



# Lesser Slave Watershed Council 2013-14 Annual Report



Photo By: Chelsea Bembridge

## **Lesser Slave Watershed Council**

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## Thank You to our 2013-14 Financial Supporters and Partners



TD Friends of the  
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Alberta WPACs



## Table of Contents

LSWC Financial Supporters and Partners	Page 1
Table of Contents	Page 2
Map of the Watershed	Page 2
Message from the Executive Director	Page 3
Message from the Chairman	Page 4
2013-14 Board of Directors	Page 4
Summary of Operations	Pages 5-6
Project Highlights	Pages 7- 13
Financial Statement	Page 14
Thanks to Local Supporters	Page 15

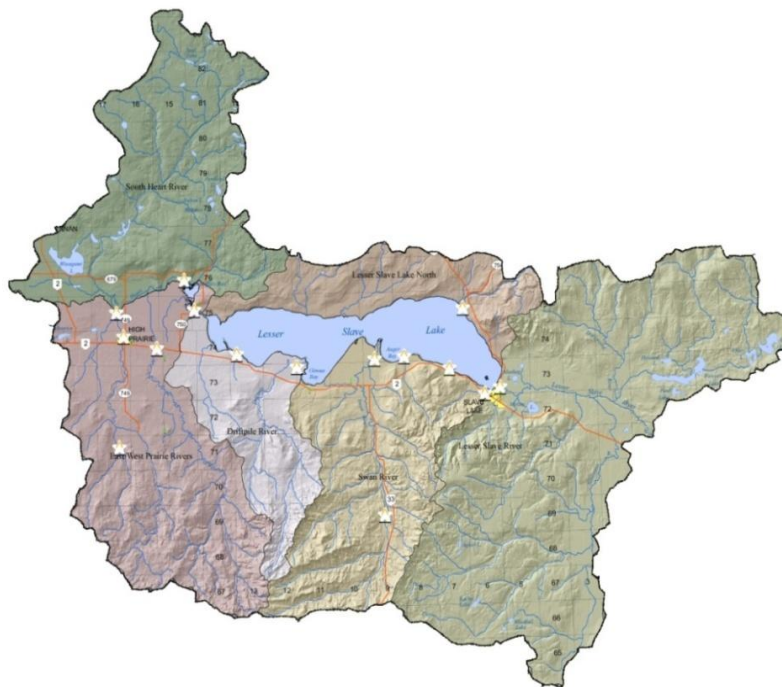


Figure 1 - Map of the Lesser Slave Watershed including the entire geographic area of Lesser Slave Lake and Lesser Slave River drainage basins. Major rivers include the South Heart, West Prairie, East Prairie, Driftpile, and Swan River, along with many other smaller creeks and streams. All streams except those in the Lesser Slave sub-basin flow into Lesser Slave Lake. The Lesser Slave River connects the watershed with the Athabasca River.

### Message from the Executive Director

Throughout 2013-14, the LSWC has made great strides in raising our profile in the communities in our watershed. People recognize us as the "water folks" and that is what we want as we move towards the development of an Integrated Watershed Management Plan for the watershed. In 2013, the LSWC Board of Directors worked with a contractor to produce the IWMP Terms of Reference. This foundational document can be compared to a road map that outlines how the IWMP project will get from start to finish and includes a communication and engagement plan that outlines how we will engage with stakeholders and the public to ensure their questions are answered and feedback is considered. I look forward to working with the IWMP Steering Committee to develop a plan that will ensure the sustainability of Lesser Slave Lake and its watershed while considering the social, economic, and environmental needs of the region.

I greatly appreciate the time and dedication of our Board of Directors. A strong organization is made up of committed and caring individuals who can see the big picture and work as a whole to get there. Volunteering can seem thankless at times but to our board members I say "Thank you". The health and well being of our lake and watershed is a great cause to lend your time to.



*Watershed Coordinator Lindsie Fairfield, back, and Executive Director Meghan Payne, front, pictured above at the 2013 Ducks Unlimited fundraising banquet hosted by the LSWC.*

### Message from the Watershed Coordinator

Over the past year, the Lesser Slave Watershed Council has worked to continue to build a foundation of environmental and watershed knowledge in all levels of the public, including key stakeholders, general citizenry, and youth. As an objective identified by the LSWC Board of Directors, educational programming relating to natural resource management and factors influencing water quality and quantity in the Lesser Slave region has been a key focus of the LSWC. Moving forward, we aim to continue to build upon this foundation by making clear and attainable stewardship outreach goals.

By expanding on successful experiences, adjusting programs to better correspond with regional needs and adopting new approaches to engage members of the public, the LSWC aims to maintain the integrity of Lesser Slave Lake, its tributaries and as a key part of larger water systems. I would like to thank those who have supported LSWC initiatives and who have participated in stewardship programming at various levels and capacities, and am looking forward to helping the LSWC realize its educational goals in the upcoming year.

## Message from the Chairman

In 2013 we said good-bye to three of our long-standing Board members: Wilfred Willier, Rob Irwin and Guy L'Heureux. I would like to thank them for their time and commitment to our organizations over the past several years. Their genuine interest and concern for the health of Lesser Slave Lake and our watershed made them dedicated board members. With goodbyes come new faces and we welcome Stefan Plouffe, Edward Podollan and Brian Panasiuk to our table.

Managing our water resources is very important now more so than ever. Our region experiences a diverse array of recreational, and industrial, agricultural and recreational land uses and pressures. We must consider economic, social and environmental factors as we move forward. Provincial and local governments need to work with the people in our watershed to ensure that future development, planning, and land use consider the long-term sustainability of Lesser Slave Lake.



*Chairman Murray De Alexandra (right) and Executive Director Meghan Payne (left) pictured above at the Slave Lake and District Chamber of Commerce Trade show.*

*Photo by: Bobbi Jo Grover Emes*

## 2013-14 LSWC Board of Directors

Name	Sector Represented	Alternate Member
Murray De Alexandra, Chairman	Commercial Fisherman	N/A
Guy L'Heureux, Vice Chairman	MD of Big Lakes	Ray Dupres
Wilfred Willier, Treasurer	Town of High Prairie	
Brian Rosche	MD of Lesser Slave River	Jeff Commins
Rob Irwin	Town of Slave Lake	Mark Missal
Gary Couch	Member at Large	N/A
Edna Willier	LSLIRC	N/A
Tammy Kaleta, Secretary	Fishing Tournaments and Recreation	N/A
Monica Dahl	ESRD	Kristy Wakeling
Lynn Sandquist	Agriculture	Lorne Pratt
Todd Bailey	Forest Industry	George Gross
Gary Braithwaite	ENGOS	Bonnie Raho
Vacant	Oil and Gas Industry	N/A
Michael Hunka	Department of Fisheries and Oceans	N/A
Vacant	Métis Settlements General Council	N/A
Sherrie Hay	Tourism	N/A



## Summary of Operations

From April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014 the LSWC worked to implement our operational plan and meet our strategic goals. The LSWC was pleased to secure funding for a full time Watershed Coordinator, Lindsie Fairfield. This addition to the work force has allowed us to broaden our reach within the watershed and grow as an organization.

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

- Hosted Structured decision making and watershed planning workshop for stakeholders in September 2013
- The LSWC worked with Aquality Environmental to produce a Draft Terms of Reference for an Integrated Watershed Management Plan for the Lesser Slave watershed.
- Hosted stakeholder and board session to discuss IWMP Draft Terms of Reference in Kinuso, AB in Feb. 2014.
- LSWC Executive Director presented information about the IWMP Project at town and MD council meetings in 2013.
- Board and Staff participated in ESRD's Water Conversations and follow up sessions.
- LSWC Executive Director attended quarterly WPAC meetings to discuss provincial scale WPAC issues and projects.

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

- LSWC monitored nutrients at six tributary sites monthly during open water.
- Partner with Municipalities to acquire sewage lagoon discharge data.
- Completed 27% of Lesser Slave Lake shoreline bathymetry survey.

- Worked with ESRD to have analytical work done on 2012 east and west basin core sediment samples.
- ESRD staff helped the LSWC by setting up the BATHTUB model for Lesser Slave Lake for future lake eutrophication modeling to inform planning.

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

- Little Green Thumbs program brought to 5 classrooms in the watershed.
- 4<sup>th</sup> year of celebrating Canada Water Week with community events.
- Held Annual General Meeting in High Prairie on June 13, 2013.
- Continuation of our MD of Big Lakes Ag Service Board Partnership.
- Continuation of educational partnership with the Lesser Slave Forest Education Society for curriculum based watershed education.
- Ongoing maintenance of fishing line-recycling stations
- Participation and distribution of information at Treaty 8 days in Gift Lake, AB.
- Distribution of over 1500 watershed stewardship handbooks.
- Public outreach at boat launches 4 times throughout the summer
- Participation at the High Prairie Gun and Sportsman Show and the Slave Lake Chamber of Commerce Tradeshow.

## Operations Continued

- Promote the LSWC through the High Prairie TD Bank Branch during their TD FEF donation month.
- LSWC developed an online newsletter and distributed to members and around the watershed.
- LSWC actively engages people via social media on Facebook and Twitter.
- The LSWC published several articles in the local newspaper in 2013.
- Hosted the annual Ducks Unlimited Fundraiser Banquet and Auction in High Prairie, AB.
- Yellow Fish Road - Educated youth in summer camps about runoff pollution, storm drain management, and painted storm drains to promote proper waste management.
- 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.

### **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 Robin Campbell in February 2013 to discuss WPAC support and funding.
- The Board of Directors had eight regular meetings in 2013.
- MD of Big Lake and MD of Lesser Slave River contributed \$20,000 in funding to water quality and nutrient budget reporting.
- SARDA contributed \$7500 to the LSWC to aid in water quality assessment and reporting.

- The LSWC received RBC Blue Water Foundation funding to support education and outreach initiatives.
- Board Roles and Responsibilities professional development session held in March 2013.
- Watershed Coordinator attended various educational training sessions: Agriculture in the Classroom, Project WILD, and Community of Practice group sessions to connect environmental educators.
- LSWC Staff and Board members attended the 2013 WPAC Summit in Cold Lake, AB.
- LSWC Executive Director attended ESRD flood mitigation symposium in Oct. 2013.
- LSWC Executive Director attended 2013 ESRD led WPAC forum in June 2013.
- LSWC requested local government funding to support operations and watershed planning in April 2013.
- LSWC Executive Director completed Environmental Project Management Essentials certification.
- LSWC Executive Director completed a wetland classification and policy workshop in Feb 2013.



*Blue sky and waters on Chrystina Lake,  
near Swan Hills, Alberta.*

## Project Highlights

### Water Quality Monitoring



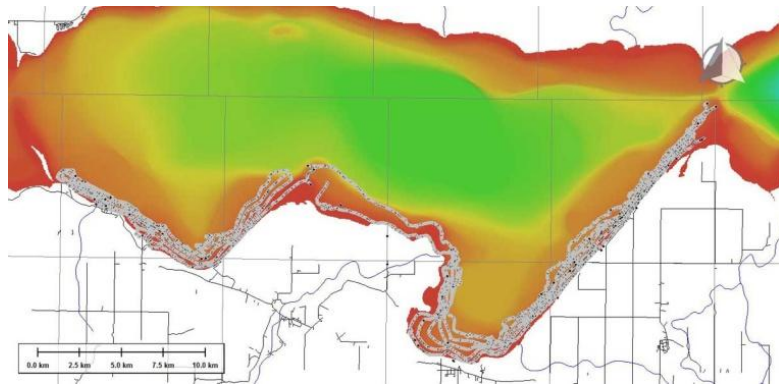
*Meghan Payne collects and records a dissolved oxygen reading while water sampling at the South Heart River.*

During the spring and summer of 2013 the LSWC monitored six streams for nutrient parameters. The LSWC staff collected samples monthly at selected sites on the: South Heart River, West Prairie River, East Prairie River, Driftpile River, Swan River and the Lesser Slave River. The samples along with recorded river flow data will provide information used to calculate a nutrient budget for Lesser Slave Lake and the major tributaries. The LSWC will be working to complete a technical water quality update

in the next year and the report will be available to water managers and the public when it is complete in spring 2015.

### Lesser Slave Lake Shoreline Bathymetry Survey

Lake bathymetry is mapping of the lake bottom to determine varying depths. It is important information used to determine where areas of different types of lake habitat can be found. The littoral zone is the area found between the shore to two meters in distance out into the lake. The LSWC hired AMEC Earth and Environment to survey a portion of the South shore of Lesser Slave Lake's littoral zone. The field crew collected GIS data and information about the substrate on the lake bottom and vegetation type. The last time ESRD collected this information was in



*The above map shows the 27% of shoreline covered in the 2013 survey.*

the 1980's and with the pressure for development on the south shore of LSL, it is important to monitor changes and update the dataset. The data is available to ESRD to inform fisheries management and update the provincial database. The AMEC report and maps are available on the LSWC website via the projects page.



## Canada Water Week 2013

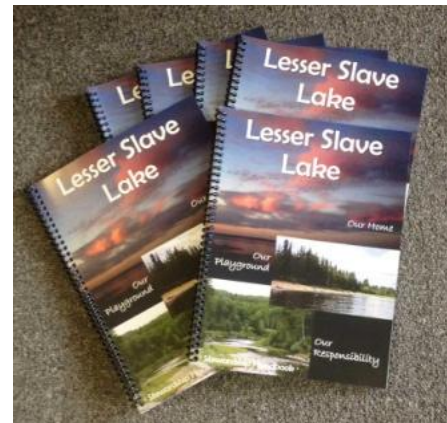


*Pictured above is LSWC Executive Director Meghan Payne presenting a couple of the poster contest winners with their prizes.*

For the 4<sup>th</sup> year in a row the LSWC organized local activities and events in celebration of Canada Water Week to help raise awareness about the watershed and how humans may influence it. Pictured on the left are a couple of the lucky winners of our "I Love my Waterbody" poster contest with LSWC Executive Director Meghan Payne receiving their prizes. Our Facebook watershed trivia contest was a big hit with up to 800 people viewing our question posts. The LSWC also hosted a movie screening of the Robert Redford film "Watershed" at the Park Theatre in High Prairie. Canada Water week is a celebration of water from coast to coast, held each year in the third week of March to coincide with World Water Day.

## Lesser Slave Lake Stewardship Handbook

Thanks to generous funding from TD Friends of the Environment, MD of Big Lakes, RBC Blue Water Project and Designs by Tam we were able to publish 2,500 Lake Stewardship Handbooks. Watershed Coordinator Lindsie Fairfield authored and designed the handbook with the intent to provide people in the region with information about our lake, watershed and the LSWC. The booklet contains information on fish and wildlife, plants and aquatic species as well as recommendation for best practices to maintain the health of Lesser Slave Lake. The LSWC has distributed the handbooks at campgrounds, libraries, schools, municipal offices, trade shows and public events and has received many compliments from readers.



### Did you know...

The LSWC website has information about past and current LSWC projects. Visit [www.lswc.ca](http://www.lswc.ca) to explore our website and find project reports, info sheets, membership forms and links to all kinds of water resources.

## Educating 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 2013 was another great year. Water related programming makes up 25% of the LSFES's presentations and trips.

### 2013 Partnership Statistics:

- 71 field trips
- 26 classroom presentations
- 1691 students engaged
- 278 Adults engaged
- \$10,000 in funding provided by the LSWC



*LSWC Watershed Coordinator Lindsie Fairfield teaching water quality sampling parameters to you (far left), while another group searches for "marsh monsters", or aquatic invertebrate along Lesser Slave Lake (left).*

### Boreal Discovery Camp - Summer Splash with the LSFES



The LSWC joined with the LSFES and the Boreal Center for Bird Conservation to teach youth in the Slave Lake Summer Splash camp about the Boreal Forest and Lesser Slave Watershed, highlighting common species, their habitat needs, and interesting adaptations. Watershed Coordinator Lindsie Fairfield taught the participants about watersheds, different land uses, and

how they can influence watersheds and water quality. Afterwards, they were provided with the materials to create their own watershed model using play dough and natural materials, like rocks, sticks and leaves.

*Watershed model demo, construction, and the finished product.*





## 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 five classrooms in the Lesser Slave region.

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 realize 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. 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.



*The growing garden at Jousard School's Grade 2 classroom.*



*A few students from St. Andrew's Life Skills class showing off their classroom garden a few months before harvest. Students successfully grew pole beans, pepper plants, tomatoes, nasturtiums and basil.*

In addition, 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, including St.



Andrews Life Skills class visited Christie's Gardens and Greenhouses where they planted some greenery to take home, and learned about greenhouses, their importance, and the services they offer.

*St. Andrew's Life Skills class of High Prairie planting tomatoes at Christie's Gardens and Greenhouses during their Celebration Event.*

## Yellow Fish Road



Through resources provided through Trout Unlimited's Yellow Fish Road program, the LSWC educated youth from High Prairie's Summer Adventure Camp about the impact storm drains can have as direct connectors to rivers and lakes. Participants learned about the importance of preventing pollutants from entering storm drains to protect and improve the watershed, water quality and aquatic habitat. The group also travelled around the community painting yellow fish near storm drains to remind others that any materials entering storm drains ultimately affects us all.



## Ducks Unlimited Banquet



In November 2013 the LSWC hosted and organized the 21<sup>st</sup> annual Ducks Unlimited Fundraising Banquet and Auction at the Peavine Inn and Suites in High Prairie, AB. Based on similar goals of wetland conservation,



the LSWC Board of Directors determined that the event would be a valuable addition to its outreach objectives. Tickets for the event sold out, and through the various donations, raffles, and silent and live auctions, both Ducks Unlimited Canada and the LSWC received tremendous financial support from the community. The LSWC accepted over \$1,200 in funds through the donations. The success of this event was made possible through the hard work and dedication from both volunteers and local sponsors. The LSWC would like to thank those individuals and businesses again who supported the Ducks Unlimited Banquet and Auction to make it such a great success.

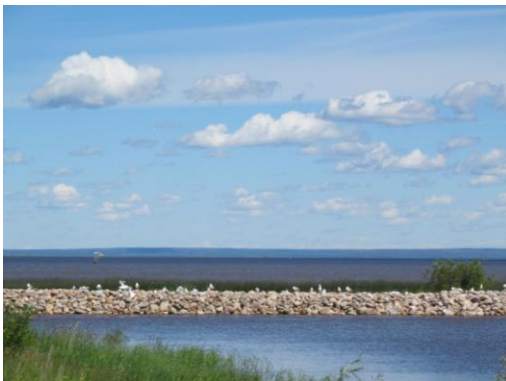


### **2013 DUC Committee Members**

Meghan Payne  
Lindsie Fairfield  
Tammy Kaleta  
Spencer Zelman  
Brian Elliott  
Nona Elliott  
Brian Ostermeier  
Judy Ostermeier  
Valinda Lea

### **Lake Days**

The LSWC staff visited several harbor and lakeside areas in the summer months to distribute informational materials and meet with members of the public. Some of these dates coincided with large events, such as the Golden Walleye Classic fishing tournament based at Shaw's Point on the west basin. Several new contacts were made because of this outreach initiative in areas including Faust, Jousard and Shaw's Point.



## Financial Statement

From April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014 (*unaudited*)

	2014	2013
<b>Revenues</b>		
Grant Income	\$ 290,500	\$ 206,900
Miscellaneous income	158	3,674
Donation income	5,972	1,712
Non government grants	16,612	50,500
Revenue deferred from previous period	71,176	162,722
Revenue deferred from subsequent period	(76,396)	(71,176)
	<b>308,022</b>	<b>354,332</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Administration	1,040	1,200
Advertising and promotion	8,332	5,934
Amortization	552	701
Donations made by the LSWC	10,185	16,790
GST expense	3,856	2,841
Insurance	4,212	1,012
Interest and bank charges	18	56
Office expenses	4,131	2,907
Office rental	10,908	12,673
Project expenses	50,941	112,108
Professional development	6,510	9,294
professional fees	2,500	3,975
Repairs and maintenance	241	0
Salaries and wages	123,749	100,515
Telephone, fax, website	3,956	3,587
Travel	13,894	17,562
	<b>246,618</b>	<b>291,155</b>
<b>Excess of Revenues over Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ \$61,404</b>	<b>\$ \$63,177</b>

## Thank You to our 2013 local sponsors and supporters!



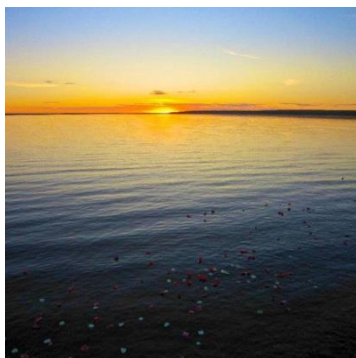
**Designs by Tam**  
**Pantara Contracting**  
**Trans Canada Corporation**  
**Pennwest Energy,**  
**High Prairie**  
**Town of Slave Lake**  
**The South Peace News**



**High Prairie and Area**  
**Dental Center**  
**Freson Bros IGA,**  
**High Prairie**  
**Boondocks Grill**  
**NAPA Auto Parts, High**  
**Prairie**



**Springburn Oilfield**  
**Services**



**ROVE Engraving and**  
**Upholstery**  
**Tervita, High Prairie**  
**The Park Theatre**  
**Tru Value, High Prairie**





**Winagami Lake - Thunderstorms approaches**  
**Photo Submitted by Tianna Turner**

