

Lesser Slave Watershed Council 2014-15 Annual Report

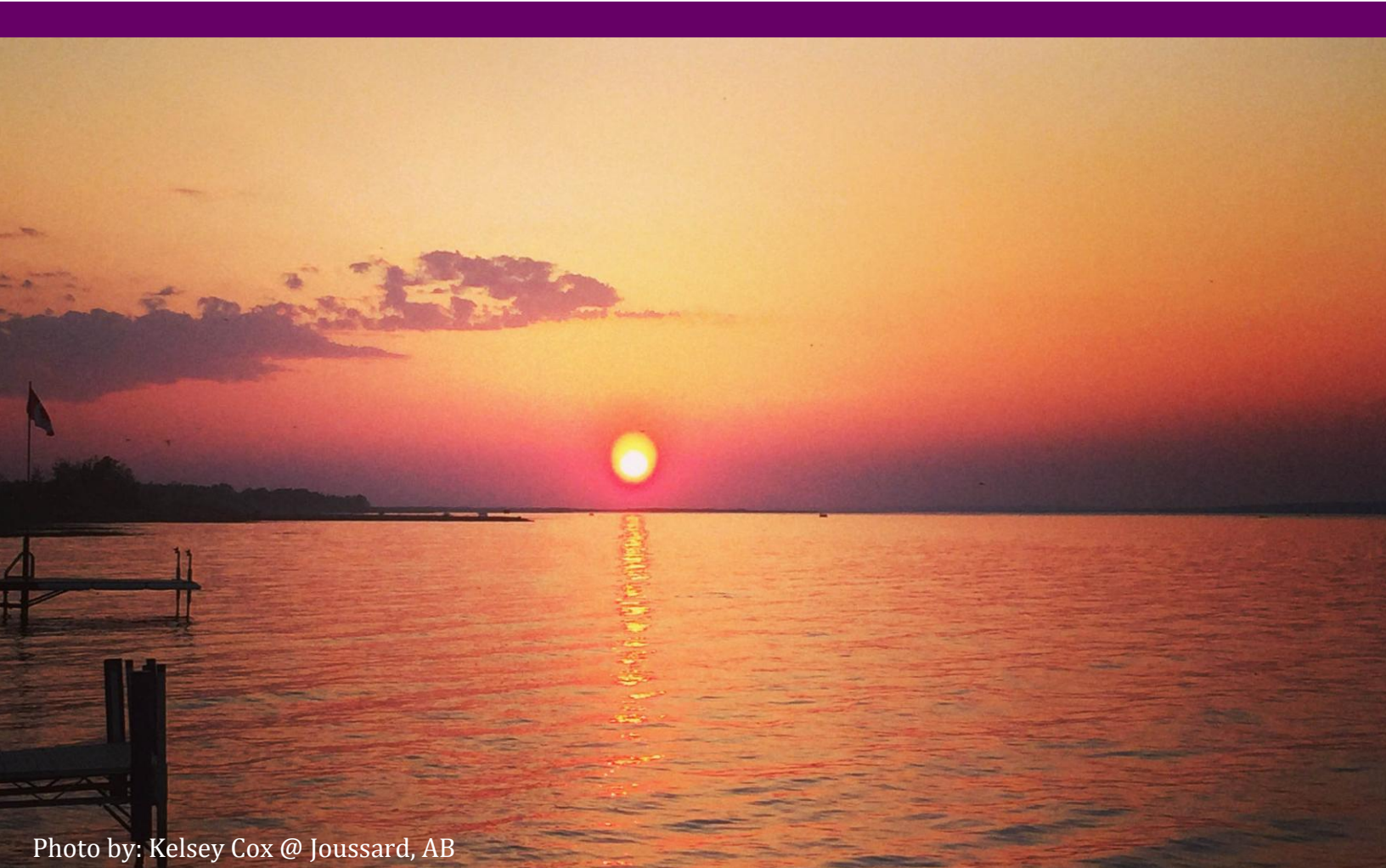


Photo by: Kelsey Cox @ Jousard, AB



Prepared for the LSWC
By: Meghan Payne, BSc.
LSWC's Executive Director

Thank You to our 2014-15 Financial Supporters



and our local partners



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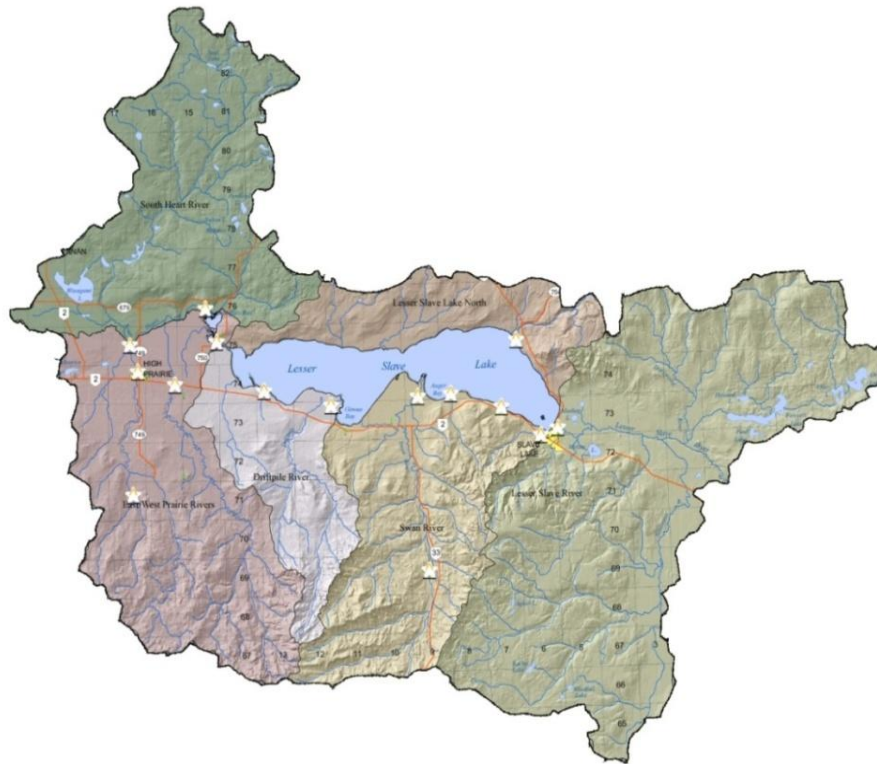


Figure 1 - Map of the Lesser Slave Watershed including the entire geographic area of Lesser Slave Lake and Lesser Slave River drainage basins.

Message from the Executive Director

2014 was another successful year for the LSWC as an organization. Our board members are dedicated and active in helping achieve the strategic goals of the LSWC and promoting our organization across the watershed. I really appreciate all of the effort made by these volunteers throughout the year.

In 2014 we said good bye to our previous Watershed Coordinator Lindsie Fairfield, who went on to pursue her career. In August of 2014 we were joined by Megan Graham who relocated from Edmonton to become the new Watershed Coordinator. The LSWC also said good bye to board members Gary Couch and Gary Braithwaite who also moved on due to career related changes. We wish them all the best.

In the fall of 2014 I was able to enroll and complete an online program through McGill University thanks to the support of the Board of Directors. The course was titled: Integrated and Adaptive Water Resources Planning, Management and Governance. This eight week program was very informative and is very relevant to the watershed planning work that the LSWC is undertaking.

Every year I reflect on the things we have accomplished, the events we hosted or participated in, the new people we meet and engage with and each year I think my favorite thing is educating people. It is a great feeling to know that you have helped someone learn more about their environment, the watershed, or their back yard creek and influence them to become better stewards of our natural resources.

I look forward to another great year ahead.

Meghan Payne

My favorite ways to enjoy the watershed:



Endurance Riders crossing the West Prairie River during their race.



Nothing beats a beautiful sunny day at the beach with family and friends.

Message from the Chair

These last 3 years as a Board Member have been very educational and engaging for me. It took almost a year of meetings to figure out exactly what the Council was all about. As the Tourism and Recreation board representative I learned to ask a lot of questions and in turn have had my learning curve accelerated. My experience in Fish & Wildlife, Parks, and Ducks Unlimited has helped with the more technical aspects of LSWC business. Over the years my enjoyment of the local environment has helped me to see the changes taking place in my back yard. I find that working with 18 stakeholder groups gives us an amazing overview of our watershed. In past water management processes led by the Government of Alberta, I don't believe all of these sectors ever sat around table once a month and pin pointed areas of concern.

I am very proud of the work completed on the 2015 Technical Update for the Lesser Slave Watershed. I am also excited about the completion of the Terms of Reference for the Integrated Watershed Management Plan that the Steering Committee has finalized along with an IWMP Communication and Engagement Strategy.

Thank you to Meghan Payne who continues to work hard to make sure our Council is operating at peak efficiency and to Megan Graham for all of the educational programming that we deliver. Going forward I am excited to see the creation of an active Education & Stewardship Committee.

Tammy Kaleta, LSWC Chair

2014-15 LSWC Board of Directors

Board Member	Alternate Member	Sector/Organization
Robert Nygaard	<i>Ken Killeen</i>	Big Lakes County
Brian Rosche	<i>Brad Pearson</i>	MD of lesser Slave River
Stefan Plouffe	<i>Julie Brandle</i>	Town of Slave lake
Michael Long	<i>Brian Panasiuk (vice chair)</i>	Town of High Prairie
Edna Willier	<i>vacant</i>	First Nations Member at Large
Jamie Bruha	<i>Kristy Wakeling</i>	Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development
Michael Hunka	<i>vacant</i>	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
<i>vacant</i>	<i>vacant</i>	Métis Member at Large
Tammy Kaleta (chair)	<i>Jim Meldrum</i>	Fishing Tournaments and Recreation
Bob Popick	<i>vacant</i>	Oil and Gas Industry
Shane Knutson	<i>Brian Elliott</i>	Cottage and Cabin Owners
Claude Smith	<i>Lorne Pratt</i>	Agriculture
Todd Bailey	<i>George Gross</i>	Forest Industry
Gary Braithwaite	<i>vacant</i>	Environmental Non Government Organization
Murray DeAlexandra	<i>vacant</i>	Commercial Fishermen
Gary Couch (Secretary)	<i>vacant</i>	Member at Large
Doug Horner	<i>vacant</i>	Trappers

Summary of Operations

From April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015 the LSWC worked to implement our operational plan and meet our strategic goals. In January of 2015 the LSWC board members worked with a facilitator from Alberta Culture and Community Development to discuss and update our three year strategic plan to ensure that it meets our goals for the organization and our watershed.

Moving forward the LSWC will continue to work with governments, stakeholders and the public to raise the level of watershed literacy and influence decisions that will have positive outcomes for Lesser Slave Lake and its watershed.

Goal 1. Establish an ongoing collaborative planning and management framework for the Lesser Slave Watershed.

- The LSWC IWMP Steering Committee completed a risk identification and prioritization exercise to establish watershed objectives and outcomes for the IWMP.
- The IWMP Steering Committee worked with CPP Environmental to develop a communication and engagement strategy that outlines how and when we will engage with the various players in the watershed throughout the IWMP project.
- IWMP Steering Committee and CPP developed a series of IWMP related information materials to be used in engagement and communication.
- The LSWC hosted a Municipal Watershed Bootcamp attended by 25 staff and councilors from our local municipalities.
- The LSWC joined the Water North Coalition, a group dedicated to water and waste water sustainability in northern Alberta.
- LSWC Executive Director joined the Alberta Water Council Lake Management project team as a WPAC representative.

Goal 2. Facilitate watershed research that addresses issues and enables management actions within the watershed.

- LSWC hired Hutchinson Environmental to put together a technical report that encompasses all of the current watershed data including:

paleolimnology, water quality data, a nutrient budget and BATHTUB nutrient model that projects future trends, as well as an update on fish health.

- The LSWC and Hutchinson Environmental produces a summary document of the Technical report for wider distribution to a non technical audience.
- LSWC Executive Director attended AEMERA's formal launch event and continues to keep in communication regarding future monitoring in the LS watershed.

Goal 3. Promote watershed education, awareness and stewardship in the watershed.

- Little Green Thumbs program brought to 5 classrooms in the watershed.
- 5th year of celebrating Canada Water Week with community events. This year we had a coloring content for youth, a facebook trivia contest and watershed facts on our local radio station.
- Continuation of partnership with the Big Lakes County Ag Service Board.
- Continuation of educational partnership with the Lesser Slave Forest Education Society for curriculum based watershed education in classrooms and on field trips and other media.
- Ongoing maintenance of fishing line-recycling stations

.....Continued

- Distribution of over 1000 watershed stewardship handbooks across the watershed.
- Participation at the High Prairie Gun and Sportsman Show where we engaged with 300 people, and the Slave Lake Chamber of Commerce Tradeshow where we engaged with 250 people.
- LSWC hosted a rain barrel sales event where we offered 60 rain barrels at a discounted price in High Prairie and Slave Lake
- The LSWC provided 200 copies of our Lake Stewardship handbook to the Wounded Warriors event in Slave Lake in summer of 2014 with the goal of increasing watershed awareness and promoting best practices.
- LSWC sent out online newsletters and notices throughout the year.
- LSWC actively engages people via social media on Facebook and Twitter.
- LSWC staff visited schools in the watershed to promote the Caring for Our Watershed program.
- The LSWC published several articles in the local newspaper in 2014.
- Continuation of partnership with Peace Country Beef and Forage Association to promote healthy riparian areas with the use of the LSWC solar and wind powered watering system.
- Watershed Coordinator attended a Land Stewardship center Stewards in Motion event in Lac La Biche to engage with watershed stewardship groups.
- The Board of Directors had nine regular meetings in 2014.
- Three local government in the watershed contributed \$15,000 to the LSWC to support watershed programs.
- LSWC Executive Director attended quarterly WPAC meetings to discuss provincial scale WPAC issues and projects.
- The LSWC held our Annual General Meeting in High Prairie on June 12, 2014.
- The LSWC received RBC Blue Water Foundation and TD Friends of the Environment funding to support education and outreach initiatives.
- Watershed Coordinator attended educational training session with Agriculture in the Classroom to learn and lead the Little Green Thumbs program.
- Watershed Coordinator participated in provincial WPAC's Education and Outreach meeting.
- LSWC Staff and Board members attended the 2014 WPAC Summit in Edmonton, AB.
- LSWC Executive Director and chair attended ESRD led WPAC forum in June 2014.
- LSWC Executive Director and Watershed Coordinator attended the December 2014 ESRD led WPAC forum.
- LSWC staff participated in educational webinars throughout the year

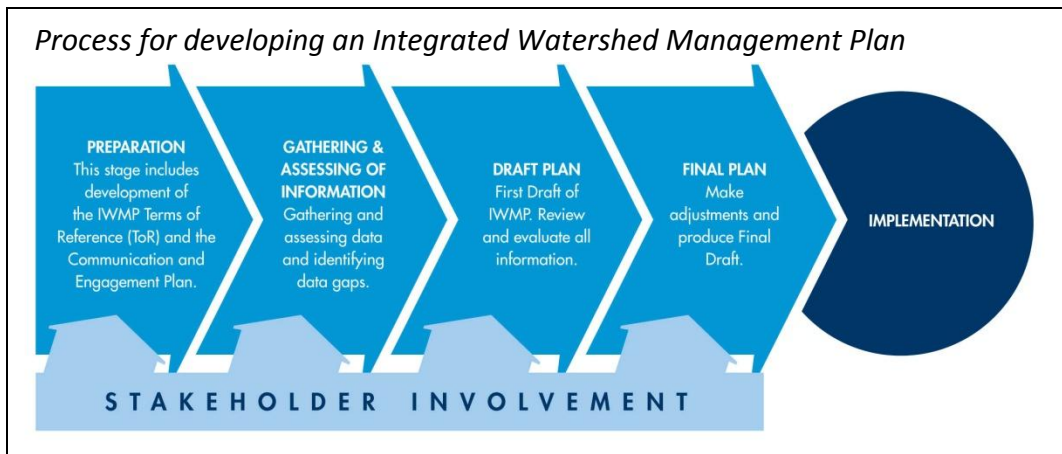
Goal 4. Establish a strong operational model in which the LSWC is sustainable, has clear governance, capacity and funding.

- The LSWC met with ESRD minister Kyle Fawcett in February 2014 to discuss WPAC support and funding.

Integrated Watershed Management Plan for the Lesser Slave Watershed

The LSWC, along with the other WPAC's in Alberta are tasked with leading the development of an integrated watershed management plan (IWMP) for their respective watersheds. An IWMP lays out actions and an approach to managing the Lesser Slave Watershed. The plan will serve as advice to the Government of Alberta, municipalities and stakeholders in the watershed to guide future decision making in their respective areas of responsibility and interest. The IWMP will identify specific actions that should be taken and describe the roles of the specific players who have authority or jurisdiction to do so.

The recommendations in the plan will address the issues that the LSWC has heard from the public and stakeholder through various engagement activities since 2011. Based on the results of the 2014 watershed risk assessment developed by CPP Environmental and completed by the LSWC Board of Directors and project Steering committee.



The IWMP Steering Committee (SC) is made up of LSWC board members and is responsible for guiding and driving the project. In 2014 the SC worked with CPP environmental to develop a communication and engagement strategy to guide communication and engagement activities through the phases of developing the watershed plan. A series of fact sheet and an information brochure were also created to aid in our project engagement.

In March 2014 the IWMP SC finalized the project Terms of Reference. This guiding document describes the work that will be done, the roles and responsibilities of the various participants, explores applicable federal and provincial legislation around watershed management and presents the overall outcomes and objectives for the final IWMP.

5 IWMP Themes

1. Water Quality
2. Water Quantity
3. Biodiversity
4. Social and economic values
5. Riparian areas and wetlands

Download the IWMP Terms of Reference online at www.lswc.ca under the watershed management tab.

Alberta Lake Management Workshop 2014



The Alberta Lake Management Society is a non profit, charitable organization operating in Alberta . ALMS and its members are active in providing a link to individuals, local communities, educational institutions, governments and industry across Alberta who are interested in lake and watershed management. The purpose of the Society is to promote understanding and comprehensive management of lakes and reservoirs and their watersheds.

Each year ALMS partners with a local organization to host a workshop that coincides with their annual general meeting. In 2014 the LSWC and ALMS teamed up to host the 2014 workshop themed Lesser Slave Lake - Exploring the Past, Planning for the Future at the Slave Lake Inn and Conference Center. The wide range of presentation explored the history of Lesser Slave Lake, information about its geography and fisheries; tools and information to support lake management and planning in AB; lake management policy in Alberta, and promoting facilitation of a stewardship ethic. Participants enjoyed a field tour on the final day of the workshop that started with a BBQ lunch on the beach at Big Fish Bay Campground. Our trip then took us to the Canyon Creek South Shore Waste Treatment facility, a state of the art plant that treats waste water using membrane filtration technology. We also visited the Lesser Slave River to talk about the regulation weir and finished off with exploration of Devonshire beach.

The presentations delivered at the 2014 ALMS workshop can be found online at www.alms.ca under the workshop tab.



Lyle Farris, Director of Utilities for the MD of Lesser Slave River explains the waste water treatment plan processes to the group before taking us in for a tour of the facility.



Above, workshop participants brainstorm and puzzle over the roles of the various players in water management. Stef Neufeld, ALMS Chair got the group thinking about how much collaboration is involved in Lake management.

Municipal Water Bootcamp

On November 4, 2014 the LSWC hosted a "Water Bootcamp" for our local municipalities, LSWC board members and land developers from the area. The LSWC hired Jay White of Aquality Environmental to host a session specifically aimed at helping municipalities and development authorities navigate the environmental and regulatory world. Jay White is a professional Biologist and a qualified wetland and aquatic environment specialist with over 15 years of experience in Alberta. His real life experience and familiarity with policy and legislation in Alberta were very helpful for the group.

The Session was attended by 25 people and presentation topics included: the importance of wetlands and riparian areas, Provincial and Federal Legislation and policies, the role of Municipalities in approving developments, lakeshore planning and tools for municipalities, and examples of enforcement and compliance case studies. Local municipalities have a big responsibility in ensuring that planning and development is completed sustainably and doesn't degrade our lake and environment. The workshop provided information and resources to help with these tasks.

The feedback that the LSWC received regarding the workshop was very positive and the LSWC will continue to provide workshops and learning opportunities on topics that are of interest to our stakeholders and local governments.



Jay White passionately explains the importance of wetlands and riparian areas to our audience of 25 people from the MD of Big Lakes and the MD of Lesser Slave River.

The LSWC is on Social Media.

Follow us on Facebook: LSWC2012, and on Twitter @abLSWC to get updates and watershed news.

Community Partner: Royal Bank of Canada



**RBC
Blue Water
Project™**

The RBC Blue Water Project is a wide-ranging program dedicated to protecting the world's most precious natural resource: fresh water. RBC support initiatives that help protect water in our growing towns and cities. In 2014 the LSWC was the recipient of a \$5000 Blue Water Grant that

went towards promoting water efficiency and reuse in our communities.

The LSWC used a portion of the funds to purchase 60 rain barrels from our local hardware stores and offer them for sale at a discounted rate. We also developed a home water efficiency brochure that also had tips for taking care of a rain barrel. The rain barrels were an instant sell out at our High Prairie and Slave Lake Locations. Rain barrels are a great way to cut back your municipal water usage and reduce the amount of overland runoff entering storm drains in urban areas.



Watershed Coordinator Lindsie Fairfield poses with our POPs Home Hardware rain barrels as we prepared for the sale.



Brian Panasiuk, LSWC Vice chair, and Perry from Home Hardware draw a name for the BBQ donated by POPs.



People lined up at POP's Home Hardware to make sure they got their rain barrel. It was sad to disappoint people who didn't get one but we will bring them back again.

Community Clean Up with the Slave Lake RBC

LSWC Staff joined the RBC Slave Lake branch staff on May 31, 2015 to help clean up the Town of Slave Lake and promote a healthy environment. The group of volunteers met at Northern Lakes College and made out way to Sawridge Creek cleaning up litter as we went. We spent a good deal of time cleaning up on the creek banks to help keep garbage out of Sawridge Creek. In the 4 hours we invested we cleaned up a pick up truck box worth of garbage. Great job team!



LSWC Executive Director, Meghan Payne smiles for the camera while cleaning up along the Sawridge Creek spillway.



The clean up crew takes a break and poses with the many bags of garbage we picked up.



THANK YOU RBC!

In June of 2014 the Slave Lake RBC branch donated \$1000 to the LSWC in support of our activities to promote watershed education and stewardship. We really appreciate the support and look forward to working together again.

Watershed Education with the LSFES

Since 2010 the LSWC and the Lesser Slave Forest Education Society have been working together to provide curriculum related environmental education to youth across our watershed. Programming is delivered in the classroom, on field trips, through summer camps, even online. The partnership has been a success in the past and 2014 was another great year. Water related programming makes up 25% of the LSFES's presentations and trips.

In 2014 LSWC Watershed Coordinator Lindsie Fairfield and LSWC Executive Director Meghan Payne joined grade three and five students on fun filled field trips where students explored spruce bogs, tested water quality and search for marsh monsters.

In addition the LSFES developed, and with support from Northern Lakes College, delivered a webinar all about bogs!

2014 Partnership Statistics:

- 78 presentations related to water were delivered.
- 1308 students were educated.
- 166 adults were also engaged



www.lsfes.org



Meghan Payne poses with a grade 5 class after catching and identifying all sorts of "marsh monsters" near Devonshire beach.



Grade 5 students follow MJ Kristoff of the LSFES through the spruce bog and learn about its unique features.



A student wanders a wetland in the jack pines in search of marsh monsters to catch in her net.

Little Green Thumbs



Through partnership with Agriculture in the Classroom Saskatchewan and funding organization Ag for Life, the LSWC was able to bring the Little Green Thumbs program to eight classrooms in the Lesser Slave region this year. Four were returning teachers and 4 were new gardens.

Little Green Thumbs is an indoor gardening program that gives participating students the opportunity to grow and harvest fruit

and vegetables in their classroom. In the process, students learn to cooperatively care for their gardens, and learn about nutrition, environmental stewardship, sustainable food systems and community interdependence. The program also supports each classroom in maintaining a vermicomposting kit, a unique system that utilizes a special worm commonly called "Red Wigglers" to compost indoors. This helps students understand decomposition cycles and further best practices.

In High Prairie, two Grade 4 classes participated in the program at High Prairie Elementary, and the Life Skills class from St.

Andrews Catholic School had a garden. At Jousard School, the Grade 1 and Grade 4 classes also had classroom gardens. In 2014 new gardens were started in Grade 1 and Grade 4 classrooms at St. Mary of the Lake and in the Grade 4 class at Peavine's Bishop Routhier School. The LSWC also has an office garden that we can use as a demonstration kit for interested teachers. The program materials and equipment to carry out the Little Green Thumbs program are free for teachers and a variety of resources are provided to support learning with the garden including lesson plans, a teacher manual, student journals, class t-shirts, posters, books and a training session. At the end of the indoor growing season, participating classrooms are provided with the funds and resources to recognize their hard work, harvest and what they learned through a Celebration Event. Several classrooms from High Prairie visited Christie's Gardens and Greenhouse for their yearend celebration.



A Grade 4 student From HPE shows off the lettuce and basil harvested from their garden.



The garden kits take up about 4 square feet of space and you can see that they really take off with a bit of TLC from the students.

Financial Statement

Statement of Revenue and Expenditures from April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015

(unaudited)

	2015	2014
REVENUE		
Government grant income	\$268,270	\$290,500
Non government grants	\$64,171	\$16,770
Donation income	\$4,968	\$5,972
Revenue deferred from previous period	\$76,396	\$71,176
Revenue deferred to subsequent period	(93,373)	(76,396)
	<u>\$320,432</u>	<u>\$308,022</u>
EXPENSES		
Advertising and promotion	\$9,842	\$8,332
Amortization	\$435	\$552
Donations	\$12,000	\$10,185
Insurance	\$3,874	\$4,212
Interest and bank charges	\$79	\$18
Office	\$6,769	\$4,131
Project expenses	\$109,672	\$52,534
Administration	\$1,299	\$1,040
GST expense	\$3,645	\$3,856
Professional fees	\$2,812	\$2,500
Rental	\$11,768	\$10,908
Repairs and maintenance	\$263	\$241
Salaries and wages	\$144,761	\$123,749
Telephone, internet, fax	\$4,396	\$3,956
Professional development	\$5,066	\$6,510
Travel	\$18,197	\$13,894
	<u>\$334,878</u>	<u>\$246,618</u>
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	<u>\$ (14,446)</u>	<u>\$ (61,404)</u>

Our lake, Our future, Ours to protect



Photo by: Necole Screpnek. Sunset at Spruce Point Park, AB

Lesser Slave Watershed Council

PO Box 2607, High Prairie, AB T0G 1E0

Phone: (780) 523 9800 Fax: (780) 523 9801

Email: info@lswc.ca

Twitter: [@abLSWC](https://twitter.com/abLSWC)

Facebook: [LSWC2012](https://www.facebook.com/LSWC2012)