



2019-20 ANNUAL REPORT

PREPARED BY

Meghan Payne, Executive Director

Alyssa Belanger, Watershed Coordinator

MANY THANKS

The Lesser Slave Watershed Council is grateful for Water for Life partnership support provided by the Government of Alberta and for the financial contributions of local municipalities and industry partners.



\$301,000



\$20,518



\$20,000



\$5,000



\$5,000



\$3,404



\$2,000



\$2,500



\$1,000



\$1,500



\$370



\$250

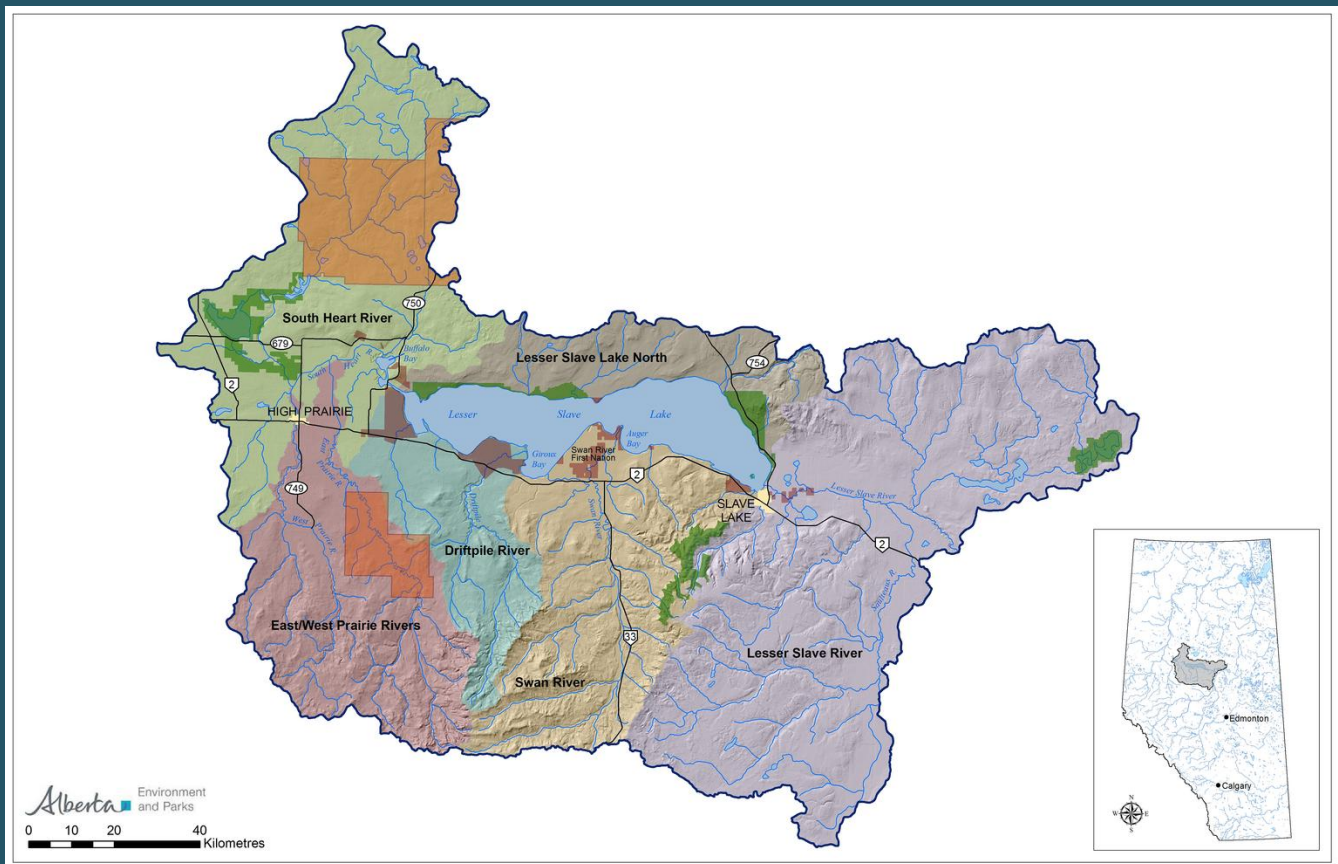


\$250



\$250

OUR WATERSHED



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Todd Bailey

Throughout the last year our Board of Directors met for nine regular board meetings, our annual general meeting in June of 2019, and participated in a strategic planning survey for our strategic planning workshop which unfortunately had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I commend the Board of Directors on their swift transition to online meetings and new technology and for their flexibility in dealing with restrictions placed on us.

The LSWC provides a strong voice for our lake and watershed and is a forum for discussion and collaboration. The people around our table volunteer their time to ensure the organization is moving towards the achievement of our goals and objectives. The diversity of backgrounds and experiences make for diverse and well-rounded conversations around the table. I look forward to working with this great group of people to promote the sustainable management of our watershed through execution of projects and delivery of programs in the Lesser Slave Watershed.

2019-20

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Richard Simard
(Robert Nygaard)
Big Lakes County

Brian Rosche
(Brad Pearson)
MD of Lesser Slave River

Rebecca King
(Shawn Gramlich)
Town of Slave Lake

Brian Gilroy
Town of High Prairie

Jamie Bruha
(Lisa Bergen)
Alberta Environment & Parks

Todd Bailey, Chairman
Swan River First Nation

Roderick Willier
Sucker Creek First Nation

Ken Noskey
(Lynn Smith)
Peavine Metis Settlement

Nicole St. Jean
(Allison Moeller, Secretary)
Forest Industry

Duane Nichols, Treasurer
Agriculture

Dean McKenzie
Oil & Gas Sector

Shane Knutson
Cottagers

Tammy Kaleta, Vice Chair
Tourism & Recreation

Jule Asterisk
Non-government Organizations

Misty Gaudet
(Pearl Lorentzen)
Member at Large



The LSWC directors
contributed a total value of
\$59,015 in kind
in their time and travel
in 2019-20

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Meghan Payne



2019/20 was another busy year for the LSWC. From water quality monitoring field work, working with landowners on watershed resiliency projects, meeting with stakeholders and municipalities to talk about watershed management, holding educational events and working with partners to deliver youth education in schools across the watershed, our staff stayed busy.

Operationally 2019 was a challenging year. A provincial election triggered many changes within the ministry of Environment and Parks, including a significant delay in receipt of grant funding for WPAC's. Although funding was delayed we did enter into a multi year grant agreement, which should alleviate the issues with timely receipt of grant funds annually. The WPAC Collective and AEP staff were able to draft a WPAC roles and responsibilities document that outlines the roles and expectations of not only WPAC's but Alberta Environment and Parks and it will be utilized to strengthen the *Water for Life* partnership going forward.

I really appreciate the ongoing support and commitment from our Board of Directors. They are volunteers who genuinely care about the work we are doing in the watershed. They are very supportive of our staff and do a great job positively representing the organization in our communities and beyond.

While we ended our 2019/20 fiscal year in the midst of the COVID 19 pandemic, we are committed to delivery of our programs and projects and will succeed by adapting to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.



The LSWC welcomed Alyssa Belanger to our team as our Watershed Coordinator. Alyssa grew up in Northeastern Alberta, and spent most of her childhood running around in the boreal forest. After getting her B.A in Environmental Studies in 2016 she spent 2 years working in Edmonton before realizing city life wasn't for her. She joined us in May of 2019 and is currently working towards her Masters in Environmental Education and Communication and leading the delivery of education and communications for the LSWC.

INTEGRATED WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN: IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

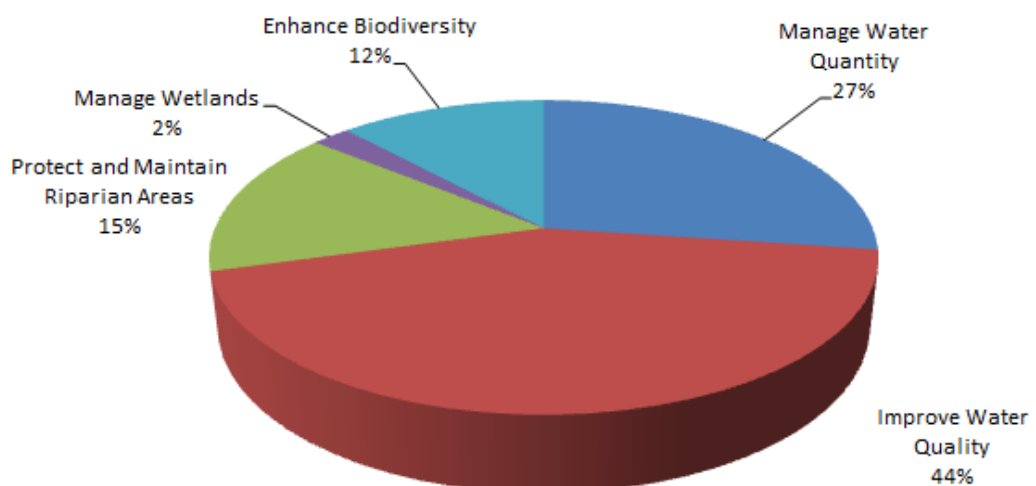
In 2018 the LSWC and Palliser Environmental Services Ltd. completed the Lesser Slave Integrated Watershed Management Plan after several years of work. The plan is a guidance document and planning tool for resource managers in the watershed. The plan was developed with input from communities, industry, Indigenous groups, local and provincial government and sets goals and objectives for a healthy, sustainable watershed. The recommendations, when implemented will lead to the achievement of these shared watershed outcomes.

The plan is organized into five themes: water quantity, water quality, riparian areas, wetlands, and biodiversity. There is a total of 79 recommendations in the plan and all watershed stakeholders and land managers have a role to play in implementation of these recommendations.

The first IWMP Implementation report includes the activities undertaken across the watershed to support the plans implementation throughout 2018 and 2019. The watershed management plan and full implementation report can be found online at lswc.ca/iwmp.

Every two years the LSWC will provide an Implementation update so that we can track progress and showcase the effort being made to manage our watershed. Thank you to all of the stakeholders and organizations that provided input in their implementation actions for this summary report.

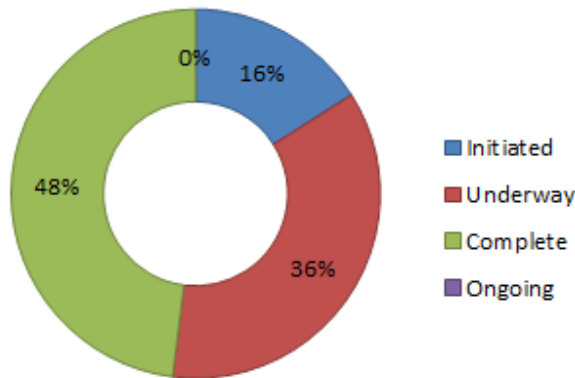
**Lesser Slave IWMP Implementation
Effort by Theme (Percentage of Actions Taken)**



IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY CONTINUED

Water Quantity

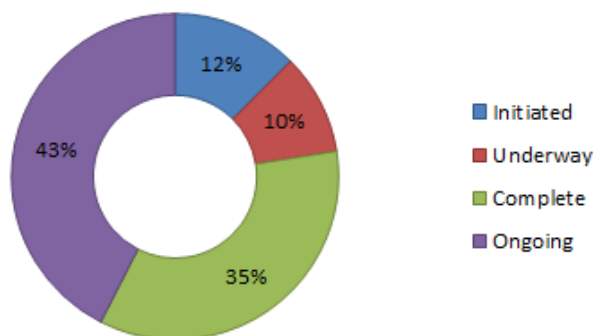
Status of Water Quantity Related Actions



- The plan makes 14 recommendations for water quantity management in the watershed.
- There are 9 actions that are underway, 12 that have been completed and 4 that remain ongoing
- Implementation partners include: the LSWC, Town of Slave Lake, Alberta Environment and Parks, industry, and the Alberta Energy Regulator.
- Pages 22-29 of the IWMP address water quantity. Go to: lswc.ca/iwmp

Water Quality

Status of Water Quality Related Actions

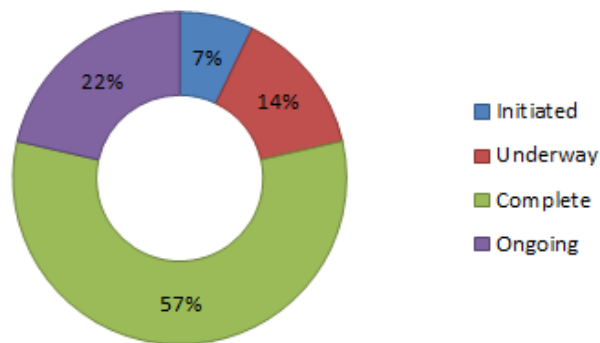


- The plan makes 31 recommendations for water quality management in the watershed.
- 18 actions have been initiated, 12 that are underway, 6 complete, and 13 that remain ongoing.
- Implementation partners include: the LSWC, Big Lakes County, MD of Lesser Slave River, Alberta Environment and Parks, Swan River First Nation, and industry.
- Pages 30-46 of the IWMP address water quality. Go to lswc.ca/iwmp

IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY CONTINUED

Riparian Areas

Status of Riparian Area Related Actions



- The plan makes 12 recommendations for management of riparian areas in the watershed.
- Throughout 2018-19 2 actions were initiated, 2 are underway, 6 have been completed and 2 are ongoing.
- Implementation partners include: the LSWC, Big Lakes County, Swan River First Nation, Alberta Environment and Parks, Cows and Fish, and industry.
- Pages 48-55 of the IWMP address riparian areas. Go to: lswc.ca/iwmp

Implementation Highlight: ALUS Program

In 2019 Big Lakes County approved a motion to deliver the Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) program in the County and hired an ALUS Coordinator to lead delivery of the program. ALUS is community-developed and farmer-delivered, ALUS sustains agriculture, wildlife and natural spaces for all Canadians, one acre at a time. The LSWC is proud to be an ALUS partner and help support projects with technical expertise and grant funding. Learn more about ALUS at <https://alus.ca/> or call the Ag. Department at Big Lakes County at (789)523-5955

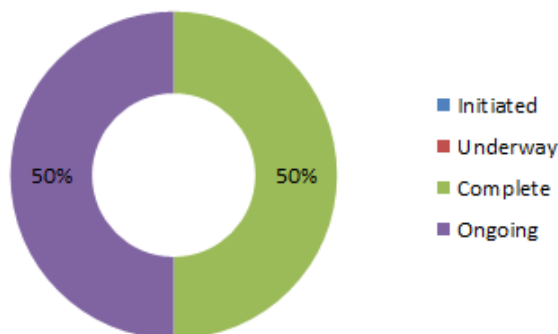


IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY CONTINUED

Wetlands



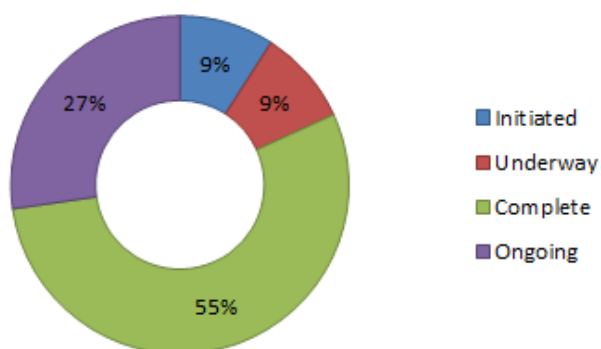
Status of Wetland Related Actions



- The plan makes 9 recommendations for wetland management.
- There has been one action completed, and one that remains ongoing.
- Wetlands and riparian areas are similar in nature in that they are both influenced by wet soils and connected to the surrounding water table. Activities that support healthy water quality and riparian areas also benefit wetlands.
- Pages 56 - 61 of the IWMP address wetlands. Go to: lswc.ca/iwmp

Biodiversity

Status of Biodiversity Related Actions



- The plan makes 13 recommendations for Biodiversity management in the watershed.
- To date there has been 2 actions initiated, 2 that are underway, 2 that have been complete and 3 that remain ongoing.
- Implementation partners include: the LSWC, Alberta Environment and Parks, Swan River First Nation, industry, and Big Lakes County.
- Pages 63-73 of the IWMP address Biodiversity. Go to: lswc.ca/iwmp

PARTNERS IN WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP

In 2015 the LSWC received our first Watershed Resiliency and Restoration (WRRP) grant for \$12,500 from the Government of Alberta and got to work building capacity to deliver land owner projects and extensions events with our partners. In 2016 the LSWC received another WRRP grant for \$37,480 and financial support from Big Lakes County Agricultural Services Board to support riparian health assessments, project planning and delivery and extension events that promote best management practices.

The LSWC, Peace Country Beef and Forage Association, Cows and Fish, and Big Lakes County staff work together to support land owners in planning projects, completing Environmental Farm Plans, seeking funding for, and implementing projects.

Summary of Achievements:

- 8 riparian health assessments completed by Cows & Fish
- 6 landowner projects completed
- 5 landowner projects initiated or under way
- 109.62 acres of riparian area protected or conserved
- Demonstration solar watering system purchased for producer trials
- 6 km of riparian fencing installed
- 2 permanent all season watering systems installed at projects
- 3 portable solar watering systems in use at project sites.
- 3 field tours & 2 workshops held
- 2 LSWC staff training to be certified Environmental Farm Plan technicians
- LSWC Executive Director is a member of the Big Lakes County ALUS Project Advisory Committee
- Total investment of cash and in kind contributions from 2015- 2019: \$205,884



Producers love to share their successes. On a 2019 field tour producer John Prince shows us one of his home made solar water systems in his pasture. John has also been using pond levelers to mitigate the effects of flooding that beaver dams are having on his land.

PROMOTING WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP



Participants learned how to properly inspect a boat for Zebra or Quaga mussels at the May 2019 Invasive Species workshop held by the LSWC and Big Lakes County, Alberta Environment and Parks and the Alberta Council for Invasive Species.



The LSWC has 2 solar powered off stream watering systems that local beef producers can try. Above, Meghan and a local producer set up the system beside a creek. The cattle quickly learn that the trough is an easier spot for a drink than wading into the creek.



High Prairie RBC and the LSWC got together in June 2019 to clean up garbage and pull invasive weeds on the riparian area of the West Prairie River in the Town of High Prairie. The RBC made a donation of \$1000 to the LSWC through the community giving program.



You may see these signs when you are out enjoying the watershed. Thank you to Big Lakes County Ag. department staff for installing these "On the living edge" signs that were developed and designed collaboratively with local partners.

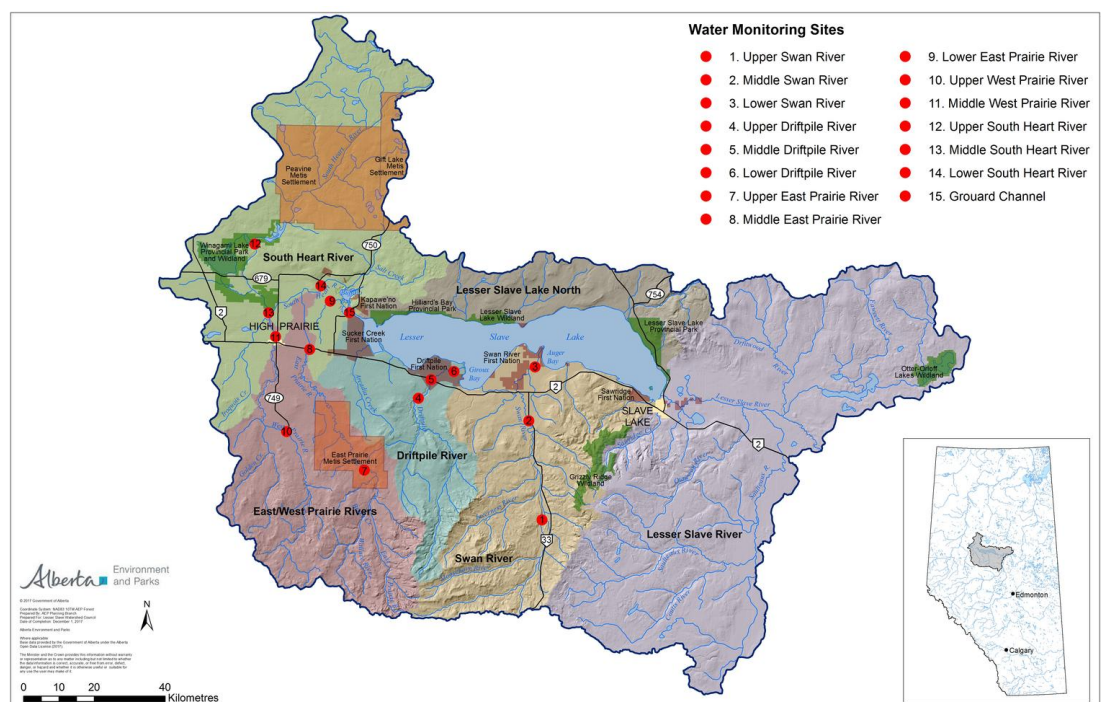
TRIBUTARY WATER QUALITY MONITORING PROGRAM

In the spring of 2017 the LSWC began monitoring water quality at 15 tributary sites in our watershed. This program supports recommendations made in the Lesser Slave Integrated Watershed Management Plan (2018). The recommendations propose a comprehensive, long-term water monitoring program be implemented for tributaries to Lesser Slave Lake. The objectives of the program are to: collect baseline data; evaluate water quality condition in comparison to relevant federal and provincial guidelines, and existing historic data; and to establish site-specific water quality objectives when sufficient data becomes available (at least five years). 2019 was the third year of the water quality monitoring program funded by industry and municipal partners.

Samples were collected by LSWC staff and volunteers at our 15 sites 10 times between April and October 2019, and summarized in a report by Palliser Environmental Services. The parameters measured include: temperature, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, pH, total suspended sediments, fecal coliform bacteria, total and dissolved phosphorus, nitrate, nitrite, and total nitrogen. Learn more and download water quality summary reports online at:

https://www.lswc.ca/water_quality_monitoring

Map of the Lesser Slave Watershed with the LSWC's 15 Tributary Water Quality Monitoring sites. Flow data is obtained from Alberta Environment and Parks annually.



WATER QUALITY COLLABORATION



**SWAN RIVER
FIRST NATION**

Swan River First Nation and the LSWC have been working together since 2017 to build a more robust data set for the Swan River. In addition to the baseline parameters being sampled at all 15 sites, SRFN covers the cost of analytical for monthly metals, dissolved metals and trace mineral samples at the 3 Swan River sites.



The West Prairie River is the source water for the Town of High Prairie & part of Big Lakes County. Since 2017 the samples from the sites on the West Prairie River have shown above average fecal coliform counts. Big Lakes County provided funding to work with the U of A to conduct fecal source tracking using DNA markers to determine what the source of the fecal coliforms in the river are. Results are summarized in the 2019 water quality report.



In order to share our water quality program results and reports on an easily accessible public platform, the LSWC has partnered with Mackenzie Datastream. Check out our 2017-2019 data set at www.mackenziedatastream.ca



With only 2 staff it is challenging to be everywhere in the watershed at once. Thank you to Taylor Hunt (right) and Marty Payne (left) who donated their time to help collect water samples in 2019.



Thank you to our 2019 Water Quality Monitoring Program funders:



Local businesses

SUPPORTED OUR PROGRAMMING WITH
OVER \$2500 IN DONATIONS

129 people

ATTENDED OUR KIDS CAN
CATCH ICE FISHING FEST IN
FEBRUARY 2020



Partners spent

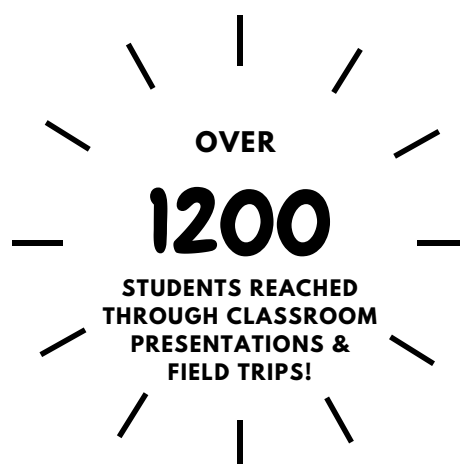
almost 700 hours working
with the LSWC!



556 Facebook Likes



850 Twitter followers



65 people

LEARNED ABOUT INVASIVE
SPECIES AT OUR MAY 2019
WORKSHOP

PROGRAMS AND
PRESENTATIONS HOSTED
IN
7 COMMUNITIES



PARTNERS IN EDUCATION



The LSWC once again partnered with our friends at the Lesser Slave Forest Education Society (LSFES) and the Boreal Center for Bird Conservation (BCBC) to deliver curriculum linked classroom presentations and hands on field trips with students in our watershed.

In 2019 there were more than 1300 students, teachers and education support staff reached through our partnership programming with the Lesser Slave Forest Education Society. The LSWC and LSFES co-hosted 13 field trips and classroom presentations in the 2018/19 school year.

Since 2009 the LSWC has been working with the LSFES and BCBC to increase watershed and environmental literacy, encourage active, outdoor experiences and provide opportunities for students to get hands-on learning in the boreal forest.



LSWC Chair Todd Bailey (left), and LSWC Executive Director Meghan Payne (right), present LSFES Executive Director MJ Kristoff (center) with a donation of \$10,000 to support environmental programming, and a retirement gift. It has been a great experience for the LSWC staff to work with MJ over the past 10 years and we wish her the best as she chooses her next adventure.



**Little
GreenThumbs**
plant grow eat share



Little Green Thumbs classroom gardening program celebrated its 6th year in the Lesser Slave Watershed in the 2019/20 school year. We are so glad to have this incredible program available to students in our watershed! Through the LGT program and with funding from Agriculture in the classroom we have 9 gardens, in 6 schools. The most exciting part is that it's entirely free to participating classrooms, so all 11 teachers and 233 students are able to participate without financial barriers!



"I love watching my plants grow! I want to make salsa!"

4th grade student,
High Prairie
Elementary School

"Students often start the year scared, but always finish excited to eat something they grew."

Teacher, Jousard
School



**Agriculture
in the Classroom**
Connecting Kids and Agriculture

kids can catch 2020

On February 15, 2020 the LSWC, our partners and numerous volunteers hosted the 3rd annual Kids can Catch Ice Fishing event in Jousard, AB. The lake conditions and weather did not cooperate but we still had a great day!



Big Lakes County FCSS sponsored a pancake and sausage breakfast to start the day.



Families from across the region and as far away as Calgary joined us despite the frigid wind and inability to actually fish!



LSWC Board member Tammy Kaleta teaching kids how to bait their hook, jig, handle fish, and remove hooks.



Mathew Monteith, Whitesands Estates showed up with his Sherp. The kids loved going for rides.



Staff from the High Prairie & District Children's Resource Council had craft supplies on hand for kids



Lesser Slave Forest Education Society Executive Director Cori Klassen shows off their indoor fishing game

Thank You to our 2020 supporters!



April 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Kaft CPA completed the LSWC's April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020 financial review engagement. The LSWC's revenues and expenses for the fiscal year are outlined below.

	2020	2019
REVENUE	\$	\$
Brian Elliott Memorial Donations	0	275
Donation Income	4,250	559
Municipal Government Income	6,500	36,000
Non Government Grant Income	2,656	36,754
Other Government of Alberta Grants	71,000	11,561
Alberta Environment and Parks Operational Grant	130,000	375,000
Revenue deferred from previous period	227,293	87,104
Revenue deferred to subsequent period	(251,159)	(227,293)
Water Quality Monitoring Program Revenue	29,476	29,666
	220,016	349,626
EXPENSES	\$	\$
Administration	905	1,200
Advertising and promotion	5,970	7,505
Amortization	422	560
Donations	10,000	10,000
Education and outreach	11,778	11,570
GST Expense	1,873	3,726
Insurance	4,117	3,984
Interest and bank charges	109	386
Office	11,735	5,971
Professional fees	2,100	2,000
Project Expenses	7,132	27,299
Rental	15,986	14,105
Repairs and maintenance	1,711	227
Riparian projects	969	37,936
Salaries and benefits	143,965	137,633
Stakeholder engagement	5,255	7,808
Telephone and internet	3,635	3,183
Training	1,070	655
Travel	1,653	2,964
Water quality monitoring	19,394	26,425
Watershed planning	14,966	21,904
	264,745	327,041
EXCESS(DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	(\$44,729)	\$22,585

IN KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

The success of any non profit organization is in the many partners and volunteers that come together with a shared vision and jointly work to achieve shared goals. The LSWC strives to do our best to track the time, cash, and in kind donations of all volunteers & partners throughout the year so that in addition to reporting on cash revenues we can assign a dollar value to the overall "non-cash" contributions to our work.

Board of Directors

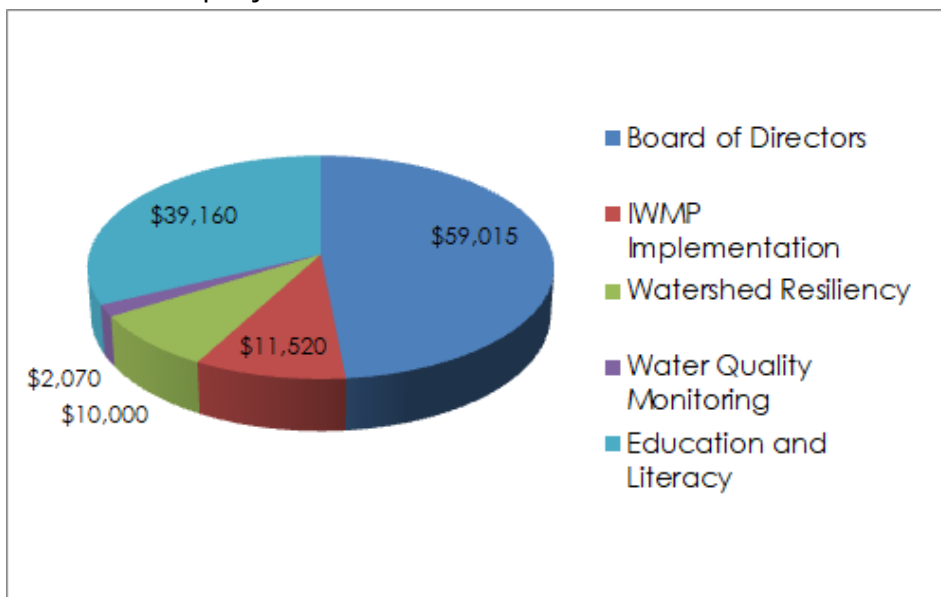
Time and travel associated with meetings, committees and participation in events.

IWMP Implementation

Time investment of IWMP implementation partners: GOA staff, IWMP Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Team, Municipalities, First Nations, and other stakeholders.

Watershed Resiliency

In kind time of partner staff & producers, cash investment of producers, donations of materials for projects.



Water Quality Monitoring

In kind time investment of partners and volunteers

Education and Literacy

In kind investment of program delivery partners, volunteers and other WPAC staff.



The 11 WPAC's in Alberta, Alberta Environment and Parks, and the Alberta Water Council have shared goals and objectives around watershed management in Alberta. The WPAC Executive Directors and Managers meet quarterly to discuss and work on provincial scale projects, engage with provincial partners and explore opportunities for collaboration. The 11 WPAC produce a WPAC Compendium that highlights annual collective achievements.

2019-20 Investment to WPAC Collective \$99,328



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