



Milk River Watershed Council Canada 2011-12 Annual Report

Our Water, Our Legacy

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN – John Ross

It was a great honor to be able to assume the chairmanship after Tom Gilchrist stepped down last year. Tom did a fantastic job guiding us through our early years and left some mighty big shoes to fill. I definitely couldn't do it without the support and dedicated work of the board and our staff. We are continuing our water quality monitoring work on the Milk River and its tributaries, as well as pursuing the MirTAP Project which is looking at the water in the aquifer under our feet. The Integrated Watershed Management Plan is nicely taking shape and we are planning an update of the State of the Watershed Report with the support of our US counterparts. We are also undertaking a new study with Alberta Agriculture on Microbial Source Tracking that will enhance our ability to track trends and sources of fecal bacteria affecting the quality of the river water. There hasn't been another project like this in the province so it is very exciting.

Tim Romanow has been a great asset as our new executive director and it was with great relief that Sandi Riemersma was able to stay on as a consultant and project manager. Mary Lupwayi has been another huge asset in the office. When you're surrounded by good people you can do good work, and for that I am very fortunate.

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR –Tim Romanow

2011-2012 has been an exciting year for the MRWCC and myself . Since taking over as Executive Director, I've had the opportunity to work with all the volunteers on the Watershed Council Teams, continue to build partnerships with our stakeholders, and strengthen our cooperative partnerships with the Municipalities. I am inspired and grateful to work with such a dedicated group. The MRWCC is reaching a significant milestone with the completion of the draft Integrated Watershed Management Plan and moving towards implementation. Though there are many challenges ahead, there are also opportunities, and we will continue to provide a venue for local concerns to be addressed , and act as a guiding body to help ensure a sustainable watershed and community for future generations.

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 stream bank 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.

OUR 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.

OUR GOAL

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair: John Ross, Agriculture

Vice Chair: Ken Miller, Agriculture

Treasurer: Will Lindeman, Water Use

Secretary: Warren Cunningham, Rural Municipality
Ed Sloboda, NGO

Greg Ottway, Provincial Government

Joan Hughson, Rural Municipality

Mike Gervais, Health

Don Welsh, Individual

Lorraine Nicol, Academia

Darlene Sakires, Industry

Randy Tailor, Alternate, Rural Municipality

Terrence Lazarus, Provincial Government

William Schamber, Urban Municipality

Darcy Wills, Recreation

Federal Government & First Nations (Vacant)



HIGHLIGHTS 2011-2012

Water Supply and Management Team - Don Welsh, Chairman

•Don Welsh and Ken Miller 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.

Research and Monitoring Team - Will Lindeman, Chairman

Instream Flow Needs Study

- AMEC Earth and Environmental was hired to continue with work initiated by Golder Associates on the Inflow Needs Study (IFN)
- A River 2 D Model was constructed
- 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

- Completed the last phase of the 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, Saskatchewan and Montana

Milk River Aquifer Water Level Data Acquisition Project

- Completed collection of water level data by meeting with municipalities and water cooperative managers to collect available water level and pump test/driller records data from each organization
- This information will be compiled and provided digitally to the Geological Survey of Canada, Natural Resources Canada for incorporation into the MiRTAP model.

Surface Water Quality Monitoring Program

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

Ground Water Quality Monitoring Program

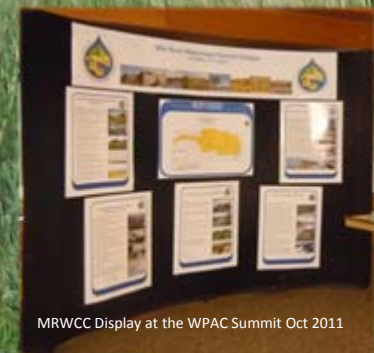
- Completed water well monitoring program that helped to establish a baseline groundwater quality for the watershed.
- Sampled approximately 10 wells in each of the 4 counties within the watershed to further assess ground water status. This is a great opportunity for landowners to document any water quality changes since 2007 and update the 2013 Milk River State of the Watershed Report.

Milk River Microbial Source Tracking Project

- Microbial source tracking to identify and quantify the main sources of fecal contamination in the Milk River, Alberta
- A collaborative project with Alberta Ag, AEW, Alberta Parks, Alberta Health Unit, Alta Provincial Laboratories for Public Health, and University of Regina



Cottonwood Wrapping on the Milk River
Summer 2011



MRWCC Display at the WPAC Summit Oct 2011



Dinosaurs on the Fall 2011 Hike Tour



Keston Prince – Verifying a well Jan 2011

Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) Team - Ken Miller, Chairman

- The IWMP Terms of Reference were endorsed by SRD
- Initiated Recreational Access Recommendations to identify access management concerns in the Milk River Watershed that fit the context of the MRWCC IWMP
- Attended the MRWA AGM and presented the MRWCC management plans and petitioned for solidarity in trans-boundary water management plans
- Drafted and on going discussions on Water quality objectives for the Milk River open water season during diversion and natural flow periods

Community Awareness & Involvement Team - Ed Sloboda, Chairman

- Hosted 6th Annual General Meeting in April 2011 with 105 members attending
- Received 1st place for entry in the Milk River Bonanza Day Parade with the float theme *"Clean Water is the essence of health living"*.
- Sponsored poster contest at local schools for kids in Grade K to 8. Forty-four 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
- 27 people participated in a the Hike Tour
- Partnered with AIPC to hold an Invasive Species Workshop
- Partnered with Agrium to deliver their Caring for Our Watersheds contest in Milk River. Two of the ten finalists were from Milk River Erle Rivers School
- Implemented one of the Caring For Our Watersheds contest proposals by constructing a bank stabilization bioengineering project to help restore native stream bank vegetation to improve wildlife habitat and reduce bank erosion
- Two Geocache sites installed, 2 others planned
- Maintained MRWCC website

LOOKING AHEAD

Our primary objectives are:

1. Continued development of the Watershed Management Plan.
2. Continue with projects that will provide data to update the SOW Report by 2013.



Stream bank Bioengineering Crew Oct 2011



Bonanza Days Float July 2011

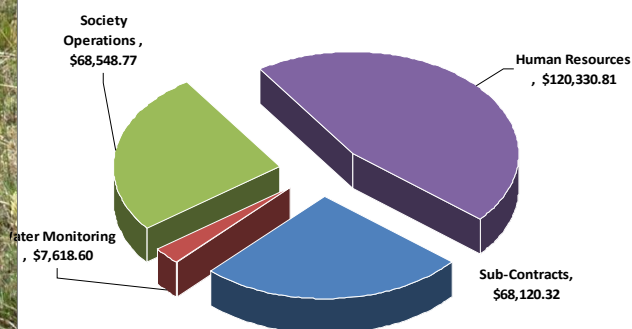
2011-2012 In-Kind Contributions

Members at large	\$46,486.20
AEW	\$7,948.40
Alberta Tourism Parks and Recreation	\$4,117.50
Town of Milk River	\$336.10
Alberta Health	\$3,837.50
CNRL	\$2,240.00
County of Forty Mile	\$11,922.00
County of Warner	\$13,098.25
University of Lethbridge	\$2,740.00
Government of Canada	\$510.00
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development	\$5,910.00
Cardston County	\$10,675.00
Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development	\$1,622.20
Alberta Conservation Association	\$561.10
Lethbridge College	\$401.10
Total in-kind	\$112,405.35

2011-2012 Income

Alberta Environment Core Funding	182,000.00
Government of Canada	22,000.00
Alberta Environment Projects	114,350.00
Alberta Treasury Branch – Milk River	300.00
Registration	750.00
Coffee Sales	632.65
Silent Auction	2,406.00
Donations	6,795.00
Interest	1,947.95
GST Rebate	7,155.91
Total	338,337.51

MRWCC 2011-2012 Expenses



CONTACT US

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