

Milk River Watershed Council Canada

2010-11 Annual Report

Our Water, Our Legacy



MRWCC VISION

A watershed where community well-being is supported by a vibrant economy and sustained by a healthy environment that will endure as our legacy for future generations.

MRWCC GOAL

To achieve balance among a thriving community, a healthy environment and a prosperous economy through understanding, dialogue and action.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

It has been my pleasure to serve as the MRWCC's Chair from 2006 to 2011. Getting to know so many interesting and accomplished people over the years was a real pleasure. I wish the watershed council well as they move forward with the important tasks of developing an integrated watershed management plan for the Milk River basin.

- Tom Gilchrist, Chair, MRWCC

The MRWCC thanks Tom Gilchrist for his dedication and leadership during his five years as Chair. We wish him well with his retirement from the Board of Directors.

HIGHLIGHTS 2010-11

Water Supply and Management Team

- Tom Gilchrist, Chair
- Ken Miller and Tom Gilchrist represent the MRWCC on the Joint Alberta – Montana Initiative charged with recommending a plan to the governments of Montana and Alberta to resolve the issues created when Montana petitioned the IJC to investigate the application of the 1921 Order that governs the apportionment of the Milk and St. Mary rivers.
- Numerous Joint Initiative Team meetings were held and principles of a solution are drafted. Discussions will continue after the sitting of Montana's legislature.

Community Awareness & Involvement Team

- Ed Sloboda, Chair
- Hosted 5th Annual General Meeting in April 2010 with 80 members attending.
- MRWCC Board members and municipal councilors toured Lake Sherburne Dam, the St. Mary-Milk River headworks and the siphons that deliver St. Mary water to the Milk River in Alberta. It was an informative day facilitated by Montana hosts.
- Received 2nd place for entry in the Milk River Bonanza Day Parade with the float theme "Milk River's Enchanted Grasslands".
- Sponsored poster contest at local schools for kids in Grade K to 8. 65 kids participated in the contest.
- Cancelled the Annual Canoe Trip twice due to extreme high flows and then extreme low flows that prevented safe voyage down the Milk River.
- 16 people participated in a the Working Well Workshop hosted in collaboration with Alberta Environment, Alberta Agriculture and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, November 2010.
- Partnered with Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park to hold an Invasive Species Workshop and presented a poster display.
- Partnered with Agrium to deliver their Caring for Our Watersheds contest in Milk River. Six of the ten finalists were from Milk River Erle Rivers School.

PLANNED OUTCOMES

Reliable and Safe Water Supplies

- Water is managed in a manner that benefits communities while meeting the needs of the aquatic and riparian environment.
- Water sharing disputes are resolved.
- Groundwater is mapped, interactions are understood and the resource is properly managed.
- An improved economy in the Milk River watershed due to a secure supply of water.
- Information on water use in the Milk River watershed is available to the public.

Quality Water

- Quality water provides for communities, terrestrial and aquatic life, recreation and industry in the Milk River watershed.
- Baseline water quality information is available to the public.
- Water quality and quantity information is used to achieve sustainable use and integrated management of water resources.

Riparian Protection

- Healthy, functioning riparian areas contribute to streambank stability, good water quality, forage, shelter and biodiversity in the Milk River watershed.

Land Use

- Innovative and sustainable land use and development practices take place in the watershed.
- A healthy, vibrant economy that will attract people and investment to the watershed.

Biodiversity

- A diverse native wildlife and plant community is present in the Milk River watershed through habitat protection and enhancement efforts.

Informed Community

- A community that is informed and actively involved in the Milk River Watershed Council Canada and its initiatives.

National/International Relationships

- Good working relationships with Saskatchewan and Montana that create a process and forum to address transboundary watershed concerns.

- Hosted Community Stewardship Forum in February 2011. Students presented their Caring for the Watersheds projects to 30 community members. Rain barrels and low-flow showerheads were made available.
- One Geocache site installed, 2 others being planned.
- Maintained MRWCC website.



Above: MRWCC Bonanza Day parade entry.



Above: Trip to the Milk River headwaters, Babb, Montana.

Research and Monitoring Team

- John Ross, Chair

Instream Flow Needs Study

- AMEC Earth and Environmental was hired to con-

tinue with work initiated by Golder Associates on the Inflow Needs Study (IFN) .

- A Habitat Suitability Criteria (HSC) Workshop was held in Lethbridge, AB from December 1 to 3, 2010 with technical experts from Alberta and Montana. Summer HSC Curves were generated for eight species found in the Milk River.
- The study will identify flow regimes necessary to maintain environmental integrity of the Milk River (e.g., fisheries, riparian areas, channel maintenance, water quality).
- Identifying IFNs is a necessary step to develop Water Conservation Objectives that consider social and economic factors in addition to environmental needs.

MiRTAP: Milk River Transboundary Aquifer Project

- A new project in collaboration with the Geological Survey of Canada and other partners.
- A 3-dimensional model of the Milk River Aquifer will be developed that spans Alberta and Montana.
- A Technician was hired to field-verify 260 wells from January to March 2011.

Streambank Stabilization Project

- AMEC Earth and Environmental developed a conceptual design for remedial work at Hilmer Bridge, Gold Springs Park and Weir Bridge (canoe access site). Hilmer Bridge was selected as a proposed Demonstration Project site for bioengineering techniques.
- Currently, funding is being sought to help with the implementation of the stabilization project design.

Water Quality Monitoring Program

- Water quality sampling and analysis is on-going (five years completed) in partnership with Cardston County, County of Warner, County of Forty Mile, Cypress County and Alberta Environment.

Water Conservation Survey

- A Water Conservation survey was completed with residents in July 2010
- 18 homes surveyed in Coutts, 55 in Milk River
- 8 businesses surveyed in Coutts, 18 in Milk River

- Results will be used to support the development of a Water Conservation Strategy

Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) Team

- Ken Miller, Chair
- The IWMP Terms of Reference were endorsed by all Municipalities during the summer of 2010 and by Alberta Environment in February 2011.
- Targets and thresholds are being drafted to support planned outcomes for the watershed. These will be presented to the public for comment.

LOOKING AHEAD

- Our primary goal is the continued development of the Integrated Watershed Management Plan.
- We will initiate work on the next edition of the Milk River State of the Watershed Report available 2013.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NOTE



This past year was our fifth year operating as a Watershed Planning and Advisory Council. Looking back, it is great to see how the science and research work that we have completed is contributing to our understanding of the watershed and to the development of the Milk River Integrated Watershed Management Plan that will guide future management of water and watershed resources. It has

also been great to see participation from the community growing as more people are aware and interested in watershed stewardship initiatives.

This past year we said goodbye to our Administrative Coordinator, Gayna Welsh and wish her well on her future endeavors. We also welcomed our new Program Coordinator, Mary Lupwayi in September 2010.

I thank our Board of Directors for their continued dedication, support and guidance. We are moving further into our watershed planning role and the upcoming year will be eventful.

Yours, Sandi

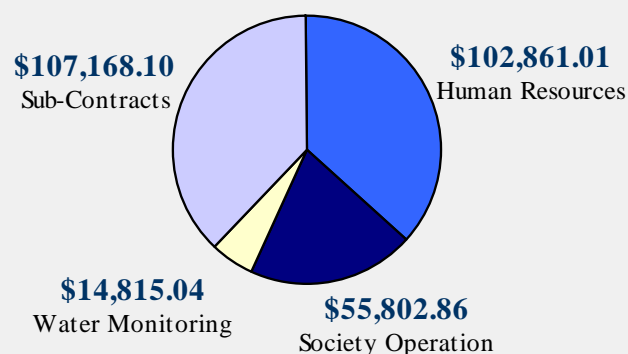
INKIND CONTRIBUTIONS 2010-11

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development	3293.41
Alberta Conservation Association	1081.01
Alberta Environment	22255.93
Alberta Fish and Game Association	3147.50
Alberta Health Services	3345.22
Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation	4578.05
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development	28015.26
Cardston County	11132.50
Cenovus Energy	7058.00
County of Forty Mile	6139.85
Cypress County	5566.25
County of Warner	13639.18
Cows and Fish	441.01
Elise Walker	280.00
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	9120.00
Member at Large	13576.51
Milk River Breeze Newspaper	500.00
Milk River Raft Tours	675.00
Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks	1600.00
Montana State University	720.00
Town of Milk River	740.52
University of Lethbridge	4612.02
Total	141,517

INCOME 2010-11

Agrium—Caring for Our Watersheds	5,000.00
Alberta Environment—Core Funding	182000.00
Alberta Environment – Projects	96600.00
Alberta Treasury Branch – Milk River	300.00
Coffee Sales	1389.50
Donations	80.00
Interest	1089.48
Geological Survey of Canada	22000.00
GST Rebate	6209.63
Silent Auction	830.00
Total	315,499

EXPENSES 2010-11



Total 280,647

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair: Tom Gilchrist, General Public
Vice Chair: Ken Miller, Agriculture-Farmer
Treasurer: Ken Brown, Recreation
Secretary: Warren Cunningham, NGO
 Ed Sloboda, NGO
 Greg Ottway, Provincial Government
 Joan Hughson, Rural Municipality
 John Byrne, Health
 John Ross, Agriculture-Rancher
 Lorraine Nicol, Academia
 Marc Dubord, Industry
 Ross Ford, Rural Municipality
 Terrence Lazarus, Provincial Government
 Tess Larson, Urban Municipality
 Will Lindeman, Water User
 Federal Government & First Nations (Vacant)



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Thank you to all of the volunteers, sponsors and organizations that contribute InKind and financially to the activity of the MRWCC.

We have accomplished much with your valuable support!

