



Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association

2022 Annual Report

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Words of Remembrance - Ben Pengilly

Ben left us on October 15, 2021. I first met Ben during 2004, he was involved in the initial planning and writing of the *Yorkton Aquifer Source Water Protection Plan* and I was involved with the writing of the *Assiniboine Watershed Source Water Protection Plan*. With the incorporation of the Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc. "Board of Directors" at the beginning of 2007 to administer the two Source Water Protection Plans, Ben joined the Board and remained a director admirably representing the RM of Cana until he retired off the Board in 2019. The AWSA held a special place in Ben's heart.

The AWSA could always count on Ben, he knew and valued the importance of good quality water and source water protection—his heart was connected to the land and he trained in Holistic Management and consulted for the Assiniboine Watershed as well as mentoring many farmers and ranchers. He believed in humanity working closely with nature to create harmony. He was a true environmentalist!

I shared all the board meetings with Ben from 2007 up to my own retirement in 2019. I think we attended every Provincial Watershed Convention together and he was an active participant in the daily discussions dealing with the issues of the day. He was also a very active participant in the informal evening get-togethers amongst other watershed groups and conservation organizations. He got along well with people, he was well respected and he was a great ambassador for the AWSA.

You're in the Big Sky Watershed now, doing what you do best. Thank you for being a major part of the team, best regards from the board and staff of the AWSA...

(written by Don Olson, AWSA's inaugural Board Chair)



AWSA's inaugural manager, Aron Hershmillier (R) presenting Ben Pengilly (L) with a Certificate of Appreciation for the implementation of the Relocation of Livestock Confinement Facilities BMP through GF1 Circa 2009

Acknowledgements

The Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association (AWSA) would like to acknowledge the financial support of our 37 Grass Roots members who truly value the importance of clean, fresh water and have made a considerable effort to protect this precious resource. We also want to thank the board of directors, staff, and advisory committees and for their time, effort, and dedication towards the AWSA.

We would like to recognize the Water Security Agency for their financial support, guidance, and expertise in aiding us with our *Source Water Protection Plans* now and into the future.

We would also like to recognize the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture for their financial support through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, the Farm Stewardship Program, the Farm and Ranch Water Infrastructure Program, the Agri-Environmental Group Plan program.

Finally, we would like to thank ALUS Canada, the Wallace Creek Watershed Assoc. Board, and the Yorkton Creek Watershed Assoc. Board for their continued financial support of the AWSA.



The Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association (AWSA) office is located at 29 Second Avenue North in Yorkton, Saskatchewan. Our office hours are Monday to Friday from 8:00am to 4:30pm (closed 12:00-1:00pm).



Introduction

This is the 14th edition of the Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association's Annual Report, which outlines the activities of the AWSA over the 2022 fiscal year (April 1, 2021 - March 31, 2022). The projects and activities found throughout this report are governed by the association's mission and vision statements, as written by its Board of Directors, and by the objectives, recommendations and key actions contained in the *Assiniboine River Watershed Source Water Protection Plan* and the *Yorkton Area Aquifers Source Water Protection Plan*.

Our **MISSION** is to have healthy source waters throughout the Assiniboine River Watershed.

Our **VISION** is citizens and communities of the Assiniboine River Watershed working together to protect the source waters of the Assiniboine River; its tributaries and aquifers within the watershed.

2021 Staff



Jesse Nielsen
Manager



Amber Cramer
Coordinator



Janet Kristjanson
Administrator

Board Chair's Message

The Value of Water... I've recently been asked what the value of water is and that's a good question. Do we put a price on water or do we value water is the question. Well in my opinion, water is life and it's invaluable! From the snow that melts and flows to fill up our streams, creeks, rivers, wetlands, dugouts, reservoirs, lakes and recharges our aquifers to the rainfall we desperately rely on, water is INVALUABLE!

Water provides life to all our residents, and the tremendous biodiversity of species that call the Assiniboine River Watershed home. Water provides recreational opportunities, directly impacts our personal and mental health, and is a valuable resource for the economy. Agriculture and so many other industries heavily rely on water in our region and Saskatchewan.

The AWSA is a special organization that works with both rural and urban municipalities, the provincial government, federal government and other like-minded organizations to help protect our source waters within the Assiniboine River Watershed. Municipalities price water and operate cost recovery models that practice a user pay system. Municipalities then assess their capital and operational expenses in order to then price that water. That price is fair and equitable for the residents and municipalities understand the value of that water but it is a continual education and awareness process for our residents to truly understand the value of clean and safe source water.

One of the largest or direct source water protection projects the AWSA have and continue to implement, is the well decommissioning program. Ground water wells are the main source of water to over 90% of the Assiniboine Watershed residents but left open and unmanaged pose a contamination risk to the aquifer, and a safety risk to your pets, animals and loved ones. Last year alone the AWSA decommissioned 68 old water wells and will continue to seek funding and work with residents and municipalities in the future to continue to implement these type of projects. Since 2007, the AWSA has decommissioned over 400 old abandoned water wells.

As the Board Chair, I also sit on the provincial watershed board (Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds SAW). SAW has been working to improve the consistency of program coverage across the entire province. This strategy identifies opportunities to better serve the provincial governments objectives but also improve the sustainability of source water protection across the province.

I want to thank our member municipalities for their watershed minded attitude towards source water protection within our watershed and the continued support from them and our funding partners. I look forward to 2022/23 and the continuation of source water protection projects being implemented in the Assiniboine River Watershed.



Aron Hershmilller
Board Chair,
Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association



Watershed Manager's Message

Looking back at the year 2021 was, I will always remember it as the start of the new beginning for the watershed stewardship groups (WSGs) in Saskatchewan. April 6th in particular will forever be a date I remember. That's when all WSGs were gathered on a conference call, eagerly awaiting news regarding a contract to deliver the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) program for the Ministry of Agriculture once again in 2021, only to be told by deputy minister, Rick Burton, that MOA will be internally taking over the program delivery going forward.

Even though it didn't come as a complete shock to me, the loss of the CAP contract was a tough pill to swallow given the AWSA's tremendous success with not only that program, but all funding programs we've delivered on behalf of MOA, dating back to when I first started with the AWSA and the Growing Forward program of 2009. The CAP contract represented a significant portion of our annual operating budget- roughly 1/4 to 1/3 on any given year. As a result, we had to downsize our staff, letting go of our technician, Sierra Unick at the end of April, 2021. The AWSA received 1/2 of our previous MOA contract amount to wrap up our involvement with the CAP program by fiscal mid-year. Amber and I once again exceeded our application targets and had everything turned over to MOA at the beginning of September.

Although not the kind of news the WSGs were wanting to hear on April 6th, I believe Deputy Minister Burton's announcement was the catalyst to change that the WSGs and our umbrella organization, the Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds (SAW), had been mulling over for the past several years. For several years now there have been various formal and informal initiatives aimed at analyzing the WSG delivery model and structure across the province in terms of gaining efficiencies, consistency, accountability, and increased performance province-wide. The loss of CAP funding simply transformed that from a desired want, to a necessary need. The sustainability of many WSGs was dependent on restructuring how we do business. As such, the 9 WSGs of SAW began the process of restructuring in December with a workshop aimed at identifying the challenges and issues that must be addressed if the WSGs are to remain relevant and sustainable going forward. The second of the two workshops, held in February 2022, sought to outline how the restructuring would take place.

Fast forwarding to the present, SAW now employs over a dozen staff across the province to deliver provincial programming and initiatives. Many WSG staff have taken positions with SAW, while others, like myself, remain with their respective local watershed. This transition has meant that the AWSA's staff was once again downsized, with Amber Cramer leaving her role as coordinator to accept a new position as the North-East district manager for SAW; a move that was bitter-sweet for me. The relationships I've built with my staff and coworkers are by far and away the greatest joy of working for the AWSA the past dozen years. Working with Amber sits amongst the very top of that joy, which is why I'm missing not having her smiling face sitting across the hall from me in the AWSA office anymore. With that said, I've supported her decision from the onset and I hope that she is as much of an asset to SAW as she has been to the AWSA over the past 4 years.

As for me... despite all the recent change, I'm the one thing that seems to remain constant. I look forward to continuing to manage the AWSA and remaining your go-to person for all your water protection, management, and conservation-related inquiries. I hope to continue to serve the residents of the Assiniboine Watershed for many, many more years to come.

Jesse Nielsen

Jesse Nielsen
Manager,
Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association



The Association at a Glance

The Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association is an independent, non-profit organization committed to protecting source waters in the Assiniboine River Watershed. The association's vision is:

Citizens and communities of the Assiniboine River Watershed working together to protect the source waters of the Assiniboine River, its tributaries and aquifers within the watershed.

To fulfill this vision, the Association works in partnership with public and private stakeholders on a variety of water management projects. Much of this work focuses on the objectives, recommendations and key actions contained in the *Assiniboine River Watershed Source Water Protection Plan* and the *Yorkton Area Aquifers Source Water Protection Plan*. The Association's Board of Directors has also chosen to undertake some other initiatives, which are detailed in this Annual Report.

The business and affairs of the Association are managed by its Board of Directors. The Board is composed of 12 advisory members: 2 from a rural municipality and 2 from an urban municipality from each of the three Advisory Committees: the Assiniboine River Advisory Committee, the Whitesand River Advisory Committee and the Yorkton Area Aquifers Advisory Committee.

All Directors are elected for a two-year term at their respective Advisory Committee meetings. Directors are elected on a staggered two-year basis (i.e. 1/2 of board member's terms expire each year).

All Directors may be re-elected and are not restricted as to the number of consecutive terms served.

The Board of Directors meet four times a year, and annually appoints at the AGM, a Chair, Vice Chair and such other committee positions as the Board may determine.

The day-to-day business of the Association is overseen by the Watershed Manager. The Watershed Manager reports to the Board, and is granted such powers and duties as the Board may specify.

The Association receives operating revenue in the form of an annual grant from the Water Security Agency and revenues from its paid membership. The AWSA has also received revenue from the MOA since 2009 for administering the AEGP/CAP program across the watershed. Lastly, the AWSA receives revenue for the project management and administration of the Yorkton Creek Watershed Association Board and the Wallace Creek Watershed Association Board. Beyond these revenue streams, the AWSA receives revenue to administer various one-off projects and programming, which varies from year to year depending on grant availability and the success of funding applications.

Membership Representation

2021-22 Board of Directors

Aron Hershmillier Board Chair	City of Yorkton
Grant McCallum Board Vice Chair	Town of Saltcoats
Don Olson	Town of Sturgis
Andrew Fahlman	City of Melville
Russ Thies	Town of Churchbridge
Stephen Spearman	Town of Springside
Scott Edlin	R.M. of Cana No. 214
Brent Ulmer	R.M. of Stanley No. 215
Roy Derworiz	R.M. of Calder No. 241
Garry Liebrecht	R.M. of Wallace No. 243
Ken Demchuk	RM of Good Lake No. 274
Duane Hicks	R.M. of Clayton No. 333

2021-22 Staff Members

Jesse Nielsen - Manager
Amber Cramer - Coordinator
Janet Kristjanson - Administrator



Assiniboine River Advisory Committee

Russ Thies – Town of Churchbridge
Lyle Romaniuk – Town of Kamsack
Lorrie Popp – Town of Langenburg
Florian Balawyder – Town of Preeceville
Don Olson – Town of Sturgis
Reg Andrews – Village of MacNutt
Tim Mitschke – R.M. of Langenburg No. 181
David Zerr – R.M. of Churchbridge No. 211
Roy Derworiz – R.M. of Calder No. 241
Craig Salahub – R.M. of Cote No. 271
Conrad Vogel – R.M. of St. Phillips No. 301
Brad Hallick – R.M. of Keys No. 303
Ken Frampton – R.M. of Livingston No. 331
Duane Hicks – R.M. of Clayton No. 333
Reg Yaremchuk – R.M. of Preeceville No. 334
Collin Redman – R.M. Hazel Dell No. 335

Whitesand River Advisory Committee

Andrew Fahlman – City of Melville
Brad Gabora – Town of Canora
Stephen Spearman – Town of Springside
Garry Jopko – Village of Rhein
Roger Hardie – Village of Theodore
Brent Ulmer – R.M. of Stanley No. 215
John Zuchkan – R.M. of Garry No. 245
Leonard Kuschak – RM of Ituna Bon Accord No. 246
Leanne Weinbender – R.M. of Sliding Hills No. 273
Ken Demchuk – R.M. of Good Lake No. 274
Dwayne Kitzan – R.M. of Insinger No. 275
Grant Faye – R.M. of Foam Lake No. 276
Don Skoretz – R.M. of Buchanan No. 304
Philip Shewchuk – R.M. of Invermay No. 305
Barry Marquette – R.M. of Sasman No. 336

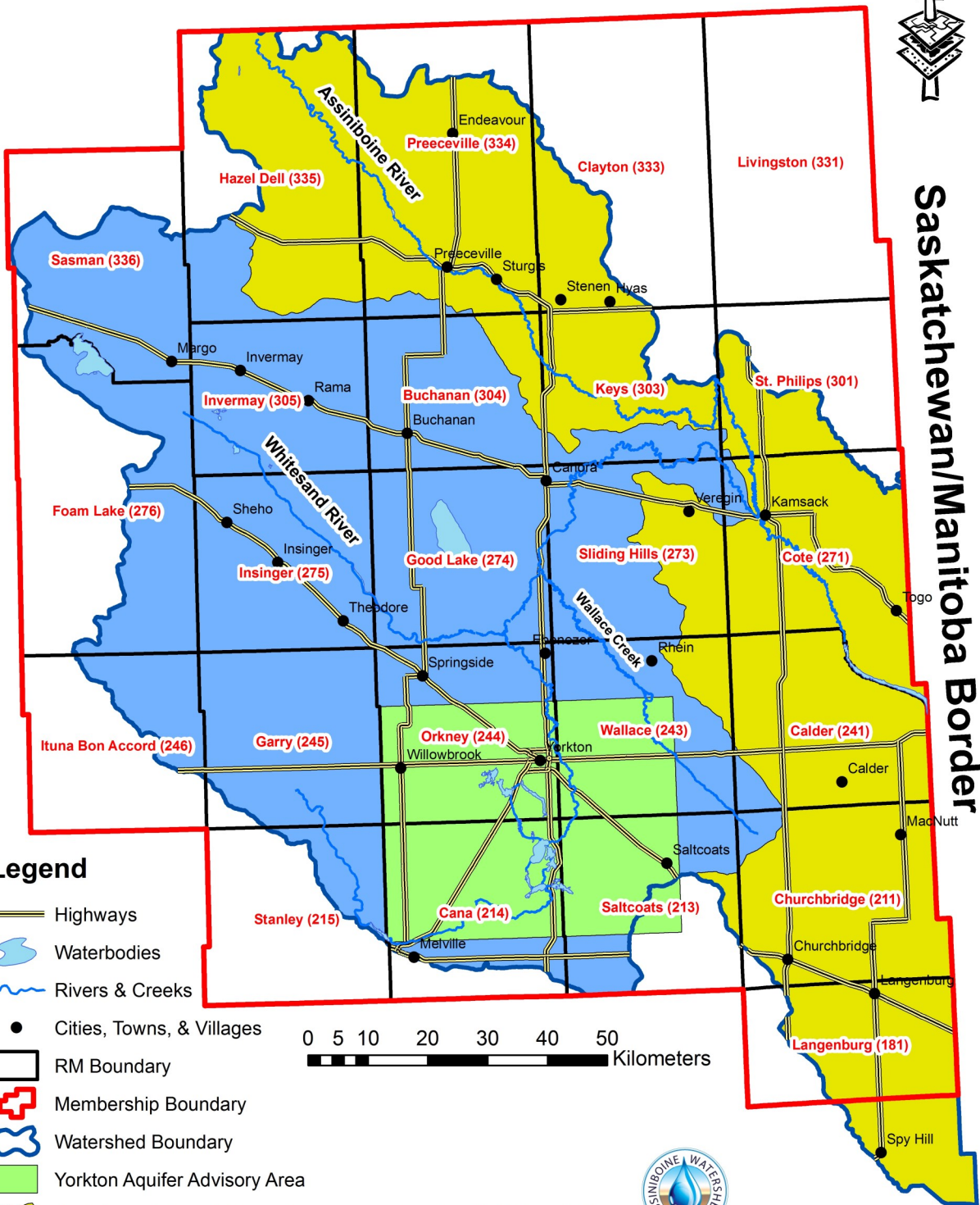
Yorkton Area Aquifers Advisory Committee

Aron Hershmillier – City of Yorkton
Grant McCallum – Town of Saltcoats
Joe Skitcko – R.M. of Saltcoats No. 213
Scott Edlin – R.M. of Cana No. 214
Garry Liebrecht – R.M. of Wallace No. 243
Randy Trost – R.M. of Orkney No. 244

Assiniboine River Watershed



Saskatchewan/Manitoba Border



Legend

- Highways
- Waterbodies
- Rivers & Creeks
- Cities, Towns, & Villages
- RM Boundary
- Membership Boundary
- Watershed Boundary
- Yorkton Aquifer Advisory Area
- Assiniboine River Advisory Area
- Whitesand River Advisory Area

0 5 10 20 30 40 50
Kilometers

Projection: UTM Zone 13N
Datum: NAD 1983



Created by: Jesse Nielsen

Notable Events

2021

April 13: SAW Manager's Zoom Call
April 14: Follow Up Conference Call with MoA
April 15: Virtual Poster Contest Presentation at KCI in Kamsack
April 16: ARBI Board Conference Call
April 16, 19, 22& 23: Virtual Poster Contest Presentation for St. Michael's in Yorkton
April 23: Sierra's Last In-office Day
April 26: SAW Manager's Zoom Call
April 27: Exclusion Fencing Site Visit
April 28: AETS Zoom Call
April 30: Long-term Business Plan Final Presentation

May 4-6: Virtual QP Training
May 5: SNFWA Virtual AGM
May 6: Baker Tilly Site Visit
May 7: AETS Zoom Call
May 11: Virtual QP Training
May 12: Exclusion Fencing Site Visit
May 13: Virtual QP Training
May 14: City of Yorkton Clean Up at Logan Green
May 18: Virtual ADAM Training
May 18: Tree for Life Delivery
May 20: Virtual ADAM Training
May 20, 21 & 25: Tree for Life Pickup Days
May 27: Poster Contest Award Presentation at KCI in Kamsack
May 28: YRHS Tree Planting
May 31: Poster Contest Award Presentation at St. Michael's in Yorkton

June 2: Poster Contest Award Presentation at Springside School
June 7: Exclusion Fencing Project Site Visit
June 15: AWSA AGM at St. Magnus School
June 17: Exclusion Fencing Site Visit
June 21: AIS Sampling at Whitesand River, Fishing Lake & Good Spirit Lake
June 22: AIS Sampling at Moosomin Reservoir
June 23: AIS Sampling at Madge Lake, Batka Lake, Jackfish Lake & Lake of the Prairies

July 6: SAW Manager's Zoom Call
July 8: GSLWAB Meeting
July 14: Well Decommissioning Site Visits
July 20: WSA Manager's Teams Call
July 21: AIS Sampling at Moosomin Reservoir
July 23: Well Decommissioning Site Visit
July 27: AIS Sampling at Whitesand River
July 28: AIS Sampling at Good Spirit Lake

Notable Events

July 29: AIS Sampling at Madge Lake, Batka Lake, Jackfish Lake & Lake of the Prairies

July 30: Well Decommissioning Site Visits

August 5&6: SAW AGM at Shekinah Retreat Centre

August 10: Well Decommissioning Site Visits

August 16: WCWAB Meeting

August 18: AIS Sampling at Moosomin Reservoir

August 19: AIS Sampling at Whitesand River, Fishing Lake & Good Spirit Lake

August 20: AIS Sampling at Madge Lake, Batka Lake, Jackfish Lake & Lake of the Prairies

September 1&2: Well Decommissioning Site Visits

September 8: Well Decommissioning Site Visits

September 14: AWSA Board Meeting

September 27-29: WSA's Adequate Outlet Training

October 5: SAW Manager's Zoom Call

October 8: SAW Board Meeting in Moose Jaw

October 18: Piezometer Survey

November 2: SAW Manager's Zoom Call

November 4: WCWAB Meeting

November 9: Climate Action Fund Zoom Meeting

November 18: Churchbridge Presentation

November 25: YCWAB Meeting

December 7&8: SAW/WSG Restructuring Workshop #1

December 17-January 3: Office Close for Christmas Holidays

2022

January 11: SAW Manager's Zoom Call

January 25: AWSA Board Meeting at Windy Acres

February 3, 10, 17&24: Virtual ALUS National Conference

February 8: PAC Meeting and Workshop at Home Inn & Suites n Yorkton

February 10: Social Media Success Workshop

February 15&16: SAW/WSG Restructuring Workshop #2

February 23: Wetland Policy Conference Call

March 3&4: ARBI Virtual Conference

March 10: Lynne Roszell's First Day

March 11: Zoom Meeting with Darrel Corkel, WSA Consultant

March 22: AWSA Board Meeting

March 23: OFCAF Steering Committee Call

March 24: Virtual SCDA Convention

March 30: AWSA Special Board Meeting



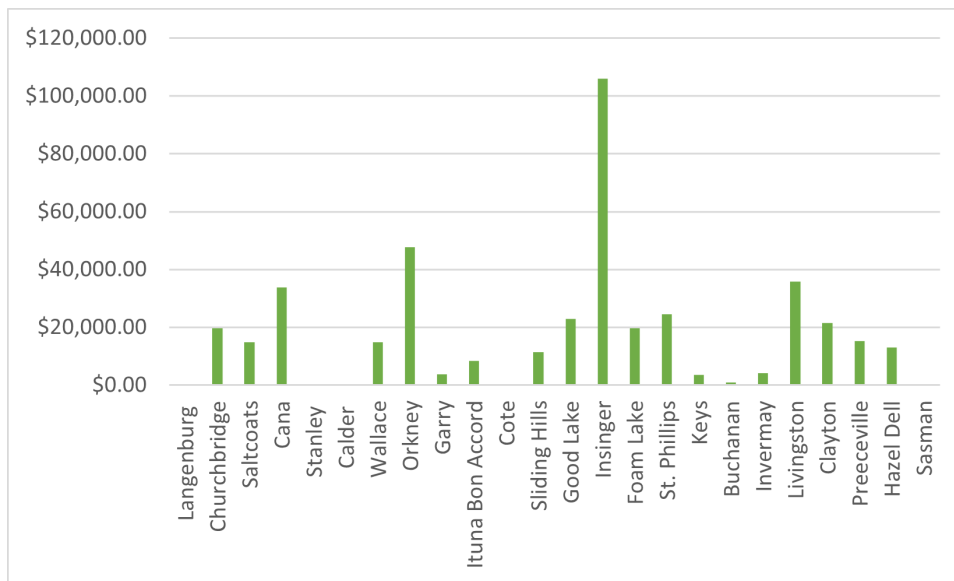
Projects / Results

The following chart illustrates the members we worked with and the amount of project funding the AWSA distributed throughout the Assiniboine River Watershed in 2021-22.

1. Water Security Agency (WSA) Core Funding
2. Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) - FSP & FRWIP (Apr 1/21 - Sept 30/21) & Well Decommissioning Campaign
3. SWAUMP Fund
4. ALUS SK Assiniboine Project (ASAP)
5. Ministry of Environment (MOE) Aquatic Invasive Species Monitoring Funding
6. Wallace Creek Watershed Association
7. Yorkton Creek Watershed Association

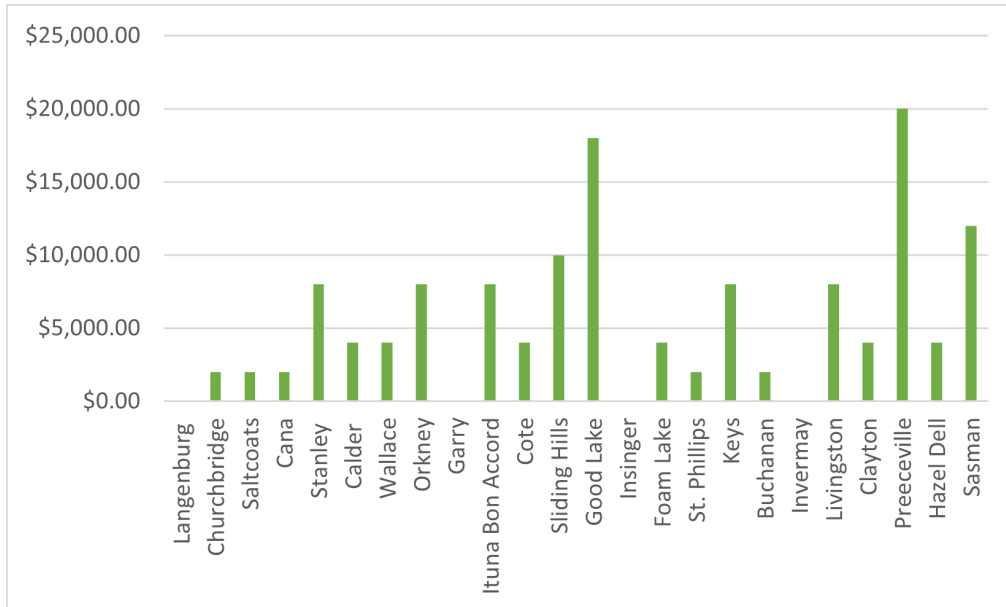
Members	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totals
Village of MacNutt	\$2,013.51				\$202.70			\$2,216.21
Village of Rhein	\$2,013.51				\$202.70	\$44,367.91		\$46,584.12
Village of Theodore	\$2,013.51				\$202.70			\$2,216.21
Town of Canora	\$2,013.51				\$202.70			\$2,216.21
Town of Churchbridge	\$2,013.51		\$5,000.00		\$202.70			\$7,216.21
Town of Kamsack	\$2,013.51				\$202.70			\$2,216.21
Town of Langenburg	\$2,013.51				\$202.70			\$2,216.21
Town of Preeceville	\$2,013.51				\$202.70			\$2,216.21
Town of Saltcoats	\$2,013.51				\$202.70			\$2,216.21
Town of Springside	\$2,013.51		\$5,000.00		\$202.70			\$7,216.21
Town of Sturgis	\$2,013.51				\$202.70			\$2,216.21
City of Melville	\$2,013.51				\$202.70		\$4,145.67	\$6,361.88
City of Yorkton	\$2,013.51				\$202.70		\$4,145.67	\$6,361.88
R.M. of Langenburg	\$2,013.51				\$202.70			\$2,216.21
R.M. of Churchbridge	\$2,013.51	\$21,747.02			\$202.70	\$44,367.91		\$68,331.14
R.M. of Saltcoats	\$2,013.51	\$16,924.50			\$202.70	\$44,367.91	\$4,145.67	\$67,654.29
R.M. of Cana	\$2,013.51	\$35,873.35			\$202.70		\$4,145.67	\$42,235.23
R.M. of Stanley	\$2,013.51	\$8,000.00			\$202.70			\$10,216.21
R.M. of Calder	\$2,013.51	\$4,000.00			\$202.70	\$44,367.91		\$50,584.12
R.M. of Wallace	\$2,013.51	\$18,812.66			\$202.70	\$44,367.91	\$4,145.67	\$69,542.45
R.M. of Orkney	\$2,013.51	\$55,743.35		\$5,942.50	\$202.70		\$4,145.67	\$68,047.73
R.M. of Garry	\$2,013.51	\$3,710.00			\$202.70			\$5,926.21
R.M. of Ituna Bon Accord	\$2,013.51	\$16,400.00			\$202.70			\$18,616.21
R.M. of Cote	\$2,013.51	\$4,000.00			\$202.70			\$6,216.21
R.M. of Sliding Hills	\$2,013.51	\$21,460.00			\$202.70	\$44,367.91		\$68,044.12
R.M. of Good Lake	\$2,013.51	\$40,810.00			\$202.70			\$43,026.21
R.M. of Insinger	\$2,013.51	\$106,037.29		\$7,312.50	\$202.70			\$115,566.00
R.M. of Foam Lake	\$2,013.51	\$23,760.00			\$202.70			\$25,976.21
R.M. of St.Philips	\$2,013.51	\$26,570.00			\$202.70			\$28,786.21
R.M. of Keys	\$2,013.51	\$11,465.00			\$202.70			\$13,681.21
R.M. of Buchanan	\$2,013.51	\$2,960.00		\$14,517.00	\$202.70			\$19,693.21
R.M. of Invermay	\$2,013.51	\$4,160.00			\$202.70			\$6,376.21
R.M. of Livingston	\$2,013.51	\$43,724.45			\$202.70			\$45,940.66
R.M. of Clayton	\$2,013.51	\$25,456.01			\$202.70			\$27,672.22
R.M. of Preeceville	\$2,013.51	\$35,260.00		\$14,888.50	\$202.70			\$52,364.71
R.M. of Hazel Dell	\$2,013.51	\$17,008.00		\$15,335.50	\$202.70			\$34,559.71
R.M. of Sasman	\$2,013.51	\$12,000.00		\$7,310.00	\$202.70			\$21,526.21
Totals	\$74,500	\$555,881.63	\$10,000	\$65,306	\$7,500	\$266,207	\$24,874	\$1,004,269

Canadian Agricultural Partnership April 1, 2021 - September 30, 2021



RM Name	RM No.	Project Cost Totals	Project Applications
Langenburg	181	\$0.00	0
Churchbridge	211	\$19,747.02	2
Saltcoats	213	\$14,924.50	3
Cana	214	\$33,873.35	3
Stanley	215	\$0.00	0
Calder	241	\$0.00	0
Wallace	243	\$14,812.66	1
Orkney	244	\$47,743.35	8
Garry	245	\$3,710.00	1
Ituna Bon Accord	246	\$8,400.00	1
Cote	271	\$0.00	0
Sliding Hills	273	\$11,460.00	3
Good Lake	274	\$22,810.00	7
Ininger	275	\$106,037.29	4
Foam Lake	276	\$19,760.00	4
St. Phillips	301	\$24,570.00	1
Keys	303	\$3,465.00	2
Buchanan	304	\$960.00	1
Invermay	305	\$4,160.00	2
Livingstone	331	\$35,724.45	4
Clayton	333	\$21,456.01	1
Preeceville	334	\$15,260.00	3
Hazel Dell	335	\$13,008.00	2
Sasman	336	\$0.00	0
Totals:		\$421,881.63	53

2021 Well Decommissioning Campaign



RM Name	RM No.	Project Cost Totals	Number of Wells
Langenburg	181	\$0.00	0
Churchbridge	211	\$2,000.00	1
Saltcoats	213	\$2,000.00	1
Cana	214	\$2,000.00	1
Stanley	215	\$8,000.00	4
Calder	241	\$4,000.00	2
Wallace	243	\$4,000.00	2
Orkney	244	\$8,000.00	4
Garry	245	\$0.00	0
Ituna Bon Accord	246	\$8,000.00	4
Cote	271	\$4,000.00	2
Sliding Hills	273	\$10,000.00	5
Good Lake	274	\$18,000.00	9
Insinger	275	\$0.00	0
Foam Lake	276	\$4,000.00	2
St. Phillips	301	\$2,000.00	1
Keys	303	\$8,000.00	4
Buchanan	304	\$2,000.00	2
Invermay	305	\$0.00	0
Livingston	331	\$8,000.00	4
Clayton	333	\$4,000.00	2
Preeceville	334	\$20,000.00	10
Hazel Dell	335	\$4,000.00	2
Sasman	336	\$12,000.00	6
Totals:		\$134,000.00	68

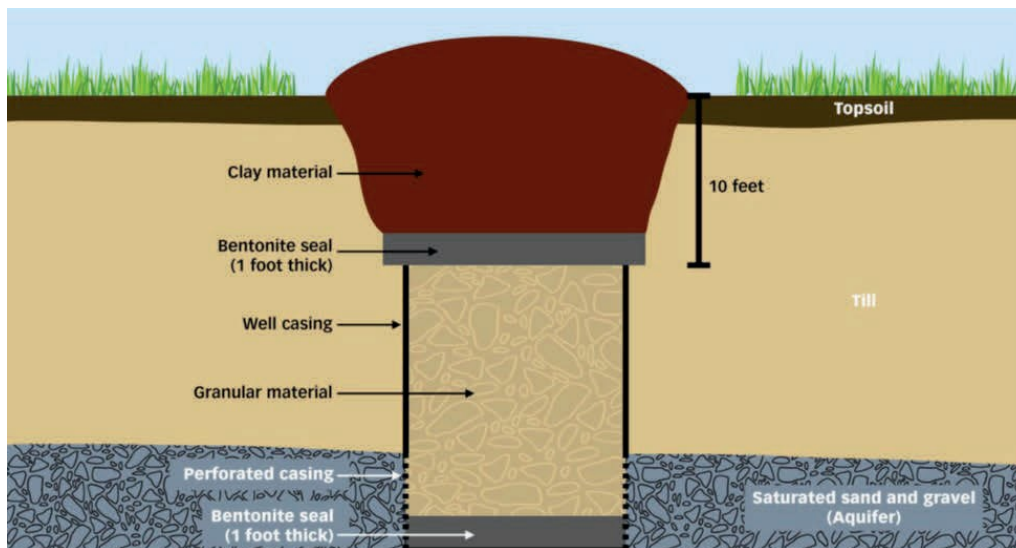
Well Decommissioning Campaign

Groundwater is a critical resource in the Assiniboine River Watershed because over 90% of our residents rely on groundwater for their drinking water. In fact, Yorkton is the only city in Saskatchewan that relies solely on well water for its source water- all other cities utilize both groundwater and/or surface water for source water. Protection of our aquifers is paramount, and we encourage producers to complete projects on their farms to maintain and protect the quality of our ground water.

Over the years, many wells and test holes around homes and farms throughout our watershed have been abandoned without being properly sealed and decommissioned. These abandoned wells act as a direct conduit that can allow surface water to directly enter an aquifer, contaminating the groundwater and potentially contaminating nearby wells. Decommissioning abandoned wells will prevent contaminants from entering the aquifer as well as reduce safety risks associated with open wells. Decommissioning abandoned wells is up to 90% funded through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership's Farm and Ranch Water Infrastructure Program.

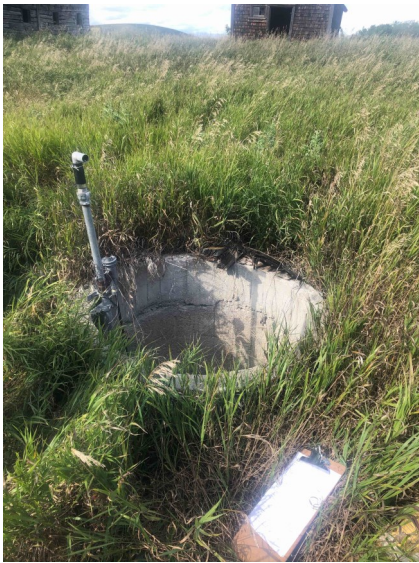
The AWSA has had overwhelming success with decommissioning wells while administering BMP programs from the Ministry of Agriculture. With the loss of that contract, the number of wells decommissioned in our watershed was at risk of drastically decreasing. AWSA staff successfully applied to the Water Security Agency's Project Incentive Funding to run a watershed-wide well decommissioning blitz. The AWSA worked with member RMs to advertise and apply on behalf of their ratepayers to streamline the process. The AWSA then applied to the Ministry of Agriculture's CAP program to provide the RM with a 90% reimbursement. The campaign was a huge success, nearly 70 wells were decommissioned throughout the Assiniboine River Watershed in the fall of 2021.

The AWSA would like to extend a huge thank you to the RMs for their partnership. Partnerships like this are invaluable to the AWSA, we look forward to continued collaboration in the future!



Thank You

The AWSA would like to acknowledge and thank the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture for their support and partnership over the past 12 years. Although the announcement of the delivery model changes to the CAP program was disappointing, we are dedicated and motivated to move forward with new and exciting opportunities. We look forward to any possible future partnerships or collaborations with the Ministry!



Wells decommissioned during the 2021 Well Decommissioning Campaign

Top Left: well decommissioned in the RM of Sliding Hills No. 273

Bottom Left: well decommissioned in the RM of Good Lake No. 274

Right: well decommissioned in the RM of Hazel Dell No. 335

Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS)

ALUS is a community-developed, farmer-delivered program that provides support to farmers and ranchers to enhance and maintain nature's benefits.

Our 2021 program funding structure:

Project Classification	Annual Payment	Description
Forage Conversion	\$35/acre + \$50/acre for establishment	Converting cropland to perennial forage cover using a blend of tame grass/legume species.
Wetland Conservation < 2 acres	\$30/acre	Conserving existing prairie pothole wetland habitat (basin size less than 2 acres in area).
Wetland Conservation > 2 acres	\$20/acre	Conserving existing prairie pothole wetland habitat (basin size greater than 2 acres in area).
Upland Conservation	\$20/acre	Conserving existing upland habitat composing of native trees, shrubs, and grasses.
Exclusion Fencing & Solar Watering Systems	Up to 2/3 cost-shared	Fencing off waterways to permanently exclude direct cattle access and providing an alternate source for livestock watering.

In 2021, we signed up **7 new participants** and **renewed 1 project** for over **330 acres** of restored and enhanced ecosystem services within our watershed!

Our PAC grew substantially in 2021, adding 5 new producers. We look forward to working with them, their knowledge and expertise will be invaluable as we continue to expand our ALUS program.

Throughout 2022, we will be focusing on our exciting new Regenerative Agriculture Program and further spreading the word about our ALUS program. If you have acres you'd like us to consider enrolling into the ALUS program, would like to get involved with our PAC, or know of an opportunity to reach more producers, please speak with someone from the AWSA office.



ALUS Photos



Photos of our first ever project renewal. This forage conversion project in the RM of Preeceville No. 334 has been in place for the past 5 years and has been renewed for another 5 years! This project converted 44 acres of annual cropland to perennial forage, conserved 19 acres of wetland and 17 acres of trees and shrubs to establish a total of 80 acres of ecosystem services!



Lake Winnipeg Basin Program - Exclusion Fencing

In 2020, the AWSA was successful in a proposal to the Lake Winnipeg Basin Program to receive grant funding to provide an incentive for ranchers to eliminate direct access of their cattle to creeks, streams and rivers through cost-shared funding for exclusion fencing and remote off-site watering systems.

Three ranchers were chosen to receive 50% cost-shared funding to implement their projects. The projects were along the two major rivers in the watershed, the Assiniboine River and the Whitesand River. Northwest from Yorkton along the Whitesand River, one rancher installed 1.1 miles of permanent 4-strand barbed wire fencing and dug a new dugout that will be used as the cattle's new water source. One rancher, located west of Endeavour, installed 1.2 miles of the same type of fence along the Assiniboine River. This rancher also chose a new dugout as the water source for his herd. Downstream on the Assiniboine River, north of Canora, a rancher installed 1.25 miles of electric fence. This rancher purchased a solar powered float pump system that will be used as the water source while grazing on the pasture.

The AWSA would like to acknowledge the financial support from Environment Canada's Lake Winnipeg Basin Program for making these projects possible and thanks each of the ranchers for doing their part to be good stewards of the watershed.

Solar watering system installed as an alternate watering source on an exclusion fencing project along the Whitesand River



Permanent 4-strand barbed wire fencing installed along the Assiniboine River

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Monitoring

The AWSA continued to spread awareness and education regarding zebra and quagga mussels throughout 2021. Through funding from the provincial Fish and Wildlife Development Fund and the Invasive Species Centre, monitoring was completed at eleven locations in seven waterbodies within the watershed (Batka Lake, Fishing Lake, Good Spirit Lake, Madge Lake, Jackfish Lake, Lake of the Prairies, and Theodore Reservoir). We collected water sampled with fine-mesh tow nets that were filtered, preserved and sent to a lab for any presence of veligers (baby mussels). We also utilized eDNA analysis for the first time. Water was pushed through a micromesh filter then sent to a lab where it was sampled for any presence of invasive mussel DNA.

Extensive efforts go towards preventing the introduction of zebra and quagga mussels due to the detrimental impacts they have. These finger-nail-sized mussels do substantial damage to freshwater lakes they infest. Originating from Europe, they have no natural predator here in North America, so they produce prolifically wherever they end up, putting our Saskatchewan lakes at risk. They are filter feeders, meaning most waterborne nutrients are used up, starving the lake. They attach themselves to underwater infrastructure, boat motors, docks, and clog intake pipes.



We are pleased to report that no zebra or quagga mussels were found in 2021, and to-date, Saskatchewan remains mussel-free!



Invasive
Species
Centre



Government
of
Saskatchewan

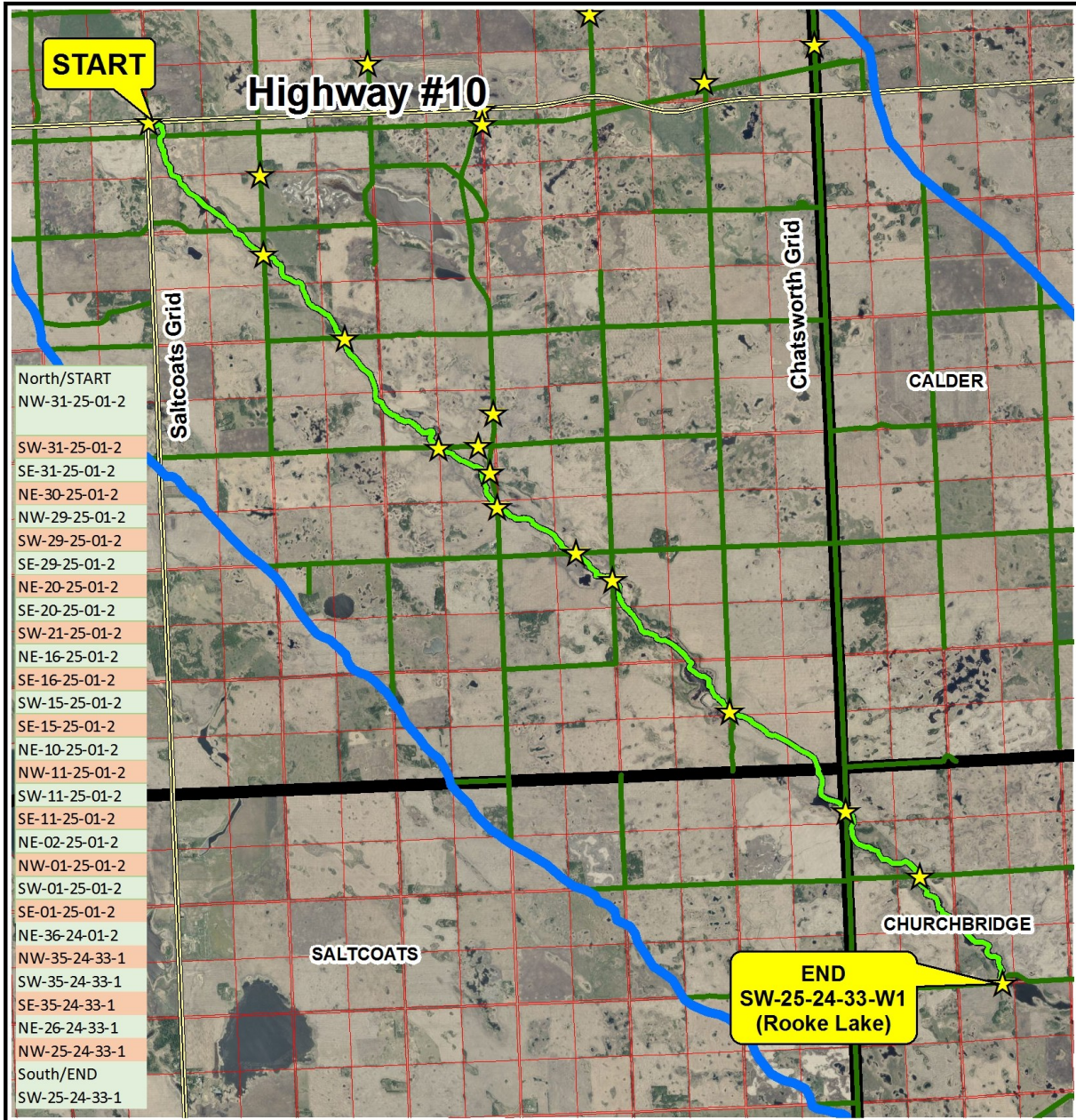
Fish and Wildlife
Development Fund

Wallace Creek Watershed Association Board

For the Wallace Creek Watershed Association Board (WCWAB), 2021 was a busy year. The exceptionally dry conditions that have plagued the Assiniboine Watershed persisted once again in 2021. The lack of moisture that presented area producers with a very trying year of farming actually presented the WCWAB an excellent opportunity to undertake two significant channel clearing projects on Wallace Creek. The first project involved channel clearing a 12.4 mile stretch of the creek starting at the highway 10 crossing, East of Yorkton, and extending South-east to the very headwaters of Wallace Creek at Rooke Lake, in the RM of Churchbridge. That channel clearing activity soon revealed that water was being held up near the highway 10 crossing, and downstream to the north. As such, we undertook a second channel clearing project involving 9 miles of channel between highway 10 and just south of Purves Lake. With the completion of these projects, Wallace Creek has now been completely channeled cleared by WCWAB, from the headwaters at Rooke Lake, to it's connection with the Whitesand River, over 90 miles!



Wallace Creek - South of Highway 10 Channel Clearing 2021



- North/START
- NW-31-25-01-2
- SW-31-25-01-2
- SE-31-25-01-2
- NE-30-25-01-2
- NW-29-25-01-2
- SW-29-25-01-2
- SE-29-25-01-2
- NE-20-25-01-2
- SE-20-25-01-2
- SW-21-25-01-2
- NE-16-25-01-2
- SE-16-25-01-2
- SW-15-25-01-2
- SE-15-25-01-2
- NE-10-25-01-2
- NW-11-25-01-2
- SW-11-25-01-2
- SE-11-25-01-2
- NE-02-25-01-2
- NW-01-25-01-2
- SW-01-25-01-2
- SE-01-25-01-2
- NE-36-24-01-2
- NW-35-24-33-1
- SW-35-24-33-1
- SE-35-24-33-1
- NE-26-24-33-1
- NW-25-24-33-1
- South/END
- SW-25-24-33-1

Legend

1:75,000

- Channel Clearing Area (12.4 miles)
- Culvert Location
- Roads
- Watershed Boundary
- Highway
- RM Boundary
- Quarter Sections Boundary

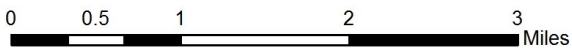
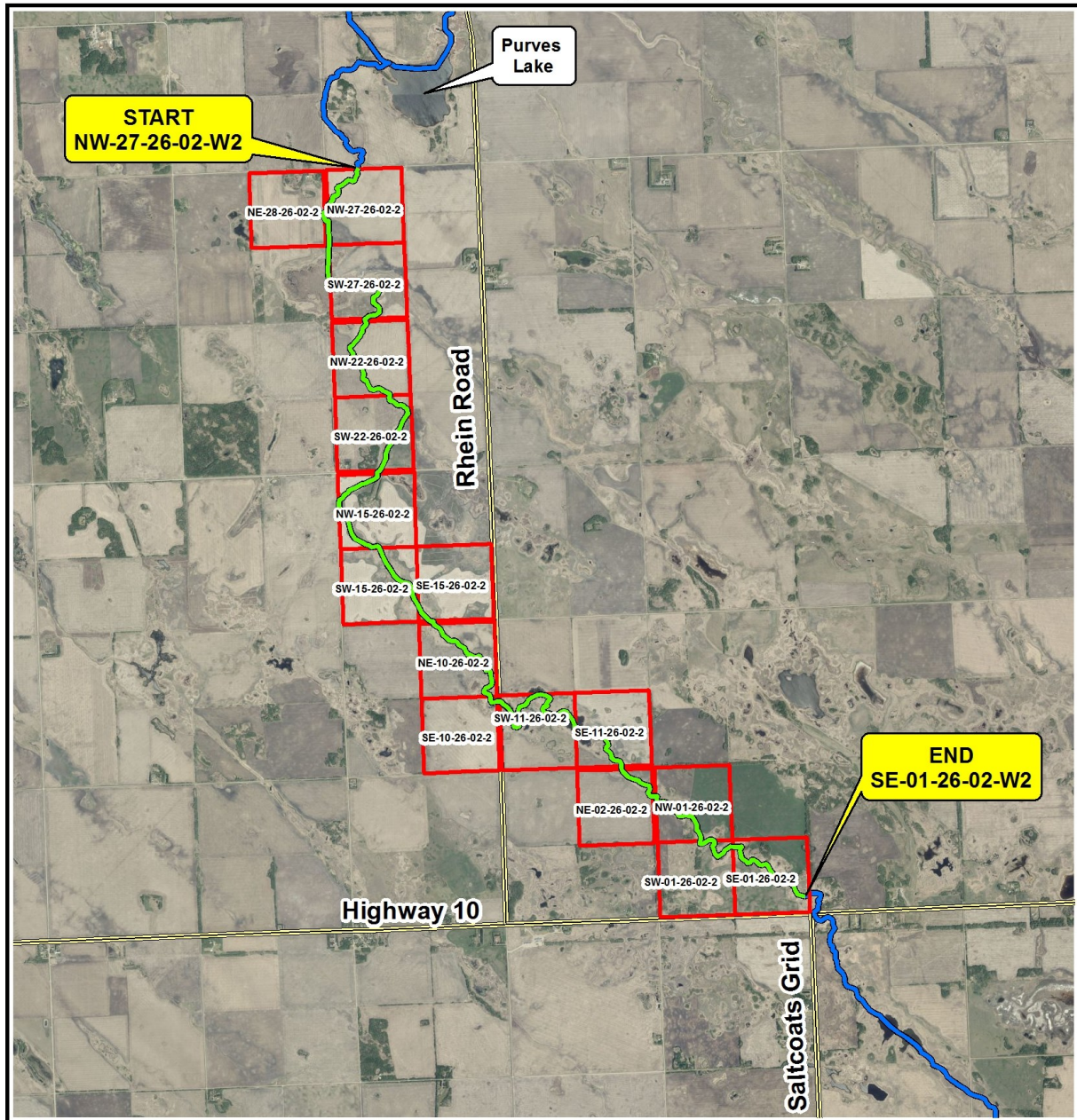


Created: July 22, 2021
 Projection: UTM Zone 13N
 Datum: NAD 1983
 Created by: Jesse Nielsen (WCWAB)

Wallace Creek Watershed Association Board



Wallace Creek - North of Highway 10 Channel Clearing 2021



Legend

- Channel Clearing Area (9 miles)
- Project Quarter Sections
- Wallace Creek
- Road



Created: Oct.22, 2021
 Projection: UTM Zone 13N
 Datum: NAD 1983
 Created by: Jesse Nielsen (AWSA)

Yorkton Creek Watershed Association Board

The Yorkton Creek Watershed Association Board (YCWAB) began working with the Water Security Agency (WSA) near the end of the 2021 fiscal to obtain an approval for a portion of the main channel, from Willowbrook to York Lake. The Yorkton Creek Watershed water management system was created in the late '70s / early '80s. As such, this approval will bring all YCWAB works (channels and structures) up to speed with current WSA regulations. The goal is to obtain WSA approval on the entire YCWAB system as a first step in a more holistic approach to water management in that sub-watershed of the Assiniboine River Watershed.

The YCWAB also undertook a repair of the low-level crossing structure at the outlet of Upper Rousay lake in July of 2021. The crossing was eroded over the decades and required new rock in order to provide a more suitable crossing for the local landowner.

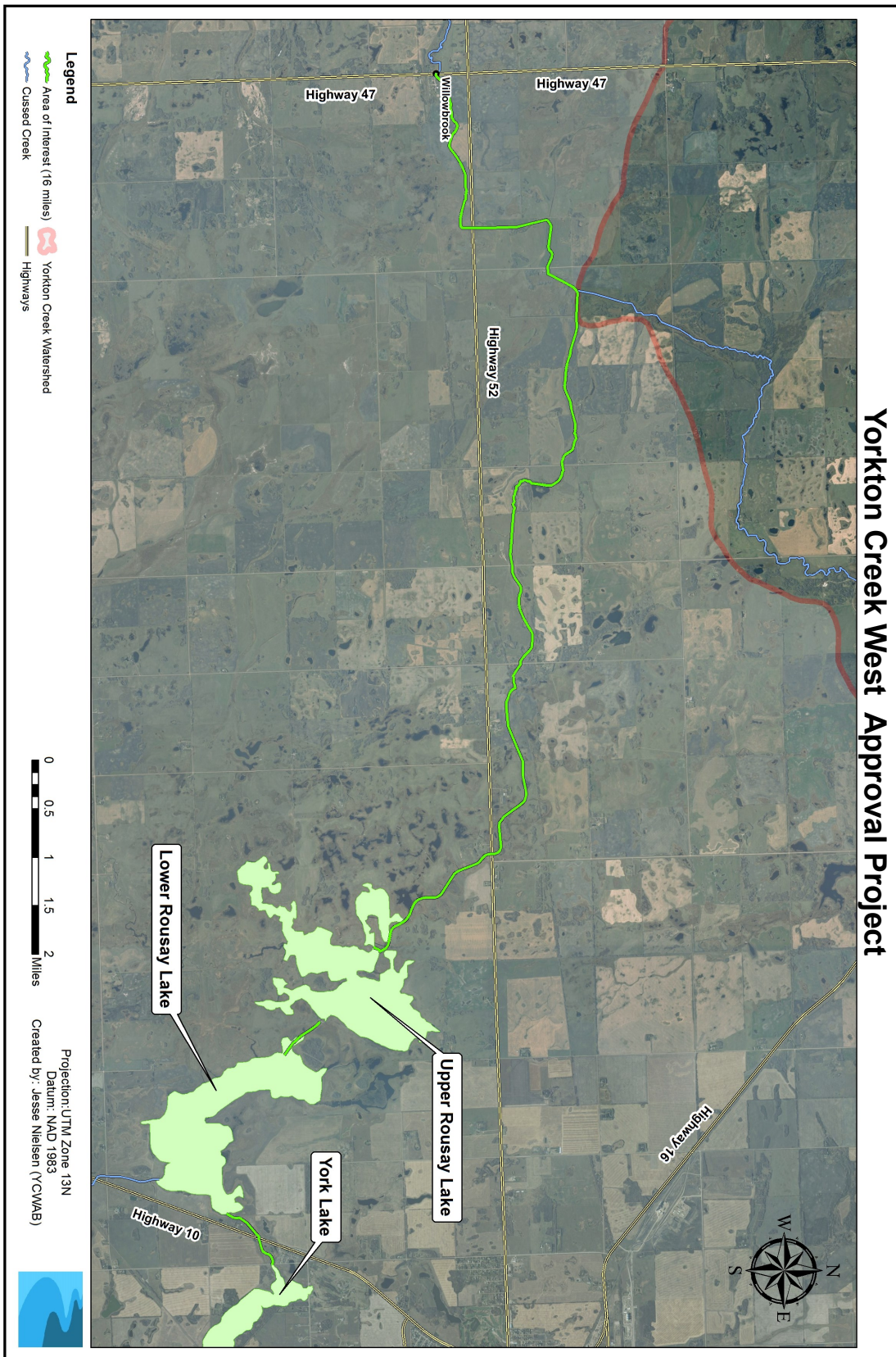
BEFORE (2019)



AFTER (2021)



Yorkton Creek West Approval Project



2021 Poster Contest

The Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association once again participated in the Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds (SAW) provincial poster contest in 2021. The theme was “Wetlands and Wildlife” and there were two competition divisions. Students in grades 3 & 4 and grades 5 & 6 had a chance at cash prizes. The first-place winner’s poster from each of the two age divisions went up against the top posters from the other provincial watershed groups for a chance to win the provincial grade prize of \$500.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, class presentations were done over Zoom. AWSA staff were able to still provide the students’ favourite aspect of the presentations - edible aquifers! Staff made and dropped off the edible aquifers at the schools so students could enjoy them in class after the virtual presentation. The AWSA completed seven virtual presentations and received over 100 posters.

Grade 3/4 Division First Place
Yianni - St. Michael's in Yorkton



Grade 5/6 Division
Reeshy - St. Michael's in Yorkton



2021 Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds Stewardship Award

Each year at the annual Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds (SAW) conference, the Stewardship Award is given to an individual or group that go above and beyond in leadership and commitment to the protection and enhancement of a Saskatchewan watershed. The AWSA was honoured to have their nominee, the RM of Orkney No. 244, be the recipient of the 2021 SAW Stewardship Award.

The RM of Orkney understand and respects the importance of source water protection. The RM of has worked closely with the AWSA for the past three years running a well decommissioning campaign aimed at sealing old, abandoned wells for its ratepayers. The RM of Orkney made a motion at council to apply to the Ministry of Agriculture's CAP program on behalf of the landowner. This program reimburses landowners 90% of the cost of the well decommissioning. To be eligible for this program, landowners must make a minimum of \$50,000 in gross farm income. The RM applying on behalf of the landowner opens the program to those who otherwise would not be eligible, such as acreage owners, and in the case of Orkney, many urban residents of subdivisions along the outskirts of Yorkton that are actually within the RM's jurisdiction. The RM or Orkney also decided to cover the 10% cost of the well decommissioning not rebated by the CAP program, making the process completely free for its residents. This approach has drastically increased the uptake of the well decommissioning BMP. Over 75 abandoned wells have been decommissioned within the RM or Orkney in the past few years due to this initiative!

Randy Trost, RM of Orkney No.244
Reeve (left)

Jesse Nielsen, AWSA Manager
(center)

Trevor Protz, RM of Orkney No. 244
Deputy Reeve (right)



Saskatchewan Tree for Life Program

In the spring of 2021, the Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds (SAW) and its members kicked off the Saskatchewan Tree for Life Program. The AWSA distributed 7,250 free seedlings across the Assiniboine River Watershed. The species of seedlings distributed included prairie sky poplar, white spruce and blue spruce. The AWSA donated 400 spruce seedlings to the Yorkton Regional High School. Jesse assisted the students with planting.



As a tree grows, it pulls CO₂ in through its leaves and converts it to carbohydrates - which they use to grow. The carbon stays with the tree, and does so for the duration of its life. A young tree can absorb CO₂ at a rate of 13 pounds per year. A tree, at ten years old, is estimate to absorb 48 pounds of CO₂ per year!



Tree Planting Equipment Rental



The Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association is pleased to announce that it will now be renting tree planting equipment to all residents within its Rural and Urban member municipalities. We have one tree planter and three plastic mulch applicators available for rental on a first-come-first-served basis.



- Rental Costs**
- ⇒ Equipment rental
 - ⇒ \$50/day or \$200/week (5 days)
 - ⇒ Plastic Mulch
 - ⇒ \$200/roll (4'x1500')
 - ⇒ 3 mm thickness



- Equipment Information**
- ⇒ Tree Planter
 - ⇒ “Non-hydraulic” model (coultter disc requires well-tilled soil to create furrow)
 - ⇒ Seats 2 people for planting
 - ⇒ Ball hitch
 - ⇒ Can be pulled behind tractor or 4-wheel drive truck
 - ⇒ Mulch Applicator
 - ⇒ Pull-type
 - ⇒ Requires 50hp+ tractor with hydraulic hook-up capability
 - ⇒ Clevis-pin hitch



For more information
contact the
Assiniboine Watershed
Stewardship Association
306-783-1696





Culvert Infrastructure Mapping Available



The Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association is pleased to offer its services to our Rural and Urban member municipalities interested in having their culvert infrastructure GPS mapped and inventoried. AWSA staff will measure and record dimensions, GPS locations, culvert heights and any other relevant infrastructure information; and compile it in both electronic spreadsheet and GIS formats.

Cost to Membership Municipalities

\$500/day flat rate (field and/or in-office map creation)

- ⇒ Member - Urban and Rural Municipalities will receive 1 FREE day of mapping.
- ⇒ New for 2021 - The AWSA has recently upgraded its survey grade GPS/RTK equipment to better serve its membership.



For more information contact Jesse at the Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association
306-783-1696



2022 EDITION

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