

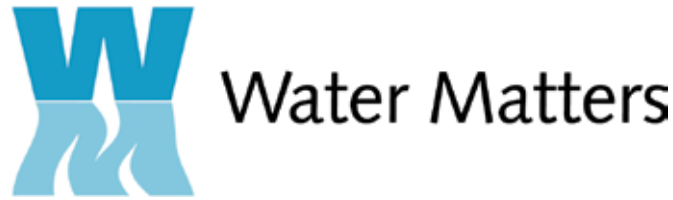
A high-speed photograph of water splashing against a bright blue background. The water is captured in mid-air, creating a complex, crystalline structure of droplets and streams. The lighting is bright, highlighting the transparency and texture of the water.

# **Biennial Report 2012-2013**



**Water Matters**

Photo: Pablo Piña Poujol



## 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

We will 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

We will 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, we will be a sustainable organization by:

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

## Water Matters Society of Alberta

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## Message from the Chair

Throughout 2012 and 13, we have seen ongoing pressures on Alberta's water resources. From water use associated with oilsands development in the north, to increased fracking at a provincial scale, to water quality issues confronting many of the province's lakes, to concerns around water allocation associated with continued growth and economic prosperity in the south, the list is long and impressive. Floods in 2013 meanwhile stood as a stark reminder of the power of water and how it can impact our lives.

Over the past two years, Water Matters has continued its focused work on watershed stewardship and protection by publishing three reports intended to provide policy answers for the water allocation issues of the South Saskatchewan River Basin.



Another research project and its report, *Determining Appropriate Nutrient and Sediment Loading Coefficients for Modeling Effects of Changes in Landuse and Landcover in Alberta Watersheds*, is moving Alberta's water agenda forward to deal with one of the greatest aquatic challenges of our time, non-point source pollution impacts on our waterways. Focused on determining impacts of land conversion on water quality, the report is already being used to assess and plan activities with aquatic health in mind.

It is clear we have our work cut out for us to restore some watersheds in Alberta, and it is only through an understanding of our land use decisions that we can begin to protect our water resources in a more proactive manner.

While science-based policy remedies for watershed protection and water quality remain the focus of Water Matters' work, we recognize that science-based policy alone is not enough. Albertans must move in a unified direction in pursuit of a common mission, preserving and restoring our aquatic health for future generations of Albertans.

The journey to having policies and actions that are protective of our watersheds will take long term commitment: by government, by industry, by Albertans, by Water Matters. We hope you will continue to join and support us on this journey.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason Unger". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping underline.

Jason Unger,  
Chair, Water Matters Society of Alberta



Photo: morgueFile

## Accomplishments 2012-2013

**Water Policy Dialogues** – In 2012 Water Matters developed a detailed water policy discussion document *Maintaining Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems: Operational and Policy Recommendations for Instream Flow Needs* and three shorter water policy briefs:

- *Sharing our Rivers: How Albertans Can Maintain Healthy River, Communities and Economies*
- *Allocating Our Water: Changing to Meet the Public Interest*
- *Moving Water: Water Management Options to Achieve Social, Economic, and Environmental Goals*

These documents were released in summer to fall 2012 through press briefings and broad public dissemination, including posting on the Water Matters website. They are the foundation for written articles in various publications and

for interviews with media and documentary film producers. Water Matters worked with other ENGOs to define common goals and outcomes for water policy in Alberta based on key concepts in the briefs. Agreed-upon recommendations for improvements to water law, policy and management in Alberta that would benefit aquatic ecosystems are the focus of continuing conversations with representatives of Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (AESRD), industry and other stakeholders. In Spring 2013 Water Matters staff, on behalf of the Alberta Environmental Network, participated in AESRD stakeholder consultation sessions on water management held throughout Alberta.

### **Water Management in the Oil Sands Region**

– In 2012-2013 Water Matters continued work in the oil sands region, including:

- Prepared summaries of laws, regulations and policies regarding water management

in the oil sands region, including fact sheets on environmental issues and provincial policy regarding wetland and groundwater management.

- Developed and delivered presentations regarding the new federal/provincial joint monitoring system in the oil sands region and risks to groundwater from SAG-D oilsands development.
- Participated in technical workshops on environmental monitoring and assessment in the oil sands region, including as an ENGO representative on behalf of the Alberta Environmental Network on the Joint Oil Sands Monitoring program's Water Component Advisory Committee.
- Held meetings with industry representatives to discuss risks and water policy priorities related to oil sands development.
- Together with Keepers of the Athabasca developed and delivered public presentations in northern Alberta communities on water management, watershed and land use planning and risks to freshwater and groundwater systems associated with oil sands development.
- Participated in an international discussion panel and webcast entitled "Underground Intelligence: The need to map, monitor, and

manage Canada's groundwater resources in an era of drought and climate change", hosted by the University of Toronto's Program on Water Issues.

- Provided strategic technical (scientific and legal) assistance to the Pembina Institute and Ecojustice for a judicial review application, related to potential harm to the MacKay River from groundwater extraction related to an in situ oilsands project.
- Together with other Alberta-based ENGOs and experts in international corporate social responsibility and sustainable investment, provided feedback and advice to Suncor in annual external sustainability reviews of their environmental programs and performance, a process organized by the US non-profit organization Ceres.
- Made a submission to the Legislative Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship concerning a potential hydroelectric development on the Slave River, downstream of Lake Athabasca.

#### **Determination of Pollutant Export**

**Coefficients** – Water Matters completed a project to define appropriate coefficients for modeling nutrient and sediment pollution to rivers and streams from particular land uses in Alberta. Modeling of non-point source

Photo: Bart Robinson



pollution informs decisions regarding the effects of land use change on water quality and potential mitigation strategies. Suggestions were developed regarding approaches to determining loading coefficients, important factors to consider, and a new way to interpret Government of Alberta water quality/pollution data and predict pollutant loading rates related to different land uses and land covers. The draft report was reviewed and positively received at a workshop of experts from provincial and municipal governments, academia, and the environmental consulting community. The final Water Matters report authored by William Donahue – *Determining Appropriate Nutrient and Sediment Loading Coefficients for Modeling Effects of Changes in Landuse and Landcover in Alberta Watersheds* (November 2013) – is available through the Water Matters website. Results are being applied in a variety of watershed planning initiatives and contributing to protection of aquatic health. In-kind support for this project was provided by The ALCES Group and EPCOR.

**Source to Tap Project** – Water Matters, in partnership with the Oldman Watershed Council (OWC), facilitated seventeen community meetings in SW Alberta that engaged diverse interests in conversations about water use, watershed health, headwaters integrity and stewardship issues, opportunities and actions. The compilation of results informed the OWC Headwaters Action Plan process and public consultations regarding the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan. Groundwork was laid for an interactive website that would also serve as an information portal for OWC.

**Appeals of Amendments to Irrigation District Licences** – Water Matters filed notices of appeal of Alberta Environment’s approval of amendments to four water licences that allowed irrigation districts to use substantial volumes of water for purposes other than irrigation. Water Matters was denied both standing and intervener status before the Alberta Environmental Appeals Board. Represented by EcoJustice, Water Matters together with Alberta Wilderness Association and Trout Unlimited requested judicial review of the EAB decision.

The EAB decision to deny Water Matters participation in an EAB hearing was upheld by the Court of Queen’s Bench.

**Partnerships and Collaboration** – Water Matters continued to participate in meetings of the Alberta Environmental Network Water Caucus, Southern Foothills Study, Crown of the Continent Roundtable, Alberta Innovates and Alberta EcoTrust to support these initiatives and provide expertise regarding water. Facilitation services were provided for a strategic planning session of the Alberta Environmental Network board as well as for a workshop in Vancouver for BC ENGOs, to develop a public campaign for Water Act Modernization and initiate discussion on provincial water priorities. Water Matters worked with Cows & Fish and the Lac La Nonne Watershed Stewardship Society to develop a local stewardship program. Assistance was provided to Peace River High School for a project to increase awareness of ice jam formations on a prospective bridge being built in Grand Prairie.

**Planning of Future Projects** – In 2013 Water Matters developed proposals and secured resources needed to undertake the following projects

- **Advancing Groundwater Policy** – Recommendations will be developed for improved policy regarding groundwater management in Alberta.
- **Headwaters Recreation Education** – Working in collaboration with the Environmental Law Centre, Water Matters plans to engage recreation, landowner and community groups in the headwaters of the Oldman River and Bow River Basins. The project is exploring policy and regulatory options for managing recreation use in the Eastern Slopes and building a strategy for educating recreation users.

**Organizational Capacity** – Water Matters staff and resources were significantly curtailed in 2013. By the end of 2013 the Board was in the process of planning for renewal of the organization.



Photo: Bart Robinson

# Financial Statements

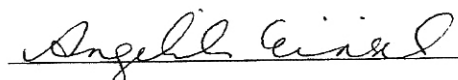
## Notice to Reader

On the basis of information provided by management, I have compiled the statement of financial position of Water Matters Society of Alberta as at December 31, 2013, and the statement of operations and fund balances for the year then ended.

I have not performed an audit or a review engagement in respect to these financial statements and, accordingly, I express no assurance thereon.

Readers are cautioned that these statements may not be appropriate for their purposes.

My involvement with these statements includes data entry. All transactions were authorized by management.



Banff, Canada      Angelika Eirisch  
February 2, 2014      Chartered Accountant

The Financial Statements may be viewed in their entirety online at: [www.water-matters.org/pubs](http://www.water-matters.org/pubs)

## Water Matters Society of Alberta Statement of Financial Position December 31, 2013

(Unaudited See Notice to Reader)

\*Deferred contributions reported in the Restricted Fund relate to funds received in the current year to be used in the subsequent year for expenditures related to restricted projects.

	Restricted	Operating	Total 2013	Total 2012
<b>ASSETS</b>				
Current				
Cash	\$ 36,838	8,685	45,523	48,846
Accounts receivable	2,600	971	3,571	5,774
Prepaid expenses	0	325	325	337
	<b>\$ 39,438</b>	<b>9,981</b>	<b>49,419</b>	<b>54,957</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES</b>				
Current liabilities				
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 1,886	5,878	7,764	7,406
Deferred contributions*	37,552	0	37,552	47,521
	39,438	5,878	45,316	54,927
Fund balances	0	4,103	4,103	30
	<b>\$ 39,438</b>	<b>9,981</b>	<b>49,419</b>	<b>54,957</b>

Approved on behalf of the board:



Jason Unger, Chair, Water Matters Society of Alberta



**Water Matters Society of Alberta**  
**Statement of Operations and Fund Balances**  
**Year Ended December 31, 2013**

(Unaudited See Notice to Reader)

	Restricted	Operating	Total 2013	Total 2012
<b>REVENUE</b>				
Donations	\$ 1,600	29,148	<b>30,748</b>	25,736
Grants	120,925	7,647	<b>128,572</b>	242,318
Interest income	0	15	<b>15</b>	675
Professional services	0	15,344	<b>15,344</b>	8,895
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>122,525</b>	<b>52,154</b>	<b>174,679</b>	<b>277,624</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
Salaries	105,898	22,398	<b>128,296</b>	223,225
Subcontractors	6,848	3,446	<b>10,294</b>	18,463
Advertising	3,959	583	<b>4,542</b>	5,131
GST paid	0	901	<b>901</b>	4,375
Insurance	0	1,300	<b>1,300</b>	2,109
Meetings	1,660	98	<b>1,758</b>	2,434
Office	523	1,156	<b>1,679</b>	2,755
Professional development	0	250	<b>250</b>	0
Professional fees	0	5,971	<b>5,971</b>	7,735
Rent	0	4,689	<b>4,689</b>	7,436
Telecom	133	1,760	<b>1,893</b>	2,888
Travel	3,504	5,529	<b>9,033</b>	9,765
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>122,525</b>	<b>48,081</b>	<b>170,606</b>	<b>286,316</b>
<b>EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) REVENUE OVER EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>4,073</b>	<b>4,073</b>	<b>-8,692</b>
<b>FUND BALANCES</b>				
Beginning of year	\$ 0	30	<b>30</b>	8,722
Excess (Deficiency) Revenue over Expenses	0	4,073	<b>4,073</b>	-8,692
<b>FUND BALANCES END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>4,103</b>	<b>4,103</b>	<b>30</b>

Approved on behalf of the board:



Jason Unger, Chair, Water Matters Society of Alberta

## 2012 and 2013 Foundation and Institution Funders and Supporters

We extend our sincere thanks to the following foundation and institution funders and supporters that enabled the work of Water Matters.

Absinthe Films Inc.	Gordon Foundation
Alberta Conservation Association	Government of Alberta Community Spirit Program
Alberta Ecotrust Foundation	Kresge Foundation
Alberta Innovates (Technology Futures)	Oldman Watershed Council
Alberta Real Estate Foundation	Royal Bank of Canada
Brinkerhoff Family Charitable Foundation	Southern Alberta Land Trust Society
Calgary Foundation	TD Friends of the Environment Foundation
Eco Canada	Telus Corporation
EcoJustice	Town of Canmore
Edmonton Community Foundation	Wilburforce Foundation
EPCOR	

## 2012 and 2013 Individual Donors

We also thank and celebrate our many individual donors whose contributions sustain our work of watershed protection across Alberta.

Braum Barber	Esther S. Ondrack
Bill Bocock	Bruce R. Peachey
Cheryl Bradley	Richard P. Pharis
Katherine Caine	Valerie and James Pissot
Peter Campbell	Jason Unger
Rick Dowell	Duane S. Raford
Lorne A. Fitch	Kimberley Sanderson
Margaret Glasford	Jason Scott
Mark Goettel	Greg Shyba
Mary and Derek Griffiths	Guy Stuart
Carolyn Haddock	David Swann
Rachelle Haddock	Margaret Taylor
Philip Hazelton	John Walker
Tom Hegan	Barbara Williams
Glenn Mainland	Cliff Wallis
Donna Mendelsohn	



Photo: Pablo Piña Poujol

## Board of Directors 2012 and 2013

Cheryl Bradley (Secretary)

Lethbridge, Alberta (Oldman River Watershed)

Rick Dowell (Treasurer)

Edmonton, Alberta (North Saskatchewan River Watershed)

Lorne Fitch

Lethbridge, Alberta (Oldman River Watershed)

Paulette M. Fox (term began June 2012)

Blood Reserve, Alberta (Oldman River Watershed)

Mary Griffiths (term ended June 2013)

Edmonton, Alberta (North Saskatchewan River Watershed)

Rachelle Haddock (Vice Chair)

Calgary, Alberta (Bow River Watershed)

Eric Lloyd (term ended June 2012)

West Bragg Creek, Alberta (Elbow River Watershed)

Pablo Piña Poujal (term began June 2013)

Calgary, Alberta (Bow River Watershed)

Bart Robinson (term began June 2012)

Canmore, Alberta (Bow River Watershed)

Maggie Romuld (term ended June 2013)

Brooks, Alberta (Red Deer River Watershed)

Greg Shyba (term ended June 2013)

Calgary, Alberta (Bow River Watershed)

Dan Thompson (term began June 2012)

Edmonton, Alberta (North Saskatchewan River Watershed)

Jason Unger (Chair)

Edmonton, Alberta (North Saskatchewan River Watershed)

## Staff and Consultants

Carole Stark, Executive Director

William Donahue, Director, Science and Policy

Julia Ko, Water Policy and Program Coordinator (to August 2012)

Carlos R. Garcia, Operations and Program Manager (to March 2013)

Dave Kabfleisch and Jane Kabfleisch, Website Consultants

