

TWIN RIVER HERITAGE RANGELAND

Reclassification and Expansion

Alberta Environment and Parks is seeking input from the public and stakeholders on the proposed reclassification and expansion of the Twin River Heritage Rangeland Natural Area approximately 10 km west of the Town of Milk River. The area includes over 47,000 acres of grassland within the Milk River Ridge. The western and northern end of the area includes high value and uncommon Foothills rough fescue grasslands. Surrounding the Natural Area is an additional over 300,000 acres of provincial lease lands and provincial grazing associations.

This reclassification was flagged during the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan development and “explore opportunities for further conservation management approaches using a collaborative approach in areas of grasslands” (section 3.14, P. 73). On August 5th a 30-day public consultation was announced with a survey on Alberta Parks consult website. A number of organizations, individuals, and municipalities expressed concern over the short period of time during a very busy time of year for producers and the consultation period was extended to 60 days, closing at the end of September.

There are benefits to a designated Heritage Rangeland, including the opportunity for 30-year generational grazing leases, and a recognition that cattle grazing is essential for the maintenance of the ecology of native grasslands. The designation also honors existing subsurface leases, though prohibits the exploration or development of new oil and gas developments.

The MRWCC does have some concerns that need to be publicly addressed and has requested that the Management Plan process start with the establishment of a local planning committee and compose a Terms of Reference that outlines what issues will be addressed within a plan prior to the proposed reclassification.

In regards to the development of on/off stream storage within a reclassified Twin River Heritage Rangeland. We are now aware that a

Consultative Notation (CNT) for future storage has been placed on lands within the existing natural area and will be carried forward. (Notations are instruments used through the Public Lands Act to identify a management intention regarding certain public land by government departments or legal entities. Notations indicate that the holder of the notation wants to be consulted before any commitment or disposition is placed on the land).

Water security continues to be a very important issue to the Milk River watershed community. With the uncertainty of climate change, difficult decisions need to be made to ensure a higher level of water security within our watershed. Provincial leadership is key to our future. The MRWCC has requested that the information regarding this CNT and the process outlined to remove lands from a Heritage Rangeland or Natural Area be clearly outlined and communicated to all stakeholders.

The MRWCC continues to question the justification for the location and extent of the proposed expansion. No criteria have been presented for the proposed expansion. What percentage of intactness determines if the land is suitable or preferred for an expansion? If the intent of an expansion is to protect rough fescue grasslands higher value parcels adjacent to Twin River would need to be considered or evaluated. The direction provided within the SSRP is: “explore opportunities for further conservation management approaches using a collaborative approach in areas of grasslands” (section 3.14, P. 73). As a Council we still support this measure, where the current proposed expansion fails is the use of science-based criteria for determination of what lands would be included in an expansion or qualify the reasoning. Without developing a public protocol for expansion and inclusion of a management committee the process is not collaborative. Other partners such as local land trusts have not been asked to sit at a collaborative table of stakeholders as had been with the OH Ranch and Pekisko Heritage Rangelands.

The MRWCC has offered to continue engagement on this matter and provide support to



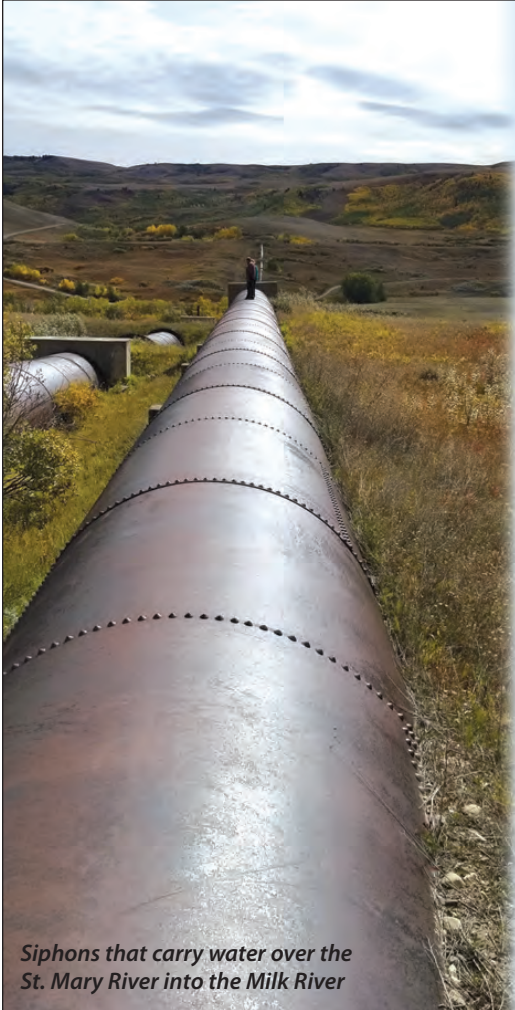
Twin River area

ensure management of this area is sound and reflects the principles and objectives of the approved Integrated Watershed Management Plan for the Milk River Watershed.

A decision regarding the proposal is expected to be made now that the public consultation period has ended. Watch for future engagement opportunities; the resulting proposed action(s) will be posted online at www.albertaparks.ca/consult once a decision has been reached.

You can still voice your option by contacting the Senior Alberta Parks Planner:

Jennell Rempel - Senior Parks Planner
Environment and Parks
Room 416, Admin. Bldg, 909-3rd Avenue
North, Lethbridge, Alberta, T1H 0H5
403-331-8640
Jennell.Rempel@gov.ab.ca



Siphons that carry water over the St. Mary River into the Milk River

St. Mary and Milk Rivers International Apportionment Update, 2018 Season

By Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP)

In the spring/summer edition of the newsletter, AEP reported that the U.S. had not been able to incur an early season deficit on the St. Mary River under the Letter of Intent (LOI) between the Accredited Officers of the International Joint Commission (IJC). Based on information discussed at the May 4th conference call, predictions were that it would not be possible for the U.S. to incur a deficit by the May 31st deadline in the LOI. This meant that Alberta Milk River irrigators would have to irrigate from the natural flow of the Milk River during 2018.

Several conference calls were held by the IJC Officers and all agencies closely monitored conditions throughout the season. At the June 22nd call, Alberta suggested that the IJC Officers consider allowing the U.S. to incur a deficit on the St. Mary River during the summer, outside of the timing specified in the LOI. The St. Mary Reservoir was well below normal up to mid-April but had rapidly filled from mid-April to the end of May and was in a good state. Alberta water managers advised IJC officials that Alberta Milk River irrigators could continue withdrawals without significant harm to the water supply in the Alberta St. Mary system. At this point, the U.S. was not sure if they could create a deficit during the summer, or that they would benefit from it. The IJC Officers decided to monitor flow conditions and reassess the situation at the next call.

The natural flow of the Milk River dropped to zero by July 6th. At the July 11th call, the Officers agreed that the U.S. would be permitted to create a deficit on the St. Mary River, to offset the deficit from ongoing irrigation use on the Milk River. If the deficit to be created on the St. Mary River was larger than that needed to offset the Milk River deficit, it would be used to offset the deficit on the Milk River in the

next balancing period. Weekly apportionment reporting would be provided, and the situation would again be assessed on August 3rd.

The U.S. was able to incur a deficit on the St. Mary River in late July. Due to issues with flow estimation, the deficit was larger than originally determined during operations. The deficit was large enough, in that period, to cover the accumulated Milk River deficit, plus the maximum deficit that could be accumulated in the remainder of the season. The St. Mary River flow volume into Canada from July 16-31st was 25,200 acre-ft, which was 5200 acre-ft below the Canadian share of 30,400 acre-ft.

This meant that there would be enough volume to balance current and future deficits on the Milk River for 2018, and irrigation in Alberta could continue. For the remainder of the season, the water withdrawn for irrigation from the Milk River was St. Mary River water owed to Canada from July. During the August 3rd call, the Officers agreed that they would waive the difference the U.S. owed to Canada on the St. Mary, from what Canada owed to the U.S. on the Milk, which was due to a shift in the water level and flow relationship between flow measurements.

The IJC Officers have recently reviewed the modelling work that was completed under the Montana-Alberta Water Management Initiative and are looking at administrative options that they may be able to implement. They will also comment on structural options in their report to the IJC Commissioners, to be presented at the spring 2019 meeting. Alberta and Montana continue to work on joint recommendations to Premier and Governor from the work of the joint initiative. AEP also continues to support the technical staff of the IJC in the improvement of the international natural flow models and communications material.

Attention Milk River Watershed Residents and Agricultural Producers!

Funding still available for Phase 2 Stewardship Implementation Projects!



The MRWCC is still accepting applications from residents and agricultural producers located along the sand-bed reach and select tributaries across the entire watershed. (See map provided below).

If you have a project that helps maintain or improve riparian health along the Milk River or the tributaries of the Milk River, here is an opportunity to apply for funding. Approved projects will receive funding for material procurement only, landowners will be responsible for construction costs and all in-kind costs. Applications are reviewed by a producer panel and awarded based on project merit and priority as outlined in the funding guideline.

This grant is funded through Alberta Environment and Parks, Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program (WRRP) to initiate riparian restoration and stewardship programs. The program provides financial incentive to landowners along the Milk River who are ready to implement projects that improve riparian health of the basin and build resiliency to both flood and drought impact within the watershed. This is a three-year program, which commenced in April 2017 and will be completed in March 2020. Please apply early as this funding is available on a first come first serve basis.

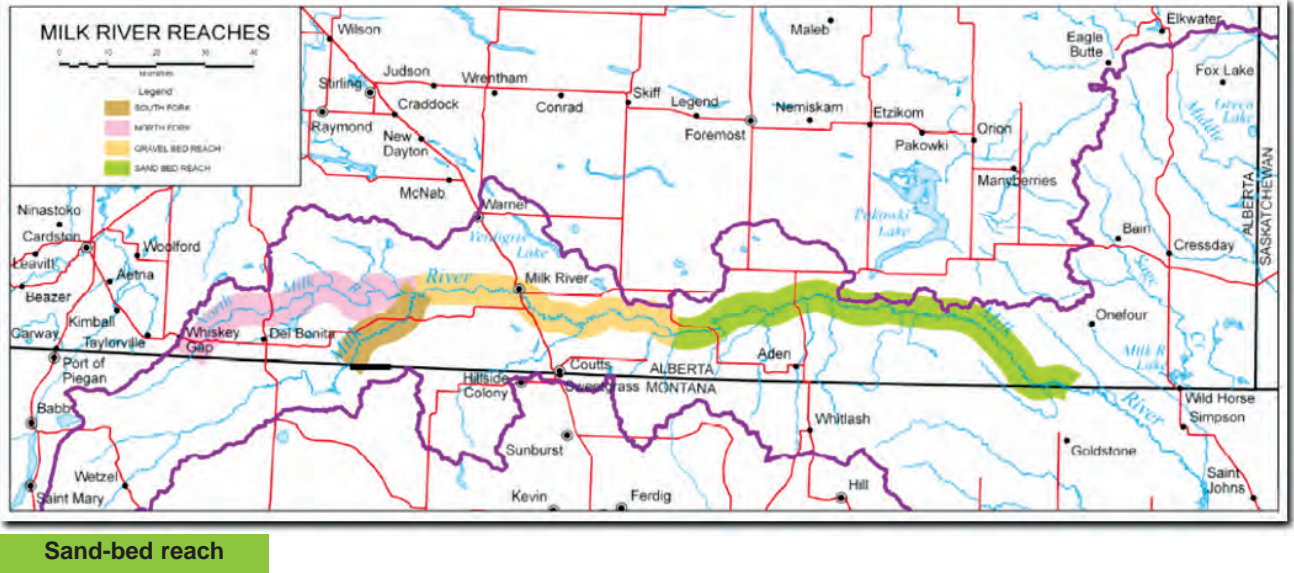
Project Type and Funding Availability:

- ❖ Wetland enhancements:
 - 10 Watering systems / Alternative water developments:
 - One per individual operation at \$10,000/each (maximum grant)

- Riparian Corridor / Exclusion fencing:
 - 9 sites at \$5,000/site (maximum grant)
- Riparian plantings
 - 5 sites at \$2,000/site (maximum grant)
- ❖ Wintering site management projects:
 - Portable windbreaks / calf shelters/winter watering system
 - 5 sites at \$4,000/site (maximum grant)

Please visit our website at www.mrwcc.ca for a complete funding guideline and application form or drop by our office in Milk River. For more information please call Tim at 403-647-4342.

We wish to thank the Government of Alberta for this funding opportunity and all residents/producers who have already bought into this program.



Another Impactful Event at the 2018 Youth Range Days

This year was the 11th annual Southern Alberta Youth Range Days. Southern Alberta Youth Range Days (YRDs) is a program for youth to learn and be inspired to promote stewardship of southern Alberta's native working agricultural rangelands. YRDs program is a celebration of our western heritage, connecting the next generation to the people, knowledge, and skills that will help them better understand our connection to the land, water, and biodiversity. Youth Range Days locations rotate across southern Alberta, allowing the camp to be situated in different ecoregions of the prairies, offering a slightly different agenda each year. In addition to the core program, additional agenda items focus on local topics or guest speakers selected to highlight current events or people/areas of interest in that location.

YRDs is about making lasting memories of summer days spent in nature with good friends having fun learning new skills. We had a

full crew of 30 kids including 12 newcomers and 18 returners. This year we were hosted by Rangeview Ranch in Cardston County.

We started off with the horseback riding and Plant ID at Rangeview Ranch and in the evening the participants learned about artificial nesting structures and got to help build nests for Ferruginous Hawks. These nests made the news when they were put up at the end of September as part of a partnership between Fortis, Nature Conservancy of Canada and Alberta Conservation Association/MULTISAR. Participants then got to learn about snakes and meet Sammy the snake. Sammy may not be native but still seeks to teach people snakes are nothing to be scared of.

The second day participants were able to take in a day at the beautiful Sandstone Ranch. After finishing their Plant ID quiz they got to catch bugs with Dan Johnson (University of Lethbridge), check out a young ferruginous hawk



with Adam (ACA), learn about Toadflax and bio-control with Leta (NCC) and if that wasn't enough we topped it off with some information about riparian health from Kelsey (Cows and Fish) before heading out for a tube down the Milk River. The participants ended their day but hearing some

stories around the campfire from a local producer.

On the final day the participants learned about grassland birds before finishing off their Ranch Plans. The Ranch Plans serve as a way for the participants to put all the pieces together. First place, the "Top Hand" award, is given to the participant

with the best marks, who showed eagerness and understanding of the topics, often this is a second or third year returning youth. In addition to the bragging rights for the year, the award is a custom built Olson Silver Belt buckle unique to each Range Days, donated by the Society for Range

Management- International Mountain Section. A "Green Hand" award is given to a "newbie" or the youngest (or both) attendee to the camp for their enthusiasm and understanding of the topics covered. The participants are also acknowledged based on their hard work in the workbooks. We are proud to announce Amakobe Efetha as this year's Top Hand winner and Jorja Salmon as the Green Hand winner.

Roger and Lori Thompson of Rangeview Ranch were amazing hosts. Their property had amazing views and they provided us with some excellent area to explore. The amazing food and horseback riding were also big highlights for the participants!

Many thanks to all sponsors, volunteers and organizing committee.

Check out the Southern Alberta Youth Range Days Facebook at www.facebook.com/youthrangedays for updates and information for next year.



MRWCC pleased with the success of the Education Programs

New school year means new out-reach opportunities. Kandra has been doing school activities that have ranged from classroom presentations to hands on activities. It's been great to work with students and teachers in the region. Some highlights from the past year include water quality testing programs, browse studies and a wetland exploration! It has been great finding different ways to engage the students in the watershed.

We look forward to doing more out-reach activities this school year. Until the weather gets warm again this means doing in class presentations on the watershed, habitats, species at risk, Caring for Our Watershed and point and non-point pollution (ask Kandra about the fun hands on activities for this one!). Once spring hits it is the perfect time to do a wetland or river study field trip. Please contact Kandra if you are interested in any of these programs or presentations.

MILK RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL CANADA

2019 POSTER CONTEST

Contest Rules:

Illustrate with artwork, using pencil, water-colors, crayon, pastels, acrylics
Please use 11 x 17 or 18 x 24 sized paper or poster board.
Please use your original artwork, **no photos or computer generated pictures.**
First, second and third place prizes will be awarded for the following Grades:
♦ Grades: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8

Theme:

“What is a Watershed?”

The Contest:

We would like you to draw a picture that illustrates the aspects of the area we call a watershed. What does it include? Why is it important?

Please draw the artwork, using pencil, water-colors, crayon, pastels, and acrylics.

Winners will be awarded prizes at the Community Appreciation Forum in March 2019.

Drop entries off at your school office by **February 26, 2019.**

Thank you for participating!

For more information contact 403-647-4306 or email kandra@mrwcc.ca

Please include this slip of paper with your entry (Please print)

Name _____

Age _____

Grade _____

Teacher _____

School _____



Students from Grade 7 to 12 invited to participate in Caring for our Watersheds Contest

Students from Grade 7 to 12 are to research the watershed and identify a problem (we can help!). They are then tasked with coming up with a realistic solution and write up a proposal. The proposal is then sent off to be judged. From there, 10 finalists are chosen from Southern Alberta and given an opportunity to do a 5 minute presentation. This is an excellent opportunity to get involved in identifying problems and getting creative with solutions.

Did we mention there is money involved? Students have a chance to win up to \$1,000 for themselves as well as a matching cash prize for their school PLUS if they wanted to implement their idea, there is funding available for that too! Please contact Kandra if you are interested in participating or want more information.

We would like to thank Nutrien for sponsoring this event. This program wouldn't be possible without their support.

In 2016 two students placed 4th in the competition and won \$700 (for both them and the school) for their idea to put up artificial nesting structures for ferruginous hawks. This project was able to be implemented through a donation of poles from Fortis and the nesting structures were added following guidelines put out by MULTISAR. Then we added some nests to entice our new tenants. More thanks go to Milk River Cable Club for helping to put the hawk nests that were built by Milk River Elementary School Grade 3 students.

We are happy to share that we had success in one of the nests put up last year as a follow up to a proposal from students at Erle Rivers High School. We got excited when we noticed an adult making itself comfy in the nest and were overjoyed to spot at least 3 baby hawks in the nest a month later!

Ferruginous hawks prefer to be renovators not builders. Despite their local abundance, the overall number of pairs has been in decline. One of the causes of this decline is the loss of nesting habitat. By providing an artificial nesting structure in a suitable place a producer is not only helping a species at risk but they are also providing a home to what tends to be very efficient pest control. A family of ferruginous can consume approximately 500 Richardson ground squirrels (more affectionately referred to as gophers) in a season. If you are interested in putting up an artificial nesting structure on your property please contact MULTISAR at 403-382-4354



Xeriscaping in partnership with the Town of Milk River

As a follow up to the Xeriscaping tour a few years back we agreed to partner with the Town of Milk River to lead by example here at the Town Hall. Xeriscaping is landscaping and gardening that reduces or eliminates the need for supplemental water. With the water security issues that face our region it is beneficial to look at what we can do to be proactive in our landscaping.

We are happy with how well the north side of the lawn turned out. We have gotten a lot of attention and questions about the project which is awesome! The goal is to educate homeowners that drought resilient landscaping can look good. The Town is in the process of putting together a guide to the plants that were used for anyone who is interested. Huge thank you to Steve MacRae for designing the plans, Erle Rivers school students and their teacher, Karen Ellert-Garber for volunteering to help plant, Betty O'Donnell for donating the beautiful rocks,

Raymond and Yvette Baril for volunteering to help lay the gravel and help water the plants during this critical establishment period. Once the plants have successfully estab-

lished they will scarcely need to be watered. Everything looks great so far! Stay tuned as we complete our xeriscape project on the south side of the Town office next summer.



Water Monitoring UPDATE

Water Monitoring along the mainstem Milk River and Tributary sites has now wrapped up for the season. Thank you to our municipal partners for the continued support, and 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. Water Quality summaries will be made available through the MRWCC website this winter. Check out the MRWCC Science forum for a sneak peek at the results! Can't make or missed the science forum? Then view the presentations online at www.mrwcc.ca



Milk River Watershed Council Canada Science Forum

November 8, 2018
Milk River Civic Centre
9:30am-3:00pm

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

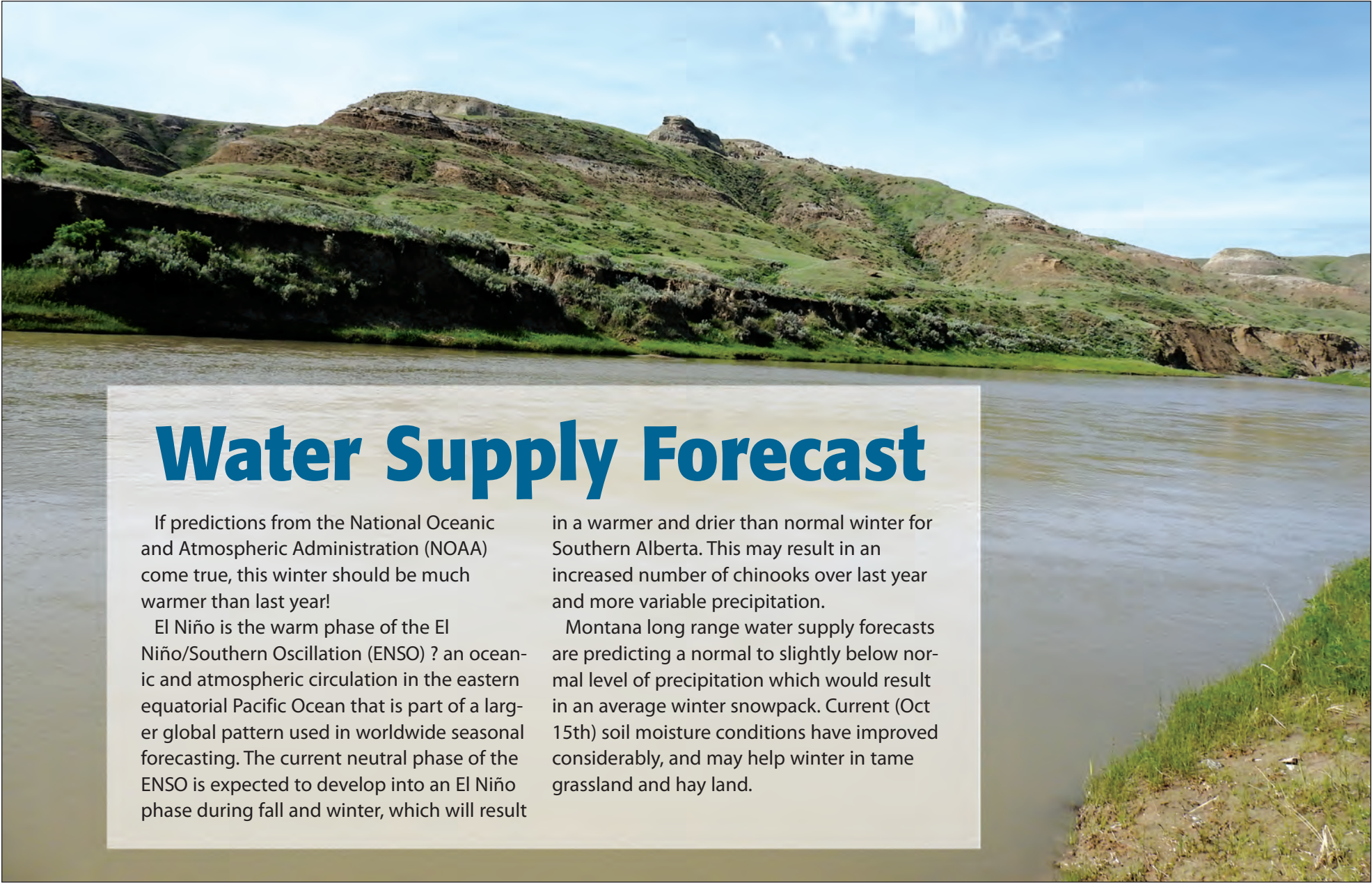
Come and witness researchers and others experts share their findings with engaged community members and stakeholders.

Lunch will be provided
Registration fee: \$10/individual, Students free
To register call: 403-647-3808
or email: mary@mrwcc.ca
Registration deadline: November 5, 2018

Some of the topics include:

- Characterizing water quality in the tributaries to the Milk River
- Source and variation of salts in the Milk River
- Methods to reduce amount of stormwater being discharged to area creeks and ways to improve the stormwater quality in urban areas
- Insects returning after the burn – Milk River Natural Area
- Insect food availability and utilization for sharp-tailed grouse in Alberta using stable isotopes
- And more!

www.mrwcc.ca



Water Supply Forecast

If predictions from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) come true, this winter should be much warmer than last year!

El Niño is the warm phase of the El Niño/Southern Oscillation (ENSO) ? an oceanic and atmospheric circulation in the eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean that is part of a larger global pattern used in worldwide seasonal forecasting. The current neutral phase of the ENSO is expected to develop into an El Niño phase during fall and winter, which will result

in a warmer and drier than normal winter for Southern Alberta. This may result in an increased number of chinooks over last year and more variable precipitation.

Montana long range water supply forecasts are predicting a normal to slightly below normal level of precipitation which would result in an average winter snowpack. Current (Oct 15th) soil moisture conditions have improved considerably, and may help winter in tame grassland and hay land.

Water Storage Investigation Summary Project

Approximately 13 sites within the Alberta portion of the Milk River Watershed have been investigated for on or off stream storage potential in the last 40 years. Additionally, supplemental water via pipeline or canal has also been investigated. Only a few sites have had potential positive feasibilities with relatively low impact from development.

The Milk River Watershed Council Canada will facilitate the summarization of past water storage investigations within the Watershed focusing on long term solutions to current water security concerns. The project team will be tasked with identification of relevant studies and ensuring access to associated materials such as economic, cultural, and environmental assessments. The Project team will hire a consultant to review historic and recent water supply documents and discussions, and summarize findings. The ensuing report will also identify current regulatory, environmental, social and political opportunities/barriers related to supply options. This will be accomplished by compiling an approximate 10-page summary, a one-page executive summary, and a brief prioritization of water supply options. If prioritization cannot be made, then the report will make recommendations to the team for further work.

The Province will provide clear and transparent information to community members and all area stakeholders regarding past water storage investigations; and provide relevant information to decision makers about potential options available for water storage within the watershed, key to assisting in deciding whether to further pursue a project in the near future. Watch for details of the project report in the New Year. This project has been supported by Alberta Environment and Parks Transboundary Water Secretariat, Strategy Division of AEP, MRWCC, Milk River Water Users Association, and Local Municipalities.



Transboundary Grasslands WORKSHOP

Alberta is hosting the 4th Annual Transboundary Grasslands Workshop December 3-5, 2018 at the Exhibition Park in Lethbridge. This is a great opportunity for producers and area managers to learn about initiatives across Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Montana that are improving our knowledge, management, and educational messaging of grasslands. This year's theme of "Connecting the Dots" focuses on tangible actions that improve rangeland management, values the cost of stewardship actions, and supports our valuable working grasslands. The event kicks off with a tour of the Writing on Stone Park area, and a 1.5 day workshop in Lethbridge. Registration and a detailed agenda is now available at <http://www.albertapcf.org>. Sponsorship opportunities are also available for interested producers.

4th Annual Transboundary Grassland Workshop

Connecting the Dots

December 3 - 5, 2018
Exhibition Park, Lethbridge, Alberta

Register at: www.albertapcf.org



CANOEING THE MILK!

Our original Canoe Tour was set for June 15th and was intended to travel from Finstead's lease to lower level crossing on the Pinhorn stretch of the Milk River. This unfortunately had to be rescheduled due to weather. The rescheduled date took place July 6th and was the stretch from Coffin Bridge to Weir Bridge. The weather was more favourable and the participants enjoyed tackling a stretch of river that certainly keeps you on your toes! The scenery was amazing, and lunch was at Poverty Rock where the participants were able to wander and check out the unique site. The rock itself is stunning for those who have never had the opportunity to see it. We were lucky this summer to have excellent river flow levels. Thank you to everyone who came out and survived the many stretches of rapids!



Milk River Watershed Alliance Film Project

– *Lifeline of the Highline* –

Our sister organization, The Milk River Watershed Alliance (MRWA) in Montana has hired Banik Communications of Great Falls to produce an educational video on the Milk River and the necessity for the rehabilitation of the St. Mary diversion system.

"We believe that the most powerful way to explain the importance and complexity of the St. Mary's diversion system, which can provide up to 90% of the flow for the Milk River, is through short film". By showing the location, extent of the project,

beneficiaries, and consequences of failing to act, we can instill a sense of urgency to rally support to move the project forward so the Milk River can continue to provide for our communities. The MRWA plans to share the video at stakeholder meetings, lobbying efforts for congress and legislature, and local viewing events within the watershed.

Banik's contracted services include outreach and coordination, expert interviews, professional narration, videography, editing, a music bed, short video cuts for online teasers, a full length video, and pub-

lic relations. The rehabilitation cost for the St Mary's diversion to the Milk River is estimated at \$200 million USD. Currently, 75% of the rehabilitation cost will fall upon irrigators in the watershed; an unrealistic operations and maintenance cost that will be detrimental to communities along the Hi-Line.

Beneficiaries of the Milk River in Montana include municipalities such as Havre, Chinook, Harlem, irrigators, recreationists, sportsmen, First Nation's with Federal Reserved Water Rights, and wildlife interests.

Watch the MRWCC website and Facebook page for updates on the film project.



Milk River, Montana



Milk River Watershed Council Canada

2019 Heritage Tree Program

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;

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.milkriverwatershedcouncil.ca

Nomination Deadline is February 4, 2019
Our Water - Our Legacy

- 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.



Milk River Watershed Council Canada

2019 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 www.milkriverwatershedcouncil.ca

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 4, 2019



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 4, 2019

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



Thank you, Milk River Bonanza Committee, for another successful event!

We were happy to take part in the Bonanza Day parade again this year! The theme this year was “Under the Neon Lights... Milk River Shines Bright!” Our float like many was decorated with bright colours to honour the theme. We had Sweetgrass Hills and a fish on the float.

Could you tell it was a sauger? Designated as a sensitive fish in Alberta, in few occurrences the sauger are found in slow moving rivers and may be vulnerable to habitat degradation. We were pleased to take home a first-place ribbon for our float. Hopefully you were able to stop by and

check out your wingspan and learn about the watershed at our display at the Civic Centre. The point and non-point pollution activities as well as the giant Jenga were a hit! Thanks to everyone who stopped by our display. Great job to the committee that organized this years’ Bonanza Days!

Chairman’s Message

We’re having another challenging year in our Watershed. The year started out with above normal snowpack in the mountains and flooding in the spring, that quickly morphed into our second year of drought. Last year we had similar conditions and on August 3, 2017 the irrigators were denied water from the river due to zero natural flow in the Milk River and because the spring was so wet the US didn’t create a deficit against the Letter of Intent, that could later be offset by irrigation water use in the fall. The same conditions existed this year, but the IJC and our government agreed to divert extra water from the St. Mary’s River to balance off the deficit that occurred this fall, and irrigation was allowed to continue.



This, however, is not a reliable solution to the low water years on the Milk River and another more permanent answer must be found. The events of the last few years have truly highlighted the need for On-Stream Storage. Several Off-Stream solutions have been found, but none of them has the capacity needed in the dry years. We need to find a way to secure water supply in the river for our towns, fish in the summer and the winter, and also for other wildlife, irrigation, cattle and industry that relies on the river to maintain a healthy diversity. We will continue to work for water security in our basin.

The natural flow of the Milk River is extremely low and creates a real danger that the river will once again freeze solid this winter. This has happened several times in my lifetime and will continue to do so until we can find a permanent solution.

The effort by the government to reclassify and expand the Twin River Natural Area to a Heritage Rangeland designation is a real step forward. Unfortunately, it is being pushed through with some fatal flaws that we cannot agree with at this time. We will continue with our efforts to find solutions to the issues, so we can feel comfortable that the Heritage Rangeland is a valuable designation for the future, that ranchers and the community can be comfortable with.

Please join us for our 2nd Annual MRWCC Science Forum on November 8, 2018. This is a great day to listen to some very interesting speakers and dig a little deeper into the issues concerning our watershed. I know I’m looking forward to it. See you there!

John A. Ross
Chairman, Milk River Watershed Council Canada

Executive Director’s Report

The Milk River Watershed Council Canada works towards a goal to achieve balance among a thriving community, a healthy environment and a prosperous economy through understanding, dialogue and action. It is what attracted me to working with the Council 6 years ago, and it drives the many volunteers the MRWCC relies heavily on to be successful.

We have a well-respected track record of effective partnerships and sound science to navigate difficult issues and find common sense outcomes that achieve that goal. Despite many of the outside political pressures and environmental conditions we have and will continue to adapt, and expect a decision-making transparency that will ensure our continued success!

Thank you to the staff and membership of the council for making all projects and events a success this past year. Please watch for future opportunities to help direct the future of management within our watershed, and feel free to stop by the office in Milk River any-time to have a chat and learn more about the projects and work of the MRWCC.

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.

We are closed weekends and
holidays

Staff Directory:

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