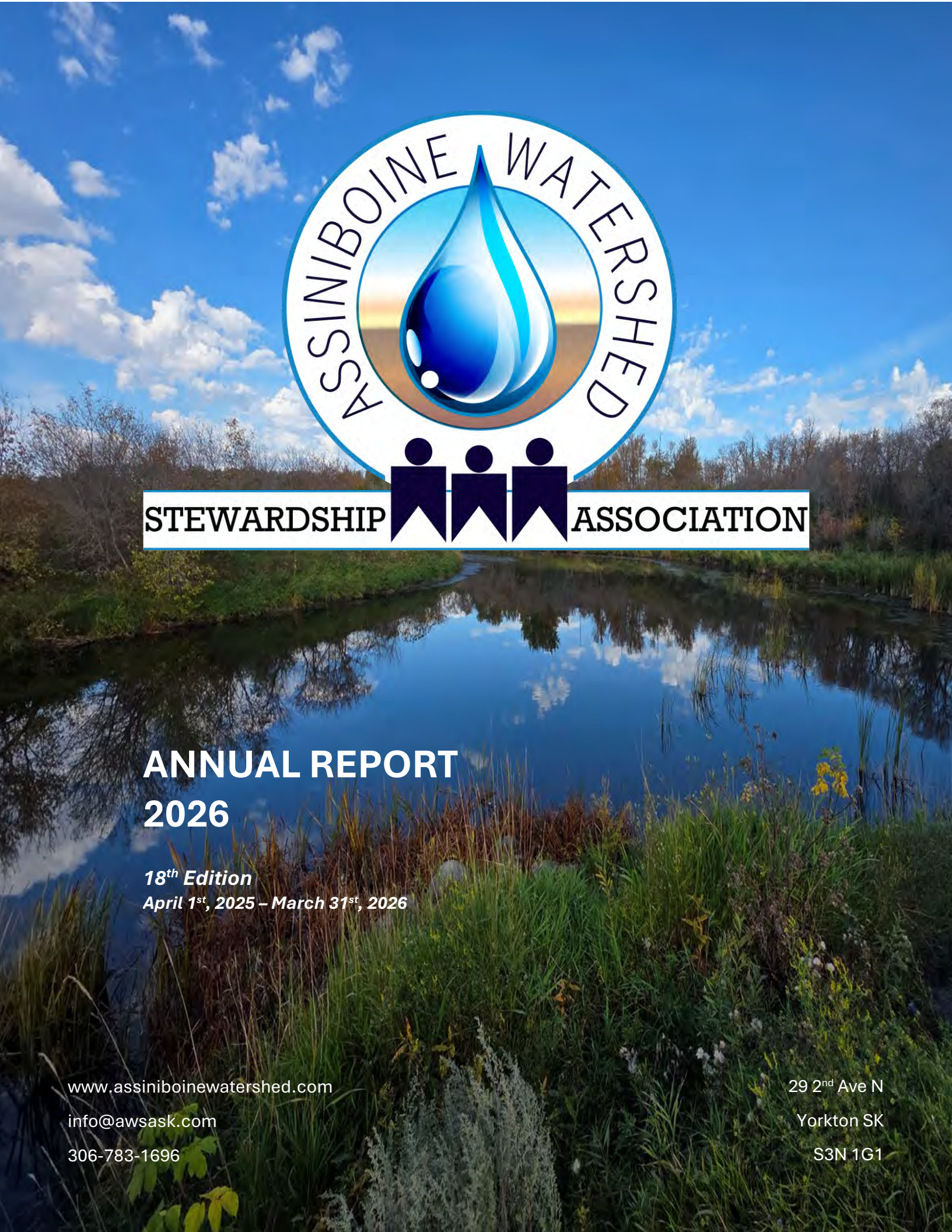

ANNUAL REPORT 2026

18th Edition

April 1st, 2025 – March 31st, 2026

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As we reflect on the 2026 fiscal year, running from April 1st, 2025, to March 31st, 2026, we extend our heartfelt thanks to the many individuals, municipalities, organizations, and partners whose continued support makes the work of the AWSA possible. Much of what we are able to achieve is rooted in relationships built over time, and we are deeply grateful for the shared care, commitment, and trust that continue to strengthen source water protection across the watershed.

We are sincerely thankful for the essential financial and in-kind support that helps sustain our projects and day-to-day work. We gratefully acknowledge ALUS Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada for their meaningful contributions, which continue to strengthen our ability to carry out important work throughout the watershed.

Our work remains closely connected to the communities we serve, and we are truly grateful for the support of our 38 Grass Roots members, including 25 Rural Municipalities and their 13 villages, towns, and cities. Your ongoing commitment provides a strong foundation for everything we do. We also extend our sincere thanks to the First Nations communities, community partners and groups, educational institutions, landowners, and individuals who have collaborated on projects, shared local knowledge, and championed watershed protection throughout the year.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes out to our partner watershed boards. Over the past year, the Wallace Creek Watershed Association Board and the Yorkton Creek Watershed Association Board have provided important financial support to the AWSA, and we are grateful for their ongoing confidence in our work. Building upon the Smith Creek Watershed Association Board's recent renewal and affiliation with the AWSA, we have spent this past year working closely together to reshape their operations, creating a stronger framework for regional collaboration and shared dedication to stewardship.

We are equally thankful to the members of our Whitesand, Assiniboine, and Yorkton Aquifers Advisory Committees for their guidance, thoughtful insight, and continued encouragement within their communities and networks. Your experience, local perspective, and willingness to stay engaged help ensure that our work remains grounded, practical, and responsive to the needs of the watershed.

Within the organization, we offer sincere thanks to the AWSA Board of Directors and staff for the time, care, and dedication they have given throughout the year. We also recognize the thoughtful leadership of our Watershed Manager, Mr. Jesse Nielsen, as he helps guide the AWSA into its next chapter as a growing and maturing organization by sharpening our future focus, strengthening continuity in our work, and helping build a legacy of lasting stewardship. We are working diligently to update our office and operations to better reflect technological advances in both business practice and stewardship work in order to ensure future-forward resiliency, and we could not have made that progress without the support of our boards and partners.

Together, your support is helping shape a stronger, more resilient future for water stewardship across the Assiniboine River Watershed.

Thank you for being part of the AWSA community and its future.

THE AWSA BOARD CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Stewardship in Action Across the Watershed



Reflecting on 2025, it is remarkable to see what we have accomplished together across our region. Our watershed is the lifeblood of our communities, and throughout 2025 we continued to move forward with purpose, resilience, and collaboration.

Protecting aquifers and water quality remains our highest priority. This year, our well decommissioning program continues with strong municipal support, helping reduce risks to local drinking water supplies while reinforcing our long-standing commitment to healthy groundwater and responsible watershed management.

We also expanded our collaboration with the Smith Creek Regional Watershed Association, building on our ongoing work with the Yorkton Creek and Wallace Creek boards. Together, these partnerships strengthen local water management across the broader Assiniboine River Watershed and reflect the value of coordinated, regional stewardship.

Another highlight of the year was the continued growth of ALUS and shelterbelt activity. With the support of local agricultural producers, we expanded natural infrastructure that delivers real ecosystem benefits, while our Wetlands & Wildlife poster contest continued to engage students and build awareness of healthy ecosystems, water sources, and stewardship from an early age.

To our agricultural producers, member municipalities, board, stakeholders, and AWSA staff, thank you. You continue to show that productive agriculture and sound environmental stewardship go hand in hand. Looking ahead, we know challenges will continue to evolve, but this past year has shown that the Assiniboine Watershed community is adaptable, innovative, and united. Together, we will keep advancing local solutions that protect our water and support resilient communities.

Sincerely,

Aron Hershmiller
Chairman of the Board
Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association

"I'm proud of what we've accomplished together to protect our water and strengthen our communities."
-AH

THE AWSA MANAGER'S MESSAGE

A Global Perspective on Our Watershed



"*Blessed*." That is the word that best sums up my week-long experience in Santiago, Chile, at the University of Regina-led *Bridging the Water Adaptation Gap* (BWAG) partners meeting last October.

First and foremost, I felt fortunate to take part in what has been the most rewarding experience of my career with the AWSA so far. Having previously participated in interviews with BWAG project coordinator Darrel Corkal, receiving an invitation to represent Canada at the international partners' meeting from October 27 to 31, 2025, was an unexpected honour.

I was one of three Saskatchewan partners selected to represent local water management experience. Together with a three-person academic team from Saskatchewan, we spent the week in discussion with South American project members from Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay, sharing the triumphs and challenges of managing water in a changing climate.

At first, the language barrier seemed daunting—we spoke primarily English, while our hosts spoke Spanish. Thanks to exceptional real-time translators, that barrier quickly dissolved. By the end of the week, we had even picked up enough Spanish to introduce ourselves and order a cold drink at a local restaurant.

Secondly, this trip reinforced just how fortunate we are in Canada to possess such abundant water resources. The severe water security challenges our South American colleagues face were deeply impactful. It reminded me that we often take for granted what others must fight for: clean, reliable water.

This contrast is especially stark here in the Upper Assiniboine Watershed, where our challenges typically center on managing an *excess* of water on the landscape. While dealing with flooding over the years can be incredibly frustrating, my time in Chile completely shifted my perspective. It made me realize that having "too much water" to manage is a luxury compared to having none at all.

As many residents look back on the unprecedented spring flooding that impacted parts of the Assiniboine Watershed earlier this year, it is worth pausing to reflect. While managing floodwaters demands immense resilience and hard work, let us also remember to give thanks for a resource abundance that so many communities around the world would consider a profound blessing.

Sincerely,

Jesse Nielsen

Jesse Nielsen
Manager
Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association

IN MEMORY OF LORRIE POPP



Lorrie Popp gave many years of dedicated service to his community through both municipal leadership and watershed stewardship. In addition to serving as Mayor of the Town of Langenburg, he was an active member of the Smith Creek Regional Watershed Association and the AWSA board from June 2024 until June 2025, where he brought practical insight, steady leadership, and a strong commitment to serving others. That spirit of stewardship continues through his son, ***Kevin Popp***, who served alongside Lorrie on the Smith Creek Regional Watershed Association and continues to support its work today as a non-voting consulting member. Kevin reflects on Lorrie's lasting impact in the following tribute:

I'll maybe reflect on what made my dad the man he was and why it had an impact to the community. While sitting with my dad during his last month, here is something he told me:

"The fundamental lessons I learned in life and have passed on to my kids and grandkids are:

1. *Work hard.... commit to tasks*
2. *Be honest*
3. *Stay true to yourself*
4. *Don't be afraid to take risks*

I believed in helping others and giving to our community. I was an active member of boards, committees, councils and organizations that were committed to serving our greater communities. I volunteered for whatever task or project required assistance. Taking the time to contribute to these organizations with insight and knowledge was another way of serving the community. "

My Dad was a problem solver. He would help identify a problem, offer solutions and ideas to remedy or solve and would often times be the one at the frontline putting the time in to execute a solution. Dad was one of those guys that gained the ultimate satisfaction and fulfillment by ensuring the organizations he supported were successful and helped others. He was humble and never looked for recognition. Dad was well rounded. He started his career working for a bank and moved home and bought the family farm in 1973. He remained connected to the outside world with his tax services that he offered at first with direct calls to clients at their kitchen tables to the latter part of his career having built a successful financial services company. This exposure gave him opportunities to serve in new organizations such as the Langenburg Town Council, and the Smith Creek and Assiniboine watershed boards. These came to him later in his life and he embraced the opportunity to serve with infectious energy and enthusiasm. Dad had lots to give yet and unfortunately God had another plan for him. I'm thankful for what he gave to me and taught me..... and will honour him by attempting to be an even better version of him one day. Making a positive and lasting impact on people's lives through good works..... that sums him up!

Official Obituary

March 23, 1951 - June 15, 2025 (age 74)

Lorrie George Popp was born on March 23, 1951 to Edgar and Eileen (Peppler) Popp. He grew up on a farm in the MacNutt area and enjoyed the hard work that came along with farm life. He attended MacNutt school where he met his life partner, Connie. They were blessed with 53 years of married life together and four children. He had many talents: banker, farmer, accountant, board member and lastly mayor. He was a community builder: serving on numerous boards and leading many projects to improve the communities he lived and led in. He will be remembered for his sense of humour and created relationships through his jokes, even if they were at your expense. While leaving much unfinished, Lorrie will be remembered for the legacy that he created with his family, his friends, and his community. On June 15, 2025, he passed into the gates of heaven and no doubt, immediately got to work.

LAST YEAR: THE 2024 - 2025 AGM



Last year's Annual General Meeting was held in Yorkton, Saskatchewan at the Painted Hand Casino. The AWSA debuted a refreshed forward-facing presence, featuring new banners and an updated Annual Report layout to symbolize the organization's ongoing growth. Following a review of the year's successes, the event shifted to celebrating key community contributions, honoring Don Olson with a memorial plaque and presenting a Recognition of Services award to Janet Kristjansen.

The annual election for the AWSA boar members was held next, resulting in new members alongside the re-election of many long-standing members being elected to continue their roles.

Finally, the meeting concluded with a dynamic question period, where municipality representatives addressed critical regional issues—such as Yorkton's wastewater plant upgrades, landfill operations, and beaver mitigation—while sharing their future visions for watershed management.

2025-2026 BOARD MEMBER ELECTION RESULTS

Yorkton Area Aquifers Advisory Committee		**Term Length**	**Term Expiry**
Aron Hershmiller	*returning*	2 Year	June 2027
Randy Trost	*returning*	2 Year	June 2027
Garry Liebrecht		2 Year	June 2026
Grant McCallum		2 Year	June 2026
Whitesand River Advisory Committee			
Bob Steffenson	*returning*	2 Year	June 2027
Parker Ellert	*returning*	2 Year	June 2027
Dwayne Kitzan		2 Year	June 2026
Stephen Spearman		2 Year	June 2026
Assiniboine River Advisory Committee			
Keith Strutynski	*new*	2 Year	June 2027
Jared Stefanyshyn	*new*	2 Year	June 2027
Jami Perron		2 Year	June 2026
Jeff Farmer	*new*	1 Year	June 2026





RECOGNITION OF SERVICE

JANET KRISTJANSON – 10 Years of Service

At its 2025 Annual General Meeting, the AWSA proudly honored the dedicated service of long-time staff member Janet Kristjanson, marking a milestone 10 years with the association. Since stepping into her role as Office Administrator in August 2015, Janet's extensive expertise in bookkeeping and financial management has been foundational to our operations.

Often the first welcoming presence to greet visitors, Janet's warm and caring demeanor is deeply appreciated by both clientele and colleagues alike. Her meticulous attention to detail ensures that the finances for the AWSA's diverse initiatives remain exemplary—a monumental task that involves managing the accounts for five distinct boards.

Though she serves in a part-time casual capacity two days a week, the scale of her impact is immense. Janet has been a cornerstone of the AWSA's success over the past decade, and the association is incredibly fortunate to benefit from her talent. Thank you, Janet, for your outstanding commitment and all that you do.







INTRODUCTION TO THE ANNUAL REPORT

Welcome to the 18th edition of the Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association's Annual Report. This report provides an overview of the AWSA's work during the 2025–2026 fiscal year and highlights the partnerships, programs, and stewardship activities carried out across the watershed. It is intended to give members, municipalities, partners, landowners, and the public a clearer understanding of the organization's purpose, the scope of its work, and the progress made over the past year.

The activities described throughout this report are guided by the AWSA Board of Directors and informed by the priorities identified in the August 2006 Assiniboine River Watershed Source Water Protection Plan and the August 2006 Yorkton Area Aquifers Source Water Protection Plan. Together, these plans provide the framework for addressing local water issues through practical, community-based action. They help shape the AWSA's focus on protecting groundwater and surface water, supporting municipal and agricultural resiliency, improving awareness and education, and building partnerships that strengthen long-term stewardship across the region.

This annual report is both a record of work completed and a reflection of the AWSA's broader role within the watershed. In the pages that follow, readers will find a combination of organizational information, governance updates, program summaries, project highlights, outreach and education activities, and examples of collaboration with municipalities, producers, community groups, and government partners. Taken together, these sections illustrate how the AWSA works to translate watershed planning into applied stewardship that responds to local needs while contributing to broader environmental goals.

At its core, the AWSA exists to support communities in understanding, protecting, and managing the water resources they rely on. Whether through watershed board administration, land stewardship programming, groundwater protection, infrastructure support, environmental education, or collaborative monitoring and research, the organization's work is rooted in the belief that healthy source waters are essential to strong communities, resilient landscapes, and a sustainable future.

The following statements continue to guide our work:

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 that every person in the Assiniboine River Watershed has a safe, reliable supply of drinking water, now and into the future.

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 the first board meeting following the 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 2015.

The AWSA generates operating revenue through paid membership. We also receive revenue for managing and administering the **Yorkton Creek Watershed Association**, the **Wallace Creek Watershed Association**, and the **Smith Creek Watershed Association**, 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 STAFF

To keep pace with a rapidly changing landscape, the AWSA staff has evolved to emphasize continuous improvement, technological integration, and modernized workflows. From strategy to stewardship, our team is built to be agile, resilient, and forward-looking.



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 Financial Officer

Janet Kristjanson'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 to not only the AWSA since 2015, but also to the Wallace and Yorkton Creek watershed boards, and now the Smith Creek Watershed Board for 2026 and forward. Janet has also been known to get involved with organizing and attending field days and has even gotten her hands dirty planting trees.



Watershed Coordinator

Our Coordinator, Cassandra Kowalchuk, joined the AWSA in November of 2024. Her role includes hands-on implementation and coordination of projects and programs including the Well Decommissioning campaigns, educational events such as the Edible Aquifers and Poster Contest presentations and working directly with communities and landowners to ensure our various services are delivered effectively. This role is pivotal in translating strategic plans into tangible actions on the ground. Cassandra has been heavily involved in preparing grant proposals to target infrastructure project funding within the Watershed.

OUR LOCATION

The AWSA office is located at **29 Second Avenue North in Yorkton, Saskatchewan**. Our office hours are **Monday to Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**, with the office closed from **12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.** We have operated from this location since **2009**, and over that time it has provided a stable and recognizable home base for the organization's work.

Yorkton serves as a practical location for the AWSA because it is the main urban centre within the Saskatchewan portion of the Assiniboine Watershed and an important regional service hub. Its location supports accessibility for member municipalities, landowners, partner organizations, and the public, while providing the AWSA with a visible and established presence in the region. The office functions as a central point for administration, coordination, communication, and public contact, and has helped provide continuity as the organization has grown and evolved over time. As a long-standing base of operations, the Yorkton office continues to support the AWSA's role in watershed stewardship and regional collaboration.



OUR STORY – HOW THE AWSA STARTED

The 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 organizations from 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.



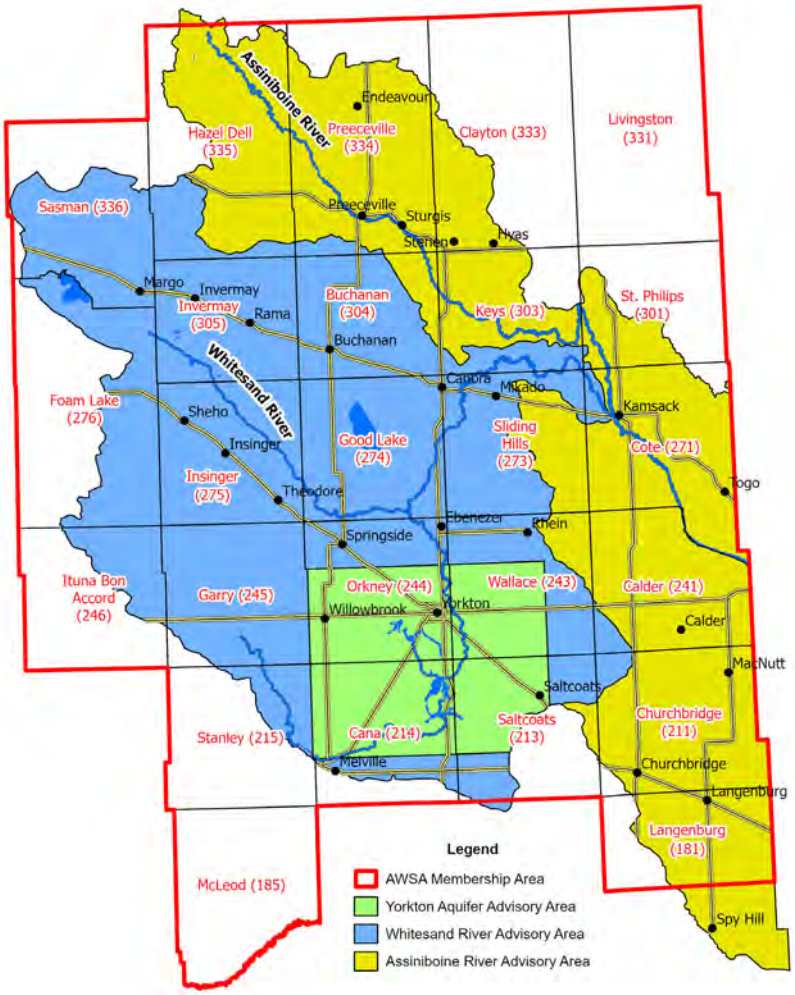
August 12th, 2009: Office Grand Opening

MEMBERSHIP & REPRESENTATION

OUR GRASS ROOTS MEMBERS

The AWSA is comprised of 38 grassroots member municipalities, including 2 cities, 8 towns, and 3 villages, and an encompassing 25 rural municipalities. Participation by all municipalities within the watershed ensures comprehensive geographic coverage and enables coordinated, watershed-wide identification, consideration, and response to water-related priorities across the Assiniboine Watershed.

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		



GOVERNANCE

The governance structure of AWSA is designed to ensure transparent, accountable, and effective leadership in support of the organization's mandate. It establishes clear roles, responsibilities, and lines of authority for decision-making and oversight, while ensuring that member municipalities are equitably represented.

Through defined governance bodies, including Advisory Area Committees and the Board of Directors, the structure supports informed decision-making, organizational continuity, and the responsible stewardship of resources in alignment with AWSA's mission and strategic objectives.

This governance and representation framework forms the foundation for meaningful and effective member participation at Annual General Meetings. Ensuring that representatives are current, informed, and empowered supports continuity in decision-making and strengthens the overall effectiveness of the Association's governance structure.

Consistent engagement through informed and active municipal representation is essential to maintaining clear communication channels, coordinated regional planning, and shared leadership across the watershed.

AWSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors is composed of twelve members, including two rural and two urban representatives from each of the three Advisory Area Committees, ensuring balanced representation across the watershed. Board members are elected to serve two-year terms, with no restrictions on the number of consecutive terms they may hold.

AWSA Board Members are tasked with representing both urban and rural constituents within their designated Advisory Area, ensuring that any water-related concerns from member municipalities are communicated to the AWSA Manager and Board.

Board members receive comprehensive knowledge regarding the projects and programs offered by AWSA. The primary expectation is that Board members serve as ambassadors for AWSA and actively promote its initiatives and activities.

The board convenes quarterly, with meetings scheduled for March, June - after the Annual General Meeting, September, and December.

Board members receive per diems and mileage reimbursement for travel to attend meetings. Additional benefits include fully funded opportunities to participate in a range of workshops and conferences throughout the year.

AWSA BOARD MEMBERS 2025-2026

Parker	Ellert	City of Melville	
Aron	Hershmiller	City of Yorkton	*Chairman*
Keith	Strutynski	RM of Calder	
Robert	Steffenson	RM of Good Lake	
Dwayne	Kitzan	RM of Insinger	
Jami	Perron	RM of Langenburg	
Randy	Trost	RM of Orkney	
Garry	Liebrecht	RM of Wallace	
Lorrie	Popp	Town of Langenburg	*Until June 2025*
Jeff	Farmer	Town of Langenburg	*July 2025*
Jared	Stefanyshyn	Town of Preeceville	
Grant	McCallum	Town of Saltcoats	*Vice Chairman*
Stephen	Spearman	Town of Springside	



March 2026: The AWSA Board

Rear L-R: Kieth Strutynski, Janet Kristjansen (*Administrator*), Jesse Neilsen (*Manager*), Parker Ellert, Aron Hershmiller, Dwayne Kitzan, Jared Stefanyshyn, Garry Liebrecht, Robert (*Bob*) Steffanson.
Front L-R: Jeff Farmer, Randy Trost, Grant McCallum, Jami Perron, Stephen Spearman.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

To support effective governance across all 38 member municipalities, membership representation within the watershed is organized through three Advisory Area Committees, providing a structured and regionally focused approach to representation, communication, and decision-making. Advisory representatives are annually appointed to their respective advisory committee for each of the 38 municipal members of the AWSA.

These individuals are the local voice and liaison between their municipalities and the AWSA. Advisory Area Representatives play a vital role in bringing local perspectives forward, sharing information back to their councils, and contributing to collective, watershed-wide solutions.

Advisory representatives are required to attend the AGM on behalf of their municipality. As part of their annual responsibilities, member municipalities review their current Advisory Area Committee representation and confirm whether to reaffirm their appointed representative or designate a new one for the coming year.

ASSINIBOINE RIVER MEMBERS 2025-2026

Keith	Strutynski	RM of Calder
David	Zerr	RM of Churchbridge
Duane	Hicks	RM of Clayton
Amanda	Burback	RM of Cote
Collin	Redman	RM of Hazel Dell
Cal	Statchuk	RM of Keys
Jami	Perron	RM of Langenburg
Neil	Abrahamson	RM of Livingston
Reg	Yaremchuk	RM of Preeceville
Ron	Sernowski	RM of St Philips
Jocelyn	Griffin	Town of Churchbridge
VACANT		Town of Kamsack
Jeff	Farmer	Town of Langenburg
Jared	Stefanyshyn	Town of Preeceville
Dean	Harris	Town of Sturgis
VACANT		Village of MacNutt



Rear L-R: Derrick Robson, Neil Abrahamson, Keith Strutynski, Collin Redman, Jared Stefanyshyn.
Front L-R: Wayne Mastrachuk, Hal Griffith, Jocelyn Griffin, Jeff Farmer.

WHITESAND RIVER MEMBERS 2025-2026

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
Regan	Graham	RM of Invermay
Leonard	Kuschak	RM of Ituna Bon Accord
Andrew	Waldbauer	RM of McLeod
Barry	Marquette	RM of Sasman
LeeAnn	Weinbender	RM of Sliding Hills
Brent	Ulmer	RM of Stanley
Denise	Leslie	Town of Canora
Stephen	Spearman	Town of Springside
Garry	Jopko	Village of Rhein
VACANT		Village of Theodore



Rear L-R: Parker Ellert, Dwayne Kitzan, Stephen Spearman.
Front L-R: Garry Jopko, Kimberlee Markusson, Denise Leslie, LeeAnne Weinbender, Bob Steffanson.

YORKTON AREA AQUIFERS MEMBERS 2025-2026

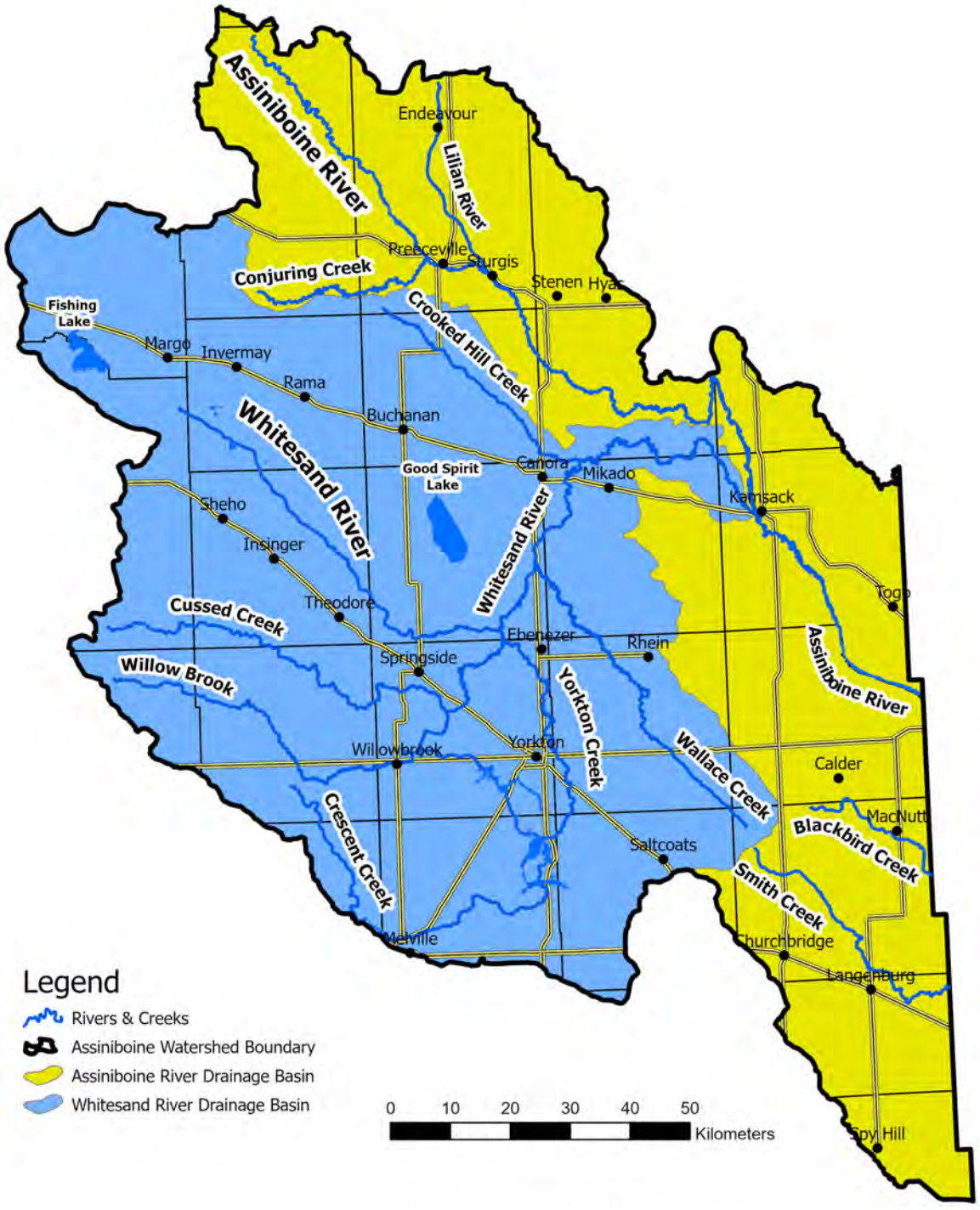
Aron	Hershmiller	City of Yorkton
Perry	Yelle	RM of Cana
Randy	Trost	RM of Orkney
Joe	Skitko	RM of Saltcoats
Garry	Liebrecht	RM of Wallace
Grant	McCallum	Town of Saltcoats



Garry Liebrecht, Joe Skitko, Aron Hershmiller, Grant McCallum, Perry Yelle, Randy Trost.

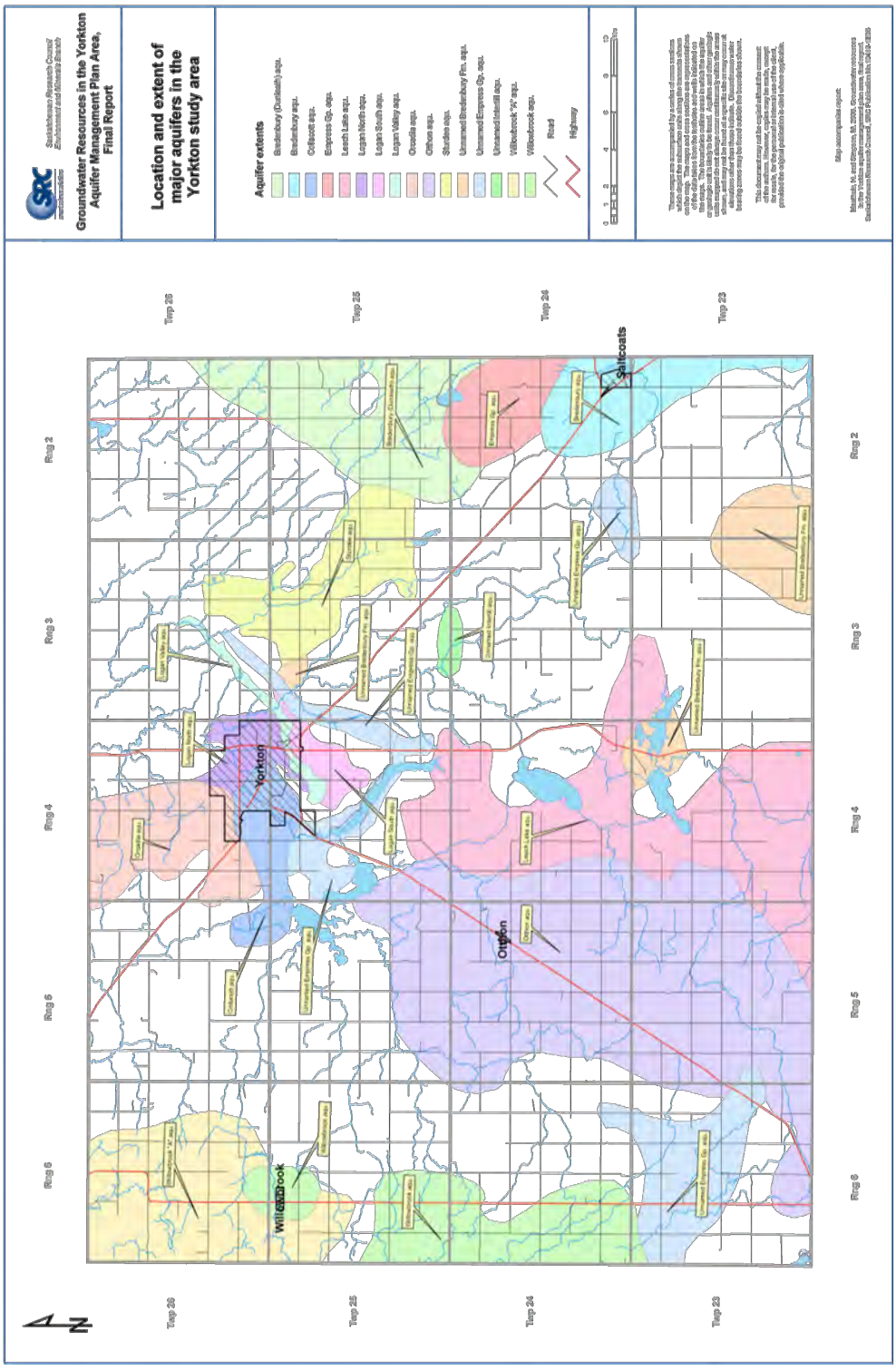
THE ASSINIBOINE RIVER WATERSHED

The Assiniboine River Watershed covers an area of 17,300 square kilometers in east-central Saskatchewan, forming an interconnected hydrological network divided into two primary systems: the central and western Whitesand River Drainage Basin and the northern and eastern Assiniboine River Drainage Basin. Local waterways throughout the region—including the Willowbrook Creek, Yorkton Creek, and Wallace Creek—collect regional runoff and flow into the respective Whitesand and Assiniboine rivers; all water within the watershed flows towards the east. This nested system ensures that while various communities sit within distinct local subbasins, they are all ultimately tied to a single, shared drainage pathway.



THE YORKTON AREAS AQUIFERS

Yorkton holds a distinct environmental profile as the largest community in Saskatchewan to rely entirely on groundwater for its municipal needs. To sustain this vital resource, the city operates a robust infrastructure network consisting of 15 water supply wells and a sophisticated network of 130 piezometer observation wells. Mapped continuously since the inception of regional water management frameworks in the 1990's, this monitoring system tracks major localized systems—including the *Logan, Leech Lake, Collacott, and Sturdee aquifers*—ensuring water extraction aligns safely with natural environmental recharge.



THE WATERSHED BOARDS

YORKTON CREEK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

A Legacy of Inter-Municipal Water Governance and Regional Flood Mitigation

The **Yorkton Creek Watershed Association Board (YCWAB)** operates as a vital regional water governance body constituted under the provincial legislative frameworks of Saskatchewan. The board is legally mandated to manage surface water flow, prevent devastating flood events, and protect agricultural lands, municipal infrastructure, and delicate ecosystems in the Yorkton area. As a sub-basin within the broader Assiniboine River Watershed, the Yorkton Creek Watershed encompasses an area of approximately **2,900 square kilometres** spanning **seven separate Rural Municipalities** alongside two major urban hubs. The jurisdiction of the board is bound by the borders of its member communities, creating a unified coalition that includes the urban centers of the **City of Yorkton** and the **City of Melville**, working in lockstep with the surrounding rural regions:

- RM of Saltcoats 213, RM of Cana 214, RM of Wallace 243, and RM of Orkney 244
- York Lake Regional Park
- **Extended Drainage Basin:** RM of Ituna Bon Accord 246, RM of Garry 245, RM of Stanley 215

To guide these regional decisions, the YCWAB is composed of appointed municipal representatives, regional park authorities, and critical technical advisors. Voting members represent local councils, while non-voting technical seats are filled by professionals from **Ducks Unlimited Canada** and the **Saskatchewan Water Security Agency (WSA)**. This diverse composition ensures that environmental, agricultural, and municipal priorities are balanced equitably during watershed decision making.

The core operational backbone of the YCWAB revolves around the ownership, maintenance, and regulation of **15 water management "structures"** south and west of the City of Yorkton. These engineering assets—consisting of control gate structures, earthen dams, weirs, and water channels—are designed to manage water levels in the system of lakes and marshes south of the City of Yorkton. The system controls the flow of water originating from two primary directions before it can threaten regional infrastructure or farmland. It regulates water moving eastward via **Willowbrook** from the west, directing flows systematically into the **Rousay Lakes** catchment basin, while simultaneously regulating water moving northward via the **Crescent Creek and Yorkton Creek** channels from the south to manage water retention and distribution into **Big Leech Lake**. By retaining excess water in these major wetland basins during rapid spring thaws or severe summer cloudbursts, the board safely mitigates upstream and downstream flood risks.

The YCWAB strictly reviews and refers to its formalized **Operating Guidelines** to govern the management of these structures. These guidelines establish the baseline parameters for releasing or retaining water, ensuring that the entire Yorkton Creek Water Management System operates as effectively and efficiently as possible to maximize channel capacity without causing downstream erosion or back-flooding onto private agricultural lands.

The extensive flood control network utilized by the board is the result of decades of complex land negotiations and capital investments. The foundational footprint of the current system was laid during the **Yorkton South Flood Control Project (1978–1982)**. Built in partnership with Ducks Unlimited Canada and Saskatchewan Agriculture, this **$1.7 million multi-purpose regional engineering project** established the structures, channel creation, and diversions used today. To successfully implement the development of the project, the YCWAB had to secure long-

term public access across vast tracts of privately held land by obtaining **Flood Consents and Right-of-Way Easements**, where necessary, within the project area. There are **over 250 such easements** permanently registered by the YCWAB. These legal agreements grant the board and its operators uninterrupted access to private property to complete channel clearing, bank stabilization, and structural maintenance. This extensive legal registry remains one of the board's most significant historical achievements, safeguarding the public's right to manage water across private boundaries.

Recognizing the growing need for specialized engineering, professional field mapping, and dedicated administration, the YCWAB underwent a major structural modernization over a decade ago. The **AWSA** took over as the **Administrator and Project Manager** for the YCWAB on **October 31st, 2014**. Under this long-term agreement, the AWSA oversees the day-to-day operations, field activities, and regulatory reporting of the YCWAB on behalf of its Board of Directors. The AWSA integrates the board's operational goals with modern environmental stewardship programming. The AWSA utilizes drone flight analytics and GIS tracking to map culverts and inspect the board's infrastructure. This allows for targeted maintenance such as channel clearing and beaver dam removal, and historic monitoring. To minimize sediment buildup within the board's drainage channels, the AWSA also runs agricultural incentive initiatives—including the Regenerative Agriculture Program and **ALUS Shelterbelt Establishments**—which stabilize soils and reduce rapid surface runoff before it enters the Yorkton Creek network. This collaborative framework successfully bridges engineering assets with modern environmental science, ensuring the ecological and economic resilience of the entire watershed region.

Seasonal Operations: Weather Events and Habitat Mitigation

Overall, 2025 was a manageable year for water levels and structure operations within the Yorkton Creek Water Management System. Aside from a significant July rain event in the Melville area that caused water levels on Crescent and Leech lakes to rise above what would normally be expected at that time of year, the system operated under standard conditions for most of the season. One unusual occurrence did arise during spring melt, when a large buildup of dead cattails collected at the Leech Lake outlet structure. Although it was an uncommon sight, the material was quickly cleared from the channel and did not affect operation of the Leech Lake structure, the most downstream control point in the Yorkton Creek Water Management System.

The YCWAB also completed the final phase of a project on Crescent Creek that began in 2024 to help mitigate flooding at the Brewer Road creek crossing, highlighted in our 2025 Annual Report. The work, completed in late November 2025, involved clearing the overflow channel that allows water to bypass the main beaver dam during high-water periods such as spring runoff. This final phase of the project allows the beaver pond habitat to be maintained, in keeping with the landowner's request, while still improving water conveyance in Crescent Creek. It is a practical example of balancing habitat retention with flood mitigation.













YCWA BOARD MEMBERS 2025

Parker	Ellert	City of Melville	
Rene	Richard	City of Yorkton	
Scott	Edlin	RM of Cana	*Vice Chairman*
Trevor	Protz	RM of Orkney	*Chairman*
Joe	Skitko	RM of Saltcoats	
Blair	Harris	RM of Wallace	
Lee	Rusnack	York Lake Regional Park	
Kevin	Rozdeba	Ducks Unlimited Canada	*Non-Voting Technical Advisor*
Laura	Uhryn	Water Security Agency	*Non-Voting Technical Advisor*

WALLACE CREEK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

Regional Flood Management, Land Reclamation, and Municipal Infrastructure Protection

The **Wallace Creek Watershed Association Board (WCWAB)** is a regional water governance body established to help member municipalities manage flood risk, restore water conveyance, and protect agricultural land and infrastructure across the Wallace Creek basin. Formed in response to the severe flooding of 2011, the board operates under provincial legislation and provides a coordinated framework for managing water across municipal boundaries. As a recognized watershed board, it has the authority to levy funds from participating members to support channel clearing, maintenance, and infrastructure improvements. Member contributions are based on the proportion of land each municipality holds within the drainage basin.

The Wallace Creek Watershed covers approximately **690 square kilometres within the Assiniboine River Watershed,** with the **Wallace Creek extending approximately 101 kilometres from** headwaters to confluence with the Whitesand River. The board is responsible for managing a water system that crosses several municipal boundaries and affects multiple communities:

- **Participating Member RMs:** RM of Sliding Hills 273, RM of Wallace 243, RM of Calder 241, RM of Saltcoats 213, and RM of Churchbridge 211.
- **Non-Member Catchment Area:** less than 1% of the watershed lies within the RM of Good Lake No. 274, so formal membership is not necessary.
- **Urban Hub:** The Village of Rhein, representing the sole urban municipal center nested within the boundaries of the watershed.

The board's creation was driven by the extraordinary flood conditions of 2011. Saturated soils, a heavy snowpack, and intense spring runoff combined to overwhelm local drainage systems, wash out roads, damage culverts, isolate properties, and leave large areas of farmland under water. In the Wallace Creek basin, decades of silt buildup and vegetation growth had reduced the creek's ability to move water efficiently, exposing the limits of fragmented, municipality-by-municipality water management. In response, affected municipalities worked with the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority (SWA), now the Water Security Agency (WSA), to establish a unified regional board capable of coordinating management and long-term maintenance across the full channel system.

Since then, the WCWAB has focused on restoring hydraulic capacity of Wallace Creek and reducing future flood risk through a sustained maintenance program. To date, the board has cleared approximately **55 miles** of the main Wallace Creek channel—approximately **88% of the creek's total length.** Ongoing work also includes beaver dam removal, culvert and creek crossing improvements, and bank stabilization throughout the basin. These efforts have improved flow, strengthened municipal infrastructure, and helped protect nearby agricultural land.

A key factor in this work has been the board's ability to leverage provincial cost-sharing support. Through WSA programs, including the **Agricultural Water Management Fund**, the board has been able to recover up to **50%** of eligible costs related to channel clearing and beaver dam removal. Additional support through agricultural water management funding has helped offset engineering, survey, and design costs for larger projects.

To support long-term access and maintenance, and to insulate the public's investment from future boundary disputes and ensure unimpeded operational access, the board has successfully negotiated and registered permanent **Maintenance Access Easements across 83% of the individual quarter sections** running immediately

along the creek. Through this unified model of inter-municipal governance, the WCWAB successfully transforms localized flood vulnerabilities into a structured, sustainable, and collaborative regional asset.

Today, the AWSA supports the WCWAB through administration, project coordination, and technical assistance, helping connect local decision-making with on-the-ground delivery. This partnership strengthens the board's ability to manage water proactively and maintain the improvements already made. Together, the Wallace Creek board and its municipal members continue to build a more resilient watershed that protects roads, farmland, and communities across the basin.

Mitigating Risks to Creekside Property

Following the 2014 flooding in the Assiniboine River Watershed, the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure installed a 7-foot smooth-wall steel culvert at the Highway 309 Wallace Creek crossing, four miles west of Rhein, adding to two existing 6-foot CSP culverts. The added capacity has since contributed to repeated spring flooding on a property located half a mile downstream.

In the fall of 2025, the WCWAB undertook work to mitigate the flooding problem created by the additional culvert. First, a gate was fabricated and installed on the third culvert to reduce downstream flow volumes during high water periods. The board also worked with the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure to secure an agreement placing operation of the new gate under WCWAB responsibility. Second, the board diverted a section of Wallace Creek to bypass the at-risk property and reduce future flooding concerns. Approximately 250 feet of new channel was excavated to tie back into the creek downstream, cutting off an approximate 1,500-foot meander. The result is similar to the natural formation of an oxbow in prairie creek systems, except this was accomplished in a matter of days rather than decades. Together, the reduced creek flow and diversion provide a strong example of protecting private property, water wells, and municipal infrastructure from flood-related impacts.

BEFORE



SPRING 2024



SPRING 2025



FALL 2025



FALL 2025



FALL 2025

AFTER

FALL 2025





SPRING 2026





WCWA BOARD MEMBERS 2025

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

SMITH CREEK REGIONAL WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

A Comprehensive Multi-Basin Coalition for Eastern Trans-Boundary Flow Management

The **Smith Creek Regional Watershed Association (SCRWA)** operates as a coordinated, multi-basin water governance body constituted under the provincial legislative frameworks of Saskatchewan. Officially incorporated on **July 14th, 1998**, the board emerged as a direct, unified response to the devastating regional flood events of 1995. Prior to this crisis, surface water on the easternmost fringe of the Assiniboine River Watershed was managed in a highly fragmented manner, leaving individual communities and agricultural producers isolated when addressing regional and trans-boundary water movements.

The emergency began developing during the summer and autumn of 1994 when consecutive heavy rainstorms completely saturated prairie soils. This baseline saturation was severely compounded by a brutal late-winter snowpack and an intense series of March blizzards that dropped unseasonably high volumes of wet snow. When spring arrived with rapid, spiking temperatures, it triggered an immediate, explosive runoff that the frozen, oversaturated ground could no longer absorb. The resulting deluge hit the easternmost side of the province and the Assiniboine River Watershed with unprecedented severity, completely overwhelming the region's waterways, with peak flows recorded in the basin exceeding existing hydrological records.

Dominated by an extensive network of prairie pothole wetlands that were already at full water-holding capacity, the landscape lacked the retention needed to slow the torrent. Millions of gallons of water simultaneously rushed out of multiple channels, exposing a critical systemic vulnerability. As these distinct sub-watersheds naturally bled into one another before crossing the Manitoba border, no single local municipality could solve the problem alone. The crisis forced a major political and environmental reckoning, directly prompting the federal, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba governments to jointly launch the Upper Assiniboine River Basin Study to formally analyze the systemic breakdown. The study's conclusions made it clear that a sustainable, long-term solution required an entirely new model of regional water governance. Recognizing that they shared a single, interconnected water management vision, the local municipal leadership united to form a comprehensive multi-basin association. What fundamentally distinguishes the SCRWA from localized entities like the Yorkton Creek or Wallace Creek associations is its status as a highly integrated **regional** amalgamation. Rather than monitoring a singular creek watershed, the SCRWA oversees an expansive collective network of six distinct sub-watersheds:

- **Stony Creek**
- **Two Creeks**
- **Cupar Creek**
- **Blackbird Creek**
- **Smith Creek**
- **Deerhorn Creek**

Following its initial formation, the association's mid-history was defined by the academic community's keen focus on the region for research purposes. In **2007** the University of Saskatchewan established the **Smith Creek Research Basin**, a move that transformed the region into Canada's premier outdoor laboratory for prairie pothole hydrology. Over the subsequent decade, this research proved that intensive agricultural drainage had reduced local wetlands by nearly half, increasing annual streamflow volumes by 55% and impacting water bodies as far downstream as Lake Winnipeg. This period also witnessed an unprecedented hydrological shift. Before the late 1990s, approximately 85% of the basin's streamflow occurred strictly during the spring snowmelt. However, between 2009 and 2014, the

region experienced its wettest years on record, causing intense summer rainfall to generate massive, unseasonal flood peaks, transitioning into the “new norm” of increasing variability in climate and precipitation.

This environmental volatility heightened local regulatory challenges following Saskatchewan's landmark **2015 Agricultural Water Management** overhaul, which mandated that tens of thousands of unauthorized private drainage works across the province be brought into immediate compliance or closed. The SCRWA was thrust into intense localized water disputes as it worked to balance agricultural production with downstream flood safety and environmental interests. In complex regional cases, the board had to execute its legal authority to **apply for land expropriation** to secure the necessary public right-of-way for coordinated water management when voluntary landowner negotiations failed. These efforts were perhaps most apparent within the **Blackbird Creek Drainage Network Project**, a network spanning 167 quarter-sections designed to safely coordinate, control, and license the existing and proposed drainage works within the basin. The sheer scale of this development drew national attention and prompted a formal intervention request for a federal environmental assessment, which was ultimately resolved on **December 13th, 2019**, when the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change ruled that the project could proceed sustainably under the board's localized oversight.

Recognizing that managing this intersection of academic research, intense agricultural drainage licensing, and multi-basin infrastructure demanded permanent, specialized staff, the board modernized its administrative framework. In **November of 2024**, the board officially signed an execution contract appointing the **AWSA** as its direct **Project Manager and Administrator**. Under this contractual agreement, the AWSA will oversee the regulatory reporting, infrastructure mapping, and overall project coordination on behalf of the SCRWA board of directors. This professional administrative union bridges the board's historical regional knowledge of water management with the experience of an organization dedicated to striking the balance between agricultural development, infrastructure protection, and environmental stewardship, permanently anchoring the long-term resilience of the eastern portion of the Upper Assiniboine Watershed.

Improving Water Movement Near MacNutt:

Recognizing the need to improve water conveyance within the Blackbird Creek basin, the SCRWA completed the first phase of a multi-phase channel clearing initiative in October 2025 to help mitigate future flood risk within the Blackbird Creek Drainage Network. Three miles of creek were cleared east of the Highway 8 crossing just south of the village of MacNutt.

Blackbird Creek



Before: August 2025



After: October 2025

SCRWA BOARD MEMBERS 2025

Kevin	Popp	Blackbird Creek	*Non-Voting Consulting Member*
Johnathan	Fuhr	Hohenlohe C&D	
Derek	Kentel	Langenburg East C&D	
Vince	Schnee	Marchwell C&D	*Non-Voting Consulting Member*
David	Fyke	RM of Calder	
Trevor	Bauming	RM of Calder	
Kelly	Fatteicher	RM of Calder	
Kyle	Marteniuk	RM of Calder	
Trevor	Baumung	RM of Calder	
Cameron	Wiebe	RM of Churchbridge	
George	Haas	RM of Churchbridge	
James	Schmidt	RM of Churchbridge	
Neil	Rathgeber	RM of Churchbridge	*Chairman*
Garnet	Putland	RM of Langenburg	
Leighton	Schappert	RM of Langenburg	*Vice Chairman*
Roland	Schappert	RM of Langenburg	*Non-Voting Consulting Member*
Terry	Hildbrandt	RM of Langenburg	
Tim	Mitschke	RM of Langenburg	
Lorrie	Popp	Town of Langenburg	*Until June 2025*

THE PROGRAMS

THE ALUS PROGRAM

ASAP: ALUS SASKATCHEWAN ASSINIBOINE PROJECT

Established in 2015, ASAP was one of the earliest "communities" to deliver the Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) program in Canada. As a community-led, farmer-delivered conservation initiative, ALUS engages producers to create nature-based climate resilience and biodiversity solutions on marginal agricultural land. This vital regional work is bolstered by the dedicated support of the SaskFSA and AWSA, an independent non-profit devoted to safeguarding regional source water. The AWSA's manager, Jesse Nielsen, serves as the program coordinator.

While ASAP launched with eight producers and 285 acres in its inaugural year, its core mission has remained steadfast: to preserve, protect, and enhance natural habitats and ecosystem services within the Assiniboine River Watershed. Over a decade later, ASAP has grown into one of the top performers in a network that now spans 40 ALUS communities across Canada, having partnered with nearly 150 local producers to fund and implement over 3,300 project acres.

These marginal acre or "edge-of-field" projects typically involve converting marginal cropland into perennial forage. To support this transition, producers receive funding for the initial establishment of the forage stand, alongside annual payments for its ongoing care and maintenance. Contracts run for flexible 5-year terms with an option to renew upon expiration. The program also allows producers to terminate a contract early if required; doing so simply stops future annual payments without any penalty. Because of this adaptable payment structure and unmatched flexibility, many participating producers frequently choose the ASAP program over other available conservation incentives.

ALUS

ALUS SASKATCHEWAN ASSINIBOINE PROJECT

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 nonsensible 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	N/A	$20 or $30/ acre*	Conserving existing prairie pothole wetland habitat adjacent to the newly seeded forage ($20/acre if wetlands > 2 acres; $30/acre if wetlands < 2 acres) 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.
Tree Planting	50% up to $3/tree	$2/tree*	Planting tree seedlings for shelterbelts or habitat creation.
Regen Ag	N/A	$40/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
info@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.

GROWING ROOTS REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

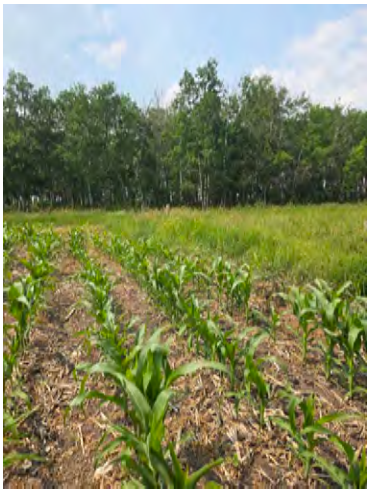


Launched in 2022 by ALUS with support from General Mills, Growing Roots is a regenerative agriculture program focused on enhancing soil health, biodiversity, and ecosystem services on agricultural lands. The program utilizes the ALUS model to deliver on-field programming that introduces farmers and ranchers to regenerative principles. Participants receive both financial support and technical guidance from coaches and an advisory committee of experienced producers to implement practices such as seeding cover crops for grazing, baling, or silage; intercropping multiple cash crops; and underseeding cash crops with ground cover species.

Beyond on-field projects, Growing Roots places a heavy emphasis on knowledge exchange and peer-to-peer learning, helping to build local, interactive networks of producers. The program is exclusively offered in just four ALUS communities across Canada—two in Manitoba (including ALUS Seine Rat Roseau) and two in Saskatchewan (ALUS Assiniboine West, ASAP, and as of 2024, ALUS SAW – Carrot River). Since the program's inception, ASAP has successfully partnered with 70 producers to implement regenerative agriculture projects across more than 10,0

2025 FORAGE & COVER CROP RESULTS

	2024		2025	
ALUS CROPS	**Target Acres**	**Actual Acres**	**Target Acres**	**Actual Acres**
Perennial Forage	300.0	457.1	110.0	197.3
Growing Roots Cover Crops	960.0	992.5	960.0	1,550.0









THE PAC: PARTNERSHIP ADVISORY COMMITTEE

All ALUS initiatives are managed by the PAC, which is made up of local farmers, ranchers, technical advisors, 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.

In March of 2026, the PAC gained a new member, Sharon Andreas. Sharon and her husband, Tom, have a 3,500 acre, 225 cow-calf pair mixed farming operation in the western portion of the Assiniboine Watershed, which has come to be known as the birthplace of Regenerative Agriculture for east-central Saskatchewan due to the early adoption of cover cropping and regen ag practices by the Andreas and several of their neighbors. Sharon first started planting cover crops in 2015, well ahead of the norm for her time. Sharon's expertise in cover crops was on display when she and her husband received the award for best cover crop in the ASAP's Growing Roots program at the AWSA's 2025 Producer Appreciation night.

PAC BOARD MEMBERS 2025 - 2026

Continuing:	Garry	Richards	*Producer, Coach*	
	Jason	Signarowski	*WSA Representative*	
	Kaitlyn	McMurphy	*Producer, MoA Representative*	
	Katelyn	Haynes	*Producer; Chairwoman*	
	Nathan	Maier	*Producer*	
	Paul	Valstar	*Producer*	
	Stephen	Breitkreuz	*Producer, Coach*	
Resigned:	Kris	Springer	*Producer, Coach*	March 2026
	Rob	Wunder	*Producer, Coach*	March 2026
New:	**Sharon**	**Andreas**	***Producer***	**March 2026**

ASAP TREE PLANTING PILOT PROJECT

In 2025, ASAP expanded its conservation initiatives by launching a pilot tree planting program funded through Natural Resources Canada's 2 Billion Trees commitment. The pilot engaged four participants and successfully planted 1,697 trees. Through this initiative, producers are reimbursed 50% of their tree seedling costs and receive five years of annual payments of $2.88 per tree, provided they maintain a minimum 80% overall survivability rate for their shelterbelt projects. To secure high-quality, budget-friendly seedlings well-suited to the Saskatchewan climate, the AWSA partnered with the Assiniboine West Watershed District in Manitoba. Following the success of this pilot, the AWSA launched a watershed-wide tree seedling distribution program in late winter 2026 ahead of the spring planting season.

2025 SHELTERBELT RESULTS

2025 Pilot Shelterbelt Program	Target Trees	Actual Trees
Tree Planting	1,550	1,697







THE WELL DECOMMISSIONING PROGRAM



The AWSA's Well Decommissioning Program is a longstanding and highly effective initiative dedicated to protecting groundwater resources and improving rural safety by properly sealing abandoned or unused water wells. The program has become a cornerstone of the AWSA's source water protection work because it addresses both immediate hazards and broader risks to aquifers that supply homes, farms, livestock operations, and communities throughout the watershed. Supported through collaboration between the AWSA, the Government of Saskatchewan's Farm and Ranch Water Infrastructure Program (FRWIP), and participating rural municipalities, the program has developed a practical delivery model that makes decommissioning more accessible for landowners while achieving measurable watershed-wide results.

The program's importance is rooted in the history of water use across Saskatchewan. For generations, dug, bored, and drilled wells were central to rural settlement, farm development, and community growth, providing dependable local water supplies in areas without centralized systems. As infrastructure, water delivery systems, and farming practices evolved over time, many older wells were left unused or abandoned. While these legacy wells remain part of the province's agricultural and settlement history, they can also become serious liabilities when not properly sealed. Decommissioning them is therefore not only a practical response to present-day risk, but also an investment in protecting Saskatchewan's aquifers, the safety of rural properties, and the resilience of watershed communities.

Within the Assiniboine Watershed, this work is especially important because groundwater remains the primary source of household and drinking water for nearly all residents. The City of Yorkton is also the only major community in Saskatchewan that relies exclusively on well water, underscoring the significance of protecting the aquifers that serve the broader region. Safeguarding groundwater is therefore not only an environmental priority, but a direct investment in public health, municipal resilience, and the security of local water supplies.

Proper decommissioning is one of the most important steps landowners and communities can take to reduce these risks. Abandoned or damaged wells can create a direct pathway for surface runoff, contaminants, and pollutants to enter underground aquifers, threatening groundwater quality and the safety of nearby active wells. In addition to environmental concerns, old wells often become hidden by vegetation over time, creating serious physical hazards for people, livestock, vehicles, and farm equipment. By identifying and sealing these sites, the Well Decommissioning Program helps eliminate legacy risks while supporting the safety and quality of the watershed's drinking water sources.

PROGRAM SUCCESS AND IMPACT



The strength of the AWSA's Well Decommissioning Program is reflected not only in its longevity, but in the sustained level of participation it continues to receive across the watershed. In 2025 alone, 43 wells were decommissioned across 24 of 25 of the AWSA's RMs, demonstrating both the reach of the program and the continued demand for this service. As water infrastructure and on-farm water sourcing practices have evolved over time, many older wells have remained on the landscape as undocumented or inactive legacy sites. The continued uptake of the program shows that decommissioning remains an important and practical response to those inherited risks. Since the program began in 2009, more than 500 wells have been decommissioned within the Assiniboine Watershed, representing a significant cumulative investment in groundwater protection, rural safety, and long-term source water stewardship.

While the Well Decommissioning Program has been available since 2009, its current delivery model has been shaped through deliberate expansion in recent years. In 2020, the AWSA introduced a pilot campaign model in the four rural municipalities of the Yorkton Aquifer Area to improve coordination, participation, and overall program accessibility. Building on that success, watershed-wide coverage was introduced in 2021, allowing the program to serve all member rural municipalities through a more consistent and efficient framework. This progression has helped strengthen the program's visibility, streamline administration, and position it as one of the AWSA's most established and widely recognized stewardship services.

MOVING FORWARD: A FRESH TAKE ON A LONGSTANDING PROGRAM

At the close of the 2025 decommissioning season, the AWSA undertook a strategic refresh of the Well Decommissioning Program to strengthen future campaign delivery. The 2026 campaign will introduce updated advertising, clearer program guidelines, and a reduced administrative burden for participating rural municipalities, all intended to improve consistency, accessibility, and overall program success. These updates reflect the AWSA's commitment to maintaining a well-established program while ensuring it remains practical, efficient, and responsive to changing conditions.

As part of this refresh, the flat program price for a standard decommissioning project was increased to $3,125.00 from the previous rate of $2,500.00, which had remained unchanged since 2021. This adjustment was made to better reflect current fair-market costs while preserving affordability for participants. For landowners, the increase represents an additional $100.00 in project cost, bringing the standard landowner share to $400.00 from the previous $300.00.

This standard flat rate applies to water wells classified by the AWSA as "Regular" abandoned wells. Coverage includes AWSA inspection and administrative services, required materials, contractor coordination, and related logistics needed to complete the decommissioning process. By clearly defining what is included within standard

program coverage, the AWSA is better positioned to provide a consistent experience for landowners, contractors, and municipal partners.

To support this updated framework, the AWSA also developed a Scope, Restrictions, and Limitations guide for the 2026 campaign. This resource provides clear guidance on what is included in the program, which situations may fall outside standard coverage, and when additional costs or responsibilities may apply. Establishing these parameters in advance helps landowners, rural municipalities, contractors, and the AWSA make informed decisions, supports fair and consistent program administration, and reduces the potential for misunderstanding throughout inspection, approval, and decommissioning.



This update also allows the AWSA to openly and transparently communicate the program guidelines, eligibility criteria, or procedures, as well as revise them as needed to reflect evolving best practices, regulatory requirements, or operational needs, while ensuring safety, regulatory compliance, and the integrity of the program.

KEY FEATURES AND BENEFITS

Key Program Details

- **Eligibility:** Any landowner may participate, provided the Rural Municipality (RM) agrees to act as the applicant on their behalf.
- **Eligible Locations:** Farms, acreages, abandoned yards, cities, towns, villages, hamlets, and resorts are all included.
- **Cost Coverage:** Each “Regular” well decommissioning project is covered at a flat rate. Projects that fall outside the standard “Regular” well category may be subject to additional scope, restrictions, limitations, or costs.

Program Support and Process

- **Comprehensive Coordination:** The AWSA manages all aspects of the well decommissioning process, including communication with landowners, contractor coordination, and rebate applications.
- **Streamlined Funding:** Projects do not require pre-approval from the Ministry of Agriculture, as they are classified as rebate projects. This allows for greater flexibility in scheduling and eliminates approval wait times.

Application and Reimbursement

- The RM serves as the applicant to the Ministry of Agriculture’s Farm and Ranch Water Infrastructure Program (FRWIP) for expense reimbursement, while the AWSA completes all required paperwork.

FINANCIAL BREAK-DOWN: PAYMENT AND REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS

The following payment and reimbursement structure is designed to keep the Well Decommissioning Program straightforward, affordable, and administratively manageable for participating Rural Municipalities and landowners. As outlined below, the process allows project costs to flow through the RM for rebate purposes while ultimately resulting in no direct net cost to the municipality. RMs also have the option to absorb the remaining $400.00 landowner balance, making decommissioning fully free to participating ratepayers. Historically, the RM of Saltcoats has elected to cover the landowner cost in previous campaigns and continues to do so in 2026.

1.	**Contractor Invoice:**		
	The AWSA-approved contractor invoices the RM for the well decommissioning work.		
	Sub Total		3,125.00
	GST 5%		156.25
	PST 6%		187.50
	Total Invoice to RM:	**$**	**3,468.75**
2.	**RM's Initial Payment and GST Claim:**		
	The RM is responsible for initially paying the contractor's invoice.		
	Total Invoice to RM:		3,468.75
	GST 5%	-	156.25
	RM's Net Cost after GST Claim:	**$**	**3,312.50**
3.	**FRWIP Rebate (90% of Sub-Total) to the RM:**		
	The AWSA prepares and submits the Rebate claim form to the Ministry of Agriculture's Farm and Ranch Infrastructure Program (FRWIP) on behalf of the RM.		
	RM's Net Cost after GST Claim:		3,312.50
	90% Rebate (on invoice pre-tax amount)	-	2,812.50
	RM's Post-Rebate Balance:	**$**	**500.00**
4.	**AWSA Reimbursement to the RM:**		
	The AWSA directly reimburses the RM with a program incentive of $100 to assist in reducing ratepayer costs.		
	RM's Post-Rebate Balance:		500.00
	AWSA's Reimbursement to the RM:	-	100.00
	RM's Post-Reimbursement Balance:	**$**	**400.00**
5.	**Landowner Payment to the RM:**		
	The RM invoices the landowner for the remaining balance. The final cost to the RM is ZERO.		
	RM's Post-Reimbursement Balance		400.00
	Landowner Payment to RM:	-	400.00
	Final Balance:	**$**	**-**

ADVERTISING AND DISTRIBUTION: AN EFFICIENT UPDATE

Traditionally, the AWSA designed, printed, and delivered campaign flyers for participating Rural Municipalities to include with ratepayer property tax mailouts. While this approach was functional, it also required repeated handling by municipal offices, created inefficiencies in printing and distribution, and often resulted in uneven timing from one RM to another based on local mailout schedules. For the 2026 campaign, the AWSA will transition to Canada Post's mailing service to distribute campaign information directly to targeted landowners within participating Rural

Municipalities. This updated approach is intended to improve consistency in timing, reduce printing and administrative demands, and provide a single streamlined message that can be delivered across the watershed at the same time. It also reduces the number of physical flyers produced by limiting distribution to a defined recipient group. As a result, RM offices will no longer need to insert campaign flyers into tax notices, although municipalities may still choose to receive a digital version and keep printed copies available at the office for local distribution as needed.





THE LAKE WINNIPEG BASIN PROGRAM

The Lake Winnipeg Basin Program is a vital federal funding and science initiative overseen by the Canada Water Agency under the Freshwater Action Plan. Dedicated to improving the water quality and long-term ecological health of Lake Winnipeg and its vast contributing watershed, the program focuses on reducing excess nutrient runoff that fuels severe blue-green algal blooms. By investing in on-the-ground nutrient reduction projects, supporting collaborative watershed governance, strengthening freshwater stewardship, and driving advanced freshwater science, the program empowers local conservation groups and landowners to protect critical water resources across the prairies.

A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY: MARGINAL LANDS, PERENNIAL FORAGE, & WETLAND RESTORATION

Discovering Challenges and Barriers to the Adoption of Best Management Practices in the Assiniboine River Watershed

The AWSA, in collaboration with Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), undertook a comprehensive study to understand the barriers agricultural producers face when adopting Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs). This critical work was made possible through funding from the Lake Winnipeg Basin Program, a federal initiative dedicated to supporting projects that protect freshwater ecosystems and improve the water quality and ecological health of the Lake Winnipeg Basin.

The project specifically explored the challenges surrounding two key practices: converting marginal cropland to perennial forage and restoring previously drained wetlands. Through an online survey of 67 producers and 50 in-depth, one-on-one interviews, the report captures firsthand perspectives on the intersection of environmental stewardship and farm economics.

The Landscape: Marginal Lands And Wetlands

In east-central Saskatchewan, marginal lands represent parts of cropped fields that consistently underperform, costing producers more to farm than they return due to persistent constraints like salinity, poor drainage, and erosion. Converting these weak acres to perennial forage acts as a practical corrective action that reduces input costs, stabilizes fragile soils, controls salinity expansion, and supports natural biodiversity. However, these same low-lying, poorly drained fields are often home to prairie wetlands, commonly referred to as sloughs. While these ecosystems are essential for flood mitigation, water filtration, and carbon sequestration, they are frequently viewed by modern producers as operational obstacles that create massive inefficiencies for large-scale field equipment.

Key Findings: The Producer Perspective

The study reveals that decisions on the farm are deeply grounded in practical, experience-based reasoning rather than environmental philosophy. The primary driver for converting marginal lands is purely economic: producers want to stop investing seed, fertilizer, and chemical inputs into acres that fail to produce a profitable return. Taking these unproductive patches out of annual crop rotation successfully simplifies daily operations, reduces equipment overlap, and mitigates persistent weed pressures from species like kochia and foxtail barley.

Despite these clear benefits, operational logistics consistently outweigh financial incentives as a barrier to adoption. Extreme time constraints during the compressed spring seeding window make it difficult for producers to prioritize seeding small, scattered marginal patches. Furthermore, a significant knowledge and equipment gap exists, as many grain-only operations lack the specific drills, agronomic expertise, or experience required to successfully establish a perennial forage stand. When it comes to wetlands, producers openly recognize their ecological value, but restoration remains highly contentious. Support for wetland projects is almost entirely conditional on the slough's specific location and its overall level of disruption to active, corner-to-corner farming operations.

Strategic Recommendations For Future Programs

To move beyond simple awareness-building and directly address the implementation barriers identified by producers, the report outlines targeted, practical recommendations for future program design. First, programs should incorporate custom forage seeding services as a core delivery mechanism. Providing access to experienced operators removes the spring timing constraint, eliminates the equipment barrier, and bridges the knowledge gap faced by conventional grain farmers. Second, financial friction can be mitigated by offering multi-year incentive contracts structured over a flexible five-year period, allowing for easy renewals to encourage long-term land retention.

For wetland restoration, programs must abandon a "one-size-fits-all" approach and adopt a differentiated incentive structure. Higher compensation rates are justified and necessary for restoration projects that present greater operational disruptions, such as wetlands located squarely in the middle of actively cropped fields compared to those on the periphery. Finally, reducing perceived risk by allowing producers to terminate conservation contracts without strict penalties will lower the barrier to entry and encourage broader initial program uptake.

Conclusion

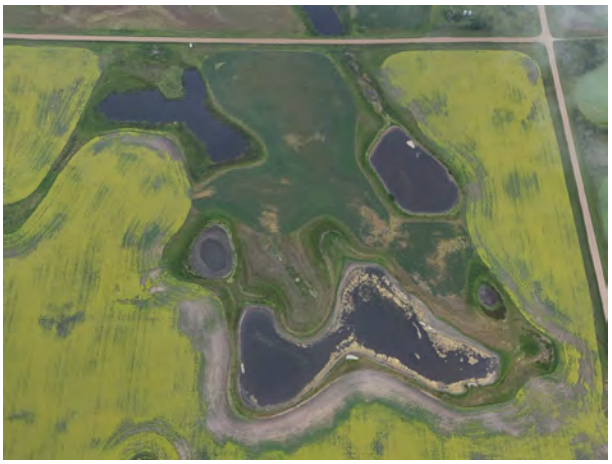
Ultimately, the success of BMP adoption is not determined solely by the size of a financial incentive, but by how seamlessly a program fits into the daily realities of modern farm operations. Producers are highly receptive to environmental stewardship when it clearly aligns with economic stability and operational efficiency. By addressing practical logistical hurdles—such as providing custom seeding over cash incentives alone—future programs can transform conservation efforts from a perceived administrative burden into a sustainable, long-term agricultural asset for the watershed.

Looking Forward: Pioneering The Future of Landscape Stewardship

With this foundational research complete, the next vital phase of our initiative centers on public mobilization, strategic communication, and programmatic evolution. The AWSA, alongside its partners, will actively deliver the insights from the survey responses directly to the wider agricultural community. Our comprehensive outreach strategy includes a dedicated feature article in Ducks Unlimited Canada’s prestigious Conservator magazine, targeted social media campaigns, and meaningful, direct follow-ups with local landowners to translate these survey insights into tangible on-farm successes.

Driven by a vision to continuously pioneer greater environmental stewardship, the AWSA is dedicated to cementing its position as a top-tier leader and premier contender in the realm of watershed conservation. We recognize that as our agricultural communities grow more resilient, our programming must evolve in lockstep. To significantly accelerate the adoption of these essential Beneficial Management Practices, we are actively advocating for enhanced funding models, implementing structural program enhancements—such as custom-tailored seeding services—and expanding on-the-ground technical support for producers.

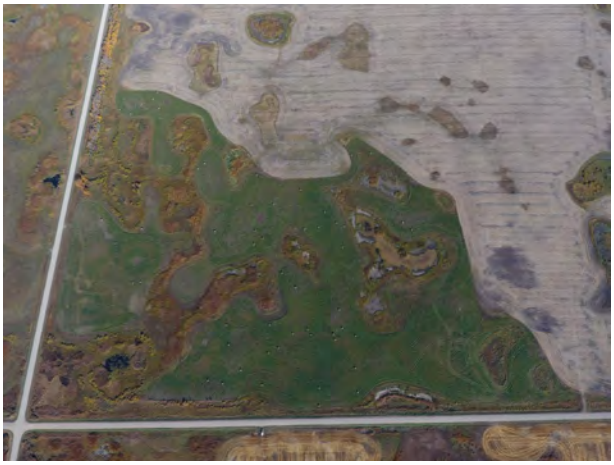
By modernizing program frameworks to directly lift the logistical and risk-based burdens identified by landowners, AWSA is proudly leading the charge toward a sustainable future where agricultural profitability and robust ecosystem health flourish together.













THE SWAUMP FUND PROGRAM

Source Water And Urban Municipality Projects

The AWSA created the Source Water and Urban Municipality Projects (SWAUMP) Fund to support eligible urban member municipalities, and those rural municipalities (RMs) that have assumed administration of an urban municipality, in delivering projects and initiatives that advance the safety, protection, conservation, management, and stewardship of water resources within the Assiniboine River Watershed. Examples of previously funded projects include flow meters, well retrofitting, and lift station upgrades.

Established in 2020, the SWAUMP Fund provides targeted, project-based funding to help municipalities address local water-related priorities within the Assiniboine River Watershed. The fund is financed through AWSA municipal membership levies and is intended to reinvest member contributions into practical, on-the- ground improvements.

2025 FUNDED PROJECTS

VEREGIN WATER CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

This application, submitted by the RM of Sliding Hills on behalf of the Hamlet of Veregin, outlines a proactive initiative designed to improve water management and foster a culture of conservation within the Special Service Area of Veregin.

This twofold project focuses on both immediate loss prevention and long-term behavioural shift. It first involves the installation of residential curb stops across the community. Veregin has unfortunately experienced difficult-to-detect and isolate water breaks in recent years, sometimes within vacant properties. The resulting delays in locating and shutting off these leaks have, on multiple occasions, led to significant water wastage totaling thousands of gallons and causing considerable expense for residents. Installing curb stops at each residence provides a critical tool for mitigation, allowing for precise shutoffs when a home is empty or when essential maintenance is required.

The second core component is the widespread installation of water meters in 38 Veregin households. The community's current water supply is unmetered, with residents paying a flat rate regardless of their actual usage. This structure unfortunately offers no incentive for responsible consumption. Our goal is that by metering usage, we can create awareness about individual household footprints. This will empower residents, particularly heavy users, to make informed choices and actively curb unnecessary consumption, leading to tangible conservation benefits.

The installation phase, projected to run from July 2025 to September 2026, represents a total estimated cash expense of $22,141.75. This budget includes the purchase of curb stops, service boxes, and rods; 38 water meters; and the associated professional installation costs. This forward-thinking project aligns directly with stewardship goals for the Assiniboine River Watershed and will ensure a more sustainable and secure water future for all residents of Veregin.

YORKTON PARK STREET PUMPING STATION REHABILITATION



The City of Yorkton's Park Street Pumping Station Rehabilitation project is a strong example of how municipal infrastructure investment supports broader watershed stewardship. With support from the Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association's 2025 SWAUMP Fund, the project helps strengthen Yorkton's potable water system while advancing the shared goal of responsible water management within the Assiniboine River Watershed.

A critical phase of the total rehabilitation relies on bringing the Park Street Reservoir back online. This station was constructed in 1969 and decommissioned in 2011. Once complete, the rehabilitation will add approximately 4,550 cubic metres, or 1 million gallons, of potable water storage to Yorkton's water system. This additional capacity will help the City meet water storage requirements, support fire protection, improve emergency preparedness, and provide greater resilience during periods of high demand or service disruption.



The SWAUMP Fund contributes to the project's success by helping offset eligible costs for a major water infrastructure improvement that benefits the community and the watershed. By supporting the reuse and rehabilitation of existing infrastructure, the fund helps Yorkton take a practical and conservation-minded approach: extending the life of municipal assets, reducing the need for new construction, and improving the efficiency and reliability of treated water storage.

This project demonstrates that water conservation is not only about reducing individual use; it is also about building and maintaining systems that protect water resources over the long term. Through this partnership, the City of Yorkton and AWSA are supporting safer, more sustainable water management for residents, businesses, emergency services, and the broader watershed.

A SPECIAL SWAUMP FUND UPDATE

CLEAR DASH: The Crystal Lake Emergency and Aquatic Restoration Diver-Assisted Suction Harvesting Project



In 2025, the AWSA board approved a special case SWAUMP Fund project in support of The Crystal Lake Water Quality Committee (CLWQC). Their CLEAR program team is preparing to launch its first full season of DASH operations to remove the rapidly expanding invasive Chara, a species of algae, from Crystal Lake's littoral zone.

Tom Kindred of the CLWQC provided the AWSA with the following update:

> *What is DASH?*
> *Diver-Assisted Suction Harvesting removes invasive aquatic vegetation at the source. Trained crew members remove Chara by the root using an underwater suction system. Plants come up intact, roots and all, and are bagged at the surface. Nothing passes through a pump, so nothing is shredded and spread. Compared with*

mechanical harvesting or manual raking, DASH causes far less sediment disturbance, minimal plant fragmentation, and a much lower risk of spreading the very vegetation it is removing. It uses no chemicals, making it safe for swimmers, fish, and native aquatic life. It is among the most environmentally sensitive methods available for removing invasive vegetation.

The project has reached an exciting stage. The purpose-designed, community-built DASH boat is in final outfitting, with on-water testing scheduled for later this month. A crew has been hired and is currently in training. To support safe and effective operations, the committee has developed an extensive set of standard operating procedures and a comprehensive training program designed to protect the crew, equipment, and the lake environment. The boat has also been designed to provide an emergency water supply for firefighting at Crystal Lake, adding a practical community safety benefit beyond lake stewardship.

Operations are authorized under a three-year permit from the Water Security Agency to harvest specific designated areas of the lake. The program will hold its official kickoff on July 3, 2026, with full-time operations beginning July 6 and expected to continue for at least six weeks.

This milestone has been made possible by remarkable community support. More than $45,000 has been raised and invested in the program, including nearly $26,000 in donations from cottage owners and supporters, a contribution from the Rural Municipality of Keys, and a $10,000 contribution from the Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association through the Don Olson Legacy. The committee is deeply grateful for AWSA's investment, which has been instrumental in bringing the DASH program to life.







PREVIOUSLY FUNDED PROJECT TYPES

2020	**2021**
Town of Kamsack o Well-head Protection Landscaping Village of MacNutt o Sewage Lift Station Upgrades	Town of Churchbridge o Water Drainage Enhancements Town of Springside o Water Distribution Flow Meters
2022	**2023**
Town of Saltcoats o Anderson Lake Aeration System Village of Theodore o Observational Well Retrofit Village of Duff (RM of Stanley) o Water and Sewage Works Investigation & Report	Hamlet of Crystal Lake (RM of Keys) o Water Quality Study Town of Churchbridge o Well-head Protection Landscaping
2024	**2025**
Town of Springside o RO Bottle Filling Station for Springside School Hamlet of Hazel Dell (RM of Hazel Dell) o Upgrades to Water Treatment Facility	City of Yorkton o Park Street Pumping Station Upgrades Hamlet of Veregin (RM of Sliding Hills) o Water Distribution Curb Stops and Water Meter Installation

EDIBLE AQUIFERS PRESENTATIONS



The AWSA has delivered Edible Aquifers presentations since 2009, with participation continuing to grow over the years. This year, we travelled to nine schools across the Assiniboine Watershed to deliver presentations, share our sweet and educational Edible Aquifers treat, and promote the annual Wetlands & Wildlife Poster Contest.

Our first presentation took place in Kamsack on January 24th, 2026, and we wrapped up at the end of March after delivering 12 presentations at nine schools in seven different communities. We were especially pleased to visit Dr. Brass and Canora Junior Elementary schools for the first time.

These presentations help students learn what wetlands and aquifers are, how they work together in the environment, and why they are important to healthy wildlife and vibrant ecosystems. They also encourage discussion about local water sources, water treatment, and the role we all play in keeping our watershed clean and healthy.

After each presentation, students were treated to Edible Aquifers—a fun mix of gummy worms, Jell-O, Sprite, whipped cream, sprinkles, and a straw that creates an edible model of an aquifer and a well.

This year, the AWSA also received a generous $500.00 donation from Yorkton's Legacy Co-op to help cover the cost of Edible Aquifer ingredients and presentation delivery. We are grateful for their support in helping us continue this engaging educational program.













THE WETLANDS & WILDLIFE POSTER CONTEST



Building on the information shared in our accompanying educational presentations, this year's Wetlands & Wildlife Poster Contest saw students masterfully create artwork showcasing the diverse animals and landscapes of their local watershed. As a core requirement, each artist also submitted a unique written explanation detailing why wetlands are so vital to our environment.

Running from January 10th to March 30th—with awards and pizza parties continuing through April 10th—participation numbers absolutely soared. We received a **record-breaking 301 posters** spanning 17 classes across 13 different schools in 9 towns! We were also thrilled to welcome five new schools to the competition: Dr. Brass, Columbia, Canora Junior Elementary, Norquay, and North Valley Elementary.

Selecting the top 3 and top 10 entries was an incredibly difficult task. We are immensely grateful for the students' efforts; their palpable enthusiasm and hope shone brightly through each submission, bringing unique visions and immense talent to life.

Our division champions received some fantastic rewards for their hard work:

- **1st Place:** $100 and a pizza party for their entire class!
- **2nd Place:** $50
- **3rd Place:** $25

A huge thank you to **Pizza Hut in Yorkton** and the **Gateway Co-op in Canora** for helping us organize the 1st place celebrations and ensuring the students received the absolute best-tasting pizzas for their special day.

To shake things up this year, we introduced two exciting new award categories: **Staff Favorites** and **New Medium**. Winners in these categories, along with our Top 10 runners-up, were recognized with a variety of fantastic prizes. Our amazing community partners stepped up to help broaden our young artists' horizons with some incredible donations. The **Yorkton Exhibition Association** provided Summer Fair Exhibition passes, while the **City of Yorkton** gifted swimming passes to the Gallagher Centre Access Communications Water Park. Additional prizes included ice cream, pastry, and bubble tea gift certificates from local businesses across our watershed communities.

These awards are intended to spark a lifelong enthusiasm for learning, encourage a healthy competitive spirit, and honor the creativity and effort of these talented students. Whether it’s a special gift card, a fun treat, or a surprise package, our runner-up prizes ensure that more young artists get their well-deserved moment in the spotlight. Every single entry brings us closer to a healthier watershed—and every winner helps inspire a brighter future for our community.

2026 WINNERS

	Grades 3/4 Division			Grades 5/6 Division		
1st Place	Shaun D	Canora Junior	Canora	Hope S	Yorkdale	Yorkton
2nd Place	Penelope G	Davison	Melville	Zoe Marie V	St Henrys Sr	Yorkton
3rd Place	Jade N	Columbia	Yorkton	Willow F	St Michaels	Melville
Top 10 (Alphabetical)	Aria F	Columbia	Yorkton	Aurora W	St Henrys Sr	Melville
	Chantelle Q	Preeceville	Preeceville	Brooklynn M	Preeceville	Preeceville
	Harlow R	Saltcoats	Saltcoats	Lexi W	Norquay	Norquay
	Holly N	St Michaels	Yorkton	Nya W	Davison	Melville
	Rhyan D	Preeceville	Preeceville	Quinnley E	Kamsack	Kamsack
	Sadie C	Springside	Springside	Stella M	St Michaels	Yorkton
	Skyla P	Saltcoats	Saltcoats	Vivian R	St Michaels	Yorkton
Staff Favorites	Jackson K	Davison	Melville	Claire J	St Michaels	Yorkton
	Kevin K	North Valley	Neudorf	Isabella N	St Michaels	Yorkton
	Margaret K	Columbia	Yorkton	Sophie P	Preeceville	Preeceville
New Medium				Chelsea L	St Henrys Sr	Melville
				Ty M	Yorkdale	Yorkton

GRADES 3 / 4 POSTERS

1ST PLACE



2ND PLACE



3RD PLACE



GRADES 5 / 6 POSTERS

1ST PLACE



2ND PLACE



3RD PLACE



HIGHLIGHTS







ASSINIBOINE WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP ASSOCIATION

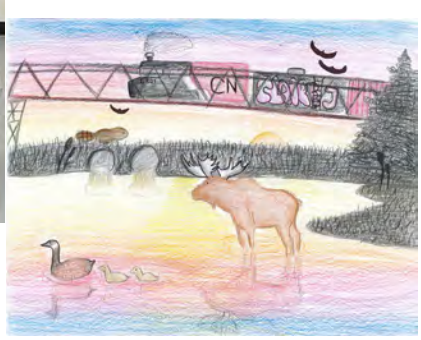
















EVENTS & ENGAGEMENTS

Bringing people together is the cornerstone of building a vibrant community around the work we do. Throughout the year, our team and partners connect at staple industry events, including the SCDA, SAW, and Sask Soil conferences and AGMs. These gatherings provide vital opportunities to put our heads together, discuss upcoming projects, voice collective concerns, and celebrate our shared successes.

Beyond the conference halls, our Field Days and Workshops transition that knowledge into action, bringing people together for hands-on learning under the open sky. We believe in doing more than just talking about our vision—we want to show it off. There is immense value in stepping outside, catching some sunshine, and walking the land alongside fellow producers, colleagues, mentors, and friends.





2026 CONFERENCES

SaskSoil Conference
TCU Place
Saskatoon SK
February 11th - 12th, 2026

SCDA AGM
Dakota Dunes
Saskatoon SK
March 25th - 27th, 2026



2025 CONFERENCES

AWSA AGM
Painted Hand Casino
Yorkton SK
June 18th, 2025

ALUS West Conference
Wheatland County
Strathmore AB
September 16th - 19th, 2025



SAW Conference
Wascana Country Club
Regina SK
October 22nd -23rd, 2025

MFGA Conference
Victoria Inn Convention Centre
Brandon MB
November 12th -13th, 2025



2025 FIELD DAYS & WORKSHOPS

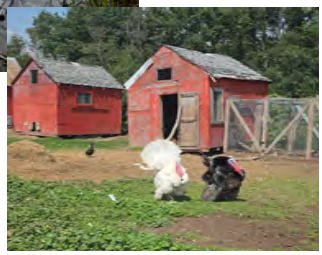
Polvi Field Day
with Understanding Ag
Esterhazy SK
July 18th, 2025

Soil Health for Farmers Workshop
with ALUS, COG and CARA Labs
Canora SK
July 30th, 2025



Breitkreuz Prybylski Hull Field Day
with ALUS and MOA
Willowbrook SK
August 12th, 2025

Floating Wetlands Installation
with SAW
Yorkton SK
August 22nd & September 23rd, 2025



2025 CHRISTMAS PARTY



Windy Acres
Yorkton SK
December 5th, 2025

Our annual Christmas party is more than just a festive tradition; it is a deeply meaningful wrap-up to the year and a vital opportunity to pause, connect, and celebrate the incredible individuals who drive our organization forward. Amidst the hectic year-end rush of deadlines, reporting, and preparation, this gathering allows us to step back and reflect on our shared achievements, express our sincere gratitude, and strengthen the vibrant community spirit that truly defines the AWSA. In doing so, it honors the hard work and dedication of our board members, and beautifully carries us forward into an inspired and successful new year.















SPECIAL FEATURE: BRIDGING THE WATER ADAPTATION GAP



Santiago, Chile

South America

October 27th - November 31st, 2025

The BWAG project is a five-year international research initiative running from September 2022 to approximately December 2027 that investigates how vulnerable agricultural regions may develop sustainable adaptation strategies to address water issues exacerbated by climate change. Regions in Canada, Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay were selected for their shared reliance on agriculture and their distinct vulnerabilities to water shortages, such as scarcity and drought, as well as water-related natural hazards, including excess water, severe storms, and catastrophic flooding. The AWSA manager, Jesse Nielsen, was one of three Canadian project partners who attended the 2025 BWAG International Partners Meeting. The following is a summary of the insights and findings from those meetings:

Limits Of Legacy Water Governance In A Changing Climate

What worked in the past may not hold water in the future. Water governance cannot remain constrained by legacy policies and regulations; instead, it must be adaptable and dynamic to remain effective. An ever-changing climate means that many of the traditional ways of managing water are simply unreliable and ill-suited to today's realities. The landscape of each of the participating countries has changed significantly since many of the laws and rules governing water were put in place. For example, Argentinian partners indicated that their Water Act was formed during a period of water abundance, but in recent memory, the region has faced the exact opposite situation.

Effective water governance must bring together all water users at a common table. Single government agencies cannot speak on behalf of everyone; individual stakeholder voices must be present, directly contributing to the conversations and decision-making that affect them. When people's voices and concerns are truly heard and integrated, effective governance begins. There needs to be a strong synergy between government agencies working in unison with grassroots organizations to create, implement, and enforce proactive, ever-evolving land-use and watershed plans. This includes legislation and regulations that provide incentives for good water stewardship alongside meaningful enforcement mechanisms to prevent the abuse of water resources.

Passionate, Motivated Individuals Required To Drive Change And Progress

One of the most prominent characteristics of the individuals involved in the BWAG experience in Chile is their passion. Throughout the meetings, there was a palpable sense of commitment from all attendees. The level of energy, drive, and enthusiasm to collaborate, share knowledge, and remain open to mutual learning is rare in professional frameworks. Participants are involved on a voluntary basis because of a genuine desire to contribute to the project.

It was evident each day that every single person at the meetings was present because they were excited to be a part of the sharing and learning taking place. Partners and researchers openly shared not only their professional

knowledge and experience regarding water, but also their personal connections and core motivations for wanting to improve global water security, creating a deeply collaborative environment.

Lessons From Chile, Reflections For Home: Water As A Basic Human Right



When water is limited and scarce, water for human consumption and sanitation must be prioritized above all other uses. Regardless of existing water rights, licenses, or allocations, basic human needs must remain at the top of the priority list. There is a profound difference between living well and merely surviving, and access to adequate water—the element of life—is the very essence of that distinction.

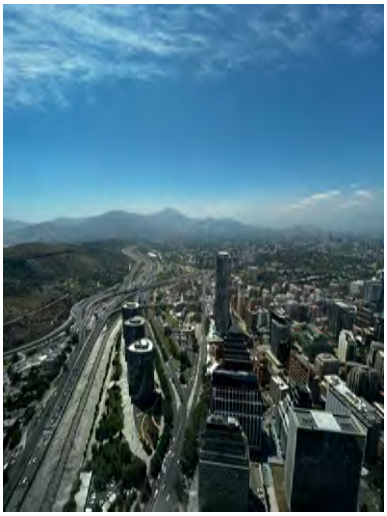
Many examples of this reality were shared throughout the week. Most impactful was learning that the Chilean school visited by the partners often has to shut down because of a lack of water due to poorly maintained and failing water infrastructure. While children in water-secure nations might welcome a day off from school, for many Chilean children, school closures are a hardship, as the school environment represents the safest space available to them.

This reality underscores a major takeaway from the time spent in Chile: residents of water-abundant nations like Canada, particularly those with reliable access to clean water, are incredibly fortunate. Over a career in the watershed sector, it becomes obvious that most Canadians take for granted that they will always have all the clean water they need. The BWAG experience in Chile strongly reinforces the need to challenge this complacency. Because Canada is a water-rich nation, it is vital to recognize this immense privilege. Consequently, there is a duty not only to be good local stewards of these resources, but also to support the global water picture by sharing knowledge, experience, and leadership in water management for the betterment of all humanity.

A Defining Takeaway From The BWAG Partners Meeting

"*In order to tackle the issue of water adaptation gaps we have to create, foster, and nourish a community of water users whose diverse values around water is the common ground that brings people together, drives everyone to care and compels people to want to take actions for sustainable water management*."

- *Jesse Nielsen*

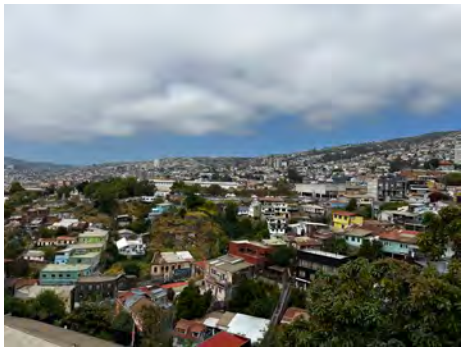














BWAG Canadian Research Team

L-R: Lenore Swystun, Darrell Corkal, Margot Hulbert, Jesse Nielsen, Candace Mitschke, Kristian Josephson









SERVICES & EQUIPMENT

CULVERT INFRASTRUCTURE MAPPING

The AWSA offers culvert mapping services to all member municipalities and has completed mapping in all urban member communities. Using our Hemisphere RTK GPS system, we record precise culvert locations, elevations, inverts, and key attributes such as length, diameter, material, and condition.

Data can be provided as an Excel spreadsheet, digital or printed maps, or a KMZ file for use in Google Earth and GIS software. KMZ files allow users to view each culvert on the landscape and access detailed attributes, photos, and RM division boundaries in one practical format.

This information supports both asset and water management planning and can be paired with high-accuracy LiDAR collected across much of the watershed in fall 2023 to support flood and water movement modelling. The best time to complete this work is early spring, when flowing water and reduced ditch vegetation make culverts easier to locate. For RMs, this service provides practical, organized data to support maintenance decisions, infrastructure planning, and a better understanding of water movement across the landscape.



DRONE / UAV



The AWSA provides UAV imagery and mapping services that enhance how we visualize and assess the landscape and infrastructure we help manage. When paired with survey and GIS data, imagery can be linked to precise GPS coordinates and used in platforms such as Google Earth.

From still imagery and video to mapping and thermal sensing, AWSA has the equipment and technical capacity to support a wide range of applications, including detecting and removing beaver dams. We routinely collect imagery during flood season and along watercourses to identify barriers, assess channel conditions, and evaluate where channel clearing or channelization may be beneficial. This technology is also used to support the reporting and monitoring of ALUS projects. For members and project partners, these services provide timely visual information that supports planning, project oversight, and a clearer understanding of conditions on the ground.

SHELTERBELT PROGRAM

Building on a longstanding partnership with ALUS and the successful 2025 pilot initiative, the AWSA launched a watershed-wide shelterbelt program in March 2026. This service provides residents within the AWSA membership area with high-quality tree seedlings priced as competitively as any source on the prairies, with promotional flyers distributed to rural mailboxes across the region.



The program helps make shelterbelt projects highly achievable for local landowners, delivering critical environmental benefits such as wind protection, enhanced wildlife habitat, soil conservation, and improved water retention. To further expand this support, the AWSA is piloting an in-house program that offers additional funding and expanded tree stock options to complement existing partnerships and strengthen long-term landscape resilience.

To ensure the success of these planting projects, the AWSA also provides specialized equipment rentals exclusively to members within the watershed area. Available machinery includes a hydraulic tree planter designed to efficiently manage large-scale projects, as well as plastic mulch applicators that drastically reduce post-planting maintenance by effectively suppressing weeds within the tree rows.

TREE PLANTING EQUIPMENT



To support shelterbelt establishment, the AWSA rents tree planting equipment to ratepayers within our membership area. When the PFRA ceased operations in 2013, the AWSA acquired its tree planting equipment, helping ensure that this important service remained available in the region. We currently have two tree planters and two mulch applicators available to assist landowners with efficient, consistent planting. For members, this means continued local access to practical equipment that helps turn shelterbelt plans into successful on-the-ground projects.

Research from the PFRA's Indian Head Shelterbelt Centre showed that plastic mulch can increase tree growth by approximately 25 percent by reducing weed competition and warming the soil earlier in spring. By offering both the mulch and the equipment needed to apply it, the AWSA helps improve planting success and long-term shelterbelt performance. We are one of only a handful of locations in Saskatchewan that still carries plastic mulch and provides the equipment required to use it, giving members access to tools that support stronger establishment and better long-term results.

SPECIAL SERVICES FEATURE: WATER SAMPLING 2025

In spring 2025, the Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association (AWSA) partnered with Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada to collect water samples for the Canadian Water Monitoring Program for Pesticides. This collaborative national program, led by Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency, was established to increase real-world monitoring data on pesticides in Canadian waters and to support informed regulatory decision-making related to human health, aquatic ecosystems, and environmental protection. Through this work, the AWSA contributed local field capacity and watershed knowledge to a broader federal effort that relies on federal, provincial, local, and Indigenous sampling partners across the country.

Four surface-water monitoring sites were selected within the watershed based on their proximity to intensive agricultural land use and their value as downstream collection points for runoff entering the broader Assiniboine system:

- Spirit Creek, Buchanan
- Crooked Hill Creek, Canora
- Whitesand River, Canora Dam
- Wallace Creek, Gorlitz

Consistent with the national program's emphasis on targeted, risk-informed monitoring in agricultural areas, these locations provided useful opportunities to observe how precipitation, seasonal runoff, landscape activities, and geographic position may influence the presence of pesticides and herbicides in surface water. Sampling took place from May through October, covering key periods before and during seeding, in-season spraying and rainfall events, and the post-harvest transition into fall. This seasonal window helped capture changing conditions across the growing season and supported the collection of locally relevant data that can contribute to a better understanding of water quality pressures in agriculturally active parts of the watershed.













THE ACRONYM LIST

Clear communication is vital to watershed protection, but our sector loves its abbreviations. For instance, a discussion on regional planning might sound like: ***"AWSA is assisting local RMs and the COY with an environmental review of a new BMP strategy, while actively promoting FRWIP and ALUS programs to nearby producers."*** This guide can help you decipher the discussion and keep everyone on the same page regarding local municipal bodies and agricultural programs.

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

March 31, 2026

Prepared by:
Megan Nerbas & Associates
Smalltown Financial Services Ltd.
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Langenburg, SK
306-743-5200

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To the Members of
Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc.

On the basis of information provided by management, we have compiled the balance sheet of Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc. as at March 31, 2026, the statement of income and retained earnings for the year then ended.

Members are responsible for the accompanying financial information, including the accuracy and completeness of the underlying information used to compile it and the selection of the basis of accounting. Our responsibility is to assist members in the preparation of the financial information.

We did not perform an audit engagement or a review engagement nor were we required to perform procedures to verify the accuracy or completeness of the information provided by management. Accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion or a review conclusion or provide any form of assurance on the financial information.

Readers are cautioned that the financial information may not be appropriate for their purposes.

Megan Nerbas
Smalltown Financial Services Ltd.
Megan Nerbas
Accountant – Bacc.

May 29, 2026
Langenburg, Sask.

Approved on behalf of the Board

..... ***Member***

Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc.
Balance Sheet
For the year ended March 31, 2026

		2026		2025
Assets				
Current				
Bank	$	372,739	$	563,303
Accounts receivable - note 4		181,259		197,601
Inventories		7,194		3,258
Prepaid expenses		2,151		949
		563,343		765,111
Capital assets - note 5		27,108		28,104
Other assets				
Security deposits		1,230		1,230
Total assets	**$**	**591,681**	**$**	**794,445**
Liabilities				
Current				
Accounts payable - note 6	$	55,340	$	60,884
Deferred revenue - note 7		437,388		581,249
		492,728		642,133
Total liabilities		492,728		642,133
Net assets				
Internally restricted - SWAUMP	$	196	$	20,196
Internally restricted - education and training		6,681		6,681
Unrestricted net assets		92,076		125,435
		98,953		152,312
Total liabilities and net assets	**$**	**591,681**	**$**	**794,445**

Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc.
Income statement
For the year ended March 31, 2026

		2026		2025
Revenue				
Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS)	$	435,866	$	438,760
Contract work		500		250
Environment Canada		39,785		64,024
Health Canada		31,200		0
Interest		10,818		10,944
Membership fees		70,115		67,925
Other		3,692		1,360
Rental, mulch, and tree income		13,448		4,725
Smith Creek Watershed		5,738		5,850
Wallace Creek Watershed		27,525		21,700
Water Security Agency		23,635		28,712
Yorkton Creek Watershed		20,750		15,000
Total revenue		683,071		659,250
Expenses				
Administration	$	863	$	604
Advertising and promotion		1,714		4,100
Amortization		18,095		5,557
Board of Directors travel and meals		12,179		13,552
Building maintenance		1,049		0
Consulting fees		23,635		27,500
Courses and seminars		3,227		3,661
Equipment rent and repairs		2,014		3,742
Insurance		2,784		2,708
Licenses and memberships		2,051		2,269
Loss on disposal of capital assets		0		0
Meals		1,266		283
Mulch		2,649		3,665
Office, printing, and postage		13,537		8,291
Professional fees		9,020		8,682
Projects		393,806		364,528
Projects - SWAUMP		20,000		6,921
Rent - building		20,295		20,295
Supplies		689		1,289
Telephone		2,217		3,100
Travel		10,508		8,273
Wages and benefits		190,197		169,179
Total expenses		731,795		658,199
Current year surplus (deficit)	$	-48,725	$	1,051

Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc.
Statement of Changes in Net Assets
For the year ended March 31, 2026

	SWAUMP	Education and training	Unrestricted Net Assets	2026 total	2025 total
Balance, beginning of year	20,196	6,681	125,435	152,312	131,905
Excess (deficit) of revenue over expenses	(20,000)	-	(28,725)	(48,725)	19,357
Prior period adjustments			(4,634)	(4,634)	-
Interfund transfers - SWAUMP				-	-
Balance, end of year	196	6,681	92,076	98,953	151,262

Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc.
Notes to the financial statements
For the year ended March 31, 2026

1 Nature of operation

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.

2 Significant Accounting Policies

These financial statements are the responsibility of management and have been prepared in accordance with Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards (PSA). Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association Inc. has adopted the standards for government not-for-profit organizations.

i) Cash (bank) and cash equivalents

cash and cash equivalents represent cash on hand and in banks.

ii) 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.

iii) 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.

iv) 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.

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.

v) 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.

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.

vi) Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in accordance with Canadian PSA 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 revenue and expenses during the fiscal year. These estimates are reviewed periodically and are adjusted for as necessary. They are reported in the statement of operations in which they become known.

Estimates have been made in the useful life of capital assets, deferred revenues, accounts receivable and grant revenues.

3 Risks arising from financial instruments

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

Credit risk is the risk that a party 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.

4 Accounts receivable

	2026	2025
Accounts receivable	177,937	193,538
GST receivable	3,322	4,063
	181,259	197,601

5 Capital assets

	Cost	Accumulated amortization	Net book value 2026	Net book value 2025
Mobile equipment	33,607	25,088	8,519	11,880
Furniture, fixtures and equipment	31,953	17,646	14,307	16,224
Computer equipment	23,304	19,022	4,282	-
Signage	17,286	17,286	-	-
			27,108	28,104

6 Accounts payable

	2026	2025
Accounts payable	48,060	53,953
Accrued wages	7,280	6,931
	55,340	60,884

7 Deferred revenue

	Balance, beginning of year	Less: Amount applied	Plus: Amount received	Balance, end of year
General wetland reservice	14,606	2,095	-	12,511
ALUS	566,643	141,766	-	424,877
	581,249			437,388

8 Commitments

The organization leases a location located at 29, 2nd Avenue N, Yorkton, SK. The lease agreement is a 3-year term commencing January 1, 2023 with an option to renew for one additional term. The monthly lease payment is $1650 plus taxes.

9 Economic dependence

The organization received 63% of its operating revenue from ALUS and is dependent on them.

10 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 characteristic have been combined in the following funds:

i) unrestricted

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

ii) SWAUMP

SWAUMP reflects funds that have been approved by the board for use by munipalities for water management projects.

iii) Education and training

This funds reflects funds that have been approved by the board to be held for volunteer related professional development for staff. This can include workshops, conferences and seminars.

11 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.

i) $75 per hour from January 1, 2026 - March 17, 2026 and $85 per hour from March 18, 2026 - December 31, 2026

ii) provide quarterly payments of $6,250 and $75 per hour for time above 300 hours annually.

iii) provide quarterly payments of $4,500 and $80 per hour for time above 225 hours annually.

13 Prior period adjustments

During the current year, amounts have been identified that have been carrying forward from period periods that should have been adjusted for in those periods. Accordingly, opening unrestricted net assets have been adjusted to reflect the correction of those prior period amounts.

ASSINIBOINE WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP ASSOCIATION

2026 EDITION

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