



# Milk River Watershed Council Canada

## 2013-14 Annual Report

*Our Water ~ Our Legacy*

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

We were very excited to announce the completion of our second State of the Watershed report this year. This one is a real break-through because it's our first transboundary SOW report, combining information from our friends in Montana and Saskatchewan. We have also been analyzing the results we've gathered after two years of data from our Microbial Source Tracking study. Our Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) is also nearing completion. It will outline best management practices and processes that could be adopted to preserve and increase economic health and development as well as sustain environmental health and protection within our basin. We are continuing to monitor water quality along the Milk River, which adds to our understanding of the river, allowing us to see trends. This gives us the ability to tailor our future projects to the needs of the watershed.

We are looking forward to releasing our completed IWMP in 2014, the plan is a guidance document for watershed managers and we are working hard to ensure the recommendations reflect our communities values, needs, and priorities. We are also excited to continue our partnership with Alberta Agriculture and the local municipalities to continue to further our Microbial Source Tracking project, with research into the relationship of bacterial counts and pathogenic ecoli. The goal is to continue to better understand the relationship of naturalized ecoli and potential health risks to make wise landuse and water quality decisions.

Many thanks go out to the directors and especially our staff, Tim Romanow, Mary Lupwayi, and our new Education Outreach Coordinator, Cyd Cunningham, welcome aboard. Sandi Riemersma who has been with us since day one will now be working with us in the future on an individual contract basis. Thanks for all the hard work you have done. I couldn't be happier to work with this group of people, as I've said before; these people 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.

### Transboundary Relationships

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

### 2013-2014 Board of Directors:

Ed Sloboda, NGO

Dennis Spackman/Aaron Domes; Provincial Government/Alternate

Brian Hills, Provincial Government

Joan Hughson, Rural Municipality

Mike Gervais, Health

Roy Audet, Individual

Lorraine Nicol, Academia

Darlene Sakires, Industry

Warren Cunningham/Ross Ford, Rural Municipality/Alternate

Suzanne Liebelt/Lloyd Closson, Urban Municipality/Alternate

Darcy Wills, Recreation

Paulette Fox, First Nations

Frank Larney, Federal Government

#### Chair:

John Ross,  
Agriculture

#### Vice Chair:

Ken Miller,  
Agriculture

#### Treasurer:

Will  
Lindeman,  
Water Use

#### Secretary:

Warren  
Cunningham,  
Rural  
Municipality



## 2013-14 HIGHLIGHTS

### **Water Supply and Management Team** – Ken Miller, 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

- Completed 8<sup>th</sup> year of water quality monitoring on the Milk River, including the fourth year of monitoring on the Eastern Tributaries.
- Partnered with the University of Alberta, Waterloo, Town of Milk River and ESRD to research the impacts of grassland fire on water quality within the Watershed and to assess potential health risks associated with burn contaminants to municipal water treatment systems.
- Completed the 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. Prepared a summary of results and incorporated within the 2013 SOW report.
- Developed in partnership with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, and Agriculture Canada – CAAP program, a genomic quick test to differentiate between fecal E. coli. and naturalized environmental E. coli within the Milk River, finalized tech transfer plan and information factsheets to ensure broadened delivery.
- Partnered with the Federal Government to manage a Milk River Transboundary Aquifer Program (MiRTAP) focused on the 3-dimensional model development of the Milk River Aquifer.
- Assisted the County of Warner in the establishment of a local Red Creek Watershed Stewardship group by providing program coordination and monitoring assistance to the group.

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

- Revised the Draft Milk River Integrated Watershed Management Plan after stakeholder feedback from the Community, Rural and Urban Municipalities, and Oil and Gas Industry.
- Hosted 4 Working group meetings responsible for completing various aspects of the IWMP.
- Hosted an IWMP Stakeholder meeting to seek input from various subject matter specialists and review a series of discussion papers that were prepared for topic areas that included: water quality, riparian areas, biodiversity, tourism, recreation and access, agricultural activity, and oil and gas activity.

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

- Hosted the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting.
- Participated in the Agrium sponsored Caring for Our Watershed Program.
- Presented a Youth Engagement Program to local schools including hosting an Annual Poster Contest, Classroom and field presentations.
- Established Geocache sites that provide visitors with an appreciation for riparian areas .
- Attended Milk River Bonanza Day and participated in local parade with a float and presented a MRWCC display that brought awareness to MRWCC activities to the community.
- Completed 2 newsletter publications and an Annual Report.
- Updated MRWCC website, expanded digital library, and incorporated social media into communications.
- Representation of MRWCC at meetings and events.
- Presented workshops and meetings including the Water Well Decommissioning Workshop
- Partnered with Alberta Parks and local schools to develop and implement a Youth Engagement Program to deliver watershed related education materials and foster a stewardship ethic within both the rural and urban communities.
- Partnered with local rural municipalities and ESRD Public Lands to develop and deliver the 8<sup>th</sup> annual Southern Alberta Youth Range Days program.
- Maintains 2 Geocache sites

## State of the Watershed Report

- Completed and distributed the Second Edition Transboundary State of the Watershed Report (SOW). A comprehensive document that integrates many aspects within the watershed to determine its status in terms of environment and social and economic well-being. Printed and digital media versions are now available throughout the local and scientific community, MRWCC website, and local school libraries.

### Executive Director's Report, Moving Forward – Tim Romanow

The past year has been eventful for the MRWCC; we have released the Transboundary State of the Watershed report which summarized research and monitoring that has been completed since the first edition report in 2008. By building new partnerships across our watershed boundaries we have realized that we cannot manage the Alberta portion of our watershed in isolation, we need to consider the greater watershed and connectivity of resources beyond water sharing; with our neighbours in Montana and Saskatchewan. In response, the MRWCC will draft a transboundary research and monitoring needs assessment, and host a Transboundary Share Forum with the intended outcome of a more inclusive health monitoring and reporting action plan. Work continues on the completion of the Milk River Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP). The MRWCC is already working to develop projects that will support implementation plans in our community. Following a MRWCC strategic planning session this past fall, renewed guidance will allow us to pursue opportunities to secure water for economic sustainability and lead the development of a municipal water conservation and security strategy in the coming years. We are excited about the opportunity to share community values of stewardship and sound management with youth from our area and beyond, and the addition of Cyd Cunningham will provide capacity for us to support youth in our Watershed; grow to become stewards of the watershed with a reverence for sustainable management. The MRWCC will continue with projects that will improve our knowledge of the watershed, and contribute to sustainable watershed management. Including, continued water quality monitoring and further work identifying fecal bacterial sources and relationships of pathogenic bacterium in the watershed. The MRWCC will also continue to work on programs that promote environmentally sustainable agriculture and support local community stewardship initiatives and groups such as Red Creek and the new Manyberries landowner group.

## 2013-14 Budget

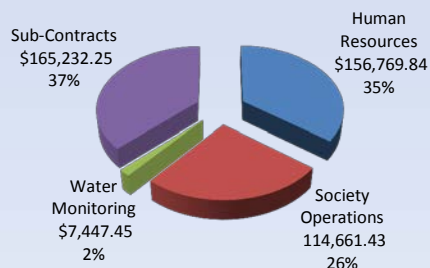
### 2013-2014 In-Kind Contributions

Members at large	\$31,241.50
ESRD	\$76,535.90
Alberta Tourism Parks and Recreation	\$6,424.55
Town of Milk River	\$1,758.20
Alberta Health	\$2,059.30
CNRL	\$2,680.00
County of Forty Mile	\$2,653.75
County of Warner	\$18,587.35
University of Lethbridge	\$50.00
Government of Canada	\$2,674.05
Village of Coutts	\$2,670.50
Cardston County	11,403.25
Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development	\$83,339.30
Cows and Fish	\$160.00
MRWCC	\$7,200.00
Alberta Conservation Association	\$8,623.85
Association	\$2,527.10
Cypress County	\$10,000.00
<b>Total in-kind</b>	<b>\$270,588.60</b>

### 2013-2014 Income

Govt Canada	\$	49,313.80
AENV Core	\$	250,000.00
AENV Projects	\$	70,000.00
Interest	\$	1,234.71
Donations/Silent auction	\$	14,842.00
Workshop & Tours	\$	1,958.46
GST Rebate	\$	1,984.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>389,333.72</b>

### MRWCC 2013/14 Expenses Total \$444,110.97



#### CONTACT US

Milk River Watershed Council Canada  
240 Main St. (Town office Building)  
PO Box 313  
Milk River, AB T0K 1M

#### Tim Romanow - Executive Director

Email: [tim@mrwcc.ca](mailto:tim@mrwcc.ca)

Phone: 403-647-4342

#### Mary Lupwayi - Program Coordinator

Email: [mary@mrwcc.ca](mailto:mary@mrwcc.ca)

Phone: 403-647-3808

#### Cyd Cunningham - Education/Outreach Coordinator

Email: [cyd@mrwcc.ca](mailto:cyd@mrwcc.ca)

Phone: 403-647-4306