

2015 Watershed Stewardship Grant Program Report

Grant #15GRSSR06

Presented to Alberta Environment and Parks by Land Stewardship Centre

October 31, 2016

Preamble

Water for Life

It is not only a resource, it is a life source.

We all share the responsibility to ensure a healthy, secure and sustainable water supply for our communities, the environment, and the economy – our quality of life depends on it.

As stewards of this precious resource it is our collective duty to ensure:

- Safe, secure drinking water,
- Healthy aquatic ecosystems, and
- Reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy.

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Acknowledgements

Land Stewardship Centre (LSC) gratefully acknowledges the Government of Alberta and Alberta Environment and Parks for making the Watershed Stewardship Grant Program possible through the *Water for Life Strategy*.

We wish to thank the 2015 Watershed Stewardship Grant (WSG) Review Committee members for their hard work and dedication to such a valuable program.

We also recognize the partner organizations which have contributed to the collective success of this program. Without their involvement the range of stewardship projects undertaken would not be possible.

Finally, we extend our appreciation to all of the committed, grassroots watershed stewardship groups and volunteers who contribute so much time, effort and expertise to improving the health of Alberta watersheds and our precious water resource.

Watershed Stewardship Grant Review Committee

Mike Murray, Bow River Basin Council, Committee Chair

Deanna Cottrell, Shell Canada

Mike Hittinger, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry

Brian Ilnicki, Land Stewardship Centre

Sharina Kennedy, Alberta Environment and Parks

Jack Latham, Community Steward

Kelsey Spicer-Rawe, Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society

Donna Trottier, Community Steward

Watershed Stewardship Grant Coordinator

Jenna Curtis

Message from the Committee Chair

On behalf of the Watershed Stewardship Grant Review Committee and Land Stewardship Centre, I am pleased to submit this 2015 Watershed Stewardship Grant Program Final Report.

The Watershed Stewardship Grant Program has been investing in local watershed stewardship initiatives in Alberta since 2006. Over the years, we have observed a growing level of sophistication with the projects and improved capacity of community stewardship groups to implement these projects with the funding support provided by the Watershed Stewardship Grant. This improved capacity is further evident in the continuous increase in leveraging of these funds in every grant cycle since the launch of this funding program. Direct investment in community stewardship and on-the-ground projects is also resulting in strengthened connections and working relationships between stewardship groups, Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils, municipalities and non-government organizations.

In 2015, the Watershed Stewardship Grant established new category of support through the “Wetland Grant” stream. Groups that received funding under this stream focused their projects on building awareness and stewardship capacity in order to conserve, restore and protect wetlands in Alberta, and in particular, wetlands of the highest value – directly in support of Alberta’s Wetland Policy.

With demand for Alberta’s water at unprecedented levels, the need for a program such as this has never been more imperative. As demand for water increases, the Water Stewardship Grant program will play an increasingly significant role in enabling stewardship action and sustaining community-based activities that help protect and conserve this critical resource. Time and time again we hear from grant recipients who express their appreciation for this important funding program and how it supports their community-based efforts in those key areas which are typically not funded by other programs.

“The most difficult expense to fundraise for is staff wages. Without having staff to apply for grants to fund our programs, none of this work would get done. We are so grateful for the ability to receive a grant that will fund a percentage of our staff wages so we can complete these essential tasks!”

Katie Pearson, Project & Programs Director, Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society

“The Watershed Stewardship Grant program offers us funding for projects that is not easy to come by.”

Marina Krainer, Executive Director, Ghost Watershed Alliance Society

“Without this grant our tour would not have been possible. Without the awareness brought about by the tour, the landowners wouldn’t be making the changes they are making. We are very thankful for the Watershed Stewardship Grant and the opportunities it provides us!”

Patty Davis, Conservation Tech, County of Warner for Ridge Reservoir Working Group

Going forward, community-based stewardship, and the on-the-ground-action facilitated by stewardship groups, will play a critical part in Alberta’s plan to take action on climate change and protect the province’s health, environment and economy. Continued investment in the Watershed Stewardship Grant program will not only reaffirm Alberta’s commitment to *Water for Life* but also enable us to become more effective managers our province’s water, air, land and biodiversity resources for the benefit of all Albertans.



Mike Murray, Chair
Watershed Stewardship Grant Review Committee

An Overview of the WSG Program

After so many successful years, it is clear that the Watershed Stewardship Grant continues to truly enable Alberta's stewards to deliver meaningful projects that are enhancing their watersheds and wetlands, while engaging and influencing the public, and positively impacting the health of Alberta communities.

Over the course of the grant's history, stewardship groups have completed a wide variety of projects ranging from invasive plant species removal to comprehensive water quality monitoring. In some cases, stewardship groups are developing technical reports, state of the watershed reports and watershed management plans, and demonstrating their increasing level of sophistication and maturity as they have evolved over time. Some groups are proactively engaging First Nations communities to be part of their efforts, and others are beginning to plan projects with outcomes as far reaching as being able to inform municipal decision makers to help with land-use decisions.

By funding projects that contribute such significant results, the Watershed Stewardship Grant program is helping stewardship groups to legitimize stewardship in Alberta. Stewardship groups, through their projects and work, are supporting various government initiatives such as the Wetland Policy, the Water for Life Strategy, the Climate Leadership Plan, and the Land-Use Framework Regional Plans. They are working throughout the province to improve local landscapes and ensure our natural resources will be available for all Albertans, now and in the future.

Land Stewardship Centre (LSC) remains dedicated to improving the Watershed Stewardship Grant Program. Every year the program is reviewed to ensure it remains relevant and responsive to the needs of the stewardship community and funders. LSC is committed to continue its work with partners to support mutual goals, such as the implementation of projects in Alberta's wetlands to support the Wetland Policy.

Not only does the program provide some of the only consistent funding to groups who are working on multi-year projects, but it also directly helps increase the capacity and strategic planning efforts of the groups it serves. The Watershed Stewardship Grant Program is consistently oversubscribed, which is indicative of a desperate need for consistent, dependable and flexible funding for stewardship initiatives in Alberta. Grant recipients continue to express their gratitude for the Watershed Stewardship Grant funds, without which they would not be able to implement their plans and deliver their projects. Receiving consistent and regular funding has enabled many of them to create continuity for their grassroots initiatives to the benefit of many.

As a direct result of this program, stewardship groups can continue to develop long-term relationships with local communities, NGOs, WPACs, municipal districts and counties, generating thousands of volunteer and in-kind hours which contribute to the success of their projects. The consistent leveraging of WSG dollars against financial, volunteer and in-kind commitments permits the scope and reach of projects to far surpass the original monetary value of grant funds provided. 2015 was another exceptional year for leveraging, the grant dollars allocated for watershed projects were leveraged at a ratio of nearly 6:1, and the wetland projects leveraged grant funds at nearly 3:1 in their first year.

All in, the leveraging of WSG funds in 2015 has resulted in a more than \$1 million being dedicated to watershed and wetland stewardship in Alberta.

Highlights of the 2015 Granting Period

This report provides an overview of all projects associated with the 2015 Watershed Stewardship Grant Program, made possible through a \$250,000 allocation from Alberta Environment and Parks (Grant #15GRSSR06) to Land Stewardship Centre.

The main objective of the Watershed Stewardship Grant portion of the fund is to assist watershed stewardship groups to develop and implement community-based projects and initiatives that contribute to achieving the three goals of *Water for Life: Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability*:

- Safe, secure drinking water supply,
- Healthy aquatic ecosystems,
- Reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy.

The main objective of the Wetland Grant portion of the fund is to assist watershed stewardship groups to develop and implement community-based projects and initiatives that contribute to Alberta's Wetland Policy, which aims to conserve, restore, protect, and manage Alberta's wetlands to sustain the benefits they provide to the environment, society and the economy.

To accomplish this, funding recipients directed their efforts to developing and delivering projects which focus on generating outcomes in one or more of the following areas:

1. **Awareness and Knowledge** – activities that increase the awareness and understanding of local watershed issues.
2. **Tool Building** – activities that help develop tools to demonstrate, test, or display watershed best management practices.
3. **Team Building** – activities that help build membership and organizational capacity to take on team tasks.
4. **Biophysical and Social Monitoring** – activities that measure environmental and social indicators of watershed health.
5. **Community-Based Action** – physical, on-the-ground activities to improve the condition of the local watershed.

Groups with legal status, such as registered societies and not-for-profit organizations, were eligible for direct funding. Groups without legal status were permitted to apply for project funding, with the understanding that funds would be issued and dispersed in partnership with an approved legal entity, such as a municipality or Watershed Planning and Advisory Council (WPAC). Eligible groups applied to receive up to \$10,000 for projects that sought to raise awareness of local watershed issues and encourage positive action, or improve the quality of their local watershed.

The WSG Review Committee evaluated 27 applications for Watershed Stewardship Grant funding from stewardship groups across the province. From these applications, 17 groups (18 projects) within eight different watersheds were ultimately selected to receive funding. Total funding requested for eligible projects was \$242,612, but \$156,601 was approved for allocation to the successful applicants.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, only 15 of the 17 grant recipients completed work as described in their project applications. Two funding recipients (Clear Hills Watershed Initiative and Foothills Land Trust) experienced challenges which affected their ability to complete their projects as originally proposed.

The WSG Review Committee also reviewed four applications for the Wetland Grant portion of funding from stewardship groups working in four Alberta watersheds. The total funding requested and approved for allocation under this grant stream was \$33,935.

All projects approved by the WSG Committee varied widely in aspiration, intent, scale and scope, which speaks to the diversity of needs and the creative approach watershed stewardship groups use to meet these needs.

As part of each project's grant agreement, grant recipients were required to submit an interim report outlining their progress, as well as a final report detailing project status, impacts and financial information.

In addition to the results achieved by each of the funding recipients, it is important to note that over the past 10 years and 11 grant cycles of the WSG program, recipients have, on average leveraged WSG funds by a ratio of 4:1. This past year was no exception with the Watershed Grant funding recipients leveraging their funding at a ratio of nearly 6:1, and for the first year of the Wetland Grant funding, recipients were able to leverage funding at nearly 3:1. So, not only is WSG funding able to provide stewardship groups with much needed dollars which can be used for essential resources and activities, it provides them with the leverage they need to raise additional funds to back their efforts.

Complete project reports and their associated financial records from funding recipients are on file at the LSC office.

Financial Overview

\$250,000 from grant 15GRSSR06 was allocated to the 2015 grant program. Of the \$250,000:

- \$180,000 was earmarked for watershed projects,
- \$45,000 was reserved for wetland projects, and
- \$25,000 was allocated for grant administration.

In 2015, a total of \$145,226 was spent on watershed projects, \$33,935 was spent on wetland projects, \$20,000 was allocated to WSG Program administration, and \$11,375 was returned by grantees. With permission from Alberta Environment and Parks, \$34,464.00 was retained for future project funding and \$5,000 was designated for grant administration, which will be reported on separately.

Grant recipients continue to do an excellent job leveraging WSG funds to support their efforts. Figure 1 illustrates how, through leveraging and in-kind contributions, the WSG funding recipients, the WSG Review Committee and LSC increased the overall value to \$1,002,118.85. This represents a leveraging of original grant dollars of 6:1.

Refer to Appendices A, B, C and D for detailed accounts.

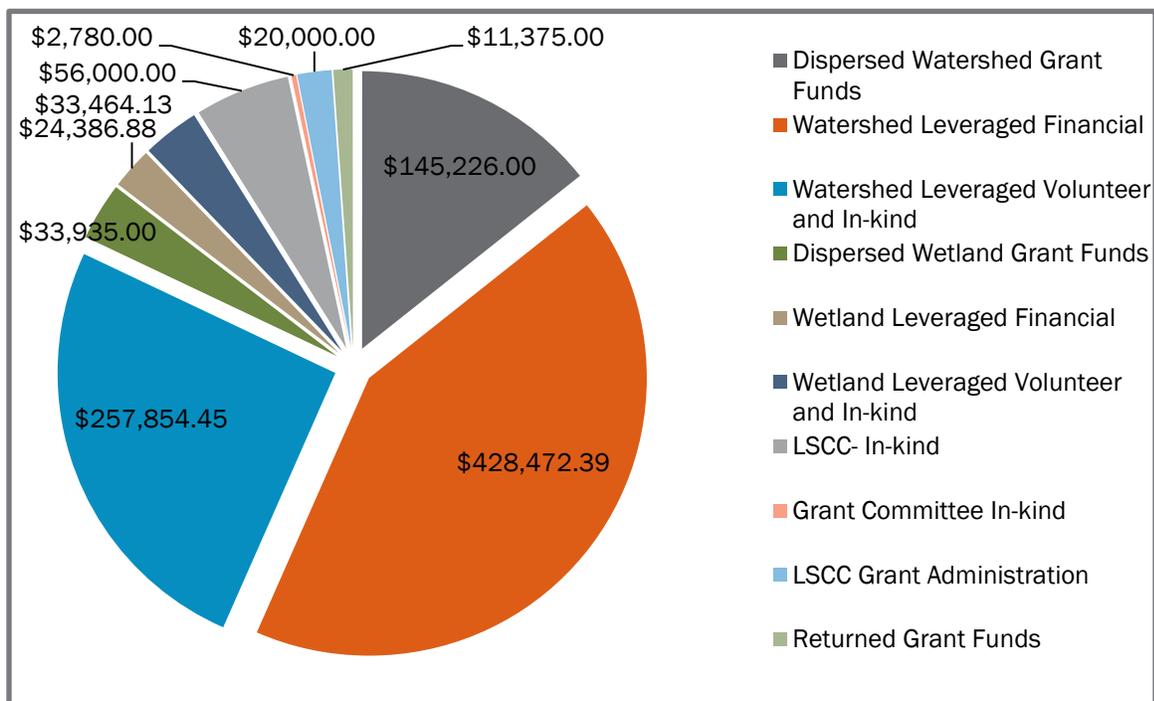


Figure 1. The value of all contributions and associated leveraging achieved with 2015 Watershed Stewardship Grant Program funding.

Project Distribution

Projects selected to receive funding were located in eight of the eleven watersheds. The majority of the funded projects were located in the Athabasca and Bow watersheds (Figure 2).

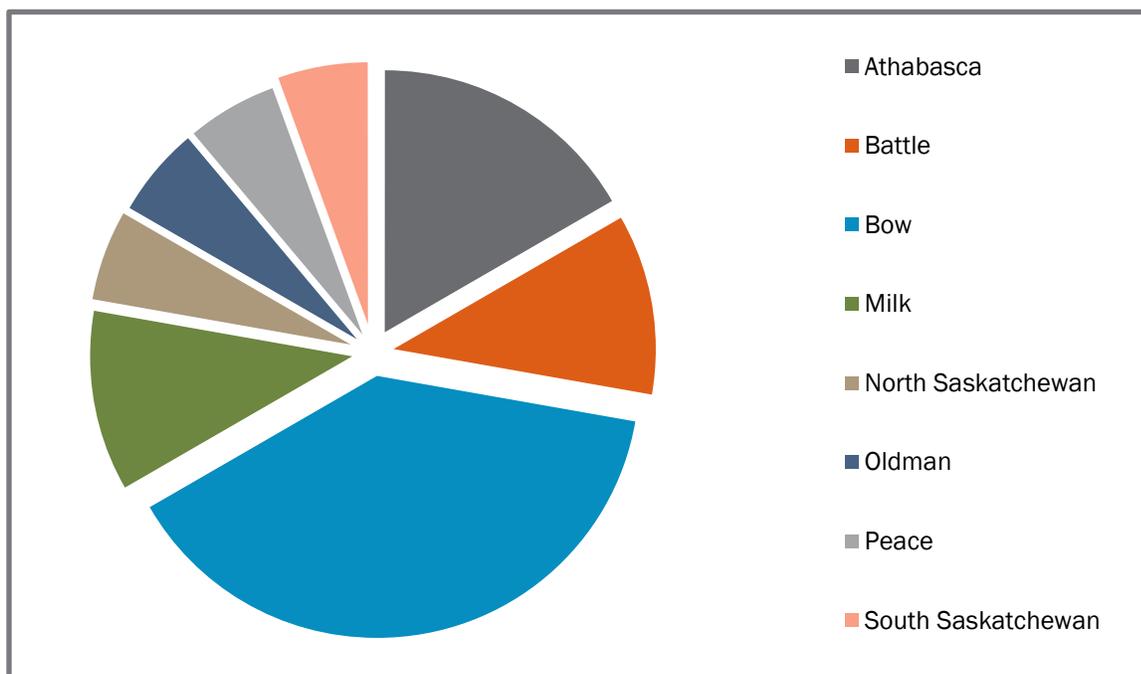


Figure 2. Distribution of WSG funded projects within Alberta's watersheds in 2015.

Project Themes

In total, 18 stewardship projects were funded. All completed projects generated extensive partnerships between groups, community organizations, municipalities and other provincial organizations, resulting in substantial financial leveraging and synergy. During the 2015 grant cycle:

- 18 projects involved building awareness and knowledge, and activities varied from attending local events to developing educational videos to promote key messages.
- 11 projects focused on developing tools to improve the effectiveness of watershed stewardship efforts.
- 11 projects incorporated team building components intended to increase membership and build capacity.
- 14 projects involved dimensions of social and biophysical monitoring such as water quality monitoring and riparian assessments.
- 12 projects concentrated efforts on community-based action to improve local watersheds through hands-on events such as shoreline clean-ups.

Grant Recipients and Project Activities by Watershed

Athabasca River Watershed

The Athabasca River is the second largest river in Alberta. Originating in the Athabasca glacier of the Columbia Icefields in Jasper National Park, the river flows northeast through the province, past the urban centers of Jasper, Hinton, Whitecourt, Athabasca and Fort McMurray before emptying into Lake Athabasca. Water from the basin eventually makes its way to the Arctic Ocean. The basin covers a total area of approximately 159, 000km².

Watershed Stewardship Groups Funded

- Highway Two Conservation
- Keepers of the Athabasca
- Stewards of Lac La Biche Watershed

Highway Two Conservation

Grant #: 07-H2C-2015

Location: Barrhead, Athabasca, Westlock and Sturgeon Counties

Grant Amount: \$10,000

Total Project Value: \$52,950

Partners: County of Barrhead, Athabasca County, Westlock County, Sturgeon County, Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society, Alberta Conservation Association, Klondike Trail Search and Rescue, Jarvie Community Council, Lac La Nonne Seniors Group, Fish and Wildlife, Alberta Lake Management Society, Junior Forest Wardens

Project Summary: Highway Two Conservation (H2C) recognizes that diffuse pollution, sedimentation and habitat degradation stemming from current farming cropping practices lowers water storage capability of surrounding land, lowers biodiversity of riparian areas and negatively impacts water quality. So, their project focused on increasing or restoring riparian buffer zones. H2C worked with Cows and Fish to complete five riparian health inventories. H2C planted over 4000 trees and reclaimed 26.75 acres of riparian area within the Athabasca Watershed. They also worked with 500 local youth during Pond Days, organized a Himalayan Balsam weed pull at Peanut Lake, and completed many other projects throughout the course of the season. In the spring of 2016, they completed an aerial survey of the Paddle River and have identified problem areas to focus on for next season.

“The Watershed Stewardship Grant funding has been extremely important in making our riparian improvement project a success. With these funds we were able to keep our summer staff on for longer. This enabled us to expand and create new programming. It also enabled us to expand our riparian improvement project by adding three new sites in the 2016 season. One of these sites protects two large wetlands, something we see as a valuable addition to our program which has previously focused on rivers and tributaries.”

Lisa Card, Conservation Coordinator, Highway 2 Conservation

Keepers of the Athabasca

Grant #: 08-KotA-2015

Location: Upper Athabasca River Watershed

Grant Amount: \$10,000

Total Project Value: \$72,421.26

Partners: Living Lakes Canada, Central Athabasca Stewardship Society, Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation, Stewards of the Lac La Biche Watershed, Athabasca Watershed Council, Crooked Creek Conservancy Society of Athabasca, Lesser Slave Lake Watershed Council, Environment Canada, Canadian Rivers Institute, First Nations (Alberta) Technical Services Advisory Group, Athabasca University, University of Alberta through the Obed Mine Spill Response Group.

Project Summary: This project builds on the momentum generated in year one of the Upper Athabasca Community Engagement for Watershed Health Project. In partnership with Living Lakes Canada, Keepers of the Athabasca's project, the Upper Athabasca Watershed Health Assessment, used the Canadian Aquatic Biomonitoring Network (CABIN) protocol to engage and train community volunteers in citizen science data collection. In 2015, nine additional members of the Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation were trained as CABIN Field Assistants, and eight additional sites were assessed for a total of twelve sites. This knowledge has increased the group's understanding of watershed health, helps fill the gaps and data deficiencies, and is also a valuable tool used to communicate watershed health to members of the public. The project engaged aboriginal and non-aboriginal community members in understanding watershed health beyond just data collection; it supported the inclusion of water data and traditional ecological knowledge to direct policy and planning efforts, building a stewardship ethic amongst the community. Keepers of Athabasca and Living Lakes Canada plan to continue partnering on their work in the watershed by monitoring the 12 sites in 2016, and hosting more training workshops.

"In addition to expanded monitoring and analysis in 2015-16, and growing our community capacity, support from the Watershed Stewardship Grant funding enabled us to reach out to the Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation community and provide CABIN training to a group of their members, who in turn were able to offer ideas on potential synergies between the sharing of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and the sharing of CABIN monitoring methods and outcomes."

Donna Mendelsohn, Board Director, Keepers of the Athabasca

Stewards of Lac La Biche Watershed Society

Grant #: 16-SLLBW-2015

Location: Lac La Biche Watershed

Grant Amount: \$10,000

Total Project Value: \$78,700

Partners: Living Lakes Canada, Keepers of the Athabasca, Athabasca Watershed Council, Central Athabasca Stewardship Society, Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Lake Management Society

Project Summary: The vision for the Stewards of Lac La Biche Watershed (SLLBWS) was created in partnership with Living Lakes Canada and the Keepers of the Athabasca. The SLLBWS built its capacity by becoming a legal entity, created a representative membership, increased its profile in the community through outreach projects, and used this membership and presence to begin implementing the recommendations set out in the 2009 Lac La Biche Watershed Management plan, which contains a set of established, measurable goals for the stewardship of the watershed. This project addressed priority gaps in implementation of the Watershed Management Plan, focusing on the health of riparian areas and wetlands, water quality and water quantity data collection, and influencing the management of fisheries and wildlife. The group distributed 500 brochures and fact sheets, had 53 attendees at a workshop, and completed a shoreline clean-up.

“The Watershed Stewardship Grant has enabled the Stewards of Lac La Biche to formalize themselves as a Society, and become a resource for the community. They have built momentum for implementing the recommendations of the Watershed Management Plan, specifically regarding the conservation of critical fish and wildlife habitat.”

Heather Leschied, Program Manager, Living Lakes Canada

Battle River Sub-Watershed

The Battle River Watershed is a sub-basin of the North Saskatchewan River Basin. The river itself extends 800 km, starting at Battle Lake in central Alberta and flowing eastward to Saskatchewan where it joins the North Saskatchewan in Battleford. Unlike most of Alberta's major rivers, the Battle River is not glacier-fed. It is a prairie-fed system. Its modest water supply comes entirely from local surface runoff, including rain and snow melt, and groundwater flows. As such, the Battle River's natural water flows are typically much lower than that of glacier-fed rivers. In total, the Battle River Watershed covers approximately 30,000 km² (83% of this area is within Alberta, the remainder in Saskatchewan).

Watershed Stewardship Groups Funded

- Love the Lake
- Pigeon Lake Watershed Association

Love the Lake

Grant #: 10-LtL-2015

Location: Pigeon Lake

Grant Amount: \$3,800

Total Project Value: \$7,786.29

Partners: Pigeon Lake Watershed Association, Summer Villages of Argentia Beach, Crystal Springs, Golden Days, Grandview, Ma-Me-O Beach, Norris Beach, Poplar Bay, Silver Beach, Itaska Beach, and Sundance

Project Summary: Love the Lake is a group of over 150 watershed residents who have made a commitment to protect the ecosystem of Pigeon Lake by resolving to follow best practices for watershed stewardship. Love the Lake is in the sixth year working to eradicate Himalayan Balsam from the Pigeon Lake watershed. Himalayan Balsam, which is classified as a prohibited noxious weed because of its aggressive tendencies to dominate a riparian area, has been effectively brought under control through this eradication program. Continuing efforts were required to complete the program in a few gardens and bush areas and a few final sweeps of the shoreline to ensure the plant is completely removed. The biweekly shoreline patrols provided frequent interaction with many lakeshore residents allowing a great opportunity for the discussion of the importance of controlling noxious weeds and conversations on the educational component on watershed stewardship activities. It is anticipated that in 2017 there will only be rare occurrences of the plant, as 2016 found only a few plants around the lake, which can be managed by volunteer support.

“Our WSG funding was used to hire a summer student who patrolled the complete shoreline on a routine basis. Without this extra effort we may have missed some of the invasive plants, and this could have resulted in a significant crop of new plants we would have to remove in subsequent years.”

Don Davidson, Project Coordinator, Love the Lake

Pigeon Lake Watershed Association

Grant #: 12-PLWA-2015

Location: Pigeon Lake

Grant Amount: \$10,000

Total Project Value: \$186,433.52

Partners: Alliance of Pigeon Lake Municipalities (APLM), Leduc County, County of Wetaskiwin, Pigeon Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce, Government of Alberta, Alberta Lake Management Society, Battle River Watershed Alliance, Alberta Water Council, Wizard Lake Watershed and Lake Stewardship Association, Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society, Summer Villages of Argentia Beach, Crystal Springs, Golden Days, Grandview, Ma-Me-O Beach, Norris Beach, Poplar Bay, Silver Beach, Itaska Beach, and Sundance

Project Summary: Pigeon Lake Watershed Association (PLWA) initiated the second year of a three-year project focusing on surface water Quality and low impact development planning and implementation. The purpose of the project was to engage, inform and guide Pigeon Lake watershed residents and municipalities to reduce the external nutrients and contaminants entering the lake through runoff. The project focused on the “framework stage” in which PLWA engaged residents through outreach, surveys and workshops, created concept plans for demonstration sites, followed by distribution of information and education materials. The project also consisted of a “roll out stage” during which further outreach to the community occurred. PLWA has drafted *The Low Impact Development Guide* for residents, the concept plans for the demonstration sites, and the *Community Engagement Guide* for the Project Manager to work through with community groups. PLWA is committed to continuing the work and will be completing demonstration sites, a “toolbox”, and seeking to gain further community support.

“The Watershed Stewardship Grant funding has been very important for the PLWA and this project for many reasons. First, because this project is interested in both Pigeon Lake and the broader community, it is important to have Alberta-based funding. Second, producing the Guide and moving a large population towards action is a huge undertaking which costs a lot of money. And third, the multi-dimensional relationship we have with LSC has been an important relationship for the PLWA for many years”

Susan Ellis, President, Pigeon Lake Watershed Association

Bow River Sub-Watershed

The Bow River originates from Bow Glacier in Banff National Park. The basin is home to more than one million Albertans and the growing population is placing demand on a limited water supply with an uncertain future as glaciers in the region retreat. The area includes several irrigation districts and much of the water supply supports agriculture in the area. Hundreds of thousands of people also visit every year, attracted to recreational opportunities in the area.

Watershed Stewardship Groups Funded

- Elbow River Watershed Partnership
- Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society
- Foothills Land Trust
- Ghost Watershed Alliance Society
- Little Creeks and Rough Fescue Appreciation Society
- Nose Creek Watershed Partnership
- Weaselhead/Glenmore Park Preservation Society

Elbow River Watershed Partnership

Grant #: 03-ERWP-2015

Location: Elbow River Watershed

Grant Amount: \$8,255

Total Project Value: \$66,343.36

Partners: Kananaskis Region Environmental Education, City of Calgary, Rocky View County

Project Summary: To increase people's awareness and understanding of the watershed, Elbow River Watershed Partnership (ERWP) is continuing to provide the Freshwater Field Study Program. The program is designed to increase watershed literacy, and give students hands on learning opportunities, such as learning how to measure water quality in a professional and scientific way, and to directly experience the headwaters of the Elbow and Bow rivers. Biology 20 students as well as students from grades 8, 9, school teachers, volunteers and program interns all learned how minimizing negative impacts on land uses help maintain water quality and quantity. During 2015 ERWP delivered their largest program in 11 years with over 2200 students and 284 volunteers participating, and 74 field programs being delivered to 27 schools including some First Nations schools.

"This grant has been extremely beneficial in this multi-year project. Through this grant we have been able to create more materials, promote the field school at more events and network with educational specialists. These funds gave us the opportunity to hire a field school administrator and to contract two people to evaluate the field school."

Flora Giesbrecht, Watershed Coordinator, Elbow River Watershed Partnership

Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society

Grant #: 04-FFCPPS-2015

Location: Fish Creek Provincial Park

Grant Amount: \$10,000

Total Project Value: \$77,330.03

Partners: Fish Creek Provincial Park, Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society, Trout Unlimited, The Venturers Society, Bow River Basin Council, Prospect Human Services, Alberta Invasive Species Council

Project Summary: The Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society (FFCPPS) 2015 project consisted of three components. First, FFCPPS had a public awareness and education campaign. This campaign aimed to increase public appreciation of the Fish Creek watershed through a wide variety of opportunities such as talks, guided walks and minibus tours, displays at local events, an annual water festival and hands-on stewardship activities. In 2015, FFCPPS successfully engaged over 7,000 members of the public, including over 200 volunteers and numerous program participants. Secondly, FFCPPS focused on engaging volunteers and park users in direct watershed stewardship activities such as weed pulls, tree wrapping, clean ups to improve the quality of habitat. Volunteers and staff removed of 1,155 kg of invasive plant material from the park and wrapped 115 trees. Lastly, FFCPPS hosted a riparian restoration in the lowest reach of Fish Creek. Based on riparian health inventories done in 2012 and 2013, FFCPPS developed a restoration strategy then worked to enhance and maintain 850m along a project site, 250m of which was new to 2015. All of these efforts fostered responsible park use and a sound stewardship ethic in participants.

“The most difficult expense to fundraise for is staff wages. Without having staff to apply for grants to fund our programs, none of this work would get done. We are so grateful for the ability to receive a grant that will fund a percentage of our staff wages so we can complete these essential tasks!”

Katie Pearson, Project & Programs Director, Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society

Ghost Watershed Alliance Society

Grant #: 06-GWAS-2015

Location: Ghost Watershed

Grant Amount: \$10,000

Total Project Value: \$132,829.61

Partners: Bow River Basin Council, Cochrane Environmental Action Committee, TransAlta, Direct Energy, Alberta Environment and Parks-Fish and Wildlife, MD of Bighorn

Project Summary: In spring 2014, the Ghost Watershed Alliance Society (GWAS) initiated the preparation of the Ghost River State of the Watershed (SOW) Report. GWAS developed Terms of Reference for the project and has since formed a steering committee comprised of stakeholders, industry representatives, local residents, local and provincial government, and NGOs. For 2015, GWAS hired ALCES Landscape & Land-use Ltd. to compile and write the SOW report with the help of the knowledgeable individuals on the steering committee. The SOW assesses the state of the watershed within a comprehensive report, identifies important issues and strategies for how to address them within an inclusive watershed management plan. The report will be available on GWAS' website once it is finalized.

“The Watershed Stewardship Grant program offers us funding for projects that is not easy to come by. It has allowed us to undertake projects and leverage other funding sources. Without the WSG we would have had a very hard time finding any funding at all.”

Marina Krainer, Executive Director, Ghost Watershed Alliance Society

Little Creeks and Rough Fescue Appreciation Society

Grant #: 09-LCARF-2015

Location: Horse Creek Watershed

Grant Amount: \$10,000

Total Project Value: \$18,791.51

Partners: Bow River Basin Council, Alberta Environment and Parks, Rocky View County, Town of Cochrane, Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society, Action for Agriculture, Southern Alberta Land Trust, Nature Alberta

Project Summary: Little Creeks and Rough Fescue Appreciation Society (LCARF) aims to spread awareness of the importance of riparian health, increase knowledge of native grasses and improve water quality through the encouragement of beneficial management practices in the watershed. As a part of LCARF’s ongoing effort to measure water quality and establish Horse Creek’s status in comparison to the Alberta Surface Water Quality Guidelines, they will be conducting their fourth year of monitoring. LCARF hired Palliser Environmental to complete water quality monitoring and produce a report on the findings. As a result of this monitoring, LCARF will develop site-specific water quality objectives for Horse Creek that can be used to maintain water quality at Horse Creek in the future, and the data will also help LCARF target specific management actions needs to maintain or improve the health of Horse Creek, as they move from monitoring to planning and stewardship activity. LCARF also hosted a presentation and riparian walk, attended by 40 people, to increase knowledge among the public about water quality, as well as native and invasive vegetation.

“The Watershed Stewardship Grant has enabled LCARF to continue the water monitoring program and meet with community members to discuss water quality and riparian health strategies for Horse Creek. Multiple years of data are needed to develop strategies for BMP implementation that targets the issues and to inform an abbreviated watershed management plan.”

Jill Cairns, President, Little Creeks and Rough Fescue Appreciation Society

Nose Creek Watershed Partnership

Grant #: 11-NCWP-2015

Location: Nose Creek Watershed

Grant Amount: \$9,945

Total Project Value: \$19,196.25

Partners: University of Alberta, Provincial Laboratory for Public Health, Bow River Basin Council

Project Summary: The Nose Creek Watershed Partnership (NCWP) completed the Nose Creek Watershed Water Management Plan (WMP) in 2007. The WMP recommended a Long-Term Water Monitoring Strategy that was implemented for five years, from 2009 through 2013. The NCWP has shifted focus from water monitoring to the implementation of beneficial management practices (BMPs) to improve water quality. To implement BMPs that can effectively improve water quality, an accurate understanding of the sources of pollutants, specifically fecal coliform bacteria, is required. Before resources are directed to implementing BMPs that may reduce fecal coliform bacteria counts, the NCWP seeks to better understand sources within the watershed using microbial source tracking techniques. As a result of this project, the NCWP has a better understanding of the sources of fecal coliform bacteria in the Nose Creek watershed. Preliminary results show that fecal coliform bacteria stems from human, muskrat, gull and cattle sources. The results of this study will inform the Year 2 study design that will be used to confirm findings.

“The Watershed Stewardship Grant enabled the NCWP to complete the first year of the Microbial Source Tracking Project. This first year was devoted to identifying the possible sources of fecal coliform bacteria in the Nose Creek watershed. These initial results will inform the second year of study. A second year of study should be undertaken to confirm findings from the first year.”

Kristyn Smigelski, Chair, Nose Creek Watershed Partnership

Weaselhead/Glenmore Park Preservation Society

Grant #: 17-WGPPS-2015

Location: Weaselhead Natural Environment Park

Grant Amount: \$4,200

Total Project Value: \$20,250

Partners: City of Calgary, City of Calgary Environment and Education Initiatives, Immigrant Services, Youth Central, Prospect Human Services Society, Alberta Invasive Species Council

Project Summary: Weaselhead Glenmore Park Preservation Society (WGPPS) main objectives are to preserve/restore naturally functioning ecosystems within the Weaselhead Park, and to advance the education of the public in conservation and environmental protection. Their 2015 Invasive Plant Program allowed them to reduce the abundance of targeted invasive plants that interfere with ecosystem function and reduce biodiversity; prevent new species of invasive plants becoming established; increase understanding and awareness among the community of invasive plants, the problems they cause, and how to combat their spread; and offer opportunities for young individuals to gain experience in environmental field-work and stewardship. In 2015, 450 volunteers contributed 1630 hours of their time to remove non-native vegetation from the park, and over 4000 children and 500 adults were introduced to the subject of invasive plants and their impact on riparian areas and aquatic ecosystems through WGPPS's education programs. Since its inception in

2009 WGPPS has reduced the area of the Park heavily infested with non-native shrubs from 52ha to 23ha, and informed some 24,000 adults and children about invasive species through its outdoor education programs, indoor presentations, stewardship activities and publicity events.

“The WSG funding has allowed us to pursue a project – restoring native vegetation in 250 hectares of riparian habitat – that requires long-term commitment to be effective. It has enabled us to encourage younger people to get involved with stewardship activities and to become members, and demonstrate to our longstanding members that their support makes a real difference in maintaining the biodiversity of the Weaselhead.”

Sarah Nevill, Invasive Plant Program Coordinator, Weaselhead/Glenmore Park Preservation Society

Milk River Watershed

The Milk River Watershed, located in the most southern part of the province, is the smallest of Alberta's ten major river basins¹, encompassing an area of 6,664 km². It is unique; known not just for its dry climate, extraordinary landscapes and diverse plant and wildlife communities, but also for the direction in which the Milk River flows. As the northern-most tributary of the Missouri River, the Milk River is the only watershed in Alberta that drains south to the Gulf of Mexico. The headwaters originate in northwestern Montana. The river then enters Alberta and flows eastward through the southern portion of the province and into Saskatchewan, prior to looping back into Montana.

Watershed Stewardship Groups Funded

- Ridge Reservoir Working Group (two separate projects funded)

Ridge Reservoir Working Group

Grant #: 13-RRWG-2015

Location: County of Warner

Grant Amount: \$9,901

Total Project Value: \$12,460.70

Partners: County of Warner, Alberta Conservation Association

Project Summary: The Ridge Reservoir Working Group (RRWG) is a new group that is working towards establishing itself as a community minded organization. Their intention is to implement projects which contribute to the bank stabilization of Ridge Reservoir, improve and protect water quality, and secure and enhancing wildlife habitat within the Ridge Reservoir Watershed. Initially, RRWG assessed the land within the watershed to identify at risk areas and where and how improvements can be made through health inventories. The Alberta Conservation Association completed riparian health assessments of Milk River Ridge Reservoir, and then RRWBG hosted a tour with local landowners and government officials presenting them with the information on riparian health, the results of human activity and the possible ways to negate further detrimental effects on land and water.

“Without this grant our tour would not have been possible. Without the awareness brought about by the tour, the landowners wouldn't be making the changes they are making. We are very thankful for the Watershed Stewardship Grant and the opportunities it provides us!”

Patty Davis, Conservation Tech, County of Warner for Ridge Reservoir Working Group

¹ <http://www.environment.alberta.ca/apps/basins/Default.aspx>

Ridge Reservoir Working Group

Grant #: 14-RRWG-2015

Location: County of Warner

Grant Amount: \$10,000

Total Project Value: \$13,461.11

Partners: County of Warner, Alberta Conservation Association

Project Summary: The Ridge Reservoir Working Group (RRWG) completed grant 13-RRWG-2015, to work with Alberta Conservation Association to assess the land within the watershed to identify at risk areas and where and how improvements can be made through health inventories and to host a field tour. Through these assessments producers learned how damaging livestock watering directly from water bodies is, and they learned how beneficial it is for their animals to have uncontaminated water to drink. Grant 14-RRWG-2015 allowed the group to purchase an off-site watering system, which was used on a demonstration site during the field tour, allowing attendees to observe how effective an off-site waterer works and the convenience it provides. Since the field tour, the waterer is made available to producers to use for short-term trials, and has resulted in several other systems being purchased by landowners, keeping the cattle off the reservoir and tributaries.

“If we had not received the Watershed Stewardship grant to purchase an off-site livestock watering system, the demonstration site would not have been possible. Producers were able to observe the system working at the field tour and borrow our system for their own pastures. One producer called a couple days after borrowing our system to say how well it worked and how easy it was to move and set up. He has now invested in his own system.”

Patty Davis, Conservation Tech, County of Warner for Ridge Reservoir Working Group

North Saskatchewan River Watershed

The North Saskatchewan River Basin covers approximately 80,000 km² of the province. The basin originates in the Saskatchewan Glacier in Banff National Park and flows in a general eastward direction to the Alberta-Saskatchewan border. The Brazeau, Nordegg, Ram, Clearwater, Sturgeon and Vermilion rivers flow into the North Saskatchewan River as it passes across Alberta. Major centers within the basin include Drayton Valley, Rocky Mountain House, Edmonton, Fort Saskatchewan and the Saddle Lake Indian Reserve.

Watershed Stewardship Groups Funded

- Wabamun Watershed Management Council

Wabamun Watershed Management Council

Grant #: 18-WWMC-2015

Location: Lake Wabamun Watershed

Grant Amount: \$5,000

Total Project Value: \$7,874.65

Project Summary: Wabamun Watershed Management Council's (WWMC) vision of Lake Wabamun watershed is one of healthy ecosystem with a community that shares its collective responsibility to be the best stewards of that environment. To help achieve this vision, WWMC worked with Haptic Group, a website and graphic design company, to develop a new website which is more user-friendly and effective as a tool to educate users about watershed stewardship. The new and more effective website will now help increase awareness and understanding of local environmental issues and solutions, and share information about the activities of the WWMC with recreational users, businesses, decision makers and residents affecting the Wabamun watershed. WWMC will be using website analytics to gauge the number of users and their length of stay on the new website.

"We may not have proceeded with the project without the WSG funds. In addition to having a new and improved website that we can use to share information more effectively, the grant has simplified our website management, freeing up our volunteer resources for other activities."

Kelly Aldridge, Past Chair, Wabamun Watershed Management Council

Oldman River Sub-Watershed

Located in southwestern Alberta, the Oldman River Watershed is a sub-basin of the South Saskatchewan system, which eventually drains into the Hudson Bay. The main tributaries of the Oldman River are the Livingston, Crowsnest, Castle, Waterton, Belly, and St. Mary rivers, which are in turn supplied upstream by numerous small streams and wetlands. The Oldman River has a drainage area of 26,700 km² and it is 362 km in length.

Watershed Stewardship Groups Funded

- Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition

Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition

Grant #: 01-CCWC-2015

Location: Castle-Crown Wilderness

Grant Amount: \$10,000

Total Project Value: \$38,225

Partners: Alberta Environment and Parks, Oldman Watershed Council, Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society, Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, Waterton Lakes National Park, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society

Project Summary: With a focus on the health and restoration of the Castle Wilderness, the Castle Crown Wilderness Coalition (CCWC) built on work done in previous years. CCWC continued with invasive plant removal in recognized areas of high use while continuing to reach new areas for monitoring and reclamation. The group removed 329 bags of weeds, and eight bags of garbage, and reported items that were too large to move to the MD of Pincher Creek, and Alberta Environment and Parks. They also participated in and hosted stewardship events and hikes, engaging more than 750 people, encouraging a stewardship ethic and creating awareness on how to maintain a healthy watershed to sustain the headwaters and land. CCWC also attended forums on the West Slope Cutthroat Trout Recovery Plan, Crown of the Continent Roundtable, Aquatic Invasive Species, and Holding the Reins among others to share information and create new partnerships.

“Water Stewardship Grants have helped us to have a presence in the Castle and our local area to share our objectives and knowledge on sustaining our wild areas. It has helped us to educate people about how important our headwaters are and how critical it is to keep them healthy. Funding has enabled us to do good work on the ground; building partnerships with other like-minded people and groups so each of us can make our funding go farther by sharing information and volunteers.”

Carolyn Aspeslet, Executive Director, Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition

Peace River Watershed

The Peace River begins in the mountains of northern British Columbia where it is influenced by the W.A.C. Bennett Dam. It then flows into Alberta, continuing northeast across the province through the town of Peace River and empties into the Slave River. At Peace Point the Peace River has a mean annual discharge of 68,200,000 dam³ and a drainage area of 293,000 km². The Peace/Slave River Basin includes the Wapiti, Smoky, Little Smoky, and Wabasca rivers. It is the largest basin in Alberta, occupying approximately 30 percent of the province. The basin is predominantly covered by native boreal forest and is part of the Mackenzie River system, which eventually drains into the Arctic Ocean.

Watershed Stewardship Groups Funded

- Clear Hills Watershed Initiative

Clear Hills Watershed Initiative

Grant #: 02-CHWI-2015

Location: Clear Hills County

Grant Amount: \$5,500 (\$1,375 Returned)

Total Project Value: \$5,358.79

Partners: Clear Hills County

Project Summary: Clear Hills Watershed Initiative (CHWI) raised awareness of their group and their efforts to improve the watershed within the community by upgrading their website, creating signage, and participating in a workshop with Aquality Environmental Consulting. CHWI also focused on gaining further participation from young people through engaging with local schools, creating a “youth category” for their photo contest, and participating in the Fish in Schools (FinS) Program.

“Without this funding the Clear Hills Watershed Initiative would not be able to complete this project. WSG funding has allowed us more visibility within our community and has led to recognition of our group and the work we do.”

Harriet Konrad, Secretary and Treasurer, Clear Hills Watershed Initiative

South Saskatchewan River Sub-Watershed

The South Saskatchewan River sub-basin straddles the border between Alberta and Saskatchewan, and eventually drains into the Hudson Bay. The river runs north, and then northeast until it crosses into Saskatchewan to join with the Red Deer River. It has around 14,000km² of drainage area and the lowest level of precipitation in Alberta, allowing the climate to be classified as sub-arid to semi-arid.

Watershed Stewardship Groups Funded

- Society of Grasslands Naturalists

Society of Grasslands Naturalists

Grant #: 15-SGN-2015

Location: Medicine Hat

Grant Amount: \$10,000

Total Project Value: \$27,089.94

Partners: South East Alberta Watershed Alliance, Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society

Project Summary: The Society of Grasslands Naturalists (SGN) and their educational group, the Medicine Hat Interpretive Program, completed a study of the 2015 river and riparian area within Medicine Hat. 15 riparian health assessments were conducted and will become a benchmark to keep track of the health of the river for years to come. Part of the project was also to develop 35 permanent photo points that can be re-visited on a regular basis to monitor changes to vegetation, erosion, and river health. Information gathered will be shared on a website, in public programs, special group and school programs, and displays. The goal from this project is to create involved, knowledgeable, and caring citizens as the basis for a healthy, strong community living in a stable sustainable economy.

“We have done a number of projects with WSG funding. Since we are a non-profit organization, we depend heavily on this type of funding to supplement any monies we receive from our local municipality, which is only about 50% of our operating budget. Many of the displays, programs, materials, etc. from this and prior grants will be used well into the future or are still in use.”

Corlaine Gardner, Chief Park Interpreter, Society of Grasslands Naturalists

2015 Wetland Grants

Alberta's new Wetland Policy aims to conserve, restore, protect and manage Alberta's wetlands to sustain the benefits they provide to the environment, society, and economy. The policy recognizes that wetland stewardship is a key component of effective wetland management in the province. One of the policy's three key strategic directions emphasizes the importance of wetland conservation and voluntary stewardship:

"The Government of Alberta encourages all Albertans to enable wetland conservation and protection through voluntary stewardship activities. The Government of Alberta and its partners will continue to work with landowners to advance wetland restoration, construction, and enhancement efforts in the Province. A wide range of initiatives, such as education and awareness, voluntary programs, and/or incentives will encourage wetland conservation, restoration, and protection activities to help sustain the benefits that wetlands provide".

Stewardship groups throughout the province have long recognized the unique and important functions that wetlands play on the landscape, and they have dedicated their time and effort to projects that benefit and enhance them.

Aware of LSC's long-standing work delivering the Watershed Stewardship Grant Program, the Education and Outreach (now Community Engagement Services) division of Alberta Environment and Parks partnered with LSC to offer a new grant stream under the Watershed Stewardship Grant Program to fund wetland-specific projects in support of the Wetland Policy.

The goal of this new grant stream is to build awareness and stewardship capacity in order to conserve, restore and protect wetlands in Alberta, and in particular, wetlands of the highest value.

Geographical Distribution

Projects selected to receive funding were located in four of Alberta's eleven watersheds, including: North Saskatchewan, Oldman, Peace and South Saskatchewan.

Project Themes

During the 2015 cycle all four of the funded wetland projects involved building awareness and knowledge, and activities varied from attending local events to developing educational materials. In addition, two of the projects focused on community based action, and one of the projects involved various dimensions of social and biophysical monitoring.

Grant Recipients and Project Activities by Watershed

North Saskatchewan River Watershed

The North Saskatchewan River Basin covers approximately 80,000 km² of the province. The basin originates in the Saskatchewan Glacier in Banff National Park and flows in a general eastward direction to the Alberta-Saskatchewan border. The Brazeau, Nordegg, Ram, Clearwater, Sturgeon and Vermilion rivers flow into the North Saskatchewan River as it passes across Alberta. Major centers within the basin include Drayton Valley, Rocky Mountain House, Edmonton, Fort Saskatchewan and the Saddle Lake Indian Reserve.

Watershed Stewardship Groups Funded

- Eagle Point Blue Rapids Park Council

Eagle Point —Blue Rapids Park Council

Grant #: 02-EPBRPC-2015w

Location: Blue Rapids Provincial Recreation Area

Grant Amount: \$10,000

Total Project Value: \$

Partners: Adjacent Landowners Association, Alberta Environment and Parks, Brazeau County, Arc Resources

Project Summary: Blue Rapids Provincial Recreation Area contains several kilometers of unmanaged all-terrain vehicle (ATV) trails that traverse several wetland features in the riparian ecosystem of the North Saskatchewan River. The current layout and condition of these trails is resulting in severe vegetation loss, erosion, compaction and sedimentation of wetlands in this riparian area. Eagle Point – Blue Rapids Parks Council, through collaboration with landowners, recreation groups, municipal and provincial government, and industry has designed an off-highway vehicle trail system better suited to the sensitive ecosystems in the area. In addition, site specific restoration plans for the wetlands have been created to restore severely damaged areas. The group has applied for and secured some of the funds needed to begin restoration of the sites in future years.

“This grant enabled us to continue with a multi-year project to do on-the-ground reclamation and restoration that is critical to wetlands in the area.”

Peter Lee, Executive Director, Eagle Point – Blue Rapids Parks Council

Oldman River Sub-Watershed

Located in southwestern Alberta, the Oldman River Watershed is a sub-basin of the South Saskatchewan system, which eventually drains into the Hudson Bay. The main tributaries of the Oldman River are the Livingston, Crowsnest, Castle, Waterton, Belly, and St. Mary rivers, which are in turn supplied upstream by numerous small streams and wetlands. The Oldman River has a drainage area of 26,700 km² and it is 362 km in length.

Watershed Stewardship Groups Funded

- Waterton Biosphere Reserve

Waterton Biosphere Reserve

Grant #: 04-WBRA-2015w

Location: Police Outpost Provincial Park

Grant Amount: \$10,000

Total Project Value: \$20,654.24

Partners: Cardston Elementary School, Alberta Environment and Parks

Project Summary: Waterton Biosphere Reserve Association provided more than 100 grade five students from Cardston Elementary School with the opportunity to spend a day exploring wetlands and associated grassland habitat at Police Outpost Provincial Park. Groups of students rotated through four activity stations which included (1) a pond study and learning about park stewardship of wetland resources, (2) a close-up look at aquatic invertebrates (3) learning about wetland animal and plant adaptations through activities and exploration of biofacts, and (4) exploring a “day in the life” of a Blackfoot First Nations child, listening to traditional stories and playing traditional games. The field day was supplemented with a pre-trip videoconference with all four classes and related classroom instruction before and after the event. In addition to successfully providing an opportunity for children to directly interact with nature, it also provided an opportunity to enhance their learning and understanding of the vital role of water and wetlands in their lives. As an added benefit, the participation of parent chaperones resulted in several adults also being exposed to new wetland related knowledge and experiences.

“The Watershed Stewardship Grant funding has been critical to maintaining the momentum for this project. While the interest from collaborating partners is high and volunteers are keen to be involved with this project, the support from the WSG allowed for paid staff to coordinate and shepherd the project along. To ensure long-term success of this project – paid support is necessary. Hosting 100 eleven year olds in a natural setting, and ensuring that they all have a safe and rewarding experience, is challenging. Managing 30 volunteers, including preparing them with the tools and knowledge they need to lead student sessions, is also a complex undertaking. The WSG funding also allowed for the purchase of additional materials and equipment critical to enriching the student experience and keeping water bodies safe by allowing for a set of pond study equipment specifically for use in Outpost Lake.”

Nora Manners, Executive Director, Waterton Biosphere Reserve Association

Peace River Watershed

The Peace River begins in the mountains of northern British Columbia where it is influenced by the W.A.C. Bennett Dam. It then flows into Alberta, continuing northeast across the province through the town of Peace River and empties into the Slave River. At Peace Point the Peace River has a mean annual discharge of 68,200,000 dam³ and a drainage area of 293,000 km². The Peace/Slave River Basin includes the Wapiti, Smoky, Little Smoky, and Wabasca rivers. It is the largest basin in Alberta, occupying approximately 30 percent of the province. The basin is predominantly covered by native boreal forest and is part of the Mackenzie River system, which eventually drains into the Arctic Ocean.

Watershed Stewardship Groups Funded

- Clear Hills Watershed Initiative

Clear Hills Watershed Initiative

Grant #: 01-CHWI-2015w

Location: Hines Creek

Grant Amount: \$10,000

Total Project Value: \$10,874.00

Partners: End of Steel Museum, Village of Hines Creek

Project Summary: In partnership with the End of Steel Museum, Clear Hills Watershed Initiative restored access to wetlands located behind the main museum grounds. The wetlands have walking trails which are accessible for bird watching and informational field trips for schools and other interested groups. Part of the project was constructing a raised boardwalk along part of the trail, which allows wetland access without damage to the integrity of the wetland. The project also included signs highlighting the benefits wetlands provide to the community. This project sparked a lot of interest for CHWI from the volunteers from the museum, village and others in the surrounding area who wanted to help with construction and learn more about the watershed and wetlands in the area.

“If the LSC wetland funding hadn’t been available this project would not have happened. I found that most people take this area of the wetlands for granted, but once exposed to them the general public will take more interest in them. I believe this insight will bring on more projects to enhance our wetlands in the future thanks to the Watershed Stewardship Grant.”

Harriet Konrad, Secretary & Treasurer, Clear Hills Watershed Initiative

South Saskatchewan River Sub-Watershed

The South Saskatchewan River sub-basin straddles the border between Alberta and Saskatchewan, and eventually drains into the Hudson Bay. The river runs north, and then northeast until it crosses into Saskatchewan to join with the Red Deer River. It has around 14,000km² of drainage area and the lowest level of precipitation in Alberta, allowing the climate to be classified as sub-arid to semi-arid.

Watershed Stewardship Groups Funded

- Society of Grasslands Naturalists

Society of Grasslands Naturalists

Grant #: 03-SGN-2015w

Location: Medicine Hat

Grant Amount: \$10,000

Total Project Value: \$33,936.34

Partners: City of Medicine Hat Parks and Recreation Department

Project Summary: Society of Grasslands Naturalists upgraded and refined their wetland programing including incorporating material specific to South Eastern Alberta and comparing local wetlands to different types of wetlands in other parts of Alberta; adapting or developing materials to assist in understanding the roles different organisms play within the ecosystem; and providing more materials for different age groups. They also installed an educational sign and floating dock which allows students to sample directly from the wetland. The floating dock protects the shoreline, allowing more student involvement, and creates a "science lab in a park". This project has helped the group to emphasize the importance of wetlands for children and adults.

“Sloughs, marshes, ponds, ditches, and swamps are the underdogs of the local ecosystems. They are taken for granted, and drained, damaged, ignored, and avoided by many. Our group works hard to develop an understanding of wetland ecosystems for school children and the general public. This project helped us emphasize the importance of wetlands for all of us.”

Corlaine Gardner, Chief Park Interpreter, Society of Grasslands Naturalists

Appendices

Appendix A: 2015 Watershed Stewardship Grant Program Financial Summary

Appendix B: Total Value of 2015 Watershed Stewardship Grant Program

Appendix C: Overview of Watershed Stewardship Projects

Appendix D: Overview of Wetland Stewardship Projects

Appendix A: 2015 Watershed Stewardship Grant Program Financial Summary

Funds Received	Amount
Alberta Environment and Parks Grant #15GRSSR06 for 2015 Watershed Stewardship Grant Program; Watershed and Wetland grants	250,000.00
Total Funds Received	250,000.00
Funds Allocated	Amount
Watershed Project funding dispersed (18 projects up to \$10,000 each)	156,601.00
Wetland Project funding dispersed (4 projects)	33,935.00
Administration	20,000.00
Total Funds Allocated	210,536.00
Funds Retained for Fall 2015 Grant	
Project funding	34,464.00
Administration	5,000.00
Total Retained	39,464.00
Allocated Funds Returned	
Clear Hills Watershed Initiative	1,375.00
Foothills Land Trust	10,000.00
Total Allocated Funds Returned	11,375.00

Appendix B: Total Value of 2015 Watershed Stewardship Grant Program

Watershed Stewardship Projects—Cash	Amount
Total grant project funding spent	145,226.00
Leveraged funding	428,472.39
Watershed Stewardship Projects—Cash Subtotal	573,698.39
Watershed Stewardship Projects—In-Kind	
Documented group volunteer time and in-kind contributions	257,854.45
Watershed Stewardship Projects—In-Kind Subtotal	257,854.45
Total Value of Watershed Stewardship Projects	831,552.84
Wetland Stewardship Projects—Cash	
Total grant project funding spent	33,935.00
Leveraged funding	24,386.88
Wetland Stewardship Projects—Cash Subtotal	58,321.88
Wetland Stewardship Projects—In-Kind	
Documented group volunteer time and in-kind contributions	33,464.13
Wetland Stewardship Projects—In-Kind Subtotal	33,464.13
Total Value of Wetland Stewardship Projects	91,786.01
Grant Program Administration and Delivery	
Watershed Stewardship Grant Coordinator and LSC staff (paid)	20,000.00
Land Stewardship Centre in-kind contributions	56,000.00
Total Grant Program Administration and Delivery	76,000.00
Watershed Stewardship Grant Committee In-kind	
Alberta Agriculture and Forestry	500.00
Alberta Environment and Parks	360.00
Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society (Cows and Fish)	400.00
Land Stewardship Centre of Canada	160.00
Shell Canada	420.00
Watershed Planning and Advisory Council (Bow River Basin Council)	380.00
Community Steward Representatives	560.00
Total WSG Committee In-Kind	2,780.00
Total Value of Grant Administration and Delivery, and WSG Committee In-Kind	78,780.00
Total Value of 2015 Watershed Stewardship Grant Program	1,002,118.85
The value of in-kind contributions has been calculated using the following:	\$20/hour
Volunteer Time	\$30/hour
Technical Expert	\$40/hour
Equipment Costs	

Appendix C: Overview of Watershed Projects

2015 Watershed Stewardship Grants			Project Grant Funding			Leveraged Contributions		Total Project Value
Grant #	Applicant	Signing Authority	Requested	Approved	Spent	Financial	In-Kind	
01-CCWC-2015	Castle Crown Wilderness Coalition	Applicant	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	16,245.00	11,980.00	38,225.00
02-CHWI-2015	Clear Hills Watershed Initiative	Applicant	8,500.00	5,500.00	4,125.00	104.61	1,180.00	5,409.61
03-ERWP-2015	Elbow River Watershed Partnership	Applicant	8,255.00	8,255.00	8,255.00	42,288.36	15,800.00	66,343.36
04-FFCPPS-2015	Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society	Applicant	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	41,370.03	25,960.00	77,330.03
05-FLT-2015	Foothills Land Trust	Applicant	10,000.00	10,000.00	-	-	-	-
06-GWAS-2015	Ghost Watershed Alliance Society	Applicant	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	76,350.16	46,479.45	132,829.61
07-H2C-2015	Highway Two Conservation	County of Barrhead	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	42,950.00	-	52,950.00
08-KotA-2015	Keepers of the Athabasca	Wildsight	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	44,141.26	18,280.00	72,421.26
09-LCARF-2015	Little Creeks and Rough Fescue Appreciation Society	Applicant	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	2,391.51	6,400.00	18,791.51
10-LtL-2015	Love the Lake	Summer Village of Grandview	3,800.00	3,800.00	3,800.00	876.29	3,110.00	7,786.29
11-NCWP-2015	Nose Creek Watershed Partnership	Bow River Basin Council	9,945.00	9,945.00	9,945.00	1,451.25	1,800.00	13,196.25
12-PLWA-2015	Pigeon Lake Watershed Association	Applicant	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	81,538.52	94,895.00	186,433.52
13-RRWG-2015	Ridge Reservoir Working Group	County of Warner	9,901.00	9,901.00	9,901.00	1,359.70	1,200.00	12,460.70
14-RRWG-2015	Ridge Reservoir Working Group	County of Warner	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	841.11	2,620.00	13,461.11
15-SGN-2015	Society of Grasslands Naturalists	Applicant	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	12,849.94	4,240.00	27,089.94
16-SLLBW-2015	Stewards of Lac La Biche Watershed	Wildsight	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	47,500.00	21,200.00	78,700.00
17-WGPPS-2015	Weaselhead Glenmore Park Preservation Society	Applicant	4,200.00	4,200.00	4,200.00	16,050.00	-	20,250.00
18-WWMC-2015	Wabamun Watershed Management Council	Applicant	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	164.65	2,710.00	7,874.65
Total			159,601.00	\$156,601.00	145,226.00	428,472.39	257,854.45	831,552.84

Appendix D: Overview of Wetland Projects

2015 Wetland Stewardship Grants			Project Grant Funding			Leveraged Contributions		Total Project Value
Grant #	Applicant	Signing Authority	Requested	Approved	Spent	Financial	In-Kind	
01-CHWI-2015w	Clear Hills Watershed Initiative	Applicant	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	449.00	425.00	10,874.00
02-EPBRPC-2015w	Eagle Point Blue Rapids Park Council	Applicant	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	9,775.00	6,546.43	26,321.43
03-SGN-2015w	Society of Grasslands Naturalists	Applicant	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	13,588.64	10,347.70	33,936.34
04-WBRA-2015w	Waterton Biosphere Reserve Association	Applicant	3,935.00	3,935.00	3,935.00	574.24	16,145.00	20,654.24
		Total	33,935.00	33,935.00	33,935.00	24,386.88	33,464.13	91,786.01