



Milk River Water Monitoring update

Long Term Water monitoring is critically important to understand potential impacts of farming and ranching, industrial activities, towns, and villages, as well as water management impact on the aquatic environment and all water users. Water Monitoring along the Milk River sites is now wrapped up for the 2022 season. You can access water quality reports at <https://www.mrwcc.ca/index.php/projects/water-quality-monitoring/> Watch out for the 2022 reports available this winter.

The Milk River historic surface water quality is now on DataStream, an open-access platform for water quality data, with the aim of promoting knowledge sharing and advancing collaborative water stewardship. The Milk River data can be accessed at: <https://doi.org/10.25976/33tj-bs38> Once analysis is completed, the 2022 data will be downloaded and available this winter.

The Council is working to produce a 15-year long-term water quality trend report. Coming soon at www.mrwcc.ca

Thank you to our municipal partners for the continued support, local landowners for doing a great job of taking care of our waterways and ensuring we have the highest possible quality water resources within the watershed, and William King for his assistance with water sampling.

Milk River Surface Water Monitoring 2022



SECURING A HOME FOR BATS in the Milk River Watershed: Project Updates

Summer Field Data

Beginning in late spring until mid-September, the MRWCC was very busy working with landowners to determine species presence on their properties. Through passive acoustic monitoring, recordings of bat calls were collected every night at different properties across the watershed. Across 32 properties, there were 13,945 recordings of bat calls in total.

Of these calls, the most common species group detected was known as Myotis 40k species, which includes the Little Brown Myotis (listed as an endangered species), the Western Small-footed Myotis, and Long-legged Myotis. Most promising, though, was that there were identifications of all species groups across the watershed. This indicated that there is a diverse and abundant population of bats on private lands.

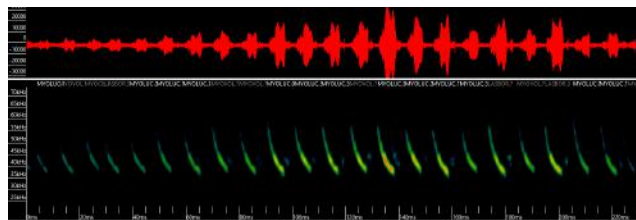
This information has been submitted to Alberta eBat, which is project intended to expand the North American Bat Monitoring Program (NABat). Overall, these recordings will contribute to a continent-wide bat monitoring program to better understand provincial bat distributions and indices of abundance.

Where are they Now?

All about hibernation and migration

There are 9 species of bats that can be found in Alberta, and 8 of these species can be found in the watershed. All of Alberta's bat species are insectivores, meaning their diet consists solely of insects and spiders. So, what do they do in the winter when their food source is not readily available? To survive the cold winter months, bats have adapted through two different methods.

Long-distance migration is the survival mechanism of 3 of Albert's bats (the Hoary, Eastern Red, and Silver-haired bat). These species leave the province altogether and move to other regions to overwinter. While exact locations aren't clearly known, researchers believe the bats may be in southern U.S., Mexico,



Spectrogram of a bat calling from the Myotis 40k group. This call was likely made by a Little Brown Myotis (*Myotis lucifugus*).

and even some warmer regions of British Columbia.

Year-round resident bats are the species that appear to hibernate through the winter. The majority of the province's bats are year-round residents, with the Big Brown Bat and all of the Myotis species believed to hibernate. Hibernation is the extreme reduction in metabolic, heart, and respiratory rate, which allows for bats to survive long periods without needing food. In fact, a bat's heart rate can drop from an average of 200-300 beats per minute, to as little as 10 beats per minute!

Very little is known about the locations that bats are overwintering in Alberta, but potential hibernacula habitats may include deep rock crevices, mines, caves, and even old buildings that provide stable temperature and humidity. The optimal temperature for bats to hibernate is between 2-5 degrees Celsius but should not dip below 0 degrees.

Threats exist for bats for both of these overwintering strategies. For long-distance migrants, a significant threat is from wind turbines. For hibernating bats, a pressing threat is the disease known as White Nose Syndrome (WNS). This is caused by a fungus that grows on the snouts and wings of bats as they hibernate. Bats rouse from their hibernation to wipe away this irritant, which taps into their valuable fat stores and ultimately leads to death over time. WNS has not been confirmed in Alberta to date, but the introduction of the disease into the province



Summer Outreach Assistant deploying the acoustic monitoring equipment.

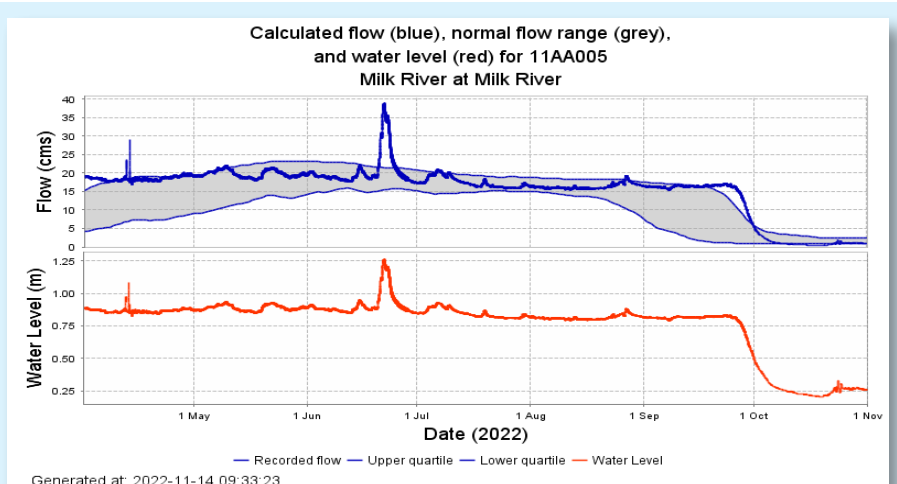
is expected in the coming years. The Little Brown Myotis is one of the species that is most significantly impacted by the disease and has been listed as an endangered species due to significant declines throughout North America.

Do you think you have bats hibernating on your property? We would love to hear from you! We are looking to identify bat hibernacula across the watershed to learn more about where bats are overwintering. Please contact Allison at allison@mrwcc.ca or call 403-647-4035 to learn more.

Partially funded by  Environment and Climate Change Canada

WATER SUPPLY AND FORECAST

After a full summer of constant diversion flows at or near the capacity of 600cfs on the Milk River the diversion has since been shutdown for the winter season. Natural flows have maintained near 2m³/s. Alberta environment weather forecasting has noted even with the late summer rain events we are still well below the normal precipitation annual totals across the basin. Average snowpacks are anticipated for the upper St Mary's which hopefully will result in an uneventful 2023 season for our irrigators. US storage in the upper St Mary's is near normal winter operational levels. Moderate to extreme drought levels persist in the lower Montana portion of the watershed. The United States Department of Agriculture drought monitor is predicting a 60% chance of higher-than-average precipitation for the winter months so hopefully that trend will persevere with better dugout and wetland storage conditions this spring.



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International St. Mary and Milk Rivers Study Public Meeting

The International Joint Commission's (IJC) International St. Mary and Milk Rivers Study, launched in November 2021, is exploring options to improve access to apportioned waters by each country, in recognition of climate change and challenges to apportionment since the original 1921 Order was issued. The effort includes a desire to achieve long-term resilience in accessing the shared waters of the St. Mary and Milk Rivers.



A community public meeting was held October 24th in a packed room at the Civic Centre in Milk River. The purpose of these meetings was to update the public on the study's progress to date, as well as to solicit public feedback and answer questions. The Study Board is very interested in hearing the perspectives of citizens around the basin and Members of the Study's Public Advisory Board were in attendance.

According to the International St. Mary Milk Rivers Study Board Work Plan; the study will formulate and evaluate non-structural water management options and structural water infrastructure options that may improve water management and apportionment to achieve maximum benefits for both countries and their water needs, recognizing needs to balance benefits, impacts, and tradeoffs, and respecting environmental needs and benefits.

The overall goals of the study are to: describe the historical water availability, apportionment, and irrigation in the watershed; Develop combinations of potential changes in apportionment procedures and infrastructure for simulation; Develop updated hydrologic and water management models to evaluate water availability under various climate and apportionment scenarios; Describe the socio-economic and ecological effects of the modelled scenarios; And ultimately recommend to the IJC preferred combination(s) of changes in administrative procedures and/or infrastructure that will improve each country's ability to access its share of water from these basins.

A few of the key notes from community members related to the restoration of diversion flows from approximately 600cfs to designed capacity of 850cfs, noting that there will be significant erosion and potential damage to infrastructure if river flows are increased. Also regarding the apportionment of flows it was demonstrated that administrative changes should take into consideration the volumes of water used by real time monitoring of water use vs current assumed usage values, and that if we have knowledge of water shortages irrigated water users can adjust management to extend the season based on crop water needs not hard shut off dates. It was clearly noted by the committee members in attendance that the outcomes of the study will benefit both countries and that a clear combination of administrative changes and infrastructure will be necessary. It was also noted that Canada currently receives on average 70,000-acre feet of water above our share of the St Marys' river, this significantly benefits the St Marys' Irrigation district but not the Milk river basin water users. Considering significant expansion of irrigation across the south Saskatchewan River basin, removal of this water as intended by the US from the Canadian system will add stress to the St Marys system in water short years. This is outside of the bounds of the current study but does have to be a consideration for Alberta water regulators.

Thank you to all the community members who participated in the meeting, this was a strong show of support for the project and demonstrated the importance of water security to our community and IJC. As the project proceeds, we will share updates and look forward to hearing additional outcomes.



State of the Watershed Report (SOW) update 2023

Project team members are hard at work compiling new and updated data and maps for the 2023 Milk River Watershed Transboundary State of the Watershed Report! It's been nearly 10 years since the last successful SOW report and a lot has changed regarding the management of our watershed and our current state of knowledge. The renewed SOW report will build on the 2013 report with 10 years of monitoring and events such as the 2020 diversion failure, significant

changes in land management particularly in Saskatchewan, and shifts some positive and some challenging for biodiversity. Updated resource mapping and incredible imagery will be weaved through the chapters of the new SOW with an anticipated release date of Summer 2023. Do you have a keen eye for photography or an interest in art? Watch for opportunities for your work to be included! Stay tuned for details to be announced this winter.



Photo Credit: Bob Dunlap <https://inaturalist.ca/observations/53866273>

Weidemeyers Admiral Butterfly Monitoring

Weidemeyer's Admiral (*Limenitis weidemeyerii*) is a relatively large butterfly distinguished by a strong and rapid flight using a flap and glide style. Their dominant black wings have noticeable white bands on both the upper fore and hind wings and white-scaled banding of the lower underside of their hind wings. The wingspan ranges from 55-72 mm in size. The Weidemeyer's Admiral is only known to occur in a small geographic area of southern Alberta and this distribution is at the northern periphery of its range, which is continental and south to western Texas and extreme northeast Mexico.

In Alberta, the Weidemeyer's Admiral is associated with woody riparian habitats that occur along a 100 km region of the Milk River and its tributaries from the Writing On Stone Provincial Park area to Onefour. This butterfly is listed as Special Concern on Schedule 1 of

the Species at Risk Act (SARA) and in the Province of Alberta under the Wildlife Act. The primary limiting factor for Weidemeyer's Admiral is the natural availability and connectivity of suitable habitat such as riparian floodplains and shrubby coulees where preferred host plants for larvae and nectar sources for adult butterflies occur. Threats facing this rare butterfly include any type of water management that reduces or eliminates shallow stream pools, invasive non-native/alien species, fires, hybridization, and prolonged drought; however, most of these threats are poorly understood.

Weidemeyer's Admiral is known to be one generation per year in Alberta with peak adult observation from late June to early July. Historically, adult observations have been as early as June 7th and as late as August 8th. Weidemeyer's Admiral is associated with streamside habitats where larval food plants occur, which typically include various species of willow, cottonwoods and

poplars, chokecherry, Saskatoon/serviceberry, thorny buffaloberry and western snowberry/buckbrush. Western White Clematis, a viny flowering herbaceous species, is also an important nectar and food source. Shallow stream pools are known to be critical sources of moisture and mineral uptake for this species.

In July 2022, the Milk River Watershed Council Canada (MRWCC) initiated an informal study in the western portion of the Writing On Stone Provincial Park and one of the project objectives was to note sightings of the Weidemeyer's Admiral. The study site includes suitable habitat of trees, shrubs, and flowering herbaceous plants. No Unfortunately, no sightings were observed in this short duration study and MRWCC would like to widen the observation network in the summer of 2023, possibly with your help. If you are interested in helping the MRWCC in the spring and summer of 2023 to help report butterfly sightings, please contact us.



Transboundary Grasslands Partnership Workshop

- A New Chapter for Grassland Conservation

The Transboundary Grassland Partnership (TGP) is working collaboratively to sustain healthy transboundary native biodiversity, the supporting grassland ecosystems, and communities. Our ranching heritage ties these landscapes together in Saskatchewan, Montana, and Alberta. In the past the borders and governing systems have limited the discussion of how to maintain these landscapes and support our commu-

nities. For seven years, the TGP has provided a forum where transboundary jurisdictions and sectors work collaboratively to conserve and enhance native grassland landscapes actively to connect these initiatives, all while enhancing native grassland conservation.

At the November 2022 workshop hosted in Medicine Hat, over 60 managers and landowners from all three jurisdictions identified projects and programs that are working well to

support producers and how to adapt programs working in Montana to Saskatchewan and Alberta. The 2022 workshop focused on hearing from producers directly how new programs or incentives can support their operations bottom lines for economics and stewardship. This grassroots approach has been critical to build trust and credibility with our watershed partners.

Acknowledging our 2022/23 Funders

We wish to thank all those who provided funding to the MRWCC this fiscal year to assist the great work that the Council does to support watershed planning, monitoring, and stewardship within our community. We have accomplished a lot with these donations. Without your support much of this accomplishment would not be possible.

Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) - \$275,000



Alberta Environment and Parks has been the main funder for the Council since its inception in 2006.

This project was undertaken with the financial support of:
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de :



Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) - \$60,000

Producers leading the way Phase 2: a Two-year grant to help address gaps to increase native grassland conserva-

tion and species at risk stewardship within the Milk River Watershed

Other Individual/Corporate Support

In addition, we wish to thank Board members, Team members and all volunteers who give their time and resources generously to the cause of the MRWCC. Each year we receive over \$200,000 in in-kind contributions.

Thanks to the individual and corporate donations that we have received. These donations are essential to leveraging project funding from other funders.

You can view sponsors of our past online auction at www.mrwcc.ca

Seeking Donations for the MRWCC 2023 Silent Auction

The MRWCC would like to extend their appreciation to those who generously donated to our past auctions. As you are aware, the past two years we were not able to have an in-person meeting, where we would host our silent auction, due to Covid related restrictions. Last year, we hosted an online auction, and because of your generosity the auction raised over \$3,000. These funds were used to help support watershed planning, monitoring, education, and stewardship within our community.

We are so pleased to announce that in 2023 we will resume to having the silent auction at our Community Appreciation Forum scheduled on March 22. As we have done in the past, we would like to ask for your support for items to be sold at the silent auction. The money raised will sup-

port community driven watershed stewardship initiatives. These individual and corporate donations are essential to leveraging other project funding.

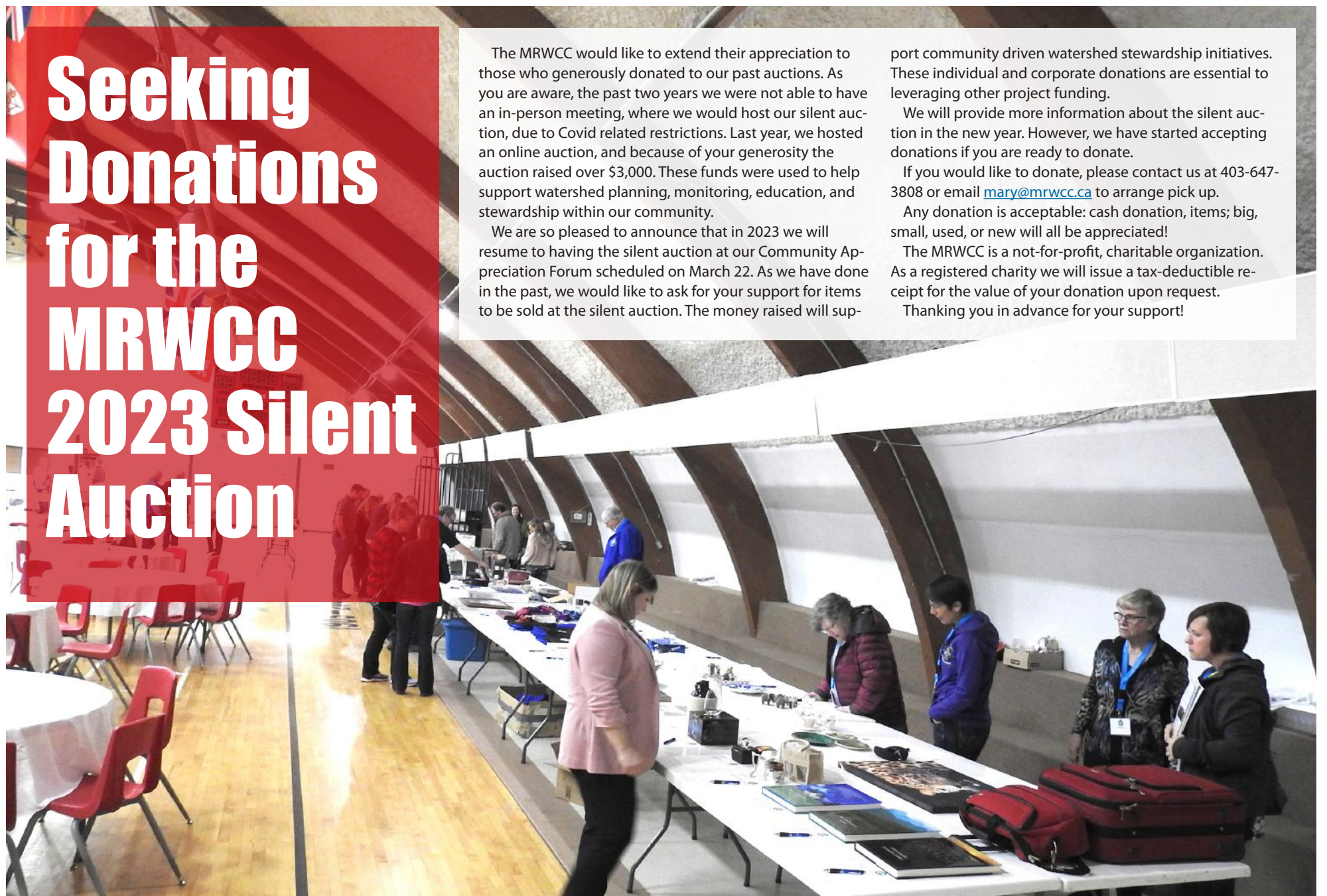
We will provide more information about the silent auction in the new year. However, we have started accepting donations if you are ready to donate.

If you would like to donate, please contact us at 403-647-3808 or email mary@mrwcc.ca to arrange pick up.

Any donation is acceptable: cash donation, items; big, small, used, or new will all be appreciated!

The MRWCC is a not-for-profit, charitable organization. As a registered charity we will issue a tax-deductible receipt for the value of your donation upon request.

Thanking you in advance for your support!





Milk River Watershed Council Canada Annual Poster and Video Contest 2023

Calling all Milk River students! We're advertising early to get those brains planning for ideas coming into the new year!

Theme:
"The Milk River Watershed is unique because:"

The Poster Contest
Students in grades 1-6:
We would like you to draw a picture that illustrates what you think makes the watershed unique. Please draw the artwork using pencil, water colours, crayons, pastels, or acrylics.

The Video Contest
Students in grades 6-12:
We would like you to create a short video to demonstrate what aspects make our watershed unique. Videos can be in the form of short films, TikToks, music videos etc. but should not exceed 2 minutes.

Prizes:
All entries will be on display during the Community Appreciation Forum on March 22, 2023, where the winners will be awarded their prizes. There will be winners selected from each grade with entries. Keep an eye out for more information. Details on the contests will be provided to schools in the New Year. For more information contact Allison at 403-647-4035 or email allison@mrwcc.ca



**REGISTER AND PARTICIPATE FOR FREE!
WATERSHED PRESENTATIONS AVAILABLE!**



CARING FOR OUR Watersheds[®] CONTEST

OPEN TO GRADES 7-12 ACROSS ALBERTA

COMPETE TO WIN \$1,000 CASH!

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO IMPROVE YOUR WATERSHED?

TAKE YOUR INTERESTS AND APPLY THEM!

Identify an environmental concern in your local watershed. Come up with a realistic solution then submit your idea as a proposal including a budget, visuals and project timeline. Finalists **WIN CASH PRIZES** for themselves and their school or club, with additional funding available to implement any realistic solution.

NEARLY \$20,000 WILL BE AWARDED TO STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS WHO PARTICIPATE.

All entries are also eligible for a participation reward and implementation funding.

This program is brought to you by:




CONTACT

Kandra Forbes, Program Coordinator
Phone: 780-672-0276
Toll Free: 1-888-672-0276
E-mail: kandra@battleriverwatershed.ca

Find contest details and deadlines here:
or visit
CaringForOurWatersheds.com





MILK RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL CANADA 2023 HERITAGE TREE PROGRAM



2020 Heritage Trees – Sandstone Ranch

Nominate a tree or trees for Heritage Tree recognition, whether it is located on your own property, a friend or family member's property, or in a public space (we will verify with the owner). To nominate or for more information please contact us at:

mary@mrwcc.ca
(403) 647-3808
240 Main Street, Box 313
Milk River, Alberta, T0K 1M0
www.mrwcc.ca

**Nomination Deadline is
February 17, 2023**



What is the Heritage Tree Program?

- ❖ The Heritage Tree Program identifies and records the location of heritage trees as well as details such as age, size, appearance and most importantly their cultural and historical significance. The stories and photos of recognized trees will then be featured on the MRWCC website.
- ❖ In addition, the identification of these trees enables the MRWCC and community-minded organizations to locate potential native seed/cuttings sources. Collecting these seeds will ensure the successional planting of legacy trees for future generations to enjoy.
- ❖ Identified trees will also be provided with a wildlife/livestock proof fence and recognition plaque.
- ❖ Planting new protected legacy trees will also be encouraged under the Heritage Tree Program.

What is a Heritage Tree?

- ❖ Notable because of its size, form, shape, beauty, age, rarity, significance, or other distinctive features;
- ❖ A living relic that displays evidence of significance;
- ❖ A prominent community landmark;
- ❖ A specimen associated with a historic person, place, event, or period;
- ❖ A representative of a farm or farmstead planted by ancestors within the community;
- ❖ A tree associated with local folklore, myths, legends, or First Nations traditions;
- ❖ A tree that you choose to plant in honour of a loved one that you will care for and watch grow over the years.

Objectives of the Heritage Tree Program

The Heritage Tree Program allows residents of the Milk River watershed to celebrate the pioneering spirit of the community by identifying and nominating trees of local significance within the watershed.

- ❖ Heritage trees help ensure the sustainability of our riparian forests for future generations to enjoy.
- ❖ Trees also play a role in not only telling the stories of local history, but also play pivotal roles in providing habitat for many wildlife species, and stabilize fragile prairie soils in erosion prone areas.
- ❖ Native trees along riparian areas of the Milk River are rare and require additional protection and care for propagation.

Southern Alberta Youth Range Days 2023

July 2023
Ages 13-18
Location: TBD
Duration: 3 days, 2 nights



Youth of all backgrounds and experience are welcome!

Explore our working Rangelands, learn about livestock and wildlife management, listen to stories by the campfire, and more!

The Range Days committee is happy announce that we have started planning for the 2023 Youth Range Days Program. This event will be a 3 day program to engage youth on everything from rangelands, watersheds, wildlife, and natural resource management. We plan to have special in-field activities and presentations that can cover everything from pollinators, bats, species at risk conservation, and rangeland management! We invite youth from all backgrounds to join us on this exciting trip to learn more about the important watershed we call home.

Keep an eye out for future updates on location, time, and registration!



[Southern Alberta Youth Range Days](#)

For more information contact: youthrangedays@gmail.com
or Allison Choquette at 403-647-4035.

Summer Student report

The MRWCC was so lucky to have Tyler Eresman as our summer student employee for 4 months. Tyler assisted on several projects. His wits and teamwork spirit made him a great addition to the MRWCC. Following is an excerpt that Tyler left the council upon his exit:

"My summer working for the watershed has been a fantastic experience, and one I am grateful to have been offered. While some of the undertakings were outside my comfort zone, I was never overly concerned, as everyone has been nothing but supportive and kind to me these past few months. Whether I was conducting field work in Haffner Coulee, or helping put on a barbecue for the IJC, I felt comfortable and sure of what I was doing thanks to the support of the many people that make up the Watershed Council, whether that be board members or staff. Over the summer I worked on the following projects: From the Field, The Bat Project, Youth Range Days, the WOSPP Partnership, Recreational River Users Survey, Outreach for School Programs at WOS, Water Sampling, as well as various other small projects that seemed to be constantly

arising. If I had to choose the highlight of my summer, I would be hard pressed to choose just one. The water sampling days with Mary and William were always enjoyable, and I learned lots on the drive to and from the Pinhorn. The Haffner Coulee Tributary Assessment was another highlight, as I thoroughly enjoy fieldwork, learned lots from Ron, was able to see a beautiful piece of native prairie, and work in ecologically unique riparian plant community. Being able to develop and conduct a program (The Prairie Plant Walk) at WOSPP is something that I feel both proud and lucky to have been able to do. It was a great way to talk about our native flora and fauna, the importance of biodiversity in both a cultural and ecological sense, the watershed, and all the important work the Council does. I would like to extend a special thanks to Tim, Mary, and Allison, as they are some of the finest co-workers I have had the pleasure to work with, and their continued efforts help make this one of Alberta's finest WPACs. I hope to attend some of the events the watershed is planning in the coming months, even though I will no longer be employed by the Council, as I would like to continue to learn about and explore this unique corner of Alberta."



Milk River Watershed Council Canada 2023 ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AWARDS



Nomination submissions should include this application form and written information about the nominee's environmental work/projects for consideration.

For detailed information, check out the Environmental Awards webpage at

Forward nomination form and written submission by mail or email at:

MRWCC
240 Main Street
Box 313
Milk River, Alberta
T0K 1M0

or
Email: mary@mrwcc.ca

NOMINATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED

By February 17, 2023



I would like to Nominate:

(Please Print)

Please mark an (x) for the chosen category

Individual _____

Family _____

Commercial Business _____

Environmental Group _____

Contact:

Mailing Address:

Phone (H): _____

Phone (C): _____

Email:

Please provide the following information. (Please print)

Nominator Name:

Nominator's Contact:

Phone (H): _____

Phone (C): _____

Email:

SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

Nominations will be assessed by a review committee chosen by the MRWCC Board of Directors.

To be eligible for an award, an individual, family, business, or environmental group must have been instrumental in demonstrating responsible environmental management practices by promoting public awareness, understanding and active concern for the enhancement and protection of the environment.

In addition, the review committee will also consider the nominees':

- long-term service and commitment;
- voluntary contributions; and;
- innovative approach.

SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENT

Describe in 400 words or less why your nominee deserves to win the MRWCC Environmental Stewardship Award. Ensure that your summary outlines how the nominee's efforts and achievements fulfil the award criteria as defined in this brochure. You are encouraged to include letters of endorsement and other supporting materials.

NOMINATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY February 17, 2023

The Milk River Watershed Council Canada (MRWCC) is looking for nominations to honour individuals, families, commercial businesses, and environmental groups that are good environmental stewards of the Milk River watershed. Nominations are in the following categories:

Individual • Family • Commercial Business • Environmental Group

Nominate anyone in the above categories that has demonstrated outstanding environmental and conservation efforts to sustain, protect, and enhance the environment within the Milk River Watershed. Self-nominations are welcome.

Milk River Watershed Council Canada

240 Main Street, Box 313 Milk River, Alberta T0K 1M0 or mary@mrwcc.ca (403) 647-3808



UPCOMING EVENTS:

Please save these dates:

Community Appreciation Forum - March 22, 2023

The MRWCC is pleased to bring back the Community Appreciation Forum, after cancelling the event for two years due to Covid.

The Forum is an opportunity to celebrate the unique aspects of the Milk River watershed and the growing community involvement in managing these areas that are important to us all.

We will share local success stories and celebrate the community's involvement in being good stewards of the environment.

The silent auction at the Community Appreciation Forum is back!! Please watch out for more information in the new year!

MRWCC 18th Annual General Meeting – May 30, 2023

Please save the date for our 2023 MRWCC AGM which is scheduled for May 30. We are planning an in-person meeting.

The following Board of Directors' seats are open for nominations in 2023:

- Non-Government Organization - Environmental
- Non-Government Organization - General
- Agriculture – Farmer
- Agriculture – Rancher
- Water Users
- Municipal District/County (2 seats)
- Provincial Government (Alberta Environment and Parks)
- Health
- Member at Large (2 seats)
- First Nations (Currently vacant)

Watch out for details about the AGM on our website at: www.mrwcc.ca



Milk River Watershed Council Canada 2022 Science Forum



December 1, 2022, 10 am to 2:30 pm

County of Warner ASB Meeting Room

Please join us and discover some of the eye-catching scientific research and monitoring projects taking place in the Milk River watershed and surrounding areas whose objectives impact the watershed ecosystem.

Come and witness experts share their findings with engaged community members and stakeholders!

For those not able to attend in person, there will be a virtual meeting option. Details to be announced!

Topics include:

- Securing a home for bats in the Milk River watershed
- Producers Leading the Way: a new approach to grasslands stewardship engagement
- Milk River Ridge Reservoir Water Quality Stewardship Initiative
- Status of fish in Milk River after 2020 diversion failure
- Observations and lessons learned during the 2020 Milk River diversion failure
- Nitrogen cycling in agriculture

Free Lunch will be provided
To register call: 403-647-3808 or email: mary@mrwcc.ca



Canoeing the Milk

Exploring the beauty of the Milk River by water

The MRWCC hosted another successful canoe trip on July 15! We had a full group join us for a beautiful day on the water with perfect sunny conditions. The canoe tour was launched at the Weir Bridge and ended at the Deer Creek Bridge. During the 4-hour paddle, we had the opportunity to spot wildlife such as deer, snakes, swallows, and pronghorns. Thank you to everyone who participated in the trip this year. We look forward to hosting another trip down the river next year!

We also wish to thank the organizing committee; William King and Ed Slododa for providing transport.

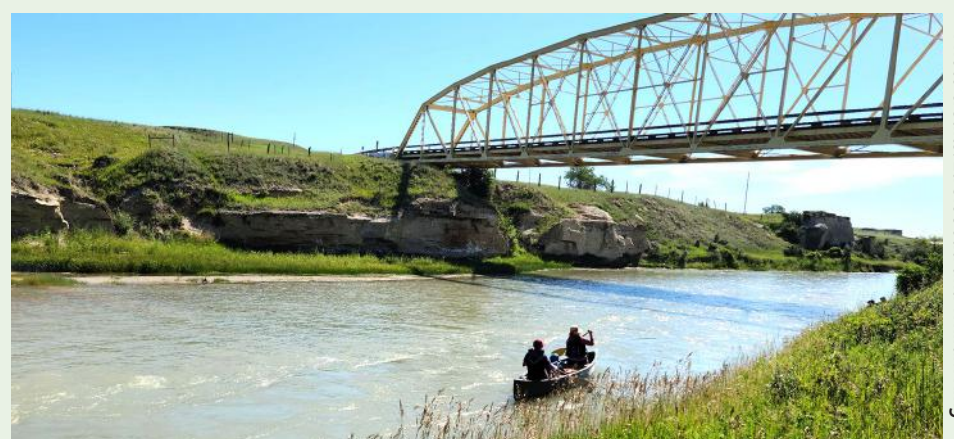


Photo credits: Ed Slododa and William King

Hiking the Milk

Our Hike Tours are designed to educate the public on the landscapes and extraordinary plant and wildlife communities of the Milk River watershed, while getting people out in some of the most beautiful and often little-known corners of our watershed.

This year, participants were in awe of the landscape as they explored the Milk River Canyon within the Pinhorn valleys on September 29th. They witnessed some wildlife and plant communities while trying out some sweet cactus berries. We were fortunate to have one of our Board members, William King, a seasoned son of the land with a wealth of experience and history of the land, give a touching presentation of the history of the Pinhorn Provincial Grazing Reserve including this magical place called the Milk River Canyon. There was something exciting to discover around every corner, be it interesting rock formations or discovering some paleontological findings and fossils.

The wind picked up in the afternoon and there were some light rain showers that did not last. However, that didn't stop people from seeing all the amazing sights.

We wish to thank all tour organizers, Ed Sloboda and William King for providing transportation and amazing photographs, Colynn Kerr for the amazing footage, Government of Alberta for granting us Temporary Field Authorization so that we can respectfully tour and enjoy the land, and all participants for making the day memorable.

Watch out for our next hike tour coming in 2023!

Thanks to those who reached out to tell us how they enjoyed the tour both in writing and through word of mouth

Some of the participants' testimonials:

"This is just a quick note to let you know that I very much enjoyed my day in the Milk River Canyon. It was a wonderful day. Thursday, September 29 was a wonderful reunion with Milk River for me. It was a Wonderful Day!"

"A big "thank you" to you and all the drivers for a most enjoyable day."

September 29, 2022, Hike Tour – Photo credits Colynn Kerr and Ed Sloboda



CONTACT US

OFFICE LOCATION:

We are located in the Milk River Town Office at 240 Main Street.

ADDRESS:

Box 313, Milk River, Alberta. T0K 1M0

OFFICE HOURS:

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

To reach us on Mondays and Fridays please contact us

We are closed weekends and holidays



Executive Director:

Tim Romanow

Phone: 403-647-4342

Email: tim@mrwcc.ca

Board of Director's Corner

MRWCC Participate in 2022 Strategic Planning Session!

October 20 and 21, 2022, the great minds of the Milk River Watershed Council Canada (MRWCC) met in Waterton National Park to brainstorm and strategize on their three-year strategic plan. The Strategic Plan considers the MRWCC's vision and identifies the Council's short- and long-term goals and objectives. The process included developing an action plan to help realize the stated goals in support of the MRWCC's vision. The outcomes of the session were:

- A better understanding of the MRWCC as an organization and individual roles.
- Refined direction for the organization.
- Priorities and Action Plan.

The MRWCC Strategic Planning Session was facilitated by Sandi Riemersma, an Environmental Biologist with Palliser Environmental Services Ltd. Sandi has been a long-standing member of the MRWCC since inception. She has a wealth of knowledge about the Council and has contributed immensely to the success of the Council over the years in various ways.

The purpose of the session was to review the MRWCC's bylaws, organizational structure, activities, and to establish a three-year work plan in alignment with current provincial direction.

To prepare for the planning session, a survey was circulated to all Board of Directors and staff members to help with the direction of the discussions. The responses received from Board members was thoughtful and comprehensive and supported the planning activities throughout the session.

The session was a huge success with close to perfect attendance. Members were able to come up with actions that the MRWCC can take in their future planning, predict possible future challenges that may be experienced and how to alleviate them. In general, the MRWCC focus



will continue to support water security and planning, with a focus on practical long-term solutions. The MRWCC will also continue to fill gaps within our state of knowledge particularly around biodiversity and continue to support the farming and ranching community with practical tools and approaches to grassland management. Discussions were also held regarding our approach to education and outreach with some bold discussion around organizing tourism, recreation, and watershed management for a joint connected outreach effort.

The MRWCC wishes to thank all Board of Directors for their contributions; Tom and Lois Gilchrist for their hospitality and generosity by inviting the group to their cabin; The Waterton Biosphere Reserve Association for their informative presentation; Sandi Riemersma for facilitating the session; and the Waterton Lakes Lodge Resort for providing the great venue.

The Strategic Plan will be finalised this winter and implementation will start in the 2023/24 fiscal year.



Program Coordinator:

Mary Lupwayi

Phone: 403-647-3808

Email: mary@mrwcc.ca



2022/23 MRWCC Board Members

Back row, Left to right: John Ross, Jon Boyle, Ron McNeil, Tim Romanow, Will Lindeman, Ross Ford, Peggy Losey, Ken Miller, Ben Ellert, Richard Oster

Front row, Left to right: Ken Brown, Allison Choquette, Ed Sloboda, Warren Cunningham

Missing: Aaron Domes, Joan Hughson, Kristen Dykstra, William King, Jollin Charest, MacCumber, Scott, Roger Houghton



2022/23 Executive Board Members

Left to right:

Ron McNeil (Vice Chairman)

John Ross (Chairman)

Will Lindeman (Treasurer)

Warren Cunningham (Secretary)

Congratulations to the 2022 appointed Municipal reps to the MRWCC!

At their recent organizational meetings, the following municipalities appointed the following as their representatives on the Milk River Watershed Council Canada:

■ Cardston County: Roger Houghton

■ County of Forty Mile: Joan Hughton

■ Town of Milk River: Peggy Losey

■ County of Warner: Ross Ford

■ Cypress County: Richard Oster

■ Village of Coutts: Scott MacCumber

Photo credits for the newsletter: William King, Ed Sloboda, Mary Lupwayi, Tim Romanow, Allison Choquette, and Sandi Riemersma



Wildlife & Outreach Technician:

Allison Choquette

Phone: 403-647-4035

Email: allison@mrwcc.ca