

January 2013

ANNUAL WFL PARTNERSHIPS NEWSLETTER

ISSUE TWO



About this Newsletter



The AWC special annual newsletter highlights the *Water for Life* partners and their success stories from the past year. Building on the work of the Alberta Water Council Moving from Words to Actions report results, the partnerships newsletter helps to create more awareness of the partnerships and the good work being done in water management around the province.

Special thanks to the contributors of our first issue: Land Stewardship Centre of Canada, North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance, Beaver River Watershed Alliance, Red Deer River Watershed Alliance, and Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development.

In This Issue:

About the Water for Life Partnerships

The Sylvan Lake Management Committee asks Fishermen to "Take it Off" for Stewardship

North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance Releases Milestone Documents

Beaver River Watershed Alliance: State of the Watershed Report

Red Deer River Watershed Alliance Ramps up Education and Stewardship Outreach

ESRD Releases First of Three New Watershed Management Guidance Documents

About the WFL Partnerships

[Water for Life](#): a strategy for sustainability is the Government of Alberta guidance document for water management. The strategy was launched in 2003 and renewed in 2008 and a new action plan was released in 2009. The renewed strategy continues to identify partnerships as a key mechanism for achieving the goals and outcomes. Three types of partnerships were identified in the strategy: local [Watershed Stewardship Groups](#) (WSGs), regional [Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils](#) (WPACs), and the provincial [Alberta Water Council](#) (AWC). The AWC provides a forum for sectors and Water for Life (WFL) partnerships to come together to discuss and find innovative solutions to shared water management issues.

water for life

The WFL partnership system is composed of the provincial AWC, 11 regional WPACs and approximately 140 local WSGs. The partnerships typically include stakeholders representing governments, industries, non-government organizations, Aboriginal and other communities, and members of the public. At present, more than 1,000 Albertans are working directly under the banner of WFL.

The Sylvan Lake Management Committee asks Fishermen to "Take it Off" for Stewardship

Every year, pressure on recreational lakes grows due to increasing number of users and sophistication of recreational equipment. A key concern throughout the province is abandoned ice fishing huts on the lake which contribute to water pollution, boating and swimming hazards, and shoreline waste debris when the ice melts in the spring.

For the people living around Sylvan Lake, the problem of abandoned huts has become all too clear. Looking out over the lake two weeks after the ice fishing season closed in April 2011, 25 abandoned huts remained, destined to sink into the lake. The task of removing these huts often falls to self-appointed volunteers, but the community saw a need to address the problem in a more meaningful and sustainable way. And so, the Take it Off project was born.

Community leaders come together

Take it Off was developed by the Sylvan Lake Management Committee (SLMC), a partnership between Red Deer County, Lacombe County, Town of Sylvan Lake, and the five summer villages surrounding Sylvan Lake. SLMC is an excellent example of how diverse municipalities can come together to successfully address their shared stewardship concerns.

Take it Off is a thoughtfully designed, multi-pronged approach that deals with the issue through community engagement, education, and prevention. Although the ultimate goal of this project is for all users of the lake to voluntarily take ownership of its stewardship, SLMC recognizes that at times there is also a need to bolster these efforts through the use of mitigation and legislation.

How it works

The Take it Off project is comprised of the following components:

- **Education:** A full color information card entitled "Take it Off, Respect Sylvan Lake" was delivered in person to each hut on the lake, allowing SLMC, RCMP, and Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD) staff to have face-to-face conversations with fishermen. The card outlined the importance of debris removal at the end of the season, and highlighted the availability of the ESRD hotline.
- **Voluntary Ice Hut Registration:** While delivering the information cards, partners also encouraged fishermen to register their huts voluntarily as a part of a process developed jointly with the RCMP. Nearly all fishermen understood the initiative and happily agreed to register their huts. As one sportsman said, "We want to fish here every year, not just this season". RCMP are now able to contact owners if an ice hut is vandalized while unattended or if the ice hut remains on the lake at the close of the season.
- **Removal:** A removal committee has been formed consisting of RCMP, ESRD, Town of Sylvan Lake and the County of Lacombe. Ice huts left on Sylvan Lake after April 8th 2012 will be removed under the authority of the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act. Success for this committee would be to have no huts left to be removed.
- **Resolution:** The Town of Sylvan Lake is putting forward a resolution to the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association to ask the Provincial Government to bring in legislation to require mandatory registration of ice fishing huts. The town is also working with Lacombe County to bring forward a similar resolution through the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC).

For more information about this group and other WSG's, visit the Land Stewardship Centre of Canada - Alberta Stewardship Network website <http://www.landstewardship.org/ASN/>

Event Announcement: Stewards in Motion has returned! Join us at these free, interactive events, offering participants the opportunity to actively learn, share, and engage in collaborative dialogue across sectors. "**Stewards in Motion: Connecting with municipalities to advance grassroots change**" event series is to bring together WSGs, Municipalities, and WPACs to work on how we, as stewards in our municipalities, can breed understanding, problem solving, and relationship building. Upcoming dates include: • Grande Prairie, January 31, 2013 (registration opens December 20, 2012) • Medicine Hat (date to be confirmed) • Red Deer (date to be confirmed) • with more events to be announced.

For more information visit <http://www.landstewardship.org/stewards-motion/>

North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance Releases Milestone Documents

In 2012 the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance released a number of milestone documents: the final Integrated Watershed Management Plan for the North Saskatchewan River in Alberta (IWMP); the Atlas of the North Saskatchewan River Watershed in Alberta; and the Vermilion River Watershed Management Plan (VRWMP).

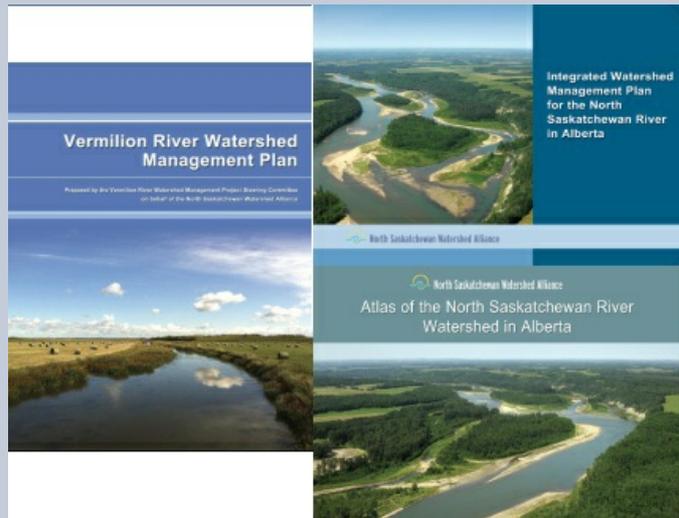
The IWMP contains 76 recommendations that address the long-term management needs of the North Saskatchewan River watershed. The IWMP was widely distributed to individuals and stakeholders across the watershed, and was also submitted to the Government of Alberta as independent multi-stakeholder advice to support the Province in the delivery of its statutory responsibilities.

The Atlas is an educational document which explains the natural attributes of the North Saskatchewan River watershed, as well as the nature of human activities. The NSWA hopes the Atlas will broaden the understanding of watershed characteristics and will raise awareness about challenges associated with managing and protecting this watershed. Sales of the Atlas will be a fundraiser for the NSWA.

The VRWMP will be presented as advice to all members of the Vermilion community; to federal, provincial, and municipal governments; and to all stakeholders who live, work, or have an interest in the Vermilion River watershed. It is intended to guide future decisions with respect to the management of watershed resources.

In 2013 the NSWA looks forward to the implementation phases of both the IWMP and the VRWMP. For more information on any of these documents, please visit the NSWA's website: www.nswa.ab.ca

Photo Credit: NSWA



Beaver River Watershed Alliance: State of the Watershed Report

One of the most important projects currently underway is our State of the Watershed Report (SoW). This is a crucial document for the Beaver River Watershed Alliance (BRWA), as it provides a snapshot of current and historical conditions throughout the watershed. It will be of great use to all stakeholders as a source of information about various aspects of the watershed. The final draft of the SoW report is expected to be completed by spring 2013, along with a summary report.

Our State of the Watershed subcommittee worked tirelessly to move the report forward in 2012. Three drafts were completed and reviewed, and many of the basin's 20 sub-watersheds had their datasets improved. Our key watershed health indicators include lake levels, water well density, water allocation by sector, trophic status of lakes, and fish biodiversity, among others. There were also public information and feedback sessions held in the communities of Bonnyville, Craighend, and Cherry Grove, where participants were given the opportunity to learn more about the report and hear from its author. Those present were also able to discuss ideas on how the report could be improved.



The work of a WPAC is never done, as we are looking forward to developing a Watershed Management Plan

for the Beaver River Watershed upon completion of the SoW report. For more information about the BRWA visit <http://www.beaverriverwatershed.ca/>

Photo Credit: BRWA

Red Deer River Watershed Alliance Ramps up Education and Stewardship Outreach

The Red Deer River Watershed Alliance as part of their three-year strategic plan set out to ramp up Education and Stewardship Outreach. Over the past year we have seen a rapid growth in our outreach initiatives with the addition of our new Outreach Coordinator. We have been busy through the spring, summer and fall offering programs to schools, service groups and summer camps.



With the help of two Outreach Assistants we were able to visit a record number of Grade 5 and 8 classrooms this past year. The Outreach team visited schools and camps in all corners of the watershed, as far south as Bassano and out into the Rockies west of Sundre. The RDRWA also took part in a number of public events focused around promoting the AWQA with the hosting of four Lake Days within the watershed and a two day canoe trip with the Native Friendship Center in Red Deer on the Red Deer River.

With this growing momentum we are already planning and booking events into the New Year. We look forward to reaching out to our communities in the watershed promoting a respect and admiration for the beauty of the Red Deer River, the place we call home. For more information visit <http://www.rdrwa.ca/>



Photo Credits: Joey Temple

ESRD Releases First of Three New Watershed Management Guidance Documents

Completing another key element of the *Water for Life* Action Plan, Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD) recently released the *Guide to Reporting on Common Indicators Used in State of the Watershed Reports* as a reference for *Water for Life* partnerships developing state of the watershed reports. Emphasizing the benefits to come from consistent reporting of indicators, the guide sets out criteria and direction for reporting on a subset of more conventional watershed health indicators commonly found in state of the watershed reports. The main audience for this guide includes Alberta's Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils and Watershed Stewardship Groups. It was written with their input and the input of Government of Alberta staff, and stems from a series of discussions and workshops that began in 2010.

The *Guide to Reporting on Common Indicators Used in State of the Watershed Reports* is a companion document to the Handbook for State of the Watershed Reporting released by Alberta Environment in 2008. The guide, the handbook, and other practical resources can be downloaded from the Water for Life website's Watershed Support Materials and Publications page at <http://www.waterforlife.alberta.ca/02645.html> . Hard copies are available from the Environment and Sustainable Resource Development Information Centre at 780-427-2700 or at env.infocent@gov.ab.ca .

This recent release is but the first in a series of upcoming watershed management planning guidance documents intended for completion and release over the next few months. Early in the new year, one should expect to see the release of a *protocol for watershed management planning in Alberta* which outlines the Government of Alberta's direction and expectations for watershed management planning in this province; then the spring of 2013 should bring about the completion and release of a *guide to watershed management planning in Alberta* which is intended to be more of a "how to guide" for groups pursuing the development and implementation of watershed management plans.

Tel: (780) 644-7380
Fax: (780) 644-7382
Email: info@awchome.ca

If you no longer wish to receive these emails, please reply to this message with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line or simply click on the following link: [Unsubscribe](#)

[Click here](#) to forward this email to a friend

Alberta Water Council
#1400, 9915 - 108 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2G8
Canada

