



Athabasca

WATERSHED COUNCIL

Annual Report

2017-2018



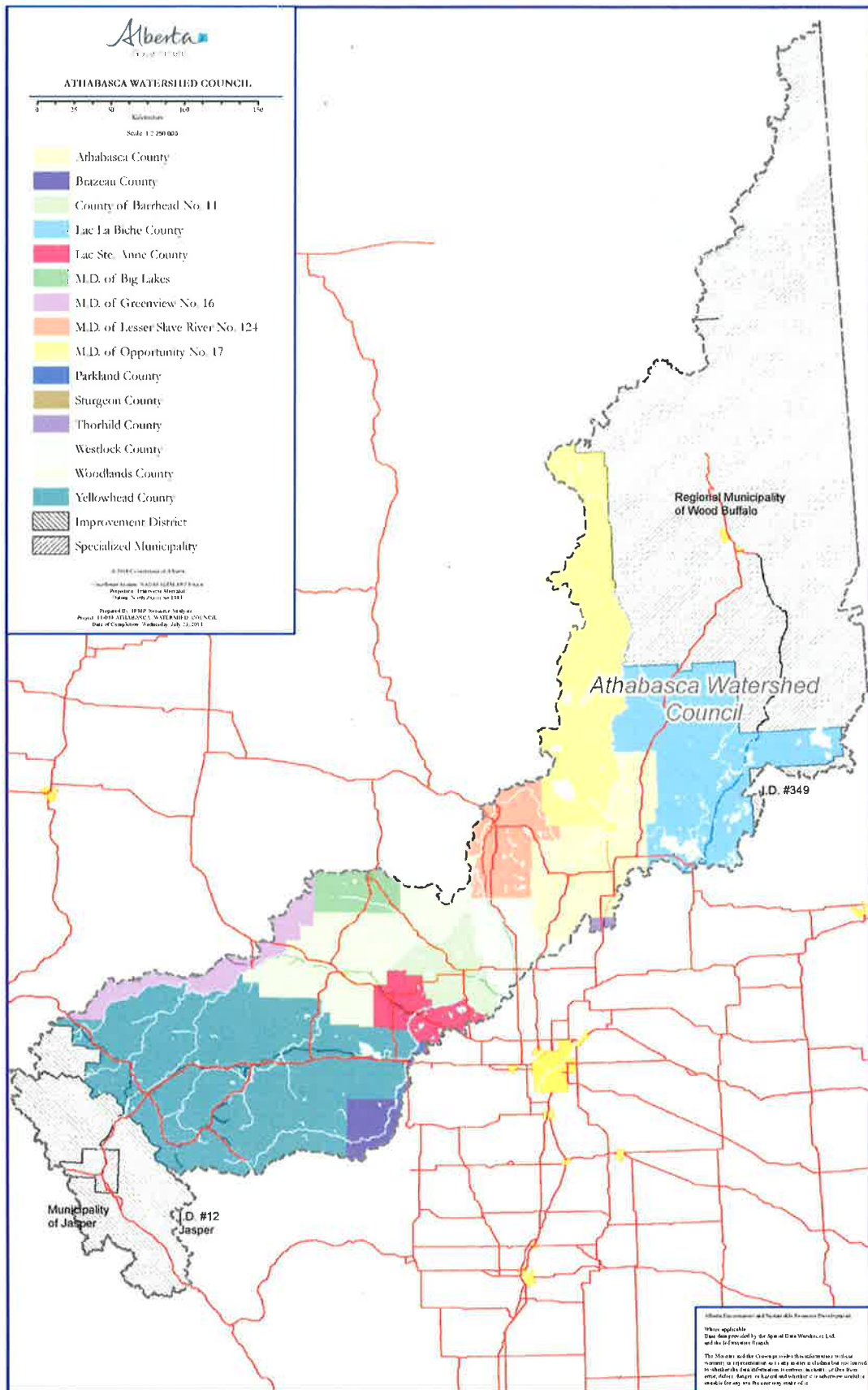




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About Us

Formation

We were established on August 21, 2009 as a registered not-for-profit organization incorporated provincially under the Societies Act of Alberta.

The first Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on November 28, 2009.

Our Values

We value integrity, trust, and transparency. We respect all points of view.

Water is a blessing and gift and is essential for environment, society, economy and the spirit.

We respect the environment and people. We believe in consensus decision making.

We respect economic responsibilities. We value inclusivity.

We value a high standard of achievement and conduct in the WPAC.

We value ecological health as foundational to all life.

We value timely responses to issues. We are purpose driven.

We value and respect the communities, cultures, and knowledges of indigenous peoples in the Athabasca watershed.

We value creativity, innovation, and organizational risk taking.

We are responsible and accountable to all members, partners, stakeholders, indigenous peoples, and the general public.

Our Vision

The Athabasca watershed is ecologically healthy, diverse, and dynamic.

Our Mission

The Athabasca Watershed Council promotes, fosters respect, and plans for an ecologically healthy watershed by demonstrating leadership and facilitating informed decision-making to ensure environmental, economic, and social sustainability.

Our Goals

Stakeholders and indigenous peoples throughout the Athabasca River watershed understand basic watershed science, are knowledgeable about the condition of the watershed, and are engaged in managing the watershed in a sustainable way.

The AWC-WPAC develops and fosters relationships with stakeholders and indigenous peoples throughout the watershed.

The AWC-WPAC acts as an information sharing hub and, through it, stakeholders, indigenous peoples, and the general public are able to share and receive information about relevant events, reports, processes, and conditions in a timely manner.

The Athabasca River watershed is managed in a way that enables environmental, social, and economic sustainability through an Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP).

The AWC-WPAC is a functional and sustainable organization.

Athabasca Watershed Council 2017-18 Board of Directors



To ensure that the AWC is representative of voices from across the watershed, the Board of Directors is comprised of elected seats representing specified stakeholder groups.

As outlined in the Board of Directors Terms of Reference, the Board of Directors has a maximum of twenty one (21) members (including the past Chairperson) representing specified positions for industry (5 seats), non-governmental organizations (5 seats), governments (5 seats), indigenous (3 seats), and members at large (2 seats). Athabasca Watershed Members may sit on the various committees that advise the Board and do not have to be a director to be a committee member.

Industry: Five (5) Seats

Agriculture—Terry Sheehan

Agriculture (Small Producer)—Janice Pitman

Oil and Gas—Janice Linehan

Forestry—Dan Moore

Mining and Utilities—Vacant

Indigenous: Three (3) Seats

Indigenous—Cleo Reece

Indigenous—Robert Grandjambe

Indigenous—Vacant

Governments: Five (5) Seats

Municipal (Upper Basin)—Robert Esau

Municipal (Middle Basin) —Larry Armfelt

Municipal (Lower Basin)—Marcel Ulliac

Provincial/Federal Government—Greg Piorkowski

Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP)—Abdi Siad-Omar

**Non-Government Organizations: Five (5) Seats**

Research and Academia—Dr. Robert Holmberg

Stewardship—Morris Nesdole

Stewardship—Vacant

Health and Environment—Brian Deheer

Health and Environment—Marv Fyten

Members at Large: Two (2) Seats

Member at Large—Tim Polzin

Member at Large—Tom Weber



Message from the Board Chair



Photo of Brian courtesy of Iva Moen

Greetings from the Athabasca Watershed Council,

This has been a busy year, with some exciting accomplishments to report on.

STATE OF THE ATHABASCA WATERSHED SUMMARY

Perhaps the largest accomplishment is that we finalized and published our State of the Athabasca Watershed Summary in March, 2018. This Summary has been two years in the making, and pulls together much of the findings from our four technical reports and our one Traditional Ecological Knowledge Report, which together make up the actual "State-Of-The-Watershed Report." It will be obvious to most of you that these large volumes of technical research and data are not so reader-friendly to the average reader – even the average watershed enthusiast. Their size alone is a bit daunting.

The Summary was presented to the public at three Open House Events: one in Edson, one in the Barrhead-Westlock area, and one in Fort McMurray. We may have had small-to-medium turnouts at these events, but those who attended gave us some helpful feedback for our next stage, which will be to develop an Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP). More on that later.

Of course, this hasn't been our sole activity. While trying to get the Summary completed, we also accomplished the following:

We participated in an historic canoe trip down the Athabasca (from Jasper to Fort Assiniboine). This trip included several Board members and staff, and also included several informational events along the way, which also got help from Board members. Our AGM last year was held in Whitecourt to coincide with a stop on the trip.

We renovated our website and we hope you like it: www.awc-wpac.ca

We hired an Outreach Coordinator. Marie Bay Breiner has been active in outreach presentations and watershed education.

The Board began discussions about how we can do reconciliation planning. This is based on the principle that any planning we do has an impact on Indigenous peoples. As a start, the Board took a one-day Indigenous awareness training session. We're looking at other opportunities for learning, and ways to make our planning activities be respectful of Indigenous peoples. For example, we have looked at participating in a blanket exercise.

We started working on our Integrated Watershed Management Plan! We've been waiting to get started on this for several years. The Committee has met a couple of times, and we have some great groundwork done. We expect this will be our next major project over the coming year.

We've been making presentations to municipalities to try to reach out to every municipality in the basin. (If we haven't gotten to you yet, we're trying to make it happen.)

We bid adieu to Jason Ponto, whose efforts we greatly appreciated, and we wish him well in his new role.

This isn't an exhaustive list. We also participated in various external events, planning processes, and we've had guest speakers on various topics present to the Board. All this shows that we have been an active, engaged group (both Board members and staff), and we look forward to an exciting year ahead. A big thank-you to our dedicated Board members who have helped in all these endeavors!

Sincerely,

Brian Deheer

Athabasca is an anglicized version of the Cree name pronounced āthap-āsk-ā-w meaning:

"the meeting place among the reeds."

Education and Outreach Report:

The Athabasca Watershed Council strives to engage stakeholders and provide education about watershed science to anyone that lives, works, or plays in the Athabasca River Basin. Our participation in the following events highlight our achievements in 2017-18.

Outreach Coordinator added to the Team

In November, 2017 we welcomed Marie Bay Breiner as our Outreach Coordinator. Marie has a background in the biological sciences and has previously worked on shoreline naturalization projects with Nature Alberta and has extensive experience with vegetation surveys and water quality monitoring. Marie is interested in permaculture, wildcrafting, and environmentally-friendly living.

"State of the Watershed Summary Report 2018" Release Events

We are proud to release our "State of the Watershed Summary Report 2018" which is a summary of the four state of the watershed reports produced in the years 2011-14. The production of this report has been a big focus for the Athabasca Watershed Council in the year 2017-18. The simplification of the language and the main scientific findings makes this a report that every one can read and understand. This report is available on our website, www.awc-wpac.ca.

In March, we hosted "State of the Watershed Summary Report 2018," release events in Edson, Westlock and Fort McMurray.. The events were a way for us to engage with the people who live and play in the Upper, Central and Lower Athabasca River Basins and we had great conversations during the events.

Municipal Outreach and Presentations Given by the AWC

We continue to bring our message and build connections with the municipalities in our watershed. These are the councils we have visited in 2017-18: Town of Edson, Athabasca County, MD of Lesser Slave Lake, Westlock County, County of Barrhead, Lac La Biche County, and the Town of Barrhead.

If your council or organisation is interested in a presentation from the Athabasca Watershed Council, please let us know, our contact information is on the back cover.

AWC-WPAC in the News

Print media is an excellent medium for sharing news and information about watershed planning. The AWC-WPAC was featured prominently in the following news stories:

"Athabasca Watershed Council reports and looks forward" *The Edson Leader*.

"Watershed council reached out, AWC formed to promote ecological health, sustainable of local watershed" *The Lac La Biche Post*.

"County asked to participate in watershed forum" *Westlock News*.

Our Participation or Presentations given by the AWC in other events

We engage with stakeholders and represent our members at events throughout the basin. Here are some of the events we participated in this year:

- Alberta WaterSMART – The sustainable water management in the Athabasca River Basin initiative.
- 2018 Alberta Ecotrust Environmental Gathering
- Alberta Student Services Conference
- Baptiste and Island Lake Stewardship Society (BAILS) Community Engagement Session
- Environmental Week Display
- Voyageur Canoe Brigade
- Athabasca Rotary Club
- Alberta Lake Management Society (ALMS) Workshop
- Ecosystem Services and Biodiversity Network Outreach Session
- Meeting with Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) about Community Based Monitoring
- Watershed Planning and Advisory Council (WPAC) Managers Meeting
- Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) Tailings Management Framework Implementation Session

Sincerely,
Marie Bay Breiner



Photo of Marie:
courtesy of Matthew
McGraw

What is a Watershed Council?

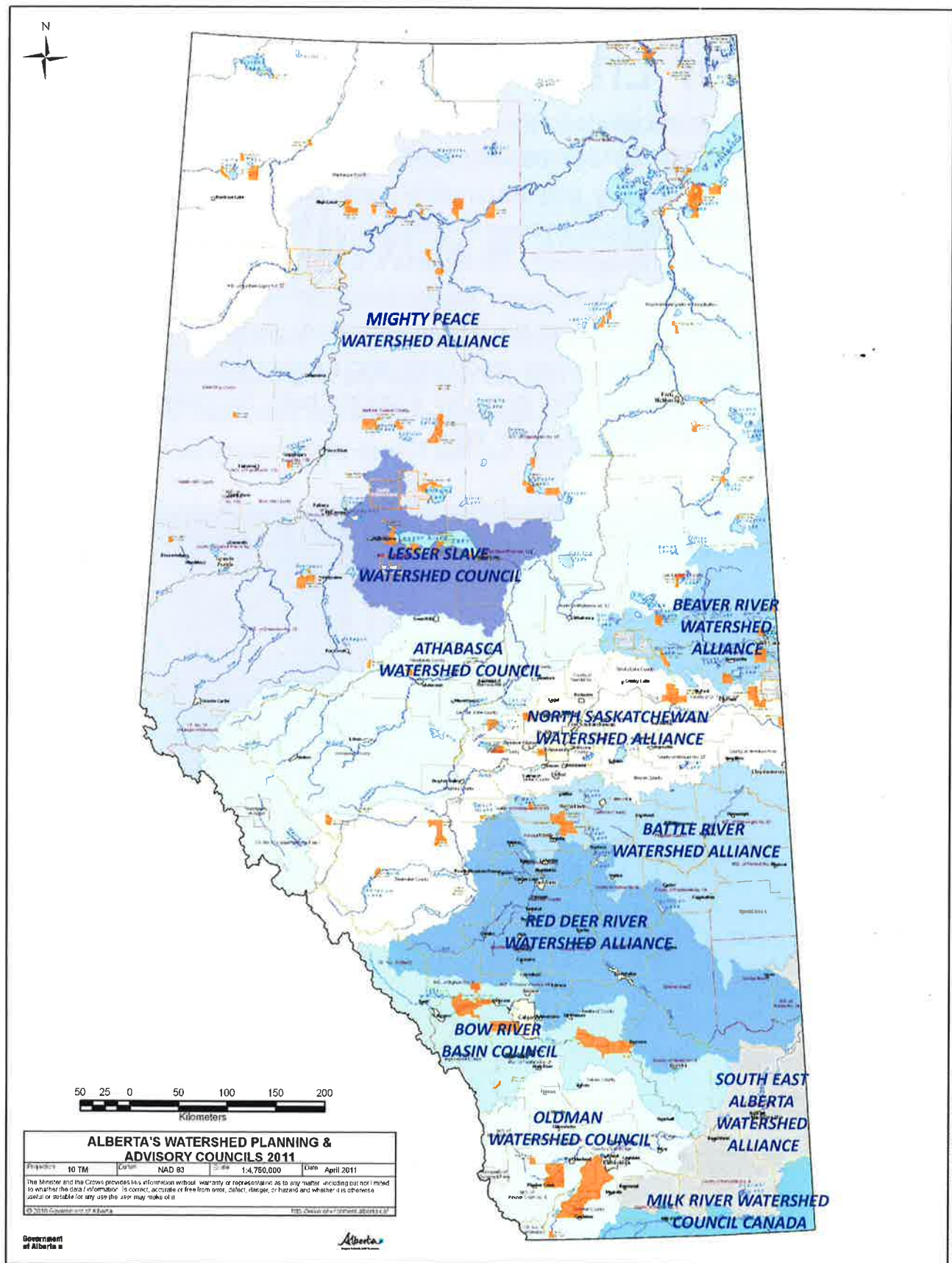
The Athabasca Watershed Council is one of eleven (11) Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils (WPACs) in Alberta. WPAC's are independent, non-profit organizations that have the responsibility to

1. report on the health of Alberta's watersheds,
2. lead collaborative planning, and
3. facilitate education and stewardship activities.

WPACs engage representatives of key stakeholders in the river basin area, including municipal, provincial and federal governments; industrial sectors; conservation groups; aboriginal communities; academia; and the public.

In their work, they seek consensus on land and water resource management strategies that support the achievement of shared environmental, social, and economic outcomes for the watershed.





Water for Life!

Life depends on water. We all share the responsibility to ensure a healthy, secure and sustainable water supply for our communities, environment, and economy. Our quality of life is tied to healthy and sustainable water supplies for the environment, for our communities, and for our economic well-being. Alberta's strategy is a collaborative approach in the management of Alberta's water resources to better enable shared responsibility and environmental stewardship. WPACs are the main mechanism to foster this collaboration at the watershed level, creating opportunities for stakeholders to come together, share resources, and explore innovative solutions to water management challenges. This provides a strong basis for collaborative action and shared ownership in the work of the WPACs.

The Goals of the "Water for Life" Strategy:

- ⇒ Safe, secure drinking water
- ⇒ Healthy aquatic ecosystems
- ⇒ Reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy



These goals will be met through knowledge and research, partnerships, and water conservation.

Water for Life provided WPACs with a mandate to support multi-stakeholder collaboration and community engagement within four main program areas:

- Education and Outreach
- Environmental Stewardship
- Watershed Evaluation and Reporting
- Watershed Management Planning

<http://aep.alberta.ca/water/programs-and-services/water-for-life/strategy/downloadable-information-about-the-water-for-life-strategy.aspx>

<http://aep.alberta.ca/water/programs-and-services/water-for-life/default.aspx>

We are grateful for the financial contributions and shared expertise of our primary partner, the Government of Alberta's department of Environment and Parks.



We would also like to thank all of the municipalities, organizations, industries and individuals who have helped us in any way over the past nine years to get to where we are today. We are nine years old and can look back to all that we have been able to accomplish and we couldn't have done it without your help!



The Athabasca River

...as described by the Athabasca University, photos courtesy of Dr. Robert Holmberg



"The Athabasca River begins at the Columbia Glacier in Jasper National Park (headwaters) and travels about 1500 km northeast across Alberta and drains into Lake Athabasca in the north-east. Lake Athabasca flows into the Slave River and joins the McKenzie River, which eventually flows to the Arctic Ocean, travelling over 1230 kms from start to glacier to mouth. As the Athabasca River flows, it also goes through a tremendous change in elevation; from 1062 metres at Jasper to about 205 metres at its mouth in Lake Athabasca."

"The entire Athabasca river basin is approximately 159,000 square kilometers, which is about 24% of Alberta's landmass. It is fed by ten smaller watersheds or sub-watersheds that eventually flow into the Athabasca River (McLeod, Pembina, La Biche, Lesser Slave, Clearwater)."

"The Athabasca River is the second largest river in Alberta, and the largest undammed river. The mean annual discharges in cubic decameters (dam³ = 1000 cubic meters) at points along the river are: 2,790,000 dam³ at Jasper; 13,600,000 dam³ at Athabasca; and 20,860,000 dam³ at Fort McMurray. The confluence of the Peace and Athabasca Rivers with Lake Athabasca in the north forms a vast wetland called the Peace-Athabasca delta. It is one of the world's most ecologically significant wetlands and has been designated as a Ramsar Convention wetland and a United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site. It is recognized internationally as an important habitat for nesting and a staging ground for the migration of waterfowl, including the threatened whooping crane. It is also a habitat for the native wood and imported Plains Bison."



"The ecology of the Athabasca river basin is diverse as a result of the different natural regions within its watershed. Ecology refers to the inter-relationships between living organisms (plants, fungi, microorganisms, and animals (including humans) and their non-living environment (air, rocks/minerals/soil, water, weather/climate). There are four natural regions in the Athabasca watershed: Rocky Mountain, Foothills, Boreal Forest, and Canadian Shield. The central and lower areas are mainly Boreal Forest while the upper region includes foothills and Rocky Mountains. A very small area of Canadian Shield natural region is situated north of Fort Chipewyan."



"The Athabasca River is an historic waterway for First Nations peoples and the fur trade. The Sekani, Shuswap, Kootenay, Salish, Stoney and Cree tribes hunted and fished along the river prior to European colonization. From about 1778, the Athabasca River was a key part of the main fur trade route from the Mackenzie River to the Great Lakes."

"The Athabasca river basin is physically and ecologically diverse. The region is endowed with many natural resources, including forests, coal, oil and gas, minerals, agricultural and oilsands. The development of natural resource industries results in specific land uses that influence surface water and groundwater quality. They also affect settlements and a growing diversity of people who live along the river, adding to the demands of the land and the river."

"Only by examining the accumulated effects of all of the activities and stresses upon the entire length of the Athabasca River Basin can we properly appreciate and plan for the sustainability of this vital waterway."



Courtesy of: <http://arbri.athabascau.ca/About-the-Athabasca-River-basin/Index.php>

Financial Statements

Statement of Financial Position

March 31, 2018

(Unaudited)

	2018	2017
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash	101,895	60,705
Term Deposit	10,000	-
Goods and Services Tax recoverable	12,595	11,542
Prepaid Expenses	1,619	1,619
	126,109	73,866
CAPITAL ASSETS (Computers, website, equipment, and furniture)	6,426	181
	132,535	74,047
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Accounts Payable	14,445	11,106
Unspent Grant (Deferred income)	40,000	7,750
	54,445	18,856
NET ASSETS		
General fund	71,664	55,009
Invested in computers, website, equipment and furniture	6,426	182
	78,090	55,191
	132,535	74,047

Statement of Revenues and Expenditures
Year Ended March 31, 2018
(Unaudited)

	2018	2017
REVENUE		
Grant revenue	\$ 180,000	\$ 132,823
Grant previously deferred and earned in the current year	7,750	-
Donations	6,642	-
	194,392	132,823
EXPENSES		
Salaries and wages	90,180	61,265
Travel	27,230	21,978
Honorariums	17,575	16,875
Office	7,502	6,195
Rental	5,840	5,600
Professional fees	5,791	6,175
Meetings and conventions	5,498	801
Advertising and promotion	3,961	3,313
Telephone	3,497	4,173
Insurance	1,734	1,772
Amortization	1,466	221
Goods and Services Tax expense	1,053	1,128
Business taxes, licenses and memberships	161	3,130
Interest and bank charges	68	241
	171,556	132,867
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES FROM OPERATIONS	22,836	- 44
OTHER INCOME		
Interest income	63	44
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	\$ 22,899	\$ -



5101-50th Avenue,

PO Box 1058,

Athabasca, AB, T9S 2A8

Email: admin@awc-wpac.ca

Thank You!

We gratefully acknowledge the support and contributions of our many members! They donate their time and resources to us.

If you would like to become a member please contact us for more information or visit our website!



A very special thank you!

To Dr. Robert Holmberg (the Athabasca University photo bank). All photos of the Athabasca Watershed were courtesy of AU and Dr. Robert Holmberg.

Thank you Robert!

To Petra Rowell for her work as interim Executive Director and her work with the Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) Committee.

Thank you Petra!



Thank you to Athabasca Hometown Printing Company