



STEWARDSHIP

ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As we reflect on the 2025 fiscal year, running from April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025, we extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who contributed to the Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association's work. Your collective efforts help us create a lasting, positive impact within the watershed.

We are profoundly grateful for the essential financial and in-kind support that empowers our projects and activities. A special thank you goes to ALUS Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada for their significant contributions.

Our work is deeply intertwined with the communities we serve. We gratefully acknowledge the vital support of our 38 Grass Roots members, which includes 25 Rural Municipalities and 13 villages, towns, and cities. Their unwavering commitment is the foundation of our success. We also thank the many community groups, educational institutions, landowners, and individuals who have collaborated on projects, provided local insights, and championed watershed protection.

We extend profound appreciation to our partner watershed boards. The Wallace Creek Watershed Association Board and the Yorkton Creek Watershed Association Board have provided crucial financial support to the AWSA over the past year. Furthermore, the Smith Creek Watershed Association Board is to be commended for its revitalization and renewed affiliation with the AWSA.

We also extend sincere gratitude to the members of our Whitesand, Assiniboine, and Yorkton Aquifers Advisory Committees for their expert guidance, strategic counsel, and advocacy for their networks.

Internally, we thank the AWSA Board of Directors and Staff for their time, effort, and dedication. We also recognize the critical role of our Watershed Manager, Jesse Neilsen, who oversees the day-to-day business of the AWSA. His dedication ensures our projects and programs run smoothly and effectively.

The collective impact of all your contributions ensures the continued protection and enhancement of the Assiniboine River Watershed's source waters for current and future generations.

Thank you for being an integral part of the Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association family.

THE AWSA BOARD CHAIR'S MESSAGE

2024 Reflections – Stewarding Water, Strengthening Community



As Chair of the Board for the Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association (AWSA), I am honoured to share reflections on a year that tested our resilience and reaffirmed the essential role of local stewardship in protecting our most precious resource - water.

In 2024, our region continued to face mounting environmental pressures, from shifting precipitation patterns to increasing demands on land and water resources, but it was also a year marked by resilience, innovation, progress, but also some loss. The AWSA sadly lost one of our largest supporters and Inaugural Board Chairman, Mr. Don Olson. Don's passion for the AWSA and commitment to the Association was second to none, and the AWSA is forever grateful for all the work Don provided for the AWSA.

Despite these challenges, 2024 was a year of action, innovation, and hope. We expanded our Well Decommissioning Program, along with our ALUS Program where we are equipping farmers / landowners with the tools and knowledge to improve water retention and soil health while boosting long-term productivity. Our

annual poster contest / classroom visits reached more students than ever before, helping the next generation understand the vital connection between healthy landscapes, aquifers and clean water.

We also made significant strides in source water protection and water management, working closely with our member Urban and Rural Municipalities, and provincial partners. Our continued work with the Yorkton Creek, Wallace Creek and now Smith Creek Watershed Association Boards helped develop practical, community-led strategies that will safeguard drinking water and watershed health for years to come.

Throughout all of this, our commitment to collaboration remained central. The success of AWSA depends on strong relationships, with producers, researchers, municipalities, and citizens who care deeply about where their water comes from and where it goes. I'm proud of the trust we continue to build across the watershed. As we look ahead to 2025, our focus will be on continued collaboration while scaling impact through innovation, enhancing our monitoring efforts, and expanding natural infrastructure projects that provide both ecological and economic benefits.

On behalf of the AWSA Board, thank you to our staff, partners, funders, and community members. Your passion and persistence are what make our progress possible. Together, we are not only protecting water, we are securing the future of our watershed.

Sincerely,

Chair of the Board

Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association

THE AWSA MANAGER'S MESSAGE

A Tribute to Don Olson: A Visionary for our Watershed



This past year we lost an iconic figure to the AWSA; someone who without them, the watershed association we've all been a part of all these years, may have never existed. Don Olson passed away March 22nd, 2025, at 77 years of age.

To me, Don was the type of individual that any organization, association, or community would be lucky to have. This is evidenced by his extensive municipal and community organizational involvement.

Don was a former town of Sturgis councilor from 1991 to 1997 and mayor of Sturgis from 1997 to 2024; over 30 years of municipal service! During that time, he

was also involved in various other boards and organizations but none I don't think gave Don the sense of pride and satisfaction as that of being on the board of the AWSA.

Just like his municipal involvement, Don's journey with the AWSA began over 30 years ago in the fall of 1996 when the governments of SK, MB, and Canada began work on the *Upper Assiniboine River Basin Study*, a report stemming from the catastrophic flooding of the Assiniboine River in 1995. Don volunteered to sit on the committee for SK, a decision that was likely fueled by his love of nature and the environment, something he had opportunity to express in his career as a Habitat Specialist with Ducks Unlimited Canada years prior.

When the AWSA opened office in May 2007 at the City of Yorkton, and two years later opened our own, current, stand-alone office in May 2009 (when I joined the team), I could only imagine how proud Don must have been to see all his work finally coming to fruition with the beginning of the province's 3rd Saskatchewan Watershed Association-formed watershed stewardship group, the AWSA. Don served as the AWSA's inaugural chairman of the board; a position he held until his resignation at the 2019 AGM (which coincided with him stepping away as mayor of Sturgis). He later re-joined the board as an urban representative for the Assiniboine River Advisory Area at the 2021 AGM, shortly after he decided to have another go as the mayor of Sturgis. He held those titles until 2024.

Don's extensive community and organizational involvement likely stemmed from his "get'er done" attitude and friendly, welcoming personality. I first met Don at my job interview for the AWSA's coordinator position back in the spring of 2009. I recall his casual demeanor throughout the interview where he, AWSA vice chair, Ben Pengilly, and former AWSA manager and now AWSA chairman, Aron Hershmiller, tried to decipher whether I was the right fit to help propel the AWSA to the forefront of watershed stewardship in Saskatchewan. I instantly sensed the pride Don had as the AWSA's chairman. He openly stated that the AWSA is the number one watershed stewardship group in the province, and it was my job to make sure we retained that title for years to come.

Just as Don's enthusiasm towards the AWSA could be felt in that interview, it was my passion to be part of the AWSA's newly budding winning team that Don later told me came across stronger than any other interview candidate and was a major reason they chose me for the job.

16 years later I want to say, "Thank You Don... for giving me the opportunity to have a career that has been everything I could have ever wanted- challenging, meaningful, fulfilling, and fun. All these blessings may not ever have happened if, when back in the day Aron and Ben asked you if you thought the AWSA should hire me, and you gave your iconic (to me a least) reply of affirmation, "Well sure!".

I've always said that the best part of my job at the AWSA is the people I've met and had the opportunity to work alongside. Don would definitely be amongst the top of that list in terms of having a lasting impact on my life. Without him none of this might ever have got off the ground.

For that and for all the fond memories I have of you over the years I will forever be grateful. Don, I hope you're up there in Heaven, pouring yourself a Lemon Hart and coke, and watching over God's watershed in the sky.

Sincerely,



Manager
Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association

A LASTING TRIBUTE TO DON OLSON

The AWSA has dedicated a memorial plaque in honour of Don Olson's years of extraordinary, dedicated service. He was an asset and inspiration to the AWSA, and pioneered many causes for the Assiniboine Watershed. Among many positions, he was a Habitat Specialist for Ducks Unlimited Canada and was involved in many local groups and provincial boards.

Memorial donations may be made to a local charity or faith community in Sturgis or Preeceville; specifically, the Sturgis Kinsmen Mini Miracle or the Preeceville Ability Bus.



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 17th edition of the Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association's (AWSA) Annual Report. This report details the activities undertaken by the AWSA during the **2025 fiscal year** (April 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025). The projects and initiatives highlighted within these pages are directly guided by our mission and vision statements, as established by our Board of Directors.

Furthermore, our work aligns with the core objectives, recommendations, and key actions outlined in both the **Assiniboine River Watershed Source Water Protection Plan** and the **Yorkton Area Aquifers Source Water Protection Plan**.

Our **VISION**

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.

Our **MISSION**

To have healthy source waters throughout the Assiniboine River Watershed.

Our **GOAL**

To ensure every individual in the Assiniboine River Watershed has access to a safe and reliable drinking water supply, both now and in the future.

OUR STAFF



Watershed Manager

Jesse Nielsen serves as the chief operational leader of the Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association, overseeing the day-to-day business and strategic implementation of the organization's mission and vision. He holds a critical role in driving the AWSA's initiatives to protect and enhance source waters throughout the Assiniboine River Watershed. Jesse has diligently served the AWSA since 2009.



Watershed Administrator

Janet Kristjansen's primary focus is on managing the AWSA's internal processes, ensuring that all administrative processes are well-maintained and support the broader goals of the AWSA. She has provided support since 2015.



Watershed Coordinator

Our Coordinator, Cassandra Kowalchuk, joined the AWSA in November of 2024. Her role includes hands-on implementation and coordination of specific projects and programs, public outreach and educational events, often working directly with communities and landowners. This role is pivotal in translating strategic plans into tangible actions on the ground.

OUR LOCATION

The Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association 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). We are fortunate to have occupied this location since 2009.



THE AWSA 2024 AGM

Last year's Annual General Meeting was held in Springside at the Town Hall.

2024 ADVISORY COMMITTEE ELECTION RESULTS

Yorkton Area Aquifers Advisory Committee

	Term Length	Term Expiry
Aron Hershmillier	2 Year	June 2025
Randy Trost	2 Year	June 2025
Garry Liebrecht <i>returning</i>	2 Year	June 2026
Grant McCallum <i>returning</i>	2 Year	June 2026

Whitesand River Advisory Committee

Bob Steffenson	2 Year	June 2025
Parker Ellert <i>new</i>	1 Year	June 2025
Dwayne Kitzan <i>returning</i>	2 Year	June 2026
Stephen Spearman <i>returning</i>	2 Year	June 2026

Assiniboine River Advisory Committee

Roy Derworiz	2 Year	June 2025
Russ Thies	2 Year	June 2025
Jami Perron <i>new</i>	2 Year	June 2026
Lorrie Popp <i>new</i>	2 Year	June 2026



RECOGNITION OF SERVICE

15 Year Award to Jesse Nielsen for his long-standing commitment to the AWSA

Jesse started with the AWSA back in 2009 while he was still working on his MSc degree at the University of Saskatchewan. One of his supervisors suggested to Jesse to contact Aron Hershmiller to participate in a survey component of his thesis. Shortly after, Jesse discovered that Aron was looking to hire a new watershed coordinator. Thinking that having a job in his hometown wouldn't be such a bad thing, Jesse applied, and now 16 years later, is still going strong with his first and only career!



5 Year Award to Russ Thies for his exceptional contributions to the AWSA board

Russ became the Assiniboine Advisory Committee representative for the Town of Churchbridge when he replaced long-time board member, Don Fogg. He has been a great voice of the AWSA and always a positive contributor during board meeting discussions.



THE AWSA AT A GLANCE

The **Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association (AWSA)** is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to safeguarding the source waters within the Assiniboine River Watershed. Our core vision is to foster collaboration among citizens and communities to protect the Assiniboine River, its tributaries, and aquifers.

The AWSA achieves its vision by partnering with various public and private stakeholders on water management projects. A substantial portion of its work is guided by the objectives, recommendations, and key actions delineated in the **Assiniboine River Watershed Source Water Protection Plan** and the **Yorkton Area Aquifers Source Water Protection Plan**. We also pursue additional initiatives decided upon by our Board of Directors.

The governance and operational oversight of the Association are vested in its 12-member Board of Directors. Directors serve two-year, staggered terms and are elected at meetings of their respective Advisory Committees which include the **Assiniboine River Advisory Committee**, the **Whitesand River Advisory Committee**, and the **Yorkton Area Aquifers Advisory Committee**. Each Advisory Committee provides two rural and two urban municipal representatives. Directors can be re-elected for an unlimited number of consecutive terms. The AWSA Board meets four times annually and appoints a Chair, Vice Chair, and other committee positions at their Annual General Meeting.

Day-to-day operations of the AWSA are overseen by the Watershed Manager, who reports to the Board and carries out duties as specified by them. Jesse Nielsen has held this position since 2009.

The AWSA generates operating revenue through paid membership. We also receive revenue for managing and administering the **Yorkton Creek Watershed Association Board**, the **Wallace Creek Watershed Association Board**, and the **Smith Creek Watershed Association Board**, and for being a delivery community for the ALUS program. Additionally, we secure funding for various one-off projects and programs, which depends on grant availability and successful funding applications.

We emphasize collaboration with government entities, other stewardship groups, and private agencies. We focus on providing local solutions for local water issues and serve as a resource for individuals needing assistance with water-related concerns. Our efforts specifically address the most significant risks to water supplies within the Assiniboine River Watershed, as outlined in our source water protection plans.



OUR STORY – HOW THE AWSA STARTED

The Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association (AWSA) traces its origins back to a comprehensive study of the Upper Assiniboine River Basin. This study was prompted by the devastating 1995 flood resulting in record peak flow of the Assiniboine River and causing widespread concerns about water resources. Issues included drainage, flood control, the loss of vital wetland habitats, and uncertainty regarding sustainable water supplies for various uses including municipal, industrial, agricultural, and recreational. There was also a notable lack of understanding about the watershed's hydrologic and ecological processes, coupled with growing worries about declining water quality and inadequate aquifer management.

In October 1996, the governments of Saskatchewan (Saskatchewan Watershed Authority), Manitoba (Manitoba Conservation Association), and Canada (Environment Canada) officially agreed to conduct the Upper Assiniboine River Basin Study. This significant undertaking provided crucial information on the basin's water resources and offered recommendations for future water management strategies.

Building on the study's findings, the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority began implementing its key recommendations in October 2002. By 2004, two dedicated watershed advisory committees were formed within the Assiniboine River Watershed to spearhead water management and aquifer planning: the Assiniboine River Advisory Committee and the Yorkton Area Aquifers Advisory Committee. These committees were comprised of local representatives from rural and urban municipalities, First Nations, and various stewardship, agricultural, and interest groups. Their work drew not only from the Upper Assiniboine River Basin Study but also from extensive groundwater studies in the Yorkton Aquifer Area, notably the Groundwater Resources in the Yorkton Aquifer Management Plan Area Final Report (Maathuis and Simpson, 2006).

As a direct result of these efforts, the Assiniboine River Watershed Source Water Protection Plan and the Yorkton Area Aquifers Source Water Protection Plan were developed in August 2006.

To effectively carry out the critical actions outlined in these newly developed source water protection plans, the Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc. was officially established as a non-profit organization on January 23, 2007.

What makes the AWSA unique among other watershed groups in Saskatchewan is its commitment to implementing two distinct source water protection plans, specifically acknowledging the vital role of groundwater within the Assiniboine River Watershed.

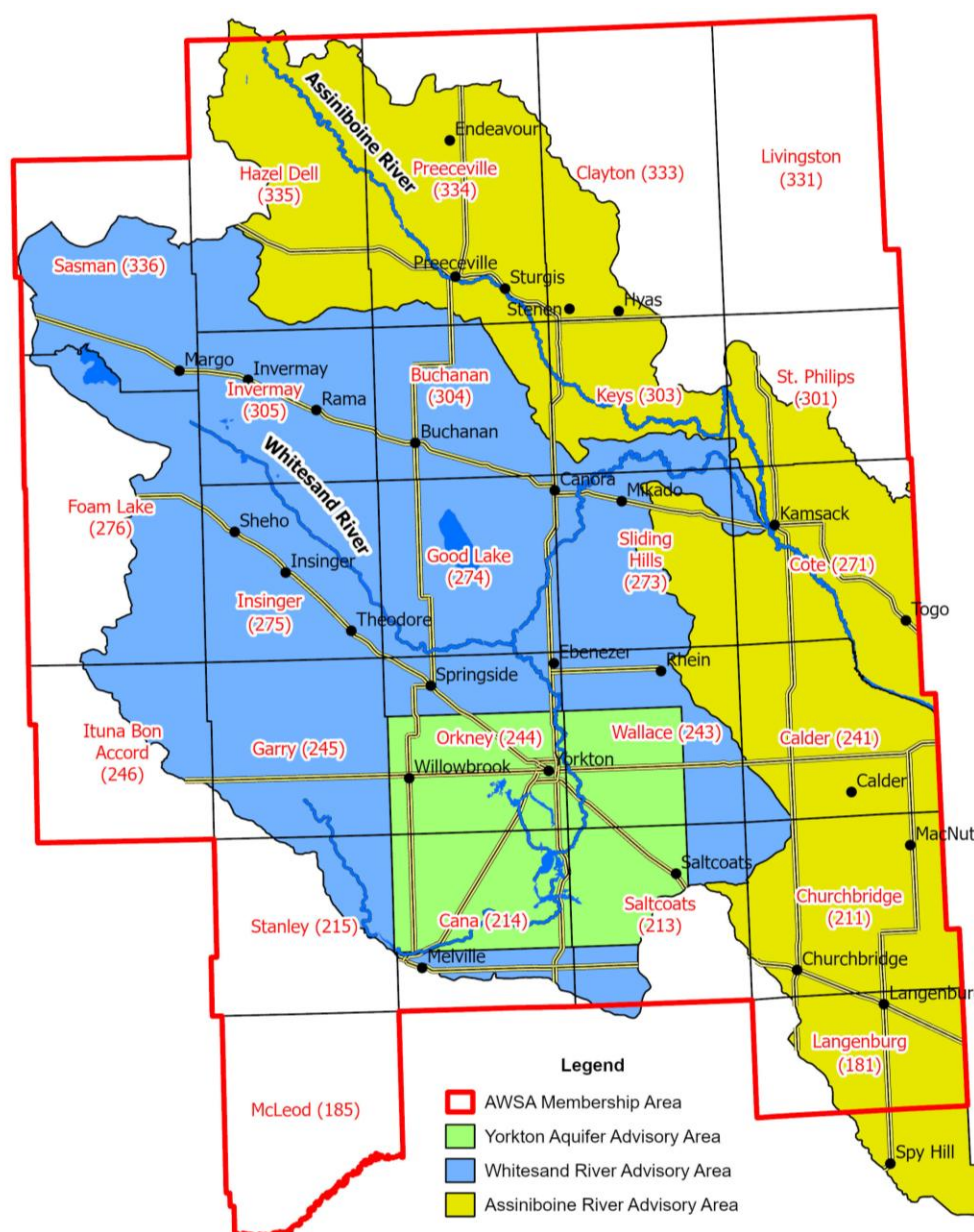


August 12th, 2009: Office Grand Opening

MEMBERSHIP REPRESENTATION

AWSA Member Municipalities: Our Grass Roots Members

City of Melville	RM of Buchanan	No 304	RM of Keys	No 303
City of Yorkton	RM of Calder	No 241	RM of Langenburg	No 181
Town of Canora	RM of Cana	No 214	RM of Livingston	No 331
Town of Churchbridge	RM of Churchbridge	No 211	RM of McLeod	No 185
Town of Kamsack	RM of Clayton	No 333	RM of Orkney	No 244
Town of Langenburg	RM of Cote	No 271	RM of Preeceville	No 334
Town of Saltcoats	RM of Foam Lake	No 276	RM of Saltcoats	No 213
Town of Springside	RM of Garry	No 245	RM of Sasman	No 336
Town of Sturgis	RM of Good Lake	No 274	RM of Sliding Hill	No 273
Town of Preeceville	RM of Hazel Dell	No 335	RM of St. Philip	No 301
Village of MacNutt	RM of Insinger	No 275	RM of Stanley	No 215
Village of Rhein	RM of Invermay	No 305	RM of Wallace	No 243
Village of Theodore	RM of Ituna Bon Accord	No 246		



AWSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AWSA directors are advisory reps from each of the three advisory areas that get **elected** by their peers at the AGM. Directors hold quarterly meetings and are responsible for the overall oversight of the AWSA's operations.

AWSA BOARD MEMBERS

Parker	Ellert	City of Melville	<i>Chairman</i>
Aron	Hershmillier	City of Yorkton	
Roy	Derowiz	RM of Calder	
Duane	Hicks	RM of Clayton	
Robert	Steffenson	RM of Good Lake	
Dwayne	Kitzan	RM of Insinger	
Randy	Trost	RM of Orkney	
Garry	Liebrecht	RM of Wallace	
Russ	Thies	Town of Churchbridge	<i>Vice Chairman</i>
Lorrie	Popp	Town of Langenburg	
Grant	McCallum	Town of Saltcoats	
Stephen	Spearman	Town of Springside	
VACANT		Town of Sturgis	

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Advisory representatives are annually **appointed** to their respective advisory committee for each of the 38 municipal members of the AWSA. This individual is the local voice and liaison for their municipality with the AWSA. Advisory reps are required to attend the AGM on behalf of their municipality.

ASSINIBOINE RIVER MEMBERS

Roy	Derworiz	RM of Calder
Duane	Hicks	RM of Clayton
Cal	Statchuk	RM of Keys
Jami	Perron	RM of Langenburg
Ken	Frampton	RM of Livingston
John	Petryshyn	RM of Preeceville
Ron	Sernowski	RM of St Philips
Russ	Theis	Town of Churchbridge
Lorrie	Popp	Town of Langenburg
Dean	Harris	Town of Sturgis

WHITESAND RIVER MEMBERS

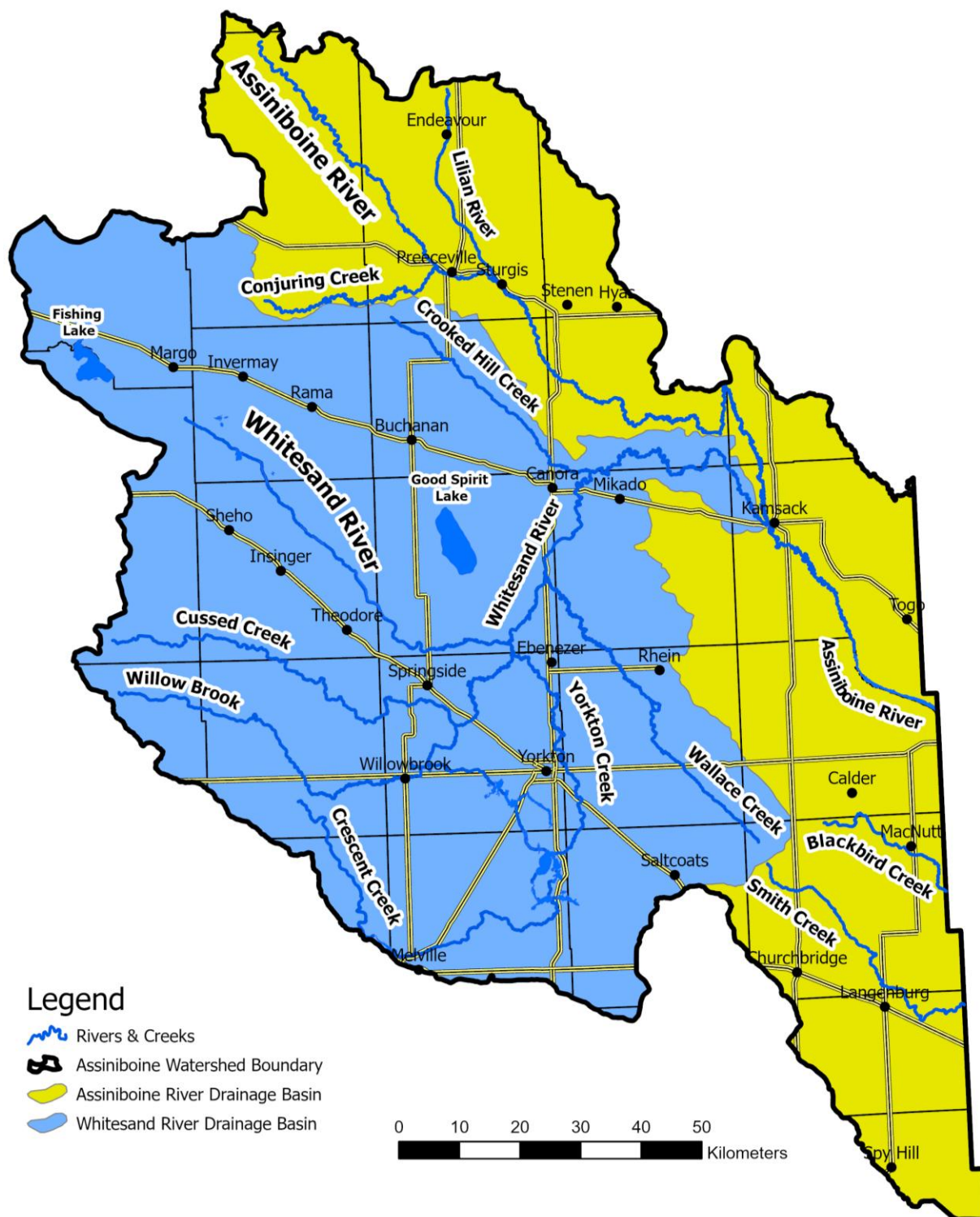
Parker	Ellert	City of Melville
Don	Skoretz	RM of Buchanan
Kimberlee	Markusson	RM of Foam Lake
John	Zuchkan	RM of Garry
Robert	Steffenson	RM of Good Lake
Dwayne	Kitzan	RM of Insinger
Leonard	Kuschak	RM of Ituna Bon Accord
Cliff	Allen	RM of McLeod
LeeAnn	Weinbender	RM of Sliding Hills
Brent	Ulmer	RM of Stanley
Brad	Gabora	Town of Canora
Stephen	Spearman	Town of Springside
Garry	Jopko	Village of Rhein
Roger	Hardie	Village of Theodore

YORKTON AREA AQUIFERS MEMBERS

Aron	Hershmillier	City of Yorkton
Perry	Yelle	RM of Cana
Randy	Trost	RM of Orkney
Joe	Skitcko	RM of Saltcoats
Garry	Liebrecht	RM of Wallace
Grant	McCallum	Town of Saltcoats

THE ASSINIBOINE RIVER WATERSHED

The Assiniboine River Watershed covers an area of 17,300 square kilometers in east-central SK. There are many smaller sub-watersheds or subbasins, each draining into their own respective creek, stream, or river, before eventually draining into the Assiniboine River. The Yorkton and Wallace Creek Watersheds are two such examples.



THE YORKTON AQUIFERS AREA

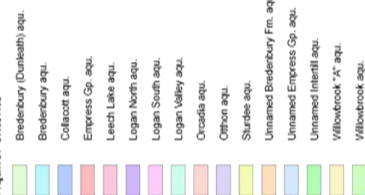


Saskatchewan Research Council
Environment and Minerals Branch

**Groundwater Resources in the Yorkton
Aquifer Management Plan Area,
Final Report**

Location and extent of major aquifers in the Yorkton study area

Aquifer extents



Road

Highway

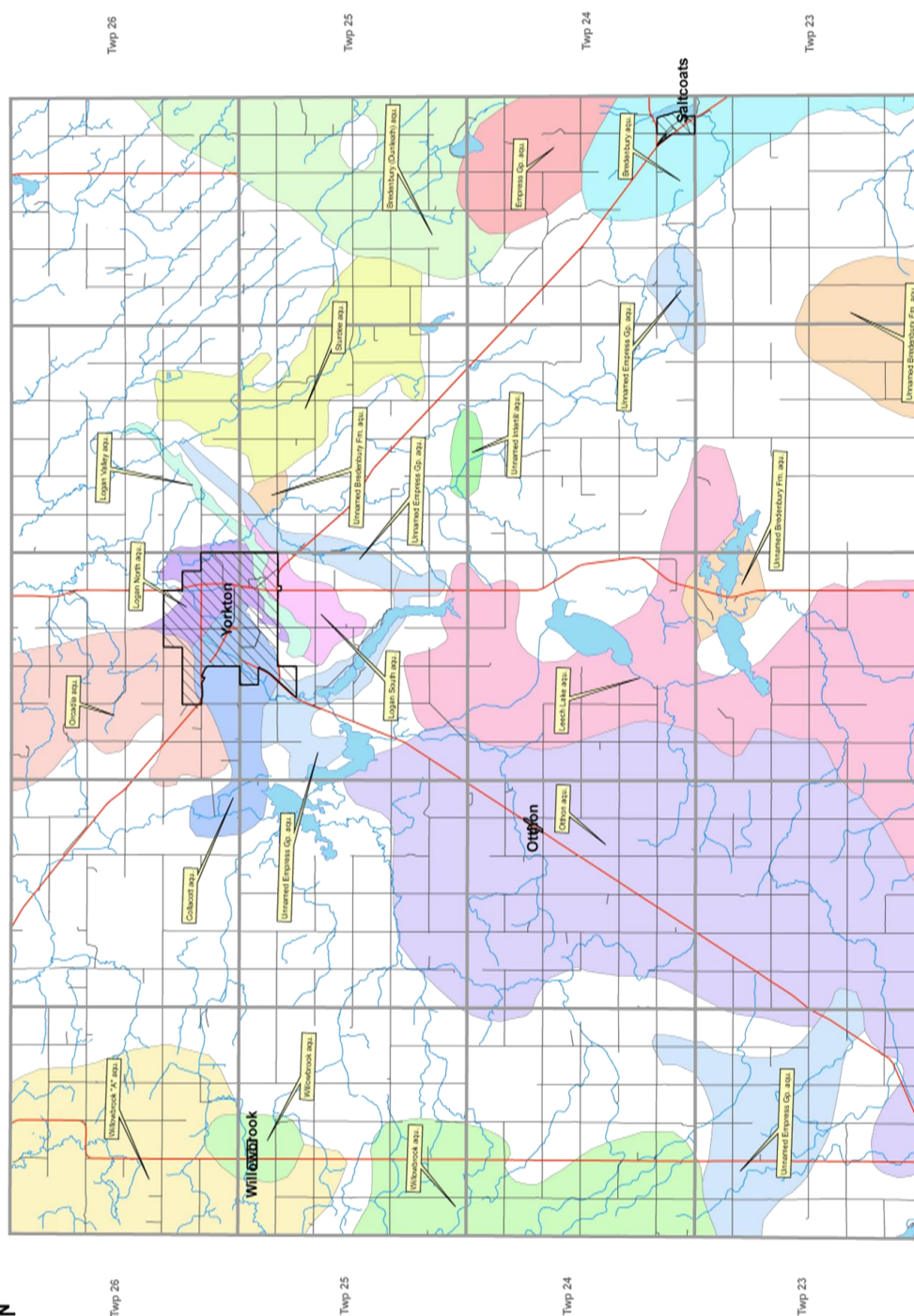


Those maps are accompanied by a series of cross sections which depict the subsurface areas along the transects shown in Figure 1. The cross sections were prepared from a review of the data taken from the histories and wells indicated on the map. The boundaries observed in areas in which the aquifer geologic unit is likely to be found. Aquifers and other geologic units mapped do not always occur continuously within the areas shown, and may not be found at a specific site or may occur at different depths. Areas where no boundaries have been identified as bearing zones may be found outside the boundaries shown.

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Accepted for publication 12 November 2007

Mazfiah, H. and Simpson, M. 2006. Groundwater resources in the Yorkton aquifer management plan area, final report. Saskatchewan Research Council, SRC Publication No. 10419-1E06.

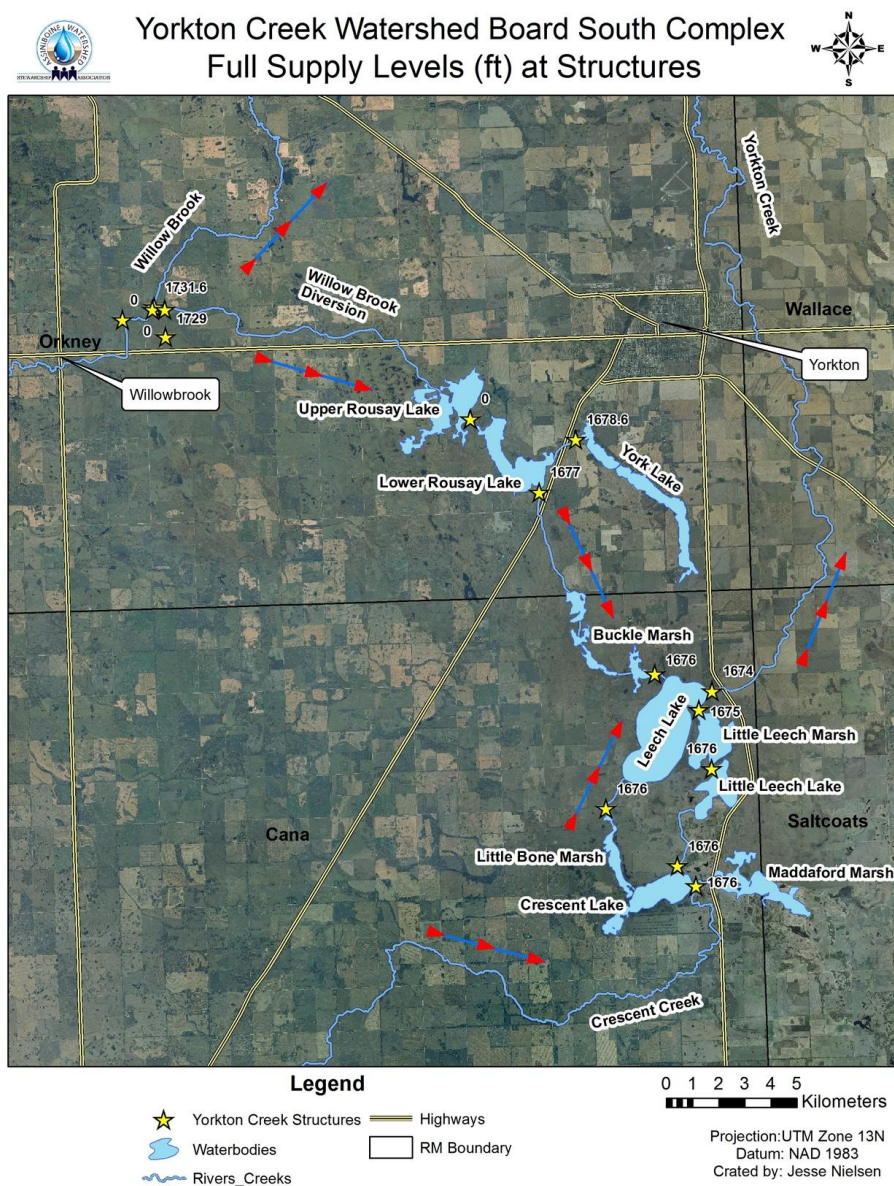


YORKTON CREEK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION BOARD

The Yorkton Creek Watershed (YCW) is a sub-basin of the Assiniboine River Watershed located in East-Central Saskatchewan. The YCW is approximately 2900 km², spanning just over 8 different Rural Municipalities.

Beginning in 1978 and finishing in 1982, the Yorkton Creek Watershed Association Board (YCWAB), along with financial and technical assistance from Saskatchewan Agriculture and Ducks Unlimited Canada, undertook the construction of a \$1.7 million multi-purpose Flood Control Project. The development consisted of channel improvements, installation of several water control structures, and construction of diversions to stabilize water levels and to control flooding of the lakes and wetland areas south and west of the city of Yorkton.

To implement the development of the project, the YCWAB had to obtain Flood Consents and Right-of-Way Easements, where necessary, within the project area. There are over 250 such easements registered by the YCWAB.



YORKTON CREEK BOARD MEMBERS

Parker	Ellert	City of Melville	
Rene	Richard	City of Yorkton	
Dale	Paul	York Lake Regional Park	
Scott	Edlin	RM of Cana	<i>Vice Chairman</i>
Trevor	Protz	RM of Orkney	<i>Chairman</i>
Joe	Skitcko	RM of Saltcoats	
Blair	Harris	RM of Wallace	
Kevin	Rozdeba	Ducks Unlimited Canada	<i>Non-Voting Technical Advisor</i>
Jason	Signarowski	Water Security Agency	<i>Non-Voting Technical Advisor</i>

YCWAB reviews and refers to their Operating Guidelines that help govern decisions about releasing and retaining water and ensures that the entire Yorkton Creek Water Management System operates as effectively and efficiently as possible.

YCWAB owns and operates 14 “structures” for water management south and west of the City of Yorkton. These structures manage the amounts of water flowing towards Yorkton via Willowbrook from the west into the Rousay Lakes and Crescent Creek/Yorkton Creek from the south into Big Leech Lake. They help mitigate the flood risk to landowners and infrastructure along the system.

The AWSA took over as Administrator and Project Manager for the YCWAB on October 31st, 2014. The AWSA oversees the operation and activities of the YCWAB on behalf of the Board of Directors.

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

Entire Yorkton Creek Water Management System Receives Drainage Approval

In 2024, the YCWAB completed the process necessary to update the registration with Water Security Agency for the portion of their water management system south of Lower Rousay Lake to the crossing of Yorkton Creek at Highway 10, east of Yorkton. This was the second of two phases of registration, the other having taken place in 2022 for the portion of the system from Willowbrook to the outlet of Lower Rousay Lake.

In the late 1970’s, the Yorkton Creek Watershed Association entered into caveats or easement agreements with many landowners along the Yorkton Creek system. These easements gave the Yorkton Creek Watershed Association the right to work on a portion of landowner’s property to complete any enhancements necessary for the safe carriage, conveyance, or transportation of water in the creek. These caveats or easements are still registered to the land today and are eligible and will be included in the new approval process.

Once the easements were obtained, the work was then completed in the late 1970’s within the creek itself to deepen, widen or straighten portions of it to increase the efficiency of the flow of water. This work is now considered “channelization” as defined by the Water Security Agency and it must be registered as a drainage approval by the Water Security Agency. Channelization is considered a form of drainage.

With the completion of phase two of the registration process, landowners received notice from ISC informing them that the Water Security Agency has registered an interest on their property. That interest is to show that the enhancement work done within the creek in the 1970’s is now legally registered to today’s standards.

It is important to note that no changes or enhancements will be made to the creek itself at this time. This drainage approval does not allow for any new work to be constructed along the creek or within the creek. However, the Drainage Approval does allow the YCWAB to apply for funding which will assist with any rehabilitation of the structures or maintenance work to the creek that the board deems necessary in the future.

YCWAB Mitigates Crescent Creek Flooding

On behalf of the YCWAB, Jesse assisted the RM of Cana in dealing with a long-standing water conveyance problem on Crescent Creek. The problem stemmed from an extremely large beaver dam, just north of the Brewer Road, that was backing up water in the creek and causing negative impacts to nearby RM infrastructure and private property. Jesse successfully mediated between the landowner and the RM and came up with a solution that allowed the landowner to retain the beaver dam and the wildlife habitat it created, while still allowing for necessary water conveyance in the creek.

The solution involved the construction of a berm to prevent water from flooding out of the creek. A gated culvert in the berm allows the landowner to pass water from the east, back into the creek if need be. Also, a secondary beaver dam was removed from a channel that allows water to flow around and bypass the main dam if water levels get too high on the creek.



August 12th, 2024; Crescent Creek; looking South



September 2024: Berm Construction



November 2024: Removal of Secondary Dam

WALLACE CREEK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION BOARD

Together with the WSA, the AWSA formed WCWAB in 2013 in response to the flooding issues of 2011. The AWSA has been the Administrator & Project Manager for WCWAB since its inception.

Our **MISSION**

To proactively manage water resources within the Wallace Creek watershed to decrease the negative impacts of flooding on agricultural lands within the watershed, and to protect private property and municipal infrastructure from flood-related damage.

Our **VISION**

Citizens working together to maximize the agricultural potential of the Wallace Creek Watershed through well-planned, sustainable, and environmentally conscious water management.

Our **OBJECTIVES**

- Reclamation of agricultural land affected by flooding within the Wallace Creek watershed
- Protection of private property, water wells, and municipal infrastructure from the negative impacts associated with flooding
- Mitigation of the effects of agricultural drainage contributing to increased flows and subsequent flooding of Wallace Creek
- Coordination of efforts between involved municipalities in relation to works associated with flood management and agricultural drainage

Wallace Creek Watershed is a sub-basin of the Assiniboine River Watershed located in East-Central Saskatchewan.

The watershed encompasses an area of 692 km² (170,000 acres), and the creek is 63 miles (101 km) long, starting at Rooke Lake in the RM of Churchbridge and flowing northwest to the Whitesand River, south of the highways 9 & 229 junction.

WALLACE CREEK BOARD MEMBERS

Garry	Jopko	Village of Rhein	
Keith	Strutynski	RM of Calder	
Donald	Soloninko	RM of Calder	
David	Zerr	RM of Churchbridge	
Neil	Rathgeber	RM of Churchbridge	<i>Vice Chairman</i>
Les	Trowell	RM of Saltcoats	
Fred	Cross	RM of Saltcoats	
Ron	Rozema	RM of Sliding Hills	
Ed	Keyowski	RM of Sliding Hills	
Garry	Liebrecht	RM of Wallace	<i>Chairman</i>
Dave	Burym	RM of Wallace	



2024 Fiscal Board Members

Rear, L-R: Fred Cross, Neil Rathgeber, Garry Liebrecht, Dave Burym, Ron Rozema, Don Solenenko, David Zerr.

Front, L-R: Roy Derworiz, Chris Jordans (AWSA Technician), Les Trowell, Ed Keyowski, Garry Jopko, Jesse Nielsen (AWSA Manager)

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

The WCWAB spent much of this fiscal year with a continued focus on performing tasks associated with obtaining a Drainage Approval/Channelization Permit on the main stem of Wallace Creek.

PROJECT TIMELINE

- Fall 2021: Over 20 miles of channel clearing from to start of creek (Rooke Lake) to highway 10 (approx. 12.5 miles) and highway 10 to Purves Lake (approx. 9 miles)
- Jan.27, 2022: WSA Letter of Non-Compliance
- 2022: Discussion with WSA: need channelization permit
 - Require LiDAR data to map 1:5 flood extent
- April 26, 2023: Held stakeholder information meeting at Rhein Hall
- June 1, 2023 – Sent out letter to all landowner along the creek
- Fall 2023 - LiDAR acquisition
- June 21, 2024 – Application to WSA's Ag Water Management Fund for 1:5 flood extent mapping and flood easements
 - Approved for \$58,000
- October 2024 – Collected elevation of all culverts and bridges along Wallace creek
- November 2024 – SCDA created 1:5 flood extent map using LiDAR data
- January 2025 – SCDA created draft flood easement documents

SMITH CREEK REGIONAL WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

The AWSA signed a contract to take on the management of the SCRWA in November of 2024.

The Smith Creek Regional Watershed Association was formed on July 14, 1998 in response to the flooding experienced in 1995 and the need to organize efforts to manage water on the eastern-most side of the Assiniboine River Watershed in Saskatchewan. Unlike the Wallace or Yorkton Creek Watershed Associations, Smith Creek is a *regional* Watershed Association that is actually the combination of the Smith Creek, Deerhorn Creek, Blackbird Creek, Stony Creek, Cupar Creek, and Two Creeks watersheds.

SMITH CREEK BOARD MEMBERS

Kevin	Popp	Blackbird Creek	<i>non-voting consulting member</i>
Johnathan	Fuhr	Hohenlohe C&D	
Derek	Kentel	Langenburg East C&D	
Vince	Schnee	Marchwell C&D	<i>non-voting consulting member</i>
Trevor	Baumung	RM of Calder	
Kelly	Fatteicher	RM of Calder	
David	Fyke	RM of Calder	
Keith	Strutynski	RM of Calder	<i>formerly Roy Derowiz until fall 2024 RM elections</i>
George	Haas	RM of Churchbridge	
Neil	Rathgeber	RM of Churchbridge	<i>chairman</i>
James	Schmidt	RM of Churchbridge	
Cameron	Wiebe	RM of Churchbridge	
Terry	Hildbrandt	RM of Langenburg	
Garnet	Putland	RM of Langenburg	
Leighton	Schappert	RM of Langenburg	<i>vice chairman</i>
Tim	Mitschke	RM of Langenburg	
Roland	Schappert	RM of Langenburg	<i>non-voting consulting member</i>
Lorrie	Popp	Town of Langenburg	

Since coming on board as Watershed Manager, the AWSA has assisted the SCWAB in the creation of a new Strategic Plan that spells out the watershed's purpose going forward.

Our VISION

To create an agricultural landscape resilient to the negative impacts of surface water extremes through well-planned, sustainable, and environmentally conscious watershed management.

Our MISSION

To collaborate on behalf of landowners, in partnership with environmental groups and all levels of government, for the proactive management, conservation, and responsible utilization of surface water resources for the collective benefit of the Smith Creek Regional Watershed area.

Our **OBJECTIVES**

- Proactive technical planning to fulfill the future needs of watershed stakeholders
- Implementation of a structured waterway maintenance program aimed at retaining, restoring, or enhancing the conveyance capacity of waterways
- Protection of private property, water wells, and municipal infrastructure from the negative impacts associated with flooding
- Coordination of efforts between involved municipalities in relation to works associated with public water infrastructure and waterway conveyance
- Promotion of best management practices related to the coexistence of agriculture and nature
- Documentation and transparency of long-term trends in the quality of surface water runoff

Our **ACTIONS**

- Actively collaborating with impacted, participating municipalities on water maintenance projects
- Managing a GPS/GIS inventory of water infrastructure (e.g. culverts, bridges, low-level crossings) allowing for a holistic view regarding the inter-related effects of water infrastructure construction, upgrades, or maintenance
- Benchmarking of creek bed elevations for facilitation of channel conveyance
- Conducting ongoing, reoccurring channel clearing/cleaning activities of natural waterways
- Representing and advocating on behalf of the stakeholders engaged in watershed management activities
- Maintaining an ongoing surface water quality sampling network
- Facilitating productive oversight and dialogue between all stakeholders engaged in water management issues
- Creation and implementation of a beneficial management practice incentive program for natural habitat enhancement and protection within the watershed

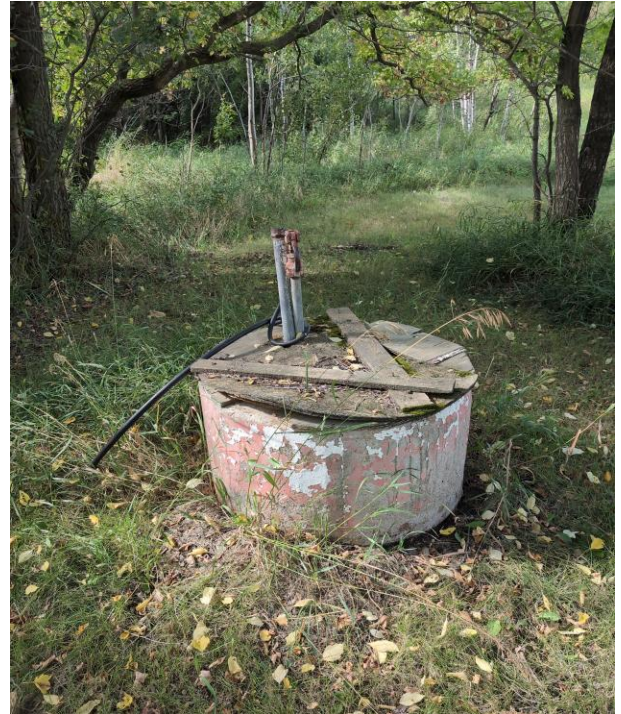
Our **LONG-TERM GOALS**

- Management of the effects of agricultural drainage contributing to increased flows and subsequent flooding of creeks
- To position SCRWA as the lead and elite watershed association setting standards for watershed management in the province of Saskatchewan

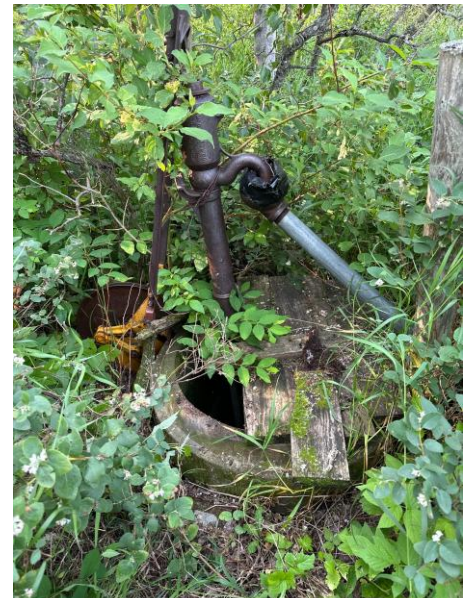
THE WELL DECOMMISSIONING PROGRAM

The Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association's Well Decommissioning Program is a highly effective initiative, dedicated to safeguarding vital groundwater resources and ensuring safety by properly sealing abandoned or unused water wells. This program stands out due to its unique funding model and collaborative approach, making decommissioning more accessible for landowners. This program is a result of collaboration between the AWSA, the Government of Saskatchewan and their Farm and Ranch Water Infrastructure Program (FRWIP), and the watershed's RM's. We have a proven track record of sealing more wells in the Assiniboine River Watershed than the rest of the province combined.

Protecting our groundwater is critical, as it is the sole source of household and drinking water for nearly 100% of residents within the watershed. The City of Yorkton is the only major community in Saskatchewan that relies exclusively on well water, making the safeguarding of our local aquifers an absolute priority. We urge all land and property owners, industry partners, and agricultural producers to join in protecting the quality of this precious resource.



A vital step in this effort is the proper decommissioning of abandoned and damaged wells. These wells create a direct pathway for surface runoff to contaminate our underground aquifers, threatening the purity of our groundwater and the safety of nearby active wells. Furthermore, these abandoned sites, often obscured by overgrowth, present serious safety hazards, leading to potential injuries and damage to vehicles and equipment.



Key Features and Benefits

Broad Landowner Eligibility

- Any landowner is eligible, provided their local Rural Municipality (RM) agrees to act as the applicant on their behalf.
- This includes farms, acreages, abandoned yard sites, and even properties within rural cities, towns, villages, and hamlets.

Fixed Costs to Landowners and Rural Municipalities

- The cost for decommissioning large diameter wells (greater than 24 inches) is a flat rate of \$2,500.00 plus GST & PST, totaling \$2,775.00.
- In rare and special circumstances, there may be additional costs

Program Facilitation

- The AWSA acts as a central coordinator, managing all aspects of the decommissioning, including:
 - Landowner communication
 - Coordination with qualified contractors
 - Crucially, they facilitate funding support
 - approving contractors to perform the decommissioning
- The RM plays a pivotal role by acting as the applicant to the Ministry of Agriculture's Farm and Ranch Water Infrastructure Program (FRWIP) on behalf of the landowner.
- The AWSA takes on the responsibility of coordinating and completing all necessary paperwork for the FRWIP application.
- The AWSA provides advertisement flyers to the RMs for them to include with their annual tax notices.

Streamlined Funding and Reimbursement

- This unique approach significantly increases program uptake because:
 - Individual landowners are not required to upfront the cost of the work and then wait for a government rebate.
 - The rebate application to FRWIP can be submitted with just the contractor invoice (proof of payment is not required for costs under \$5,000).
 - As a result, RMs often receive their rebate very promptly once the work is completed, minimizing or eliminating the waiting period.

RM of _____ No. _____ WELL DECOMMISSIONING CAMPAIGN

Do you have a small or large-diameter well that is abandoned or no longer being used?
 The RM of _____ is initiating a campaign to decommission/seal as many abandoned wells as possible.
 If you have one on your property, please contact the Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association
 to properly arrange your well decommissioning for only \$300!

ALL Landowners are Eligible

Please call 306-783-1696 before August 30th, 2025 to sign up

Groundwater is a critical resource in the Assiniboine River Watershed because over 90% of our residents rely on groundwater for their drinking water. **Protection** of our aquifers is paramount, and one of the best practices to ensure safe source waters throughout our watershed is the **decommissioning of abandoned wells**.

Over the years, many wells on properties become **abandoned** without being properly decommissioned.
 These abandoned wells are a **hazard to groundwater** and a **liability** for property owners.
 Decommissioning your abandoned wells can **increase your property value!**

This is an exclusive program, coordinated by the Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association, for their member RMs.

www.assiniboinewatershed.com



Payment and Reimbursement Process

1. **Contractor Invoice:** The AWSA-approved contractor invoices the RM for the decommissioning work.

○ Sub-total:	\$2,500.00
○ GST & PST:	<u>\$ 275.00</u>
○ Total Invoice to RM:	\$2,775.00

2. **RM's Initial Payment and GST Claim:** The RM is responsible for initially paying the contractor's invoice of \$2,775.00.

○ The RM can then claim back the GST portion of the sub-total.	
○ GST claimed back by RM:	-\$ 125.00
○ RM's Net Cost after GST claim:	\$2,650.00

3. **FRWIP Reimbursement (90% of Sub-Total):** The AWSA prepares and submits the claim form to the Ministry of Agriculture's Farm and Ranch Water Infrastructure Program (FRWIP) on behalf of the RM.

○ FRWIP reimburses 90% of the sub-total cost:	(\$2,500.00 x 90%)
○ FRWIP Reimbursement to RM:	\$2,250.00
○ RM's Remaining Balance:	\$ 400.00*

* This \$400 balance consists of 10% of the sub-total \$250, and the full PST amount, \$150.

4. **AWSA Reimbursement to RM:** To ensure the landowner's out-of-pocket cost is kept at \$300 per well, the AWSA directly reimburses the RM.

○ AWSA Reimbursement to RM:	-\$ 100.00
○ RM's Remaining Balance:	\$ 300.00

5. **Landowner Payment to RM:** The RM then invoices the landowner for the remaining balance.

○ Landowner Payment to RM:	-\$ 300.00
○ Final Cost to RM:	\$ 0.00

This payment structure means there is ZERO direct cost to the RM for the well decommissioning. Furthermore, RMs have the option to absorb the entire \$400 remaining balance, making the decommissioning 100% free for their ratepayers. In 2024, the RM of Saltcoats opted to do this.

Program Success and Impact

The effectiveness of this streamlined approach is evident in the program's participation rates.

In 2024, total of 43 wells were decommissioned across the Assiniboine River Watershed throughout 24 RM's.

The Well Decommissioning Program has been available since 2009. The current campaign model began in 2020 with a pilot project involving the four RM's of the Yorkton Aquifer Area. Watershed-wide coverage came into effect in 2021.

ECO ACTION

The Eco Action Community Funding Program in Canada, administered by Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), provides financial support to community groups for projects that have positive, measurable impacts on the environment. The program aims to equip Canadians with the tools to act on their knowledge and values to promote environmental sustainability. Specifically, it supports projects that address Environment Canada's environmental priorities, including clean air, climate change, clean water, and nature.

Last year the AWSA completed an Eco Action-funded project that involved two adjacent landowners on the Theodore Reservoir fencing off their cattle from accessing the lake as their water source. The projects will serve to protect the sensitive shoreline environment via 3-strand high tensile electric exclusion fencing and alternative watering sources in the form of a new dugout for each producer. By providing an incentive for ranchers to eliminate direct access of their cattle to creeks, streams and rivers, projects such as these limit the amount of non-point source impacts on our waterways and contribute to improving the overall health of our watershed.





Newly constructed dugouts serve as the watering source for the cattle.

3-strand electric high tensile fencing with Gallagher plastic posts proved the only feasible option for fencing the extremely rocky shoreline.



Construction of dugouts in the sandy shoreline proved to be quite a challenge.



Whitesand River Watershed shoreline protection project

By Jesse Nielsen,
Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Assoc. Inc.

The Whitesand Regional Park, located on the Theodore Dam reservoir, has long been a favorite camping and angling destination for those looking to spend some time outdoors in the beauty of the Whitesand River valley. The reservoir lake was formed by the building of the Theodore Dam on the Whitesand River, approximately 3.5 miles north-east of Theodore, SK in 1964. Anglers have the opportunity to catch walleye, northern pike, and perch while enjoying the picturesque backdrop of the valley's Parkland landscape. Jesse Nielsen, longtime Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association manager, had the preservation of that beautiful backdrop of the river valley in mind when he submitted a funding proposal to Environment and Climate Change Canada's EcoAction Community Funding Program back in 2022. "We had been monitoring for zebra mussels at the Whitesand Regional Park boat launch for several years and every year I couldn't help but notice all the cattle across the lake along the shoreline, wading in the water. They were given free access to the lake and were using it as their water source as well as a place to escape the summer heat by taking a dip in the water along the edge of the lake. Both environmentally and aesthetically-speaking, it wasn't a great scenario, and I wanted to implement a project to mitigate the situation."

Nielsen spoke to the farmer that leases the Crown land for summer pasture about fencing off the shoreline to permanently exclude the cattle from the lake, while providing the livestock with an alternate water source. "He was very receptive to the idea and was not only onboard himself, he suggested I also talk to his neighbor that pastures cattle kiddy-corner across the lake, because he'd probably be interested as well. I was very happy that we could work with both guys on either side of the lake to get their cattle out of the water and away from the shoreline." In the end approximately 3300 ft of shoreline was fenced off on the east side of the lake, across from the Regional Park, while another 2100 ft were fenced off to the north-west of the park. In both cases 3-strand high tensile electric fence was used because the extreme rockiness of the pasture. "We originally wanted to use 4-strand barbed wire with 4-5 inch wooden posts due to the lack of maintenance needed for barbed wire, but honestly that would have been a nightmare trying to fence. There's almost more rock along that shoreline than there is soil," joked Nielsen. The electric fence allowed for much larger spacing between posts and the thinner Gallagher posts installed much easier in the rough terrain than wooden posts would have. As for an alternate water source, both producers opted to have a dugout constructed. In both cases, an inlet channel from the lake ensures that the dugouts

are topped up when water levels are high in the spring.

Overall, Nielsen is very happy with the way the project turned out. "This was a particularly pleasing project for me as it was something that we identified a need for some time ago, and through collaboration with the local farmers, were able to see come to fruition. The stretches of shoreline that have been exclusion fenced will be unimpacted from the cattle going forward, which will mean the Silver willow should start showing up first, with Trembling aspen returning in time. That shoreline will look a lot different in the future than it does now. It'll be lush with vegetation and form a nice natural buffer along the lake." Both producers will be signing 5-year conservation agreements with the AWSA where they will be provided annual payments on the acres of the area between the shoreline and the fence that are now excluded from their pastures. In return, they are responsible for maintaining the fence. These annual payments are made possible through the ALUS program that the AWSA offers throughout the Assiniboine River Watershed. When asked about his final thoughts on

the project, Nielsen beamed, "This project is just a really good example of how both the environment and agriculture can benefit from the implementation of beneficial management practices."



Signs recognizing the landowner's contributions to the project were posted near each area.



Prior to the project, cattle were given free access to the lake as a water source.



The construction of dugouts created an alternative water source for cattle.



Photos Courtesy Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc.

THE SWAUMP FUND

Source Water And Urban Municipality Projects

The AWSA created the SWAUMP fund in 2020 to assist its urban member municipalities (or those RMs that have taken over administration of urban municipalities) with various projects and initiatives that contribute to the safety, protection, conservation, management, or stewardship of water resources within the Assiniboine River Watershed. The funding comes from AWSA's municipal membership levies and one way of giving back to our urban membership for their support.

PREVIOUSLY FUNDED PROJECT TYPES

- Sewage Lift Station Upgrades
- Well Head Protection Landscaping
- Observational Well Retrofit
- Lake Aeration System
- Water Distribution Flow Meters
- Water and Sewage Works Investigation and Report
- Lake Water Quality Study

2024 FUNDED PROJECTS

In 2024, the AWSA funded 2 applicant's projects at 50% of the total project cash expenses, to a maximum reimbursement of \$5,000 each:

- A Reverse Osmosis Bottle Filling Station at Springside School
- Water Treatment Facility Upgrades for the Hamlet of Hazel Dell



THE ALUS PROGRAM

ASAP: ALUS Saskatchewan Assiniboine Project

Established in 2015, the ALUS Saskatchewan Assiniboine Project (ASAP) quickly demonstrated its impact by enrolling eight producers and 285 acres in its inaugural year, even leading to a waiting list for future endeavors. As it continues to grow, ASAP's core mission is to diligently preserve, protect, and enhance the natural habitats within the Assiniboine watershed by effectively utilizing the ALUS model. This vital work is bolstered by the dedicated support of the Saskatchewan Farm Stewardship Association (SaskFSA), an organization committed to empowering farmers to achieve environmental sustainability and efficiency, and the Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association (AWSA), an independent, non-profit group passionately devoted to safeguarding and improving source water throughout the Assiniboine River Watershed. Jesse Nielsen is the coordinator for this ALUS Community region.

The PAC: Partnership Advisory Committee

All ALUS initiatives are managed by the PAC, which is made up of local farmers, ranchers, technical advisors (such as agrologists and environmental experts), community stakeholders, and other NGO's. This thoughtful blend of expertise allows the PAC to make well-informed decisions that genuinely reflect the diverse perspectives of the community, in consideration of the local economy, environment, and social fabric. They also mentor new and continuing producers and help to keep project targets on track to deliver consistent results.

Collectively, the PAC shoulders significant responsibilities, including determining which ALUS projects meet eligibility, how funding is allocated, and ensuring all selected projects meet ALUS's environmental and acreage targets while aligning with established guidelines and funding criteria.

They are expected to regularly attend meetings to govern and administer the program, actively promote ALUS within their agricultural and strategic networks, participate in community engagement efforts and events, and directly assist producers in developing and implementing ALUS projects.

The PAC Board Members

Candace	Mitschke	Fask FSA
Charlotte	Ward	Producer; Ministry of Agriculture
Garry	Richards	Producer; Coach
Jason	Signarowski	WSA
Katelyn	Haynes	Producer; Chairwoman
Kris	Springer	Producer; Coach
Nathan	Maier	Producer
Paul	Valstar	Producer
Rob	Wunder	Producer; Coach
Stephen	Breitkreuz	Producer; Coach

GROWING ROOTS REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

Growing Roots is a regenerative agriculture program focused on soil health launched in 2022 by ALUS with support from General Mills. With this program, ALUS continues to experiment with on-field project offerings, exploring how modified farming practices can produce ecosystem services and enhance biodiversity on agricultural lands and beyond.

The goal of this program is to deliver on-field regenerative agriculture programming using the ALUS model. A key aim of the program is to introduce farmers and ranchers to the principles of regenerative agriculture. Participants are invited to establish on-field projects that benefit soil health with financial support and technical guidance from coaches and an advisory committee composed of producers experienced in the implementation of regenerative practices.

Along with the deployment of projects rooted in regenerative principles, the program focuses on the facilitation of information transfer and knowledge exchange between program participants, ALUS PACs, coaches and the advisory committee. Growing Roots promotes peer-to-peer learning and the development of local, interactive networks of producers interested in implementing regenerative practices and principles on their land.

Taking part in the program are the communities of ALUS Assiniboine West, ALUS Saskatchewan Assiniboine Project and ALUS Seine Rat Roseau, and new for 2024, ALUS SAW – Carrot River.



ALUS



**Do you have marginal cropland with low productivity due to flooding, salinity, or overlap?
Are you interested in seeding cover crops on your farm?**

What are we looking for?

The ideal candidate will have marginal land that is currently in annual crop production located around or in between wetlands/sloughs. The piece of land may be small, making it inefficient for large machinery to access it, or may be a poor producing area due to salinity and flooding, making it economically nonsensical to continue growing crops on. This marginal land can instead be converted to perennial forage production or cover crops, with the producer receiving payments as outlined below. OR Do you use cover crops to improve the health of the soil on your farm?

PRODUCER INCENTIVE PAYMENTS

Project Type	Establishment Payment	Annual Payment	Description (* 5 years of annual payments; ** 2 years of annual payments)
Seeding Perennial Forage	\$65/acre	\$35/acre*	Converting marginal cropland (poor access, saline, flood-prone, coarse soil texture, highly sloped, etc.) to perennial forage cover using a blend of tame grass/legume species.
Wetland Conservation < 2 acres	N/A	\$30/acre*	Conserving existing prairie pothole wetland habitat adjacent to the newly seeded forage (basin size less than 2 acres in area). Must be in conjunction with Seeding Perennial Forage.
Wetland Conservation > 2 acres	N/A	\$20/acre*	Conserving existing prairie pothole wetland habitat adjacent to the newly seeded forage (basin size greater than 2 acres in area). Must be in conjunction with Seeding Perennial Forage.
Upland Conservation	N/A	\$20/acre*	Conserving existing upland habitat composing of native trees, shrubs, and grasses adjacent to the wetland habitat. Must be in conjunction with Seeding Perennial Forage.
Regen Ag	N/A	\$35/acre**	Seeding cover crops for grazing, baling, silage, or intercropping a cash crop with another cash or cover crop, or any practice(s) aimed at promoting the 5 Principles of Soil Health.



PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Jesse Nielsen

Assiniboine Watershed

Stewardship Association (AWSA)

306-783-1696

j.nielsen@awsask.com

Our Guiding Principles



Community-developed

The ALUS program is flexible. It is designed to be customized by [local communities](#) to respect local agricultural and environmental priorities, and help create rural resilience.



Farmer-delivered

Agricultural producers are in a unique position to provide important solutions to some of the most pressing environmental challenges of our time, including [climate change](#) and [biodiversity loss](#).



Science-based

Based on sound scientific principles and verification guidelines, ALUS provides valuable support and technical expertise for the design and implementation of natural infrastructure projects and [nature-based solutions](#).



Market-driven

The ecological services produced by ALUS projects have economic value on the marketplace, which ALUS is actively developing. Citizens, corporations and philanthropists invest directly in environmental stewardship.



Integrated

The delivery of the ALUS program is intended to complement existing conservation programs, including federal and provincial government policy frameworks.



Targeted

The ALUS program produces [ecosystem services](#) on marginal and ecologically sensitive parcels and on lands that can be managed in a different manner.



Accountable

ALUS projects are independently monitored, verified and audited by trusted farm organizations or reliable institutions. Data collection respects the highest standards in data integrity and confidentiality.



Voluntary

Farmers and ranchers who choose to participate in the ALUS program have flexible agreements that suit their operation and offer them financial compensation for their ecosystem management.



ALUS

WHERE
**AGRICULTURE
& NATURE**
MEET

6 Core Principles of Regenerative Agricultural Practices

Understand Context

No two farms or ranches are the same, and the regenerative agriculture principles should be implemented based on the environmental, economic and cultural context of each unique operation.

Minimize soil disturbance

Soil is very porous, like a sponge, and tilling soil weakens its structure. It collapses on itself, hardens, and over time loses its ability to absorb water or allow roots to grow. Reducing or eliminating tillage, along with limiting other disturbances like overgrazing and over-application of nutrients and pesticides, can reverse this process.

Maximize plant diversity

Many problems that farmers and ranchers have to deal with – such as pests, diseases and poor nutrient cycling – can be traced to a lack of diversity in the agricultural system. Including a broader range of plants and animals in the system decreases pest and disease pressure, while also supporting biodiversity and improving the health of the soil.

Keep the soil covered

Keeping the soil covered with living plants and crop residue protects it from wind, sun, hard rain, and other elements that erode it and damage the organisms living in the soil.

Maintain living roots year-round

Green, living plants are the foundation of the soil ecosystem. While most crops only grow for a few months out of the year, growing plants continually throughout the year retains nutrients and increases the supply of food to the living things in the soil, which leads to carbon sequestration, cleaner water and improved soil function.

Integrate livestock

Integrating grazing livestock on crop land benefits plants and soil in numerous ways. Natural pruning inspires new plant growth, natural fertilizer invites helpful insects to aerate the soil and spread organic matter, and livestock movement increases nutrient cycling by trampling crop residue. Understand that every farmer approaches his/her operation differently to account for unique characteristics and challenges, be it climate, soil type, topography, crop history, markets, labor, or equipment.

2024 ASAP RESULTS

- Growing Roots Regen Ag (Cover Crops)
 - 960-acre target (signed 992.5 acres)
 - 16 new landowners (target of 6)
 - \$35/acre, 100 acres max/participant, 2-year contract (can be different acres each year)
 - PLUS 45 returning participants
 - last year of funding for the 14 participants that started in 2022
 - 2nd of 3 years for the 31 participants that started in 2023
- “Regular” Projects (converting marginal cropland into Perennial Forage)
 - 300-acre target (signed 457.1 ac)
 - 12 participants
- Project Renewals with 9 Participants: 256.8 acres

WORKSHOPS & FIELD DAYS

Garry Richards Field Day

Bangor Saskatchewan

November 7th 2024

Tom & Sharon Andreas Field Day

With Michael Theile & Blain Hjertaas of Understanding Ag

Insinger, Saskatchewan

July 23rd 2024



PRODUCER APPRECIATION NIGHT



The Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association (AWSA) hosted its 2025 ALUS Producer Appreciation Night on Saturday, March 22nd, 2025, at the Gallagher Center in Yorkton, Saskatchewan. The evening brought together producers, their families and friends, local government officials, and watershed board members for a night of recognition and insightful presentations.

The event commenced with a welcoming address and a brief overview of the ALUS program by Watershed Manager Jesse Nielsen. Attendees then enjoyed appetizers and dinner, followed by an awards ceremony honoring producers whose practices exemplify the principles of regenerative agriculture and environmental stewardship.

Notable guests included the Honorable Warren Kaeding, Minister of Trade and Export Development and MLA for Melville – Saltcoats. Drawing on his extensive agricultural knowledge, Minister Kaeding graciously acknowledged the passionate efforts and significant contributions of the producers and their supporting communities. His long-standing relationship with the AWSA underscored the importance of their work. Cathay Wagantall of the Conservative Party also provided an informative overview of her party's initiatives supporting the regenerative agriculture industry. Additionally, David Chan, the new Saskatchewan Party MLA for Yorkton, attended, showing valuable interest in learning more about the AWSA and the ALUS program's impact on his constituency.



HONORING EXCELLENCE IN STEWARDSHIP

The AWSA proudly recognized several individuals for their outstanding commitment to regenerative agriculture and environmental stewardship. The recipients and their awards are:



Aaron Gray

The Most Projects Award



Tom & Sharon Andreas

The Best Cover Crop Award



Dale Prestie

The Enduring Project Award



Grant Laycock

The Perfect Project Award



Nathan & Megan Maier

The Stewardship Ambassador Award

INFORMATION & INSPIRATION

The evening featured two compelling presentations. Dakota Odgers of Covers & Co., a fifth-generation farmer from Spy Hill with a background in agricultural farming, delivered an insightful presentation on soil health. He explored the benefits of plant diversity, effective soil health practices, and the profound impact of cover cropping on farm productivity and resilience.



The night concluded with an incredibly inspirational address from Chris Koch. Born without arms and legs, the Lethbridge native and Nanton-raised speaker shared his "If I Can..." philosophy, emphasizing the importance of appreciating what we have and pursuing our dreams despite perceived limitations. Koch recounted humorous anecdotes and experiences from his life, including working on his family farm, snowboarding, running marathons, and traveling independently. His powerful message motivated the audience, reminding everyone that if he can achieve so much, "we are all capable of some pretty amazing things."

The success of the 2025 ALUS Producer Appreciation Night was further amplified by two articles in Yorkton This Week's Ag Outlook 2025 section, titled "ALUS Funding Available through AWSA" and "Cover crops have merit AWSA". These articles served to inform the wider community about the ALUS program, the opportunities it presents for local producers, and the valuable insights shared during presentations, such as Dakota Odgers' discussion on cover cropping and soil health. Further extending the event's reach, an interview with Watershed Manager Jesse Nielsen conducted by Jack Dawes of 98.5 The Rock FM aired after the event, adding more detail and enhancing the public's understanding of the AWSA and our capacity to deliver the ALUS program effectively in the Assiniboine Watershed area.



ALUS funding available through AWSA

By Calvin Daniels,
Staff Writer

Farmers with a few fringe acres that aren't exactly suited to crop production might want to look to planting cover crops, said Jesse Nielsen, Manager with Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Assoc. Inc. (AWSA) at the organization's awards supper Saturday.

And AWSA in cooperation with ALUS might be able to help with costs.

"We're talking edge of the field kind of stuff... We don't want your prime crop land. We want your marginal land," he said, adding it's the acres hard to farm, too saline, or prone to erosion, that cover cropping can help with. "It's an alternative way to traditional cropping."

Nielsen said ALUS is a very elastic program, with local boards fashioning the programming to suite local area needs. "No two ALUS programs across Canada are exactly the same," he said.

At present there are 30 ALUS programs across the country - three in Saskatchewan including the one in partnership with AWSA. Nationally some 50,000 acres are covered with 1,700 producers involved.

Nielsen added another 10,000 acres are in ALUS cover crop program. The ALUS program funding - cost-shared by producers - can also help with over ecosystem-friendly on-farm decisions, said Nielsen. That can include things such as planting trees, fencing natural water ways off to prevent cattle from "mucking around in riparian areas," and helping with alternate water for livestock.

In each case Nielsen said at the heart of funded projects is the basic premise of agriculture being more in tune with nature.



Jesse Nielsen

Cover crops have merit AWSA

By Calvin Daniels,
Staff Writer

Cover cropping offers many benefits when incorporated into a farm plan.

But, it still must fit a farmer's specific needs.

That was the message those attending the Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Assoc. Inc. (AWSA) supper in Yorkton Saturday heard from Dakota Odgers with Covers & Co.

Odgers said producers need to look at "what fits your operation? What your able to do?"

No one program fits for every producer, or every situation on the farm.

Nor, does anything undertaken effect change overnight.

"It all takes time," said Odgers,

adding with the time invested it will require producer management to get the most of whatever changes are being made.

That said, utilizing cover crops can be advantageous because a well-planned cover crop can revitalize soils in various ways.

Odgers said a cover crop with good plant diversity within what is being planted provides not just the obvious cover, but because of varied root systems and plant growing behaviours they impact soil in various ways, for example allowing better conditions for moisture to soak into the soil.

Odgers said a diverse cover crop "creates an ecosystem" which runs in a more natural way.

Ultimately, Odgers said whatever producers do they have to be making choices which enhance

farm profitability, something he said sometimes get lost in the equation of ever higher production. He noted that going back decades farmers have steadily been increasing production - being very good at that.

"We are very, very good at producing crops... We can now produce more and more," he said, adding producers "will continue to do so." What farmers are not as good at is "making money."

While production has increased "we're seeing producers get less and less," said Odgers.

So, Odgers said producers need to look how to boost that income, and one way is to reduce input costs by looking to alternative practices such as employing cover crops.

"We have to start making more money as producers," said Odgers.

CONFERENCES & CONVENTIONS

2025

SCDA 59th Annual General Meeting 2025

Saskatoon

March 19th -21st 2025

SSCA Soil Health Conference 2025

Regina

February 11th -12th, 2025

Yorkton Ag Link and Learn

Yorkton

January 28th 2025



2024

AWSA Christmas Party

Yorkton

December 13th 2024

MFGA Regenerative Agriculture Conference

Brandon AB

November 12th, 2024

SaskFSA Field Day

Spy Hill

October 30th, 2024

DUC Field Day Prairie Water Partners Meeting

Saskatoon

October 16th 2024

ALUS Conference

Red Deer AB

Sept 23rd (week of) 2024

Prairie Water Partners Meeting

Saskatoon

May 1st 2024

Calling Lakes Eco Museum Presentation

Saskatoon

May 1st 2024

Agri-Tactics Client Day

Yorkton

April 4th 2024

RM of Stanley Ratepayers Supper

Fenwood

April 4th 2024

Understanding Ag Workshop

Melville

April 3rd 2024



EDIBLE AQUIFERS PRESENTATIONS

The AWSA travelled to several communities in our watershed to deliver the Wetlands & Wildlife presentations and promote the annual Poster Contest.

Our first presentation was in Kamsack on January 24th and we wrapped up at the end of March with a total of 12 presentations at 9 different schools, at 8 different towns; one of our biggest years! We also had a new school come into the fold: Saltcoats had us present for the first time! As well, while Preeceville submitted posters last year, this is the first time we have presented at their school.



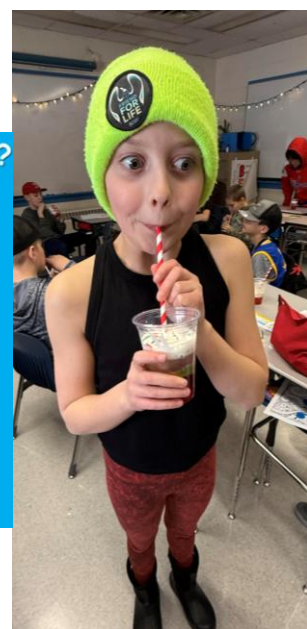
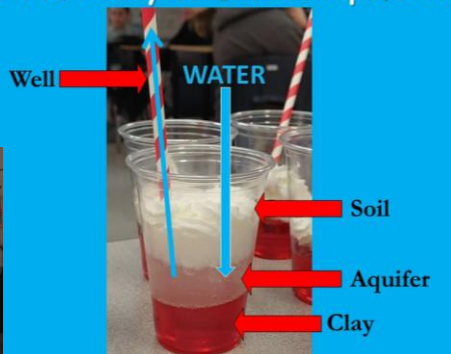
The presentations focus on what wetlands and aquifers are and how they do things for the environment, discussions on local water sources and treatment plants, add stuff from presentations

After the presentations, students were treated to Edible Aquifers, a concoction of gummy worms, Jello, sprite, sprinkles and a straw, as a perfect edible reconstruction of an aquifer and a well.

AWSA has held the contest and the presentations since 2009 with increasing participation rates throughout the years.



Are You Ready to Eat An Aquifer?!



THE WETLANDS & WILDLIFE POSTER CONTEST



Our annual Wetlands & Wildlife Poster Contest, building on the information shared in the accompanying presentations, saw students masterfully create posters showcasing the animals and landscapes of their local watershed. A key requirement for their submissions was a unique written explanation of why wetlands are important.

This year's contest ran from January 10th to March 30th, with awards and pizza parties distributed until April 10th.

Participation numbers soared, with an impressive 297 posters submitted from 15 classes across 11 different schools in 8 towns. We are immensely grateful for the students' efforts; their palpable enthusiasm and hope in each submission. It

was difficult to choose the top 3 and top 10 entries; each student brought a particular vision to life, and their talents and imaginations truly shone in their work.

Our 1st place winners in each division were presented with \$100 and a pizza party for their entire class. 2nd Place winners received \$50, and 3rd place winners received \$25.

2025 Winners

• Grade 3/4 Division:

1 st Place	Kamryn	Liebrecht	Gr 4	Saltcoats School	Saltcoats
2 nd Place	Charly	Crant	Gr 4	Davison School	Melville
3 rd Place	Luke	Ziola	Gr 4	Preeceville School	Preeceville



• Grade 5/6 Division:

1 st Place	Ava	Gardner	Gr 6	Yorkdale Central School	Yorkton
2 nd Place	Bianca	Pahilan	Gr 6	St. Michael's School	Yorkton
3 rd Place	Adriane	Enrique	Gr 6	St. Henry's Sr School	Melville





Kamryn Liebrecht
\$100 & Pizza Party
Gr 4



Ava Gardner
\$100 & Pizza Party
Gr 6



Charly Crant
\$50
Gr 4



Bianca Pahilan
\$50
Gr 6



Luke Ziola
\$25
Gr 4



Adriane Enrique
\$25
Gr 6

OUR SERVICES AND EQUIPMENT RENTALS

CULVERT INFRASTRUCTURE MAPPING

The AWSA offers culvert mapping services to all its member municipalities. We have previously mapped culverts within all our urban municipalities.

Precision culvert locations, elevations, and inverts are captured with our Hemisphere RTK GPS system. In addition to location, the following other attributes were recorded: length, diameter, material type, and condition (e.g. dented, blocked, collapsed).

The information gathered can be presented as an Excel spreadsheet, digital and printed maps, and probably the most useful, a KMZ file that can be uploaded into Google Earth and GIS software. This allows the user to see the location of each culvert on the landscape and when they click on it, they'll be given the attributes for that culvert along with any pictures that were taken.

We also provide RM division boundaries as KMZ files to assist the user with navigating. Since Google Earth is free as either a desktop application or online, we feel this is the best way to view the culvert mapping data as an RM Council.

There are several GIS software's that are free, but others require a fee and are often very expensive.

The data provided by this service can be utilized for asset management and/or water management purposes. Given that high accuracy elevation data is now available for much of the Assiniboine River watershed thanks to the LiDAR acquisition that occurred in the fall of 2023, culvert data provided by the AWSA can be used in conjunction with the LiDAR data for very precise flood and water movement modelling and mapping across the landscape.

The optimal time to perform this service is early spring, when the flowing water and lack of vegetation in the road ditches makes for more efficient culvert location. If you think that your RM may benefit from culvert infrastructure mapping don't hesitate to contact the AWSA to discuss your needs.



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 various formats for viewing, records, and analysis.

Cost to Membership Municipalities

\$500/day labor rate (field and/or in-office map creation)
\$0.70/km mileage rate
⇒ Member - Urban and Rural Municipalities will receive 1 FREE day of mapping.



Example Map
Town of Saltcoats Culvert Infrastructure



Legend
— Culverts
Scale 1:5500
Created By: Jesse Nielsen



⇒ Survey grade GPS (RTK capability) with sub-inch horizontal & vertical accuracy



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

TREE PLANTING

Tree Planting Equipment Rental

The Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association is pleased to announce that it rents tree planting equipment & supplies. 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
 - ⇒ \$225/roll (4'x1500')
 - ⇒ \$300/roll if you live outside the Assiniboine Watershed membership area
 - ⇒ 3.2 mm thickness

Equipment Information

- ⇒ Tree Planter (1 unit available)
 - ⇒ Hydraulic-operated coulters disc creates furrow, soil must be well tilled for best results
 - ⇒ Seats 2 people for planting
 - ⇒ Requires 50hp+ tractor with hydraulic hook-up capability
 - ⇒ Ball hitch (supplied)
- ⇒ Mulch Applicator (3 units available)
 - ⇒ Pull-type, clevis-pin hitch (you must provide receiver with ball removed)
 - ⇒ Requires 50hp+ tractor with hydraulic hook-up capability

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

The AWSA inherited the PFRA's tree planting equipment when that organization ceased in 2013. That included one tree planter and 3 plastic mulch applicators. The AWSA rents these pieces of equipment out to any rate payer within their membership area.

Studies by the PFRA's Indian Head Shelterbelt Center showed that use of the plastic mulch increased tree growth by approximately 25% due to the elimination of weed competition as well as the earlier warming of the soil under the black mulch in the spring. The AWSA is one of a handful of places in Saskatchewan that carries rolls of plastic mulch and has the equipment rental to utilize it.

DRONE / UAV

The AWSA provides UAV imagery and mapping services. Used in conjunction with survey and GIS data, it vastly improves visualization of the landscape and infrastructure that we help manage. Images can be inventoried and referenced to locational data such as GPS coordinates and can be referenced into various software including Google Earth.

Whether its video or still imagery, mapping, and even thermal sensing to detect and remove beaver dams, AWSA has the technical capability and access to the hardware required. AWSA routinely collects imagery during flood season and events, and along water courses to evaluate where barriers have been created or where channel clearing and channelization may be beneficial. We also utilize this for ALUS projects for reporting and monitoring.

Drone Services Available

The Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association is pleased to offer its services to our Rural and Urban member municipalities interested in having aerial pictures or video captured to assist in such things as channel clearing & beaver dam removal requirements, project site planning, or even advertising and promotion.

Cost to Membership Municipalities

\$300/day labor rate (field and/or in-office work)

\$0.70/km mileage rate

- ⇒ High-res pictures and 4K resolution video
- ⇒ You will be provided a USB drive with your raw images and/or video
- ⇒ We also provide images as a .KMZ file for convenient viewing in Google Earth- great for seeing where on the landscape pictures were taken
- ⇒ Drones allow increased efficiency, easy access to remote areas, and are a cost-effective means for gathering information
- ⇒ Nothing beats a "bird's eye view"

We fly the very capable DJI Air 3

NEW Services Available*

- ⇒ LiDAR
- ⇒ Thermal
- ⇒ NDVI
- ⇒ Multispectral
- ⇒ Aggregate Volume

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

* Call for details & pricing

THE ACRONYM LIST

The field of water stewardship and environmental management involves numerous acronyms, which can be challenging to remember even for seasoned board members. For example, when discussing a situation such as, “*The AWSA no longer receives funding from the WSA because the WSGs lost BMP funding from the MOA CAP contract in 2021, leading SAW to restructure and now receive that money from the government*”, the following list can help clarify the meanings involved in the discussion.

AAFC	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	OFCAF	On-Farm Climate Action Fund
ADOPT	Agricultural Demonstration of Practices and Technology	PAC	Partnership Advisory Committee
AGM	Annual General Meeting	PCAP	Prairie Conservation Action Plan
AIS	Aquatic Invasive Species (Zebra Mussels)	PFRA	Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration
ALUS	Alternative Land Use Services	PWCP	Prairie Watersheds Climate Program
ARBI	Assiniboine River Basin Initiative	QP	Qualified Person
ARW	Assiniboine River Watershed	RALP	Resilient Agricultural Landscapes Program
ASAP	ALUS Saskatchewan Assiniboine Project	RM	Rural Municipality
AWSA	Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association	RTK	Real Time Kinematic (extremely high accuracy GPS)
BMP	Beneficial Management Practice	SARM	Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities
CAP	Canadian Agricultural Partnership	SaskFSA	Saskatchewan Farm Stewardship Association
COY	City of Yorkton	SAW	Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds
CWRA	Canadian Water Resources Association	SCAP	Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership
DFO	Department of Fisheries and Oceans	SCDA	Saskatchewan Conservation & Development Association
DUC	Ducks Unlimited Canada	SRC	Saskatchewan Research Council
ECCC	Environment and Climate Change Canada	SUMA	Saskatchewan Association of Urban Municipalities
FRWIP	Farm and Ranch Water Infrastructure Program	SWA	Saskatchewan Watershed Authority
GIS	Geographic Information System	SWAT	Soil and Water Assessment Tool
GPS	Global Positioning System	SWAUMP	Source Water and Urban Municipal Projects Fund
GSLWAB	Good Spirit Lake Watershed Association Board	SWF	Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation
ILO	Intensive Livestock Operation	SWPP	Source Water Protection Plan
LIRA	Land and Infrastructure Resiliency Assessment	WCWAB	Wallace Creek Watershed Association Board
MAW	Manitoba Association of Watersheds	WSA	Water Security Agency (formerly SWA)
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture	WSG	Watershed Stewardship Group
MOE	Ministry of Environment	YCWAB	Yorkton Creek Watershed Association Board
MOH	Ministry of Highways	YRPDC	Yorkton Regional Planning District Commission
NRCAN	Natural Resources Canada	YWF	Yorkton Wildlife Federation

Aquifer – A permeable body of rock capable of yielding usable quantities of groundwater to wells and springs.

Stewardship – The responsible use and protection of the natural environment through conservation and sustainable practices to enhance ecosystem resilience and human well-being.

Sustainability – Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Watershed – An area of the landscape where topography dictates that all water within that area drains to a common outlet stream, creek, river, or lake.

AUDITORS REPORT

Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship
Association Inc.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Year Ended March 31, 2025

Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc.

Yorkton, Saskatchewan

March 31, 2025

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Statement of Responsibility

The accompanying financial statements are the responsibility of the Board Members of the Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc. and have been prepared in compliance with legislation, and in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards including the 4200 series.

In carrying out its responsibilities, the Board Members maintain appropriate systems of internal and administrative controls designed to provide reasonable assurance that transactions are executed in accordance with proper authorization, that assets are properly accounted for and safeguarded, and that financial information produced is relevant and reliable.

The Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc.'s board has approved these financial statements.

Baker Tilly SK LLP, as the organization's appointed external accountant, has reviewed the financial statements. The Independent Practitioners' Review Engagement Report is addressed to the Board of Directors and appears on the following page. Their opinion is based upon a review conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted standards for review engagements, performing such procedures as they consider necessary to obtain limited assurance that the financial statements are free of material misstatements and present fairly the financial position and results of the organization in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards including the 4200 series.

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Board Member



Independent Practitioners' Review Engagement Report

To the board of directors
Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc.

We have reviewed the accompanying financial statements of Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc., that comprise the Statement of Financial Position as at March 31, 2025, and the Statements of Operations, Changes in Net Assets and Cash Flow for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Practitioners' Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express a conclusion on the accompanying financial statements based on our review. We conducted our review in accordance with Canadian generally accepted standards for review engagements, which require us to comply with relevant ethical requirements.

A review of financial statements in accordance with Canadian generally accepted standards for review engagements is a limited assurance engagement. The practitioner performs procedures, primarily consisting of making inquiries of management and others within the entity, as appropriate, and applying analytical procedures, and evaluates the evidence obtained.

The procedures performed in a review are substantially less in extent than, and vary in nature from, those performed in an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion on these financial statements.

Conclusion

Based on our review, nothing has come to our attention that causes us to believe that the financial statements do not present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc. as at March 31, 2025, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

Baker Tilly SK LLP

Baker Tilly SK LLP

Yorkton, SK
June 13, 2025


Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc.

Yorkton, Saskatchewan

Statement of Financial Position as at March 31, 2025

	2025	2024
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	563,303	780,129
Accounts receivable - note 4	197,601	11,984
Inventories	3,258	6,924
Prepaid expenses	949	9,156
	<u>765,111</u>	<u>808,193</u>
Capital Assets - note 5	28,104	33,662
Other Assets		
Security deposits	<u>1,230</u>	<u>1,230</u>
	<u>\$ 794,445</u>	<u>\$ 843,085</u>
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities - note 6	60,884	24,211
Deferred revenue - note 7	<u>445,183</u>	<u>418,710</u>
	506,067	442,921
Long-Term Liabilities		
Deferred revenue - note 8	<u>136,066</u>	<u>248,902</u>
	<u>642,133</u>	<u>691,823</u>
Net Assets		
Internally-restricted - SWAUMP	20,196	17,117
Internally-restricted - education and training	6,681	6,681
Unrestricted net assets	<u>125,435</u>	<u>127,464</u>
	<u>152,312</u>	<u>151,262</u>
	<u>\$ 794,445</u>	<u>\$ 843,085</u>

Approved on behalf of the board:

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*The notes to financial statements are an integral
part of these financial statements.*

Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc.

Statement of Changes in Net Assets
For the year ended March 31, 2025

	Internally-Restricted				
	SWAUMP	Education and Training	Unrestricted Net Assets	2025 Total	2024 Total
Balance, beginning of year	17,117	6,681	127,464	151,262	131,905
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses for the year	(6,921)		7,971	1,050	19,357
Interfund transfer - SWAUMP	10,000		(10,000)		
Balance, end of year	<u>\$ 20,196</u>	<u>\$ 6,681</u>	<u>\$ 125,435</u>	<u>\$ 152,312</u>	<u>\$ 151,262</u>

*The notes to financial statements are an integral
part of these financial statements.*

Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc.

Statement of Operations
For the year ended March 31, 2025

	2025	2024
Revenue		
Environment Canada	64,024	52,558
Water Security Agency	28,712	6,429
Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS)	438,760	376,567
Smith Creek Watershed	5,850	
Wallace Creek Watershed	21,700	21,700
Yorkton Creek Watershed	15,000	15,000
Contract work	250	10,425
Membership fees	67,925	63,125
Rental and mulch income	4,725	8,350
Interest	10,944	11,475
Other	1,360	10,278
	<u>659,250</u>	<u>575,907</u>
Expenses		
Administration	604	790
Advertising and promotion	4,100	7,299
Amortization	5,557	5,389
Board of Directors travel and meals	13,552	18,330
Consulting fees	27,500	
Courses and seminars	3,661	2,828
Equipment rent and repairs	3,742	3,306
Insurance	2,708	2,676
Licenses and memberships	2,269	2,148
Loss on disposal of capital assets		536
Meals	283	1,009
Mulch	3,665	5,294
Office, printing and postage	8,291	10,726
Professional fees	8,682	7,153
Projects	364,528	274,089
Projects - SWAUMP	6,921	
Rent - building	20,295	20,295
Supplies	1,289	235
Telephone	3,100	3,117
Travel	8,273	9,062
Wages and benefits	169,179	182,268
	<u>658,199</u>	<u>556,550</u>
Excess of Revenue Over Expenses for the Year	<u>\$ 1,051</u>	<u>\$ 19,357</u>

*The notes to financial statements are an integral
part of these financial statements.*

Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc.

Statement of Cash Flow
For the year ended March 31, 2025

	2025	2024
Cash Provided By (Used In):		
Operations		
Excess of revenue over expenses for the year	1,051	19,357
Add items not requiring cash resources		
Amortization	5,557	5,389
Loss on disposal of capital assets		536
Change in long-term deferred revenue	(112,835)	54,720
Net change in working capital	<u>(110,599)</u>	<u>56,576</u>
	<u>(216,826)</u>	<u>136,578</u>
Investing activities		
Capital asset purchases	<u>0</u>	<u>(2,148)</u>
	<u>0</u>	<u>(2,148)</u>
Financing activities		
Repayment of long-term loans	<u>0</u>	<u>(30,000)</u>
	<u>0</u>	<u>(30,000)</u>
Net Cash Increase (Decrease) for the Year	(216,826)	104,430
Cash position, beginning of year	<u>780,129</u>	<u>675,699</u>
Cash Position, End of Year	<u>\$ 563,303</u>	<u>\$ 780,129</u>
Represented By:		
Cash and cash equivalents	<u>\$ 563,303</u>	<u>\$ 780,129</u>
Net change in working capital consists of:		
Decrease (increase) - accounts receivable	(185,617)	(10,318)
- inventories	3,666	(6,924)
- prepaid expenses	8,207	(3,450)
Increase (decrease) - accounts payable and accrued liabilities	36,672	14,714
- other current liabilities	<u>26,473</u>	<u>62,554</u>
	<u>\$(110,599)</u>	<u>\$ 56,576</u>

*The notes to financial statements are an integral
part of these financial statements.*

Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc.

Notes to Financial Statements
For the year ended March 31, 2025

1. Nature of Operations

The organization was incorporated on January 23, 2007 under the Non-Profit Corporations Act. The Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc. works to protect and enhance source water in the Assiniboine River Watershed as guided by the Assiniboine River Watershed Water Protection Plan and the Yorkton Area Aquifers Source Water Protection Plan. The organization is not subject to income tax.

2. Significant Accounting Policies

These financial statements are the responsibility of management and have been prepared in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting (PSA) standards. Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc. has adopted the standards for government not-for-profit organizations, set forth at PSA Handbook section PS 4200 to PS 4270.

(a) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents represents cash on hand and cash held in banks.

(b) Inventories

Inventories are valued at the lower of cost and net realizable value. Cost is determined on a first-in, first-out basis. Net realizable value is the estimated selling price in the ordinary course of operations, less any applicable selling costs.

(c) Capital assets

Capital assets are recorded at cost less accumulated amortization.

The assets are amortized on a straight-line basis at the following rates:

Mobile equipment	10 years
Furniture, fixtures and equipment	5-30 years
Computer equipment	15 years
Signage	20 years

In the year of purchase, capital assets are amortized at one-half the above rates.

(d) Revenue

The organization follows the deferral method of accounting for contributions. Restricted contributions, subject to external stipulations, are recognized as revenue in the year in which the related expenses are incurred. Restricted contributions for which the related restrictions remain unfulfilled are accumulated as deferred contributions. Unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue when received or receivable if the amount can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

Deferred contributions are the portion of grants received prior to year end which relate to programs and services to be delivered after year end.

Contract revenue is recognized when the service is provided.

Members' fees are set annually by the board of directors and are recognized as revenue proportionately over the fiscal year to which they relate.

Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc.

Notes to Financial Statements
For the year ended March 31, 2025

2. Significant Accounting Policies - continued

(d) Revenue - continued

Investment income comprised of interest from cash and fixed income investments are recognized on an accrual basis. Interest on fixed income investments is recognized over the terms of these investments using the effective interest method. Other investment income is recognized when it is received.

(e) Financial instruments

Measurement of financial instruments

The organization initially measures its financial assets and liabilities at fair value. Financial assets and liabilities originated or exchanged in related party transactions are initially measured at cost.

The organization subsequently measures all its financial assets and liabilities at cost or amortized cost, except for investments in equity instruments that are quoted in an active market, which are measured at fair value.

Financial assets measured at amortized cost using the straight line method include cash and accounts receivable (excluding those from related parties). Amounts receivable from related parties are measured at cost. Equity investments are measured at fair value. Changes in fair value are recognized in excess of revenue over expenses in the period they are incurred.

All financial liabilities are measured at amortized cost, except amounts payable to related parties which are measured at cost.

Impairment

Financial assets measured at cost are tested for impairment when there are indicators of impairment. The amount of the write-down is recognized in excess of revenue over expenses. The previously recognized impairment loss may be reversed to the extent of the improvement, directly or by adjusting the allowance account, provided it is no greater than the amount that would have been reported at the date of the reversal had the impairment not been recognized previously. The amount of the reversal is recognized in excess of revenue over expenses.

(f) Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amount of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amount of revenues and expenses during the reported period. These estimates are reviewed periodically and, as adjustments become necessary, they are reported in the statement of operations in the period in which they became known.

Significant estimates have been made in the following financial statement areas:

- Useful life of capital assets
- Deferred revenues, accounts receivable and recognized grant revenues - the ultimate approval of the eligibility of expenditures relating to restricted grants lies with the granting body

Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc.

Notes to Financial Statements
For the year ended March 31, 2025

3. Risks Arising from Financial Instruments

The organization is not exposed to significant risks through its financial instruments with the exception of credit risk.

Credit risk is the risk that one party to a financial instrument will cause a financial loss for the other party by failing to discharge an obligation. The organization is exposed to credit risk from the potential non-payment of accounts receivable.

	2025	2024
4. Accounts Receivable		
Accounts receivable are comprised of the following items:		
Accounts receivable	193,538	10,001
Goods and services tax receivable	4,063	1,983
	<u>\$ 197,601</u>	<u>\$ 11,984</u>

5. Capital Assets

	Cost	Accumulated Amortization	Net Book Value 2025	Net Book Value 2024
Mobile equipment	33,607	21,727	11,880	15,241
Furniture, fixtures and equipment	31,953	15,729	16,224	18,421
Computer equipment	6,205	6,205		
Signage	17,286	17,286		
	<u>\$ 89,051</u>	<u>\$ 60,947</u>	<u>\$ 28,104</u>	<u>\$ 33,662</u>

6. Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities

Accounts payable and accrued liabilities are comprised of the following items:

	2025	2024
Accounts payable	53,953	6,950
Government remittances		4,166
Accrued wages	6,931	13,095
	<u>\$ 60,884</u>	<u>\$ 24,211</u>

Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc.

Notes to Financial Statements
For the year ended March 31, 2025

7. Deferred Revenue - Short-Term

	Balance, Beginning of Year	Less Amount Recognized	Plus Amount Received	Balance, End of Year
Department of the Environment	8,367	61,172	54,900	2,095
Ducks Unlimited Wetland Project	12,511			12,511
Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS)	396,620	260,283	294,240	430,577
Water Security Agency - Well Decommission	<u>1,212</u>	<u>1,212</u>		
	<u>\$ 418,710</u>	<u>\$ 322,667</u>	<u>\$ 349,140</u>	<u>\$ 445,183</u>

8. Deferred Revenue - Long-Term

	Balance, Beginning of Year	Less Amount Recognized	Plus Amount Received	Balance, End of Year
Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS)	<u>\$ 248,902</u>	<u>\$ 178,479</u>	<u>\$ 65,643</u>	<u>\$ 136,066</u>

9. Commitments

The organization leases premises which are located at 29, 2nd Avenue N., Yorkton, Saskatchewan. The lease agreement is for a three-year term commencing January 1, 2023 with an option to renew for one additional term. The lease calls for monthly payments of \$1,650 plus taxes.

10. Economic Dependence

The organization received 67% (2024 - 65%) of its operating revenue from Alternative Land Use Services and is economically dependent on them.

Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc.

Notes to Financial Statements
For the year ended March 31, 2025

11. Restrictions on Net Assets

The accounts of the organization are maintained in accordance with the principles of fund accounting. For financial reporting purposes, accounts with similar characteristics have been combined in the following major funds:

(a) Unrestricted

The unrestricted fund reflects the primary operations of the organization including revenues received for operations and administration.

(b) Internally-restricted for SWAUMP

The Source Water and Urban Municipal Project (SWAUMP) reflects funds that have been approved by the board for use by municipalities for water management related projects. Municipalities will be selected for funding of \$5,000 each.

(c) Internally-restricted for education and training

The education and training reflects funds that have been approved by the board to be reserved to be used by staff for voluntary job related education and training via conferences, workshops, seminars, classes, etc.

12. Contractual Rights

Contractual rights are rights to economic resources arising from contracts or agreements that will result in an asset and revenue in the future.

Significant contractual rights of the organization for the current year include three contracts to provide administrative services to three watershed associations within its membership boundaries. Two of these contracts are from January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025 and require quarterly payments of \$5,425 and \$3,750. The third contract is from December 1, 2024 to December 31, 2025 for \$75 per hour.

13. Change in accounting policy

The organization has changed its accounting policy for the presentation of net assets. Invested in capital assets is now presented with unrestricted net assets. The change in policy has been applied retrospectively.



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Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association

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