

# Milk River Watershed Council Canada

## 2012-13 Annual Report

Our Water, Our Legacy



### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN – John A. Ross

Our water quality monitoring program continues to add to our understanding of the river, allowing us to see trends, thus giving us the ability to tailor our projects to the needs of the watershed. A large fire west of Milk River last fall, while devastating to the landowners, became an opportunity to study the recovery of the native prairie. We will be sampling the water to determine what, if any, changes in run-off and water quality from the site into the river will occur without the protection of the grass. We had the great honor to host the WPAC Summit in September. We were treated to some very informative guest speakers; I continue to learn from these great people. Our second State of the Watershed report is nearing completion and should be available later this spring. It's hard to believe that it's been 5 years since the last one, but this one should be bigger and better expanding to include parts of the watershed outside of our province containing input from Montana and Saskatchewan. We've also been working very hard on the Integrated Watershed Management Plan, which should be completed this fall. This will be our community's guide for the future.

The Microbial Source Tracking project was initiated, with samples being collected throughout the summer and the DNA being analyzed. Initial reports are extremely interesting and I believe the results will be not only surprising, but also change the way in which we view water quality within not only our watershed, but potentially all watersheds.

Many thanks go out to the directors and especially our staff, Tim Romanow, Mary Lupwayi, and Sandi Riemersma. We continue to push forward and without their dedication we couldn't achieve what we did this year; and as one of the directors said, they make me look good.



## 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.

## 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.

## 2012-2013 Board of Directors:

Ed Sloboda, NGO

Aaron Domes, Provincial Government

Joan Hughson, Rural Municipality

Mike Gervais, Health

Don Welsh, Individual

Lorraine Nicol, Academia

Darlene Sakires, Industry

Ross Ford, Alternate, Rural Municipality

Brian Hills, Provincial Government

Clark Selk, Urban Municipality

Lloyd Closson, Alternate, Urban Municipality

Darcy Wills, Recreation

Paulette Fox, First Nations

Federal Government (Vacant)



**Chair:** John Ross, Agriculture

**Vice Chair:** Ken Miller, Agriculture

**Treasurer:** Will Lindeman, Water Use

**Secretary:** Warren Cunningham, Rural Municipality



## 2012-13 HIGHLIGHTS

### **Water Supply and Management Team** - Don Welsh, Chairman

- Participated in the Alberta-Montana Water Management Initiative, a joint cross-border Council formed to address water sharing and management for the Milk River

### **Research and Monitoring Team** - Will Lindeman, Chairman

#### ***MiRTAP: Milk River Transboundary Aquifer Project***

- Partnered with Geological Survey of Canada to manage a Milk River Transboundary Aquifer Program (MiRTAP) focused on the 3-dimensional model development of the Milk River Aquifer
- Isotopic analysis of groundwater samples used to determine the age of groundwater.
- Measurement of groundwater levels in the wells on the Milk River Aquifer to reflect the current state of the groundwater conditions..

#### ***Surface Water Quality Monitoring Program***

- Completed 7<sup>th</sup> year of surface water quality monitoring on the Milk River, including third year of monitoring on the Eastern Tributaries

#### ***Impact of the Milk River fire on grassland recovery and watershed health***

- Partnered with University of Alberta to study the impact of the Milk River fire on grassland recovery and watershed health as well as any potential human health concerns that could result from the fire erosion or runoff

#### ***Milk River Microbial Source Tracking Project***

- Worked on Microbial source tracking project in partnership with Agriculture and Rural Development, Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, Alberta Health Services and University of Regina to identify and quantify the main sources of fecal contamination in the Milk River. Given that water quality guidelines are driven by E. coli concentrations, this study will utilize E. coli fingerprinting as a microbial source tracking method

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

- Prepared the IWMP which makes recommendations to decision making authorities, natural resource managers, users, and residents regarding the management of land and water resources in the watershed that reflect the communities desired watershed outcomes
- The Milk River IWMP will link the issues of groundwater and surface water quality/quantity, biodiversity, landuse, and stewardship with the watershed's economic and social priorities.

### **Community Awareness & Involvement Team** - Ed Sloboda, Chairman

- Hosted the Annual General Meeting
- Hosted the 2012 Watershed Planning Advisory Council Summit September 24 to 27. The Summit was a combination of field tours and room presentations.
- Community programs:
  - Canoe Trip - June 23, 2012
  - Hike Tours – October 13, 2012
- Youth Engagement Programs:
  - School Poster Contest
  - Youth Range Days – July 17 to 19, 2012
  - Agrium's Caring for our Watersheds Contest
- Completed two issues of The Meander newsletter
- Maintained 2 Geocache sites
- Maintained the MRWCC website
- Represented the MRWCC at community events such as Bonanza Day





## State of the Watershed Report

- Completed the second edition State of the Watershed (SOW) Report. This comprehensive document integrates many aspects within the watershed to determine its status in terms of environment and social and economic well-being. The findings of this report will enable the Milk River Watershed Council Canada and its partners to assess current conditions of the watershed in the development of a Watershed Management Plans.
- The second edition SOW report now includes the Montana and Saskatchewan portions of the watershed .

### Executive Director's Report – Tim Romanow

2012-2013 has been an eventful year for the MRWCC. Our watershed hosted the 2012 Watershed Planning and Advisory Council Summit where we showcased challenges, opportunities, and incredible messages of stewardship within our watershed. Representatives from across the province's 11 major watersheds attended the summit, many of which had never been to our area before. Work on our new Transboundary State of the Watershed (SOW) report has been very rewarding; building new partnerships across our watershed boundaries has been a model for other watersheds in Alberta. Seeing the increase in knowledge and development of new projects that have been underway since my initial involvement in the 2008 (SOW) edition has been tremendous.

Through the coming year we will continue to work with volunteers on the Watershed Council and Teams in our continued initiative to build and strengthen partnerships with our stakeholders. I personally continue to be inspired and grateful to work with such a dedicated group of volunteers and community leaders. The MRWCC is also moving towards implementation of our Integrated Watershed Management Plan. Though there are challenges ahead, there are also many opportunities, and we will continue to provide a forum for community concerns to be addressed and be leaders for sustainable management of our watershed.

### LOOKING AHEAD

Our primary objectives are:

1. Implementation of the Integrated Watershed Management Plan.
2. Continue with projects that will improve our knowledge of the Watershed, and contribute to sustainable Watershed Management.

## 2012-13 Budget

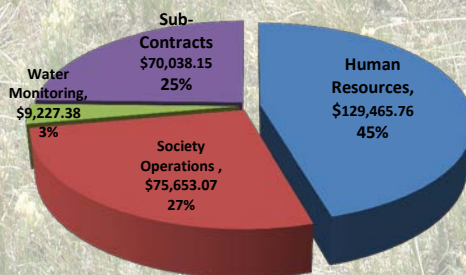
### 2012-2013 In-Kind Contributions

Members at large	\$47,345.50
ESRD	\$27,064.20
Alberta Tourism Parks and Recreation	\$4,486.00
Town of Milk River	\$1,504.50
Alberta Health	\$3,909.50
CNRL	\$810.00
County of Forty Mile	\$4,966.50
County of Warner	\$11,351.50
University of Lethbridge	\$6,400.00
Government of Canada	\$720.00
Village of Coutts	\$1,202.50
Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development	\$1,770.20
Alberta Conservation Association	\$8,943.10
Lethbridge College	\$401.10
Range View Ranch Vacations	\$8,000.00
Cypress County	\$11,110.50
Alberta Conservation Association	\$842.20
Cardston County	\$10,000.00
Total in-kind	<b>\$150,827.30</b>

### 2012-2013 Income

Government of Canada	\$ 15,125.00
ESRD Core	S 200,000.00
ESRD Projects	\$ 60,000.00
Interest	\$ 1,140.00
Donations	\$ 19,945.00
Silent Auction	\$ 1,817.00
Conference Registration	\$16,575.19
GST Rebate	\$ 7,767.64
Total	<b>\$322,369.83</b>

### MRWCC 2012/13 Expenses



#### CONTACT US

Milk River Watershed Council Canada  
PO Box 313  
Milk River, AB T0K 1M

#### Tim Romanow – Executive Director

Email: [tim@milkriverwatershedcouncil.ca](mailto:tim@milkriverwatershedcouncil.ca)  
Phone: 403-647-4342

#### Mary Lupwayi - Program Coordinator

Email: [mary@milkriverwatershedcouncil.ca](mailto:mary@milkriverwatershedcouncil.ca)  
Phone: 403-647-3808