



Water Matters

Water Matters Annual Report 2010



Message from the Chair

A recent family trip to the Colorado Plateau served as a stark reminder of the power of water. Not that we need to travel far afield to witness canyons and desert. We have it in our backyard and we need to recognize its power, both environmentally and socially. The power of water permeates all aspects of our lives, and for those of us who recreate in or near water it can be a source of exhilaration and solace. The problem is water is rarely treated with the respect it deserves. We harness it, use it, and more often than not, abuse it. Water Matters sees a need for change.

There has been no shortage of controversy around water in 2010, including reports about the adequacy of monitoring in the oil sands, the evolution of regional land use planning, and ongoing issues around water allocation in the South Saskatchewan River Basin. Through it all Water Matters continues to play an essential role in bringing forward messages and ideas of progressive water management in Alberta.

The host of issues of integrating the management of water and land in a resource driven economy are not going away. In fact, many are just getting going. I extend my deep thanks to our staff whose work benefits Albertans by adding a strong voice to address these issues. Water Matters has stressed the urgent needs of watershed health, while promoting progressive and sustainable environmental management across sectors and the government.

One final area of power must also be mentioned in relation to water and Water Matters; the power of philanthropy. Donations and grants enable Water Matters to do what it does, so we invite you to become familiar with the work of Water Matters and to empower it further.



Jason Unger, Chair



Our Vision

Watersheds in Alberta are protected for ecological and human health, recreational benefit, and their aesthetic, economic, and spiritual value.

Our Mission

Water Matters is a champion for improving watershed protection in Alberta.

To fulfill its mission Water Matters will:

- conduct and promote timely and leading edge research and investigation;
- provide and support outreach and education programs;
- advance initiatives for watershed health; and
- work with others concerned about the protection of watershed.



Strategic Goals 2010 - 2013

Shape the debate on watershed policy in Alberta by communicating directly with decision makers and empowering citizens of Alberta with the knowledge needed to act to ensure that:

- There is a strong agenda for appropriate land use and watershed protection to protect water resources
- Alberta adopts progressive policies and practices with respect to water allocation, rights trading and basin transfers
- Alberta adopts strong policies and regulations that ensure protection for aquatic ecosystems

Build and support watershed stewardship in Alberta by:

- Providing watershed stewards with resources and knowledge to increase their capacity and effectiveness
- Engaging local citizens to increase their awareness and capacity for watershed protection
- Working collaboratively with partner organizations, and interested groups and individuals
- Effectively communicating with and educating Albertans about Water Matters' vision and programs for watershed protection

To support all other goals, be a sustainable organization by:

- Building the organizational capacity of Water Matters to act as an effective voice for watershed protection

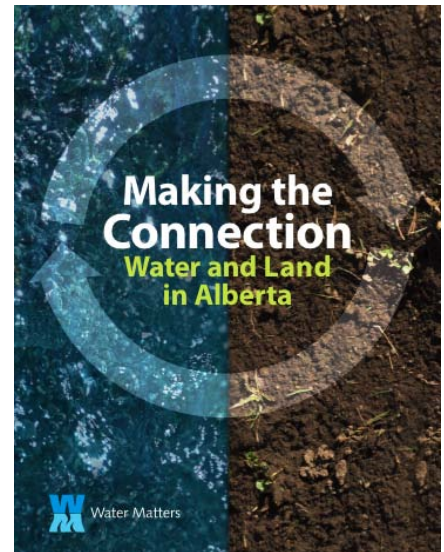
Accomplishments: January to December 2010

Contributing to the Water Policy Dialogue in Alberta

Through our research publications and outreach to decision makers and the public we have supported progressive messages and ideas for water policy in the province.

Water and Land Use

In 2010 we released *Making the Connection: Water and Land in Alberta* as a call to Albertans to heed the fundamental connection between water and land use. In publicly accessible language the report outlines the connection between land and water with a focus on southern Alberta. Strong media coverage has aided in making this report a resource that was used for the National Round Table on Environment and Economy that was commissioned by Natural Resources Canada.



Protect Alberta's Watersheds: Engaging Albertans in the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan

In 2009 we released, *Source of Opportunity: A Blueprint for Securing Source Water in Southern Alberta* to provide input into the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan. Over the past year, many of our recommendations were reflected in the advice of the SSRP's Regional Advisory Committee. With the RAC's advice now out for public comment we will continue our outreach in 2011 based on this work.

Promoting Progressive Policies for Water Allocation in Alberta

Water Matters plays a key role in promoting progressive policies for water allocation in Alberta, based on our *Share the Water* report. In 2010, we reached out to the public calling for the prioritization of water for the environment and people with strong public oversight over Alberta's water market. This campaign raised the awareness of one million Albertans through over 50 media hits and 44 public presentations based on *Share the Water*. At our 2010 AGM, the Honorable Minister of Environment Rob Renner recognized the value of this work.

Aquatic Ecosystem Protection

Aquatic ecosystems are often treated as a component in larger public processes focused on other issues. Water Matters has striven to bring aquatic ecosystems protection to the forefront of decision-maker considerations in a number of processes as detailed below.

- At the Alberta Utilities Commission Inquiry into Hydro Electric Generation Water Matters articulated the need for instream flows to be considered in new and existing hydropower development. We also coordinated the participation of six other environmental groups, who provided specific expertise in laying the foundation for future work on instream flows and watershed protection.

- Water Matters provided leadership in highlighting water issues at the federal level which helped push for an inquiry into the state of water quality monitoring in Alberta’s oil sands region, and ultimately the creation of a better water quality monitoring system. Through our report *Effective Environmental Monitoring Solutions*, we provided thorough input into the federal panel to investigate water quality monitoring. Alberta subsequently announced their own creation of a “world class” monitoring system for water, air, land and biodiversity.
- Building off our joint work in *Tailings Plan Review: An Assessment of Oil Sands Company Submissions for Compliance with ERCB Directive 074*, Water Matters coordinated with the Pembina Institute to deliver extensive media coverage of the weak enforcement of Directive 074 on reducing tailings ponds. The credibility of our critique was recognized by industry through our invitation to and participation in a national dialogue with Shell where our reports were featured. Our profile of tailings has also contributed to increased public scrutiny of environmental performance in the oil sands.
- Our report, *Watered Down*, detailing specific federal responsibilities in Alberta’s oil sands, continues to inform the work and publications of organizations such as Environmental Defence, Equiterre, and the Pembina Institute.
- Water Matters played a critical role in coordinating with other environmental groups on media strategies and messaging related to Alberta’s planned cancellation of the existing “no net loss” wetlands policy.

Supporting Watershed Stewardship

Developing Water Leaders

Water Matters contributes to the development of Alberta’s water leaders through education, capacity building and collaboration, reaching out to a broad range of ages, backgrounds and interests across Alberta. In 2010, this work included:



- Distributing five electronic newsletters, *The Water Log*, featuring an in-depth analysis and reporting of water issues in Alberta. Each newsletter, reaching 1200 people, aims to build Albertans’ knowledge of water issues – and 2010 saw a 15% increase in our subscribers
 - Assisting eight communities in response to gravel-mining applications, involving clarification of regulatory processes, effective citizen involvement and broader provincial legislative reforms. One community created a new society to improve environmental standards surrounding gravel - the Central Athabasca Stewardship Society
 - Raising youth awareness of water issues in Alberta, spanning from junior and senior high school classes to non-formal youth education initiatives and university programs. In one inspiring example, Andrej Brajic, a University of Calgary student who attended a Water Matters presentation, was awarded a Youth Environmental

Stewardship Grant to raise the awareness of university undergraduates regarding Alberta's Water Allocation Review

- Assisting graduate students from the Universities of Lethbridge and British Columbia with research focused on understanding the governance and behavioral challenges in protecting Alberta's watersheds
- Participating in the Bow River Basin Council
- Sitting on the board of the North Saskatchewan River Valley Conservation Society

Partnering to Promote Local Stewardship

Water Matters launched a two-year project in collaboration with Cows & Fish to support and assist seven water stewardship groups across Alberta to build their capacity to deliver effective watershed protection and stewardship. Groups from Pincher Creek to Lac la Nonne are undertaking a variety of initiatives – including riparian assessment, website development and state of the watershed reporting - with targeted assistance from Water Matters and Cows & Fish staff.

ENGO Collaboration

As Chair of the Alberta Environmental Network Water Caucus in 2010, Water Matters coordinated and hosted caucus phone meetings with network ENGO partners, assisted in organizing face-to-face meetings, and developed operational guidelines for the caucus.



Building Our Organizational Capacity

- This year, Water Matters successfully navigated a leadership transition, with the departure of founding Executive Director, Danielle Droitsch and the recruitment of both Carole Stark as Executive Director and William Donahue as Special Advisor on Water Policy. Our staff team has expanded to encompass a strong and diverse range of skills and expertise.
- To join the social media revolution and expand our communications and outreach capacity, Water Matters instituted a Facebook page and Twitter feed which continues to grow in popularity and stimulate public discussion around water challenges and solutions.
- In late 2010, Water Matters was recognized by Tides Canada, a national leader in forward-thinking philanthropy, in their 2010 Tides Top 10 — an award that recognizes groundbreaking environmental and social justice projects and organizations in Canada. Each year Tides Canada staff, partners and experts identify ten standout initiatives that demonstrate exceptional leadership, vision and real-world impact. Water Matters is very proud to have our work acknowledged in this way.

Looking Forward: New Initiatives Coming Onstream

Southern Foothills Community Stewardship Initiative

In partnership with the Chinook Institute for Community Stewardship and the Pekisko Group, Water Matters is leading the delivery of a regional public engagement initiative to educate citizens and give voice to local values and priorities to protect the long-term health and integrity of the landscape and watersheds of the Alberta's southern foothills. The resulting recommendations will inform municipal and provincial land use and watershed planning in the region.

Modeling New Conservation Tools to Conserve Watersheds in Southern Alberta

We have partnered with the Miistakis Institute to deliver workshops on the potential of the conservation tools outlined in the Alberta Land Stewardship Act to progressive municipalities seeking to conserve their watersheds and agricultural land base.

Enhancing Existing Tools and Providing New Options in Policy and Legislation

With this project, Water Matters will generate robust policy dialogue with Alberta water experts and decision makers to pave the way for the adoption and implementation of progressive water policy and management tools. In support of that, we will build public and stakeholder awareness of key issues affecting water supply and the need to protect environmental flows.

Maintaining Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems:

Policy Recommendations for Instream Flow Needs

This foundational project will determine policy options for incorporating instream flow needs protection into water management in Alberta, with the aim of protecting long term ecosystem health. Stakeholders and experts will be engaged to provide feedback on proposed recommendations and tools.

Oil Sands

Water Matters will primarily focus on promoting oversight of freshwater management that recognizes the costs of oil sands development to aquatic ecosystem health, and increasing understanding of the impacts of in situ operations on groundwater resources.

Fund Development

Water Matters is participating in CentrePoint's *Fund Development Plus*, a program that combines elements of professional mentoring, training and peer networking to promote organizational growth and capacity building in fund development. We will gain valuable insights into our current fund development infrastructure, practices and procedures, culminating in an improved fund development strategy and plan.





Water Matters Society of Alberta

Statement of Financial Position – Year End Dec 31, 2010

ASSETS (Current)	2010
Cash	197,506
Accounts Receivable	14,247
GST Recoverable	618
Prepaid Expenses	433
TOTAL	<u>212,804</u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	34,215
Deferred Contributions Related to Operations	171,381
TOTAL	<u>205,596</u>
NET ASSETS (Unrestricted)	<u>7,208</u>
	<u><u>212,804</u></u>



Water Matters

Water Matters Society of Alberta

Statement of Operations - Year End Dec 31, 2010

REVENUE

Donations	18,807
Fee for Service	35,635
Grants	231,578
Investment Income	0
TOTAL	<u>286,020</u>

EXPENSE

Direct Project Costs

Staff and contracted services	196,629
Project delivery costs	18,631
Total - Direct Project Costs	<u>215,260</u>

Project Oversight Costs

Staff and contracted services	77,888
Administrative costs	34,814
Total - Project Oversight Costs	<u>112,702</u>

TOTAL EXPENSES

327,962

Excess of Revenue Over Expenses **(41,942)**

Net Assets, Beginning of the Year **49,150**

NET ASSETS, END OF THE YEAR 7,208



Water Matters

2010 Foundation and Corporate Funders

*We extend our sincere thanks to the following **funders** that enable the important work of Water Matters.*

Alberta Conservation Association

Alberta Ecotrust Foundation

Alberta Real Estate Foundation

ECO Canada

Max Bell Foundation

Mountain Equipment Coop

RBC Foundation

The Calgary Foundation

The Kahanoff Foundation

The Molson Coors Donations Fund

Tides Foundation

Unilever Canada Foundation

Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation

*Equally as important, we thank and celebrate our many **individual donors** whose contributions sustain our work in watershed protection across Alberta.*

Board of Directors

Tim Belec

Westerose, Alberta (Battle River Watershed)

Cheryl Bradley (Secretary)

Lethbridge, Alberta (Oldman River Watershed)

Rick Dowell (Treasurer)

Edmonton, Alberta (North Saskatchewan River Watershed)

Lorne Fitch

Lethbridge, Alberta (Oldman River Watershed)

Mary Griffiths

Edmonton, Alberta (North Saskatchewan River Watershed)

Rachelle Haddock (Vice Chair)

Calgary, Alberta (Bow River Watershed)

Eric Lloyd

West Bragg Creek, Alberta (Elbow River Watershed)

Maggie Romuld

Brooks, Alberta (Red Deer River Watershed)

Greg Shyba

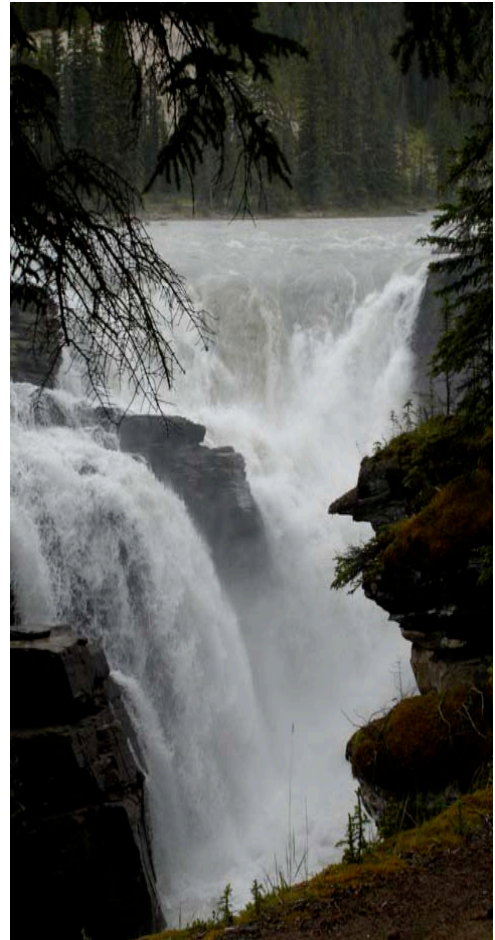
Calgary, Alberta (Bow River Watershed)

Jason Unger (Chair)

Edmonton, Alberta (North Saskatchewan River Watershed)

Denise Verreault

Edmonton, Alberta (North Saskatchewan River Watershed)



Staff

Carole Stark, Executive Director

Joe Obad, Associate Director

William Donahue, Special Advisor on Water Policy

Carlos R. Garcia, Operations and Program Manager

Julia Ko, Water Policy and Program Coordinator