 2015-16. We acknowledge and appreciate their dedicated efforts to support watershed planning and management in Alberta.

NSWA ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

NSWA Board of Directors 2015-2016

Position	Name	Sector Representation
President	Pat Alexander	Municipal
Vice-President	Ken Crutchfield	NGO
Treasurer	Dr. Stephen Craik	Utility
Secretary	Candace Vanin	Government of Canada
Director	David Curran	City of Edmonton
Director	Bill Fox	Agriculture
Director	Alison Ronson	NGO
Director	Jamie Bruha	Alberta Government
Director	Tony Lemay	Alberta Government
Director	John Thompson	Member at Large
Director	Jason Wilkins	Petroleum
Director	Alan Corbett	Municipal
Director	Marc Gressler	Municipal
Director	Dr. Laurie Danielson	Industry
Director	Glen Isaac	Utility
Director	Bob Winship	Forestry
Appointed Director	Dwight Dach (one year)	Municipal
Appointed Director	John McNab (one year)	Municipal
Invited Advisors	Tyler Fetch	Métis Nation
Invited Advisors	Josh Alexis	First Nation

NSWA STAFF

The NSWA employed up to ten full or part time staff during 2015-16: David Trew, P. Biol. (Executive Director); Billie Milholland, B.A. (Communications Manager); Gordon Thompson, P. Eng. (Technical Program Coordinator); Melissa Logan, P. Biol., Marilou Montemayor, M.Sc., and Mary Ellen Shain, M.Sc. (Watershed Planning and Management Coordinators); Elisa Brose, B.Sc. B.Ed. (Office Coordinator); Meghann Matthews, BBA, (Finance Coordinator); Mara Erickson, M.Sc. (Vermilion Stewardship Coordinator) and Jennifer Regier, B.Sc. (Student Intern).

NSWA ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

An audited financial statement for the fiscal year April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016 was prepared for NSWA by Lim and Associates, Certified General Accountants, Edmonton.

The NSWA began the fiscal year on April 1, 2015 with \$456,282 in total assets, and completed the fiscal year on March 31, 2016 with an estimated \$1,583,067 in total assets (includes significant project grant funds). Full details are available in the audited financial statement, which has been posted to www.nswa.ab.ca.

PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS

We thank Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) for a generous operating grant in 2015-16 under *Water for Life: Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability*. We thank the City of Edmonton for continuing to provide significant in-kind support to NSWA operations during 2015-2016. This support included office space, furniture, equipment, supplies and computer support for our operations. After Jan. 31, 2016 the NSWA moved to a new independent office, and the City of Edmonton is providing a generous contribution towards the operating costs.

We also thank EPCOR, the North East Capital Industrial Association (NCIA), the Wabamun Watershed Management Council (WWMC), Baptiste and Island Lake Stewardship Society (BAILS), the Lake Isle and Lac Ste. Anne Water Quality Society (LILSA), the Bow River Basin Council and the Lesser Slave Watershed Council for direct cash contributions in 2015-16.

Other significant in-kind contributions were provided by: members of the NSWA Board of Directors; the Vermilion River Watershed Management Project (VRWMP) Implementation Team; EPCOR; the Sturgeon River Watershed Alliance Steering and Technical Advisory Committees; the Headwaters Alliance Steering and Technical Committees; the "Living in the Shed" Editorial Committee; Wabamun Watershed Management Council; and the Mayatan Lake Management Association (MLMA). The NSWA gratefully acknowledges the contributions of these individuals, and their respective organizations, in terms of their time, expertise and travel costs. Total in-kind support to NSWA in 2015-16 has been estimated at \$637,349.

We also thank 30 Rural and Urban Municipalities for *per capita* contributions to NSWA operations during 2014- 2015. These municipalities included: Brazeau, Clearwater, Lac Ste Anne, Lamont, Leduc, Minburn, Parkland, St Paul, Two Hills, and Vermilion River Counties; the Towns of Bruderheim, Devon, Elk Point, Onoway, Rocky Mountain House, St. Paul, Tofield, Vegreville and Vermilion; the Cities of Edmonton, Fort Saskatchewan, and St. Albert; the Village of Myrnam and the Summer Villages of Sandy Beach, Silver Sands, Southview, Spring Lake, Sunset Point and Yellowstone. NSWA also appreciates the continued commitment from our volunteers to support our work.

*Canola Fields— Bruce T. Smith -
Images Alberta Camera Club*



NSWA ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

STRATEGIC and OPERATIONAL PLANNING

The NSWA Board of Directors and staff held a facilitated Strategic Planning Workshop in February 2015 to review the Vision, Mission, Goals and Strategic Directions of the organization. This led to the development of the 2015-16 Operating Plan and budget. The four major goal statements for the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance for the period 2015-16 were defined as follows:

- ***Provide leadership in watershed planning at all scales***
- ***Watershed knowledge supports management actions in the basin***
- ***Collaborative planning and management initiatives are in place for the basin***
- ***NSWA is functional and sustainable***

The NSWA's primary initiative for 2015-16 was the ongoing implementation of the *Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) for the North Saskatchewan River*, released in 2012. Work continued to develop the long-term collaboration required to achieve the goals of the IWMP and to implement the recommended actions. The NSWA has continued its role as a bridging organization, bringing organizations together to discuss and develop implementation initiatives.

The NSWA specifically promoted the development of Municipal Watershed Partnerships during 2015-16 to address key watershed issues. The partnerships include the Vermilion River Watershed Alliance, the Sturgeon River Watershed Alliance and the Headwaters Alliance. All municipal partnerships are supported by elected officials and staff, and provide the local leadership necessary to guide IWMP implementation. The NSWA is providing technical and administrative secretariat support to each municipal partnership.



Wabamun Lake—Bill Trout—Images Alberta

NSWA ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

OPERATING PLAN OVERVIEW

The following strategic initiatives and projects were delivered in 2015-16:

- The Sturgeon River Watershed Alliance (SWRA) developed advocacy and technical work plans in 2015-16, and successfully obtained grants from the Environmental Damages Fund (EC) and the Alberta Community Partnership Program (GOA).
- A report describing existing water supply and demand data for Sturgeon River Basin was completed.
- A report describing updated water balances for Lake Isle and Lac Ste Anne was completed.
- An Information Bulletin describing Water Supply and Demand Information Bulletin for the Sturgeon River was completed.
- The Vermilion River Watershed Alliance (VRWA) continued to implement the Vermilion River Watershed Management Plan. The NSWA obtained several grants in 2015 to support VRWA projects. Riparian and wetland restoration projects were prioritized, and project launches were held in the fall of 2015. Review of landowner applications to the program were completed.
- Year end reports to federal funding partners (Environmental Damages Fund, EcoAction, National Wetland Conservation Fund) and provincial funding partners (Watershed Restoration and Resiliency Program) were completed.
- The VRWA was incorporated as a Non-Profit Society in 2015.
- A report describing an aerial riparian health assessment of the Vermilion River and its major tributaries was completed by Golder Associates.
- A report describing the ecological condition of the Vermilion River was completed by CPP Environmental.
- The Headwaters Alliance Steering and Technical Committees met regularly and developed a prioritized work plan.
- A report summarizing stream nutrient chemistry data for Alberta was completed in 2015-16, as a knowledge contribution to support lake and watershed management.
- A State of Watershed Report was completed for the Jackfish Lake Management Association.
- Public information workshops were conducted with the Mayatan Lake Management Association to identify key issues to be considered in the development of a watershed plan. A draft watershed management plan for Mayatan Lake was prepared in 2015-16
- The final draft of the *Living in the Shed* project was completed, and the book was published in December 2015. The book has been distributed to MLAs, libraries, members and the general public.
- Two Educational Forums were planned and hosted by NSWA : the Vermilion River Watershed Forum (August 2015), and the Sturgeon River Watershed Forum (September 2015).
- NSWA participated on a Steering Committee with Parkland County, AEP, Stantec and the WWMC to develop the Wabamun Lake Subwatershed Land Use Planning Project.
- NSWA participated in the Implementation Advisory Committee for the Water Management Framework for the Industrial Heartland and Capital Region.
- A municipal project team for the development of a Watershed Drainage Study for Whitemud and Blackmud Creeks was initiated by NSWA.
- The reach of Twitter and Facebook accounts was expanded and a Pinterest page was updated.
- InStream newsletters were completed for members and new content was posted regularly on the NSWA website.
- NSWA collaborated regularly with other *Water for Life* partnerships (WPACs and AWC).
- Staff and Directors participated in AEP initiatives to develop the North Saskatchewan Regional Plan.

NSWA ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

GOAL 1: PROVIDE LEADERSHIP IN WATERSHED PLANNING AT ALL SCALES

INTEGRATED WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN (IWMP)

In 2012 the NSWA finalized and published the *Integrated Watershed Management Plan for the North Saskatchewan River in Alberta* (IWMP). Distribution of the final IWMP report was completed. Since 2012 the objective has been to implement the plan by gaining broad support and having it guide the protection, management and restoration of the watershed. The plan serves as the guiding document for sub-watershed planning initiatives within the basin. Many potential lines of work are embedded in the IWMP recommendations and are being delivered through Municipal Watershed Partnerships and Watershed Stewardship Groups, Educational Forums and other outreach tools, technical assessments and restoration projects.

STURGEON RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Sturgeon River Watershed Alliance (SRWA), which consists of 11 member municipalities and 2 NGOs, has continued to assess policy and technical information needs. A facilitated joint meeting of the Steering Committee and Technical Committee was held in January to help focus the Vision and work plan of the SRWA, and to emphasize the importance of incorporating watershed planning into daily municipal work.

Grant opportunities were explored for project work, and in 2015 the Alliance was successful with an application to the Environmental Damages Fund. These grant funds were used to begin a comprehensive hydrologic overview of the Sturgeon River watershed. Two phases of work were initiated: a review of all available hydrologic information and water licencing data in the basin; and the preparation of updated water budgets for the headwater lakes (Lac Ste Anne and Lake Isle). The work highlighted the need for more comprehensive water supply management within the watershed.

In January 2016, the SRWA applied to the Alberta Community Partnership grant program, and was successful in that application. The grant (\$300,000 for 2016-19) will be managed by the Summer Village of Silver Sands, and will be used to complete four major technical studies. These studies will inform the development of a watershed management plan over the next three years.



Sturgeon River—Karen Albert—Images Alberta

NSWA ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

VERMILION RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN (VRWMP)

The Vermilion River Watershed Alliance (VRWA) was incorporated as a non-profit society in July 2015. With representatives from five rural and three urban municipalities, provincial and federal governments, conservation organizations, academia, and a drainage district, the mission of the VRWA is to implement the 2012 *Vermilion River Watershed Management Plan* within a collaborative framework.

In August 2015, the VRWA, in partnership with the NSWA, held an Educational Forum at Lakeland College in Vermilion to raise awareness and increase knowledge of the Vermilion River Watershed. This Forum also served as an introduction to the upcoming Vermilion River Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Project (VRWREP). The VRWREP—funded through the Government of Alberta’s Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program as well as Environment Canada’s EcoAction and National Wetland Conservation Fund grants—will be delivered in partnership with local landowners, who were invited to propose individual restoration and enhancement projects on their lands. In November, the VRWA officially kicked off the VRWREP with 5 launch events over three weeks in Marwayne, Bruce, Vegreville, Two Hills and Mannville. As a result of those events, local advertisements, and project promotion by VRWA partners, we received 25 different VRWREP proposals from 16 applicants across the watershed. Selection of projects is currently underway and project commencement is slated for June 2016.

This year also saw the completion of two contracted technical studies on the Vermilion River (Golder Associates’ *Aerial Assessment of Riparian Areas of the Vermilion River and its Major Tributaries* and CPP Environmental’s *Aquatic Ecosystem Assessment*), and a *Communications Plan* developed by the Cows and Fish (Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society). Our communications strategy will continue in 2016-17 with the development of a VRWA website as well as a VRWREP video through Habit HQ.



Northern Lights near Innisfree—Bill Trout, - Images Alberta
Title: Ribbon in the Sky

NSWA ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

HEADWATERS ALLIANCE WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN

Membership of the Steering Committee (SC) includes the counties of Parkland, Wetaskiwin, Leduc, Clearwater, and Brazeau Counties and the Towns of Rocky Mountain House, Drayton Valley, and Devon, and the Village of Thorsby. Additional technical experts have been asked to participate on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The Steering Committee will continue to meet regularly in 2016. The committees have received numerous technical and policy topic briefings, including land use practices, water supply and water demand, water monitoring, EPCOR's *Source Water Protection Plan*, the new Wetland Policy, OHV management, BMP effectiveness, tributary monitoring, and the Land Use Framework.

In November 2015, the SC approved a project plan submitted by the TAC. The NSWA is working to implement this project plan. The NSWA has applied for a provincial WRRP grant to initiate the riparian assessment portion of the project plan. Other grants will be sought. The Headwaters Alliance has asked the NSWA to organize a tour of the Headwaters Region, to inform MLAs and MPs of headwaters issues. This tour is scheduled for August 9 & 10, based out of Rocky Mountain House.

INDUSTRIAL HEARTLAND AND CAPITAL REGION WATER MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

NSWA participates in AEP's Implementation Advisory Committee for this Framework. This Committee's scope includes cumulative effects management using a maximum allowable load approach, monitoring and evaluating achievement of framework objectives, communicating actions, improving knowledge and considering emerging issues. Current initiatives include improving characterization of municipal and industrial wastewater effluent discharges, updating information of NSR water quality and aquatic ecosystem health, and the maintenance and management of water quality modeling capability.

MAYATAN LAKE WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN

NSWA continues to work with AEP staff, the Mayatan Lake Management Association (MLMA) and Parkland County to utilize technical information and public consultation to support the development of watershed management information. NSWA is preparing the draft plan as advice to all parties.

The NSWA and MLMA held a third public information session on June 20, 2015 to discuss draft recommendations for the Watershed Management Plan. A draft Watershed Management Plan for Mayatan Lake will be finalized in spring 2016 and will be distributed to all parties for final review.

BLACKMUD/WHITEMUD CREEKS SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT STUDY

NSWA is the facilitator for an inter-municipal Group examining storm water management issues in the Blackmud and Whitemud Creek watersheds. The municipalities involved are Leduc County, Strathcona County, Town of Beaumont, and the Cities of Edmonton and Leduc. During 2015-16 Terms of Reference for the Group were prepared, with the intention of doing a Surface Water Management Study and subsequent Municipal Drainage Plan (s). An application was made for an Alberta Community Partnership (ACP) Grant to undertake the Watershed Drainage Study, with Leduc County as the managing partner. A grant of \$350,000 was approved with the remaining costs to be shared proportionately amongst the five municipalities. A detailed Terms of Reference for this Study has been prepared and the Group is preparing to issue a Request for Qualifications to potential consultants. A Request for Proposals will be issued to a short list of consultants. The Study is expected to require about one year to complete.

NSWA ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

EDUCATIONAL FORUMS

Educational forums are an important part of the NSWA's communication activities to support the IWMP and to encourage exchange of watershed management knowledge. Two forums were held in 2015-16.

The Vermilion River Watershed Educational Forum-Wetland and Riparian Areas Restoration and Conservation - was held on August 12, 2015 at Lakeland College in Vermilion. The forum was well attended with over 80 participants, including two MLAs, representatives from the agricultural sector, NGOs, AEP, municipal government and others. There were a variety of presentations on wetland function and restoration.

On September 17, 2015, the Sturgeon River Watershed Forum was held at the Enjoy Center in St. Albert. There were 78 participants who heard presentations on a variety of topics including invasive species, long term trends in prairie climate and water supply, and agricultural issues in the watershed.

Participants at the Vermilion River Watershed Forum -August 2015



*Sturgeon River Watershed Forum
September 2015*

NSWA ANNUAL REPORT 2015 – 2016

PARKLAND COUNTY LAKES MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE

In 2014, Parkland County approached NSWA to work with several partners to develop “lake land use” management plans for key lakes in their jurisdiction. A regional Municipal Collaboration Grant was approved by Municipal Affairs to support the project. Lake Wabamun is the first lake to undergo this planning process, and the County’s hope is that they will learn enough to apply common planning knowledge and procedures to other lakes. NSWA is participating on the Steering Committee, along with AEP, and the Wabamun Watershed Management Council. The NSWA provided a Riparian Health Assessment of Wabamun Lake, as well as a lake eutrophication modelling report. Stantec was retained by Parkland County to prepare a Phase 1 and Phase II Report. The Phase II final draft is near completion.

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

NSWA staff members continue to use social media in 2015-16 to raise awareness about the organization’s activities. The NSWA Twitter feed was started in May 2010, and by March 31, 2016 the organization had accumulated 1860 followers including environmental organizations, news media, non-profit groups, individuals and other WPACs. An NSWA Facebook page was started in 2011 and as of March 31, 2016 has 598 followers. The NSWA newsletter *InStream* is published regularly to keep NSWA members informed about issues, events, and activities. The NSWA website (www.nswa.ab.ca) was renewed and is continually updated to increase content and promote events.

PUBLICATION PROJECT:

Living in the SHED was published in December 2015. This publication is aimed at the general reader, designed to promote awareness and understanding of the importance of managing the NSR watershed. It includes an overview of historical human impacts at the subwatershed scale as well as insights on geographic, geologic, hydrologic, historical, cultural, land use, fisheries and other natural attributes. A total of 7,500 books were printed. The book is sold from the NSWA office, online, at regional retail stores, and by groups & organizations in the NSR watershed. The book sells for \$25.00.



The 12 subwatershed maps are on the NSWA website. Members of Images Alberta Camera Club in Edmonton photographed the entire watershed throughout a 12 month cycle and have generously donated their photos to NSWA.

To support our mandate to educate and increase the public’s awareness of watershed information, one free copy of *Living in the SHED* is available to each small library and each school in the NSR watershed, as well as to each rural and urban municipality and First Nations communities.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2: FACILITATE WATERSHED RESEARCH TO ADDRESS ISSUES AND INFORM MANAGEMENT ACTIONS WITHIN THE BASIN

JACKFISH LAKE STATE OF THE WATERSHED REPORT

The Jackfish Lake Management Association (JLMA) approached NSWA to complete a State of the Watershed Report in 2015. Background information and GIS mapping data for the project were gathered. A new water balance was prepared, and a recreational use survey and the riparian zone health assessment were completed. This report consolidates environmental information on the Jackfish Lake watershed in an effort to support future planning and management discussions. The report will be provided as advice to the JLMA, AEP and Parkland County. The Jackfish Lake State of the Watershed report will be completed in spring 2016.

LAKE ISLE AND LAC STE ANNE

NSWA staff attended a meeting with the local Summer Villages in late 2014 to discuss the preparation of State of Watershed reports for both lakes. The association has asked for NSWA's assistance on these projects. The Alberta Conservation Association is also conducting a fisheries and water quality improvement project for Lake Isle. A State of the Watershed Report for Lake Isle/Lac Ste. Anne has been initiated by the NSWA and a draft report will be completed in 2016-17.

ASSESSMENT OF THE RIPARIAN AREAS of the VERMILION RIVER

Golder Associates were contracted by the NSWA to survey the riparian areas of the Vermilion River, and produced a report "*Aerial Assessment of the Vermilion River, Alberta and its Major Tributaries*". This study delineated the lotic riparian areas and floodplains of the Vermilion River and assessed the condition of the riparian areas in the Vermilion River watershed. The results indicated areas of the watershed suitable for conservation and/or protection, and identified areas for restoration. The report was finalized in the spring of 2016.

VERMILION RIVER AQUATIC ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT

The NSWA is responsible for assessing and reporting on the state of aquatic ecosystems in the NSR watershed. In September 2015, CPP Environmental was contracted to complete an aquatic survey of seven reaches of the Vermilion River. This survey characterized the state of this ecosystem through examination of habitat quality, aquatic vegetation, macroinvertebrates, and fish. A report on the ecosystem assessment was finalized in the spring of 2016.



Vermilion River. — Bill Trout, Images Alberta -2013.

NSWA ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

COMPILATION OF ALBERTA STREAM NUTRIENT DATA

This project provides a basic compilation of stream nutrient data collected in Alberta between 1977 and 2013. The purpose of the project was to consolidate information from many diverse sources into one document and to provide a useful reference point for future studies of lake and watershed management in this province. The data are primarily drawn from historic agricultural and lake management studies.

Stream nutrient data are reported for ten lake watersheds. These include streams draining into Baptiste Lake, Wabamun Lake, Lac La Nonne, Pine Lake, Lesser Slave Lake, Lac Ste. Anne, Lake Isle, Gull Lake, Lac la Biche and Pigeon Lake. This document also includes data from detailed studies conducted on a large selection of streams draining agricultural watersheds with varying degrees of agricultural intensity and runoff. These longer-term studies were conducted jointly by Alberta Environment and Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development. These included the *Canada-Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture* and *Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture* projects. The final report was published in June 2015 and is posted on the NSWA website.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3: ESTABLISH AN ONGOING COLLABORATIVE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR THE BASIN

PROVINCIAL ACTIVITIES

The NSWA continues to work with the other key partnerships established under *Water for Life: Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability*. The NSWA actively contributes to discussions regarding watershed planning mandates and capacities in Alberta, and has contributed significantly to regional planning activities under the North Saskatchewan Regional Plan (Land Use Framework).

The Executive Directors of all WPACs continued to meet quarterly to discuss mutual progress, operational concerns and organize the Annual WPAC Summit.

ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL “Water for Life” IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW

The Alberta Water Council regularly reviews the progress of “Water for Life” and then recommends to the Government of Alberta how implementation could be enhanced. NSWA has been actively involved in the work of the Review Committee as the representative of the WPAC Sector.



Spreadwing on Flower
Roger Kirchen—Images Alberta

NSWA ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

STRATEGIC GOAL 4: ESTABLISH A STRONG OPERATIONAL MODEL FOR NSWA AND ENSURE THE ORGANIZATION IS SUSTAINABLE, WITH SUFFICIENT CAPACITY AND FUNDING.

NSWA GOVERNANCE

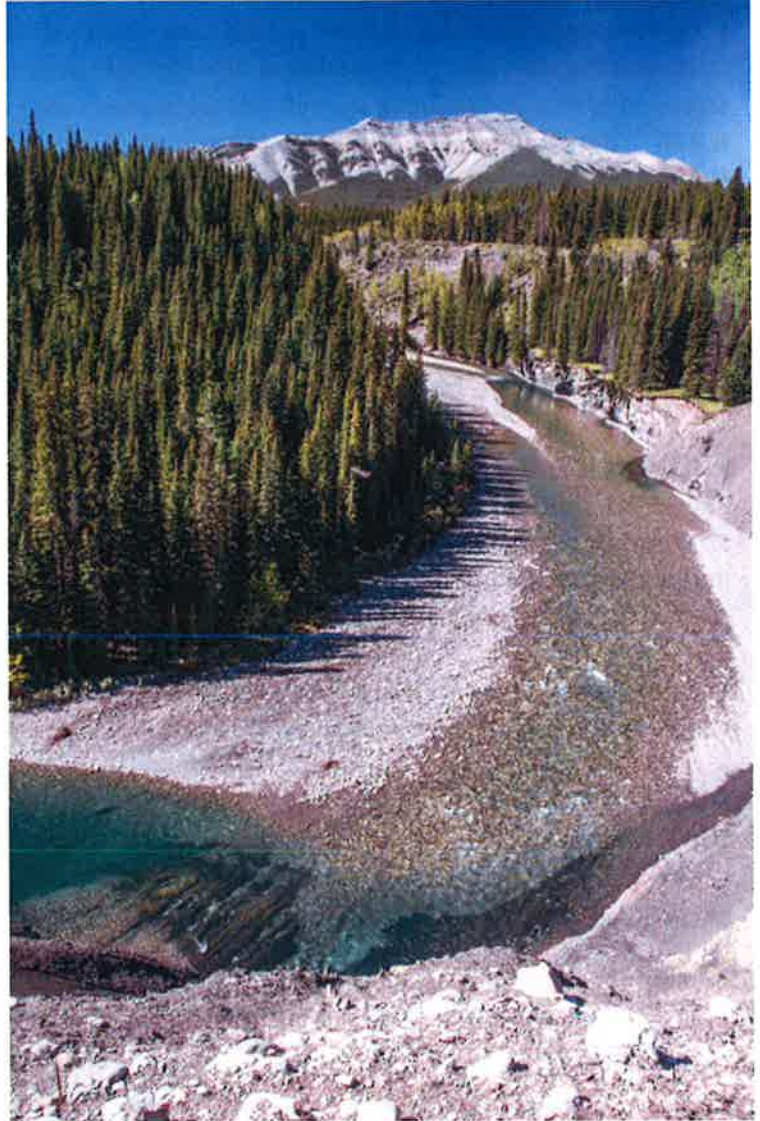
The NSWA Board of Directors established a sub-committee in 2012 to review organizational governance and improve future operations of the NSWA Society. The sub-committee recommended new organizational approaches for the NSWA, with the development of new governance protocols for the Board of Directors and new accountabilities for staff. These changes reflect the evolution and organizational learnings of the NSWA since being appointed the WPAC in 2005 and are designed to improve overall effectiveness. They are also reflective of the changing policy and planning environment in Alberta. A key organizational goal for NSWA is to strengthen its role as the primary watershed planning forum for the NSR basin.

OPERATIONAL PLAN 2015-16

The NSWA Board of Directors and staff worked together in 2015-16 to develop an improved organizational planning document that combines elements of the three-year Strategic Plan, an annual work plan and proposed annual budget. This “Operational Plan” is detailed and identifies the priority activities of the organization for the ensuing year. It will be used at the end of each work cycle to assess organizational performance.

NSWA’s NEW OFFICE LOCATION

On January 29, 2016 the NSWA staff moved into a new office. This move involved the coordination of many different aspects including signing lease contracts, hiring an IT support team, leasing computers and phone equipment, securing furniture, packing and many other details. The final move went smoothly and work is back to normal. Please feel free to visit us at our new location (Suite 202—9440 49 Street, Edmonton).



Ram River— C. Rusinek— Images Alberta

NSWA ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2016

APRIL 2015

- April 12-14 - Alberta Energy Regulator Dialogue on Regulatory Excellence
- April 26-27 - Alberta Innovates Forum
- April 28 -29 – Red Deer River Watershed Alliance Social Lab
- April 15 – Wabamun Watershed Management Council Riparian Report Presentation
- April 16- VRWM Project Implementation Team meeting
- April 13 – Waterlution: River City future planning scenario
- April 27 – SRWA Steering Committee meeting

MAY 2015

- May 1 - VRWM Project Executive Team meeting
- May 9 – Jackfish Lake Management Society AGM presentation
- May 13 – Lake Wabamun Subwatershed Land Use Planning meeting
- May 14 – VRWM Project Executive Team meeting
- May 15 – King's College presentation
- May 25 – SRWA Technical Advisory Committee meeting
- May 26 – Land Stewardship Centre, Nature Alberta meeting
- May 28 – Headwaters TAC meeting with EPCOR
- May 29 – VRWM Project Implementation Team meeting, Two Hills

JUNE 2015

- June 3 – NSWA and NSRP Lakes Team Professional Development presentation
- June 3 – Briefing to Town of Vegreville Council
- June 8 – Strawberry Creek Team meeting
- June 12 – NSRP Lakes Team presentation and lake tour
- June 15 – IH WMF Advisory Committee
- June 16 – Red Deer River Watershed Alliance Social Lab
- June 17 – NSWA AGM, Village of Wabamun
- June 20 – Mayatan Lake Watershed Management Plan Public Consultation Session #3
- June 22 – SRWA Steering Committee meeting, St. Albert
- June 22 – VRWM Project Executive team meeting
- June 25 – Alberta Water Council *Water for Life* Review Committee

JULY 2015

- July 8 – Strawberry Creek Stewardship Tour and Presentation
- July 10 – VRWM Project Implementation Team meeting, Lea Park
- July 13 – Meeting with TSAG
- July 14 – Meeting with University of Alberta CSL staff
- July 15 - Information meeting with ALIDP
- July 16 – VRWA Technical team teleconference
- July 22 – WPAC managers meeting in Red Deer
- July 28 – Meeting with River Valley Alliance

*Crossing the Clearwater
Bill Trout -Images Alberta*



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AUGUST 2015

- August 12- NSWA Education Forum (Vermillion)
- August 13 – VRWA Technical Team at Lakeland College
- August 17 - Sturgeon TAC
- August 18-19 - WSLUP Steering Committee meeting
- August 20- Clearwater County West Country Agriculture Tour
- August 22 – Presentation to Lake Isle/Lac Ste Anne (LILSA)
- August 27 – AEP Seminar on Agricultural Best Management Practices
- August 27 – Presentation to ALUS at Parkland County
- August 29 - Presentation at Fort George/Buckingham House Provincial Historic Site

SEPTEMBER 2015

- September 2- Headwaters Alliance TAC meeting
- September 4- Meeting with CPAWS Exec. Director
- September 8 - Information meeting with seniors in Vermilion subwatershed
- September 8 - Elk Point Information Night
- September 9 – Meeting with Mayatan Lake M.A.
- September 9 - Final design meeting with Canada Book Design, Beaumont
- September 11 – Wabamun Lake WSLUP Open House
- September 12 - River Watch river float
- September 13 - Edmonton Heritage Council river float
- September 14 – Sturgeon Technical Advisory Committee meeting
- September 15 - Saskatchewan River Watershed Authority re: Heritage River designation in Vermilion.
- September 16 - Biodiversity Symposium at U of A September;
- September 10 & 16-WSLUP Open House and stakeholder meeting
- September 16- ABMI Ecosystem Services & Biodiversity Symposium
- September 17 - Meeting with Friesens Printing
- September 17- NSWA Education Forum in St. Albert
- September 21- WSLUP Steering Committee meeting
- September 22 – VRWA Technical Team teleconference
- September 22 - Presentation to Leduc County Council
- September 24/25—ALMS Workshop
- September 28 – SRWA Steering Committee meeting
- September 30- Clearwater Land Care-Seminar



*Little Boy Blue—Beaverhill subwatershed
Bill Trout—Images Alberta*

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OCTOBER 2015

- October 1- ABMI model demonstration
- October 5- Meeting with CPAWS
- October 7 - Headwaters TAC meeting
- October 7 – Alberta WPAC Managers (Red Deer)
- October 8-VRWA Executive Team meeting
- October 16 – SWRA Water Quantity Working Group
- October 19 – SRWA Technical Advisory Committee
- October 21 – CPAWS AGM and launch of Conservation Blueprint
- October 22 – Alberta Agriculture Webinar on BMPs
- October 26 – University of Alberta Forum on Conservation Auction Tool
- October 28 -29 – RDRWA Project Blue Thumb
- October 28 – The Kings University College – mock job interviews for Environment students.
- October 29 - Land Use Framework - Lower Athabasca, Biodiversity Framework
- October 29 – Water for Life Implementation Progress team presentation to Alberta Water Council



Karen Albert—Images Alberta

NOVEMBER 2015

- November 4 – Land Use Framework Biodiversity Framework Indicator Session
- November 5 – University of Alberta- forum on water quality modelling
- November 6 - VRWA Executive Team meeting
- November 10 - Alberta Environmental Network Water Caucus teleconference
- November 10 – City of Edmonton Discharge Reduction Study meeting
- November 12 – Headwaters Alliance TAC & SC regular meeting
- November 14 – VRWA Project Launch - Marwayne
- November 16 – SRWA TAC meeting
- November 16-17 – AER Regulatory Excellence Forum
- November 17 – West Central Stakeholders (Synergy) education forum
- November 21 —VRWA Project Launch – Bruce and Vegreville
- November 24 – Watershed Protection Education Session at Next Step Junior High
- November 25 – Parkland County Wetland Assessment Indicator Session
- November 26 – Alberta Environment & Parks Forum: Forested Headwaters
- November 26 – Visioning Workshop for ALIDP Guide
- November 28 – VRWA Project Launch – Mannville and Two Hills

DECEMBER 2015

- December 6 – Meeting with Wabamun Watershed Management Council
- December 8 – Presentation to Sturgeon County Council
- December 9 -10 – Soil Health Conference, Edmonton
- December 10 – Presentation to Images Alberta Camera Club
- December 10 – VRWA Implementation team meeting- Vegreville

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JANUARY 2016

- January 14 – WPAC Forum sponsored by AEP in Leduc
- January 18 – Lakes of Parkland County meeting in Spruce Grove
- January 19 – Council Briefing - Morinville
- January 25 – Sturgeon River Watershed Alliance -Joint TAC/SC meeting St. Albert
- January 29-30—Office moving days

FEBRUARY 2016

- February 11 – Council briefing - Lac Ste. Anne County
- February 16- Committee of the Whole briefing– Parkland County

MARCH 2016

- Mar 2 – National Urban Park meeting: NSR Valley, Edmonton
- Mar 2 - Headwaters TAC
- Mar 4 – Wetlands and Riparian Areas workshop, Forestburg
- Mar 10 – Site visits, Vermilion watershed
- Mar 15 – Presentation at Greystone Centennial Middle School, Spruce Grove
- Mar 15 – Lake Management Presentation at Athabasca University
- Mar 16 – Wabamun WMC meeting
- Mar 17 – Briefing to City of Edmonton, Utilities and Operations
- Mar 19 – River Valley Festival Workshop, Edmonton
- Mar 23 – Mayatan Lake Management Association meeting, Mayatan Lake
- Mar 23 – Antler Lake Stewardship Society
- Mar 31 – Alberta Water Council Water for Life Implementation Review Committee



Cline subwatershed—North Saskatchewan River a few hundred meters before it enters Abraham Lake near Preacher Point. -Roxy Hastings - Images Alberta

The NSWA would like to acknowledge the generous support of
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The NSWA also appreciates the generous support of
the City of Edmonton and EPCOR



The NSWA also appreciates the generous support of our many other municipal,
industrial and organizational sponsors.



North Saskatchewan River. -Photo by B. Milholland



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