

Lesser Slave Watershed Council

— 2017-2018 Annual Report —



Thank You to our 2017-18 Financial Supporters



And our Partners and Collaborators



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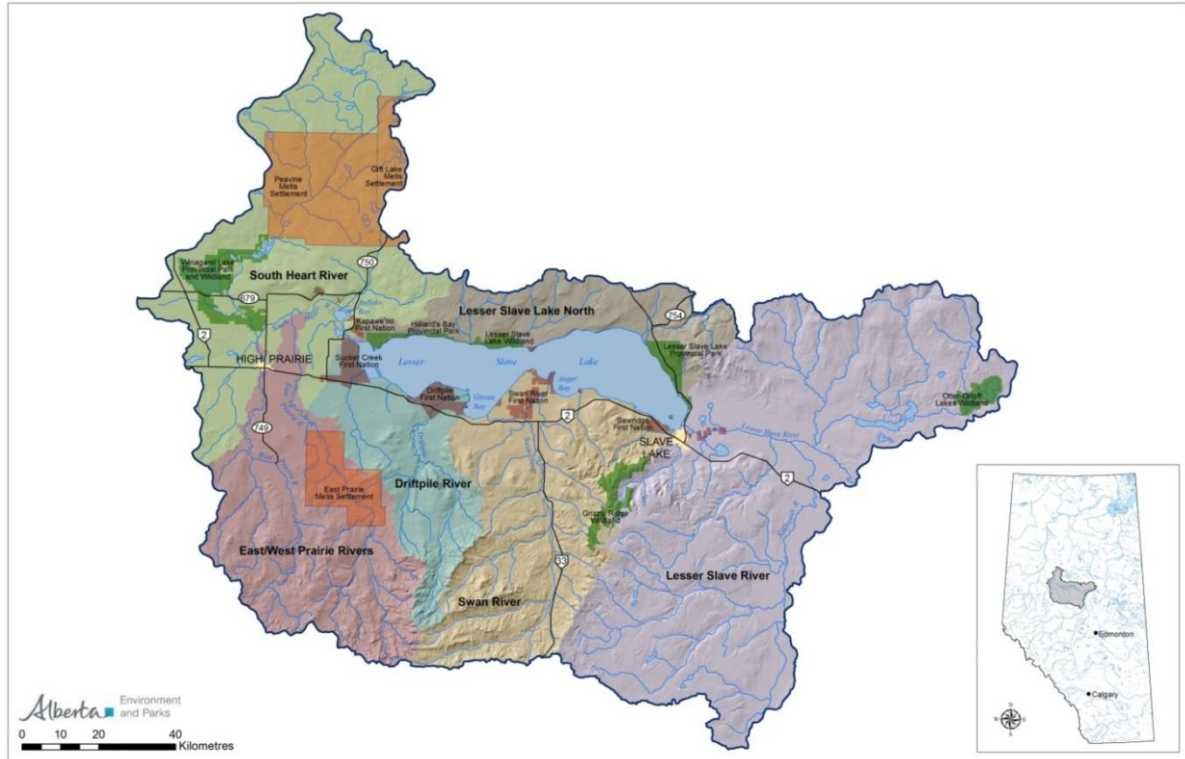
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Photo by Colin Ross



The Lesser Slave Watershed



The Lesser Slave Watershed is centered around Lesser Slave Lake. Water in our lake comes from several tributaries including the South Heart River, the East and West Prairie Rivers, the Driftpile River, and the Swan River. The Lesser Slave River is the only outlet of Lesser Slave Lake and it flows from the Town of Slave Lake to the Athabasca River about 75km East of Slave Lake.



Sunset at Shaw's Point, photo by Chelsea Bembridge

Message from the Executive Director

This past year has been very busy and very productive for the LSWC. Our two full time staff, myself and Watershed Coordinator Kaylyn Jackson, have kept very busy delivering programs, projects, and engaging with stakeholders in the watershed. We are lucky to have a great board of directors that oversee the organization and support the staff.

In 2017 we spent a great deal of time working on the Lesser Slave Integrated Watershed Management Plan. Our wonderful planner watershed Sandi Riemersma, the project Steering Committee, our Municipal Working Group and our Technical Advisory Committee have put in a lot of time and effort to bring this plan together. I personally thank everyone for their time and commitment. I look forward to continuing this work and moving the plan into implementation in collaboration with the people in our watershed.

In spring of 2017 we began year 1 of our 5 year water quality monitoring program. I am really glad to see this program up and running because water quality monitoring has not been done in our basin consistently in the past. We have received financial support from the forest sector, oil and gas sector, and municipalities and developed a partnership with Swan River First Nation to address some of local concerns.

2018 marks my 10th anniversary as Executive Director for the LSWC. I feel lucky to work in my home town at a job I love in a position where I can promote watershed stewardship and influence positive change. I hope the next 10 years bring great things for our organization.

Meghan Payne, LSWC Executive Director



Board and Staff at our 2017 Annual General Meeting

Top left to right: Wendy Freeman, Kaylyn Jackson, Charmaine Willier, Brian Roche, Todd Bailey, Linda Cox, Meghan Payne, Bob Popick, Claude Smith. Bottom left to right: Robert Nygaard, Jule Asterisk, Joy McGregor, Tammy Kaleta.

2017-18 LSWC Board of Directors

Sector or Organization	Board Member	Alternate Member
Big Lakes County	Richard Simard	<i>Robert Nygaard</i>
MD of Lesser Slave River	Brian Rosche	<i>Brad Pearson</i>
Town of Slave Lake	Shawn Gramlich	<i>Rebecca King</i>
Town of High Prairie	Brian Gilroy	<i>Judy Stenhouse</i>
Alberta Environment and Parks	Jamie Bruha	<i>Lisa Bergen</i>
Driftpile First Nation	April Isadore	<i>Vacant</i>
Sucker Creek First Nation	Charmaine Larsen Willier	<i>Rodrick Willier</i>
Tourism and Recreation	Tammy Kaleta (Chair)	<i>Vacant</i>
Oil and Gas Industry	Bob Popick (Vice Chair)	<i>Spencer Zelman</i>
Cottage and Cabin Owners	Shane Knutson	<i>Vacant</i>
Agriculture	Claude Smith	<i>Brianne Brault</i>
Forest Industry	Todd Bailey	<i>George Gross</i>
Non-Government Organizations	Jule Asterisk	<i>Vacant</i>
Commercial Fishermen	Murray De Alexandra	<i>Kevin Bell</i>
Member at Large	Wendy Freeman	<i>Vacant</i>
Trappers	Scott Mayston	<i>Vacant</i>

The Lesser Slave Watershed Council is a nonprofit (2007), charitable organization (2010) governed by a Board of Directors. The LSWC was recognized at the formal Watershed Planning and Advisory Council under the Water for Life Strategy January 1, 2007 and began to receive operational and project support grants from the province. The directors are responsible for the oversight and success of the organization. The Directors, while representing a sector or organization, are individually accountable to the LSWC organization. The Directors provide governance and strategic oversight to the Staff while bringing their experiences and knowledge of the watershed to the table making for well-rounded inclusive discussion. Board of Directors are guided by the Society Bylaws (2016) and the LSWC's Board of Director Terms of Reference which can be found online at www.lswc.ca.

Summary of Operations

From April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018 the LSWC board and staff worked to implement our operational plan and meet our four strategic goals. Below is a summary of accomplishments and activities from our 2017-18 fiscal year.

Goal 1. Establish an ongoing collaborative planning and management framework for the Lesser Slave Watershed.

- The LSWC and Palliser Environmental worked to complete the Draft Lesser Slave Integrated Watershed Management Plan.
- In spring of 2017 draft II of the plan was presented to the Steering Committee, Technical Advisory Committee and Municipal Working Group. Their feedback provided from the draft II review was incorporated into the plan.
- GOA staff created a series of maps for the watershed plan including: land ownership, human footprint, and enhanced wetland cover.
- Staff within the GOA, including members of the Water for Life Cross Ministry Steering Committee provided extensive comments on the draft plan, which were addressed, and tracked. The LSWC and Palliser Environmental met with senior AEP planning staff to review how the feedback was addressed.
- Draft III of the IWMP was released to the Board, Steering Committee, Municipal Working Group and Technical Advisory Team for a final review and to ensure that their feedback was incorporated or addressed.
- LSWC Executive Director met with oil and Gas company representatives to build relationships and engage them in the watershed management plan.
- Executive Director presented the final IWMP to the 4 municipalities and asked for them to provide a motion of support and commitment to work on implementation.

Goal 2. Facilitate watershed research that addresses issues and enables management actions within the watershed.

- The LSWC **undertook the first year of a 5 year tributary monitoring program** as recommended by the Integrated Watershed Management Plan. This program includes monitoring of 15 sites at upstream, midstream and downstream locations on the five main tributaries of Lesser Slave Lake. More information can be found on the LSWC website.
- LSWC Executive Director **participated in the Athabasca River Basin Initiative Project** on the Logistical Advisory Committee and as a member of the Working Group throughout 2017. This work focuses on water management solutions for the entire Athabasca River Basin and brought together a range of stakeholders to talk about water concerns and management issues.
- The LSWC received a grant from Alberta Ecotrust to have the Alberta WaterSmart team complete some **integrated hydrologic modeling** for our watershed to explore how wetland and forest cover changes will impact lake levels and river flows, and how climate change trends may impact our water levels in the future. Project report can be found on the LSWC website.



Goal 3. Promote watershed awareness and literacy through education, outreach and stewardship programs.

- The LSWC Watershed Coordinator joined the **Wetland Education Networks Public Education Action Group**.
- The Little Green Thumbs Program, supported by Agriculture in the Classroom Saskatchewan had a successful fifth year with **eleven classroom gardens**.
- The LSWC partnered with nonprofit rainbarrel.ca to sell and distribute rain barrels made from recycled poly drums in our watershed. We sold a total of **91 rain barrels** in 2017.
- We engaged with **462 people** at the 2017 High Prairie Gun and Sportsman Show and **388 people** at the Slave Lake Chamber of Commerce Trade Show.
- The LSWC and our partners delivered **58 classroom presentations and field trips** with schools in the watershed.
- The LSWC participated in **36 community events** including open houses, drop in programs, fishing tournaments, and more.
- The LSWC staff **engaged with over 1300 people around Lesser Slave Lake** during our summer outreach activities. Partners include: Alberta Environment and Parks, Children's Resource Council, campgrounds, resorts and the LSFES. We distributed Stewardship Handbooks, Aquatic Invasive Species information and Respect Our Lake resources.
- With help from the Alberta Conservation Association and local organizations the LSWC planned and hosted a **Kids Can Catch ice fishing event** in Jousard on Lesser Slave Lake attended by 80 people.
- Throughout 2017 the LSWC gave **18 radio interviews** on 93.5 Real Country to promote events and behaviors that support a healthy watershed.
- The LSWC and RBC Staff in the watershed organized **community clean ups** for Devonshire Beach and the east bank of the West Prairie River in the town of High Prairie. The LSWC received **\$2000 in community donations** from the RBC.
- The LSWC held its 10th **Annual General Meeting** in June of 2017 and **32 people** joined us in Faust for presentations, AGM business and a lakeside BBQ.
- Throughout the 2017-18 year the LSWC estimates we **made connections** with at least **3,372 people** through our extension efforts.
- The LSWC Partnered with Alberta Environment and Parks to host an **Aquatic Invasive Species Workshop** in Faust, AB. 35 people attended.
- The LSWC **Celebrated World Water Day 2018** with an office open house on March 22, 2018 where people joined us for cupcakes, crafts and coffee.
- The LSWC has continued to work with land owners on **3 riparian projects** started in 2016 and initiate 2 new projects.
- The LSWC Executive Director became chair of the Water North Coalition's Public Education sub-committee.
- September 2017 the LSWC held a facebook photo contest. We received 109 photo entries and selected our top 13 photos to create a 2018 calendar.
- The LSWC is growing our Social Media influence. At the end of March 2017 we had **401 Facebook "likes"** and **738 followers on twitter**.

Goal 4. Establish a strong operational model in which the LSWC is sustainable, has clear governance, capacity and funding.

- The LSWC held nine regular meetings of the board and an annual general meeting in the last fiscal year.
- LSWC all grant and financial reporting throughout the year as required by our funders.
- LSWC's Watershed Coordinator attended the provincial education and outreach staff gathering to work on collaborative WPAC education initiatives and learn the successes of the other WPAC's.
- The LSWC Board of Directors reviewed and approved the 2017-18 operational plan and budget prior to the February 15, 2018 Environment and Parks grant application deadline.
- LSWC Society Annual Return and Canadian charitable Annual return were completed for the fiscal year.
- The Town of Slave Lake contributed \$5,000 to the LSWC and we received \$15,000 from Big Lakes County's Ag. Service Board in Environmental Stream funding in 2017.
- Executive Director attended quarterly WPAC manager meetings to address provincial scale collaborative opportunities and discuss common challenges.
- LSWC Executive Director and chair attended the Sept 18, 2017 meeting hosted by Alberta Environment and Parks' Environmental Monitoring and Science Division.
- The LSWC participated in the WPAC role review being conducted by Alberta Environment and Parks by providing information and feedback into the process.

Alberta WPACs



The eleven **Watershed Planning and Advisory Council's** in Alberta are provincial *Water for Life* partners and also work together collaboratively to tackle provincial scale watershed issues and develop WPAC education and outreach programs for delivery across Alberta.

Learn more at: www.albertawpacs.ca



Looking for aquatic invertebrates "aka Marsh critters" is great fun. Kids at the High Prairie Municipal Library Summer Program got a chance to catch and identify all kinds of critters with Kaylyn.

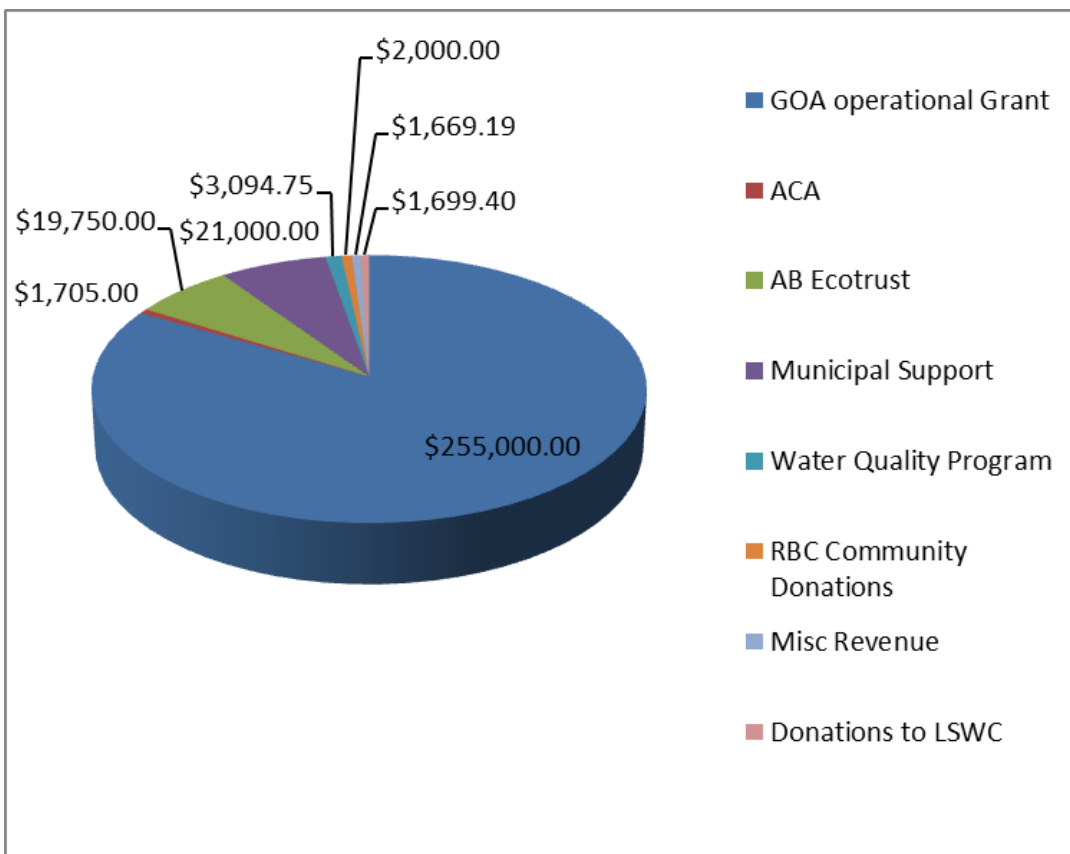


Financial Report

The LSWC receives the bulk of its support from the Government Alberta through Water for Life partnership grants. The LSWC also receives support from other grantors and foundations, through sponsorship, donations and in kind from many people and businesses.

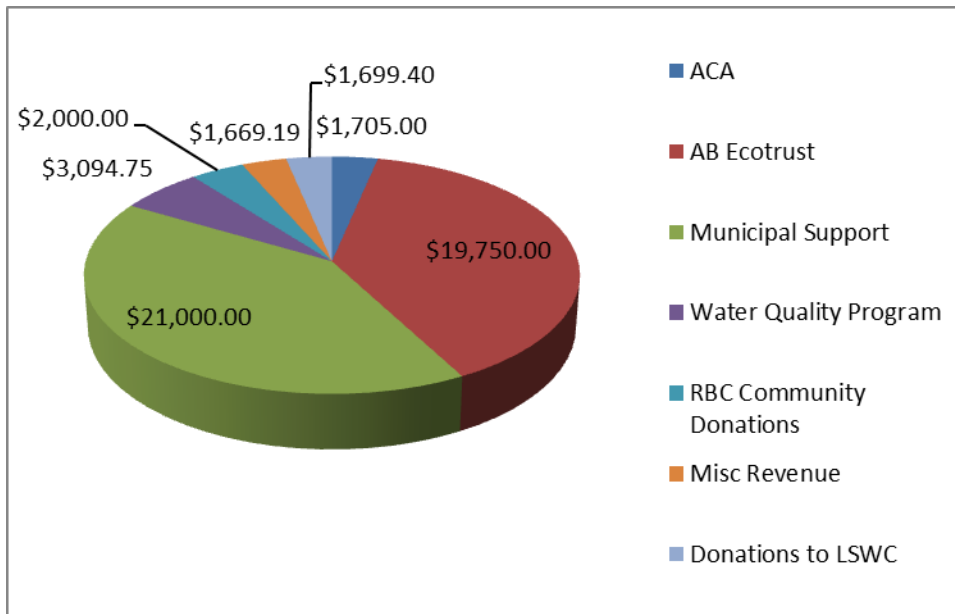
2017-18 Total Revenue

The below graph show the LSWC's total revenue for the fiscal year.



Non-Operational Revenue

This graph shows a break down of the LSWC's non-operational revenue and sources for the 2017-18 fiscal year.



In Kind Support

The LSWC tracks all of the in kind support we receive from our partners, volunteers and committee members. Manpower contributions are calculated at \$85 per hour for Board members and technical team members, and \$45 per hour for other things such as education and outreach and volunteer time towards projects. Travel expenses are calculated at \$0.535 per km.

Directors contribute their time for meetings, review of correspondence and WPAC related events. They are all volunteers and we greatly appreciate their time.

The Integrated Watershed management Plan (IWMP) is a big project with many people involved. We have tracked time and travel contributions of the Steering Committee Members, Municipal Working Group Members, Technical Advisory committee members for each meeting, call and review of documents.

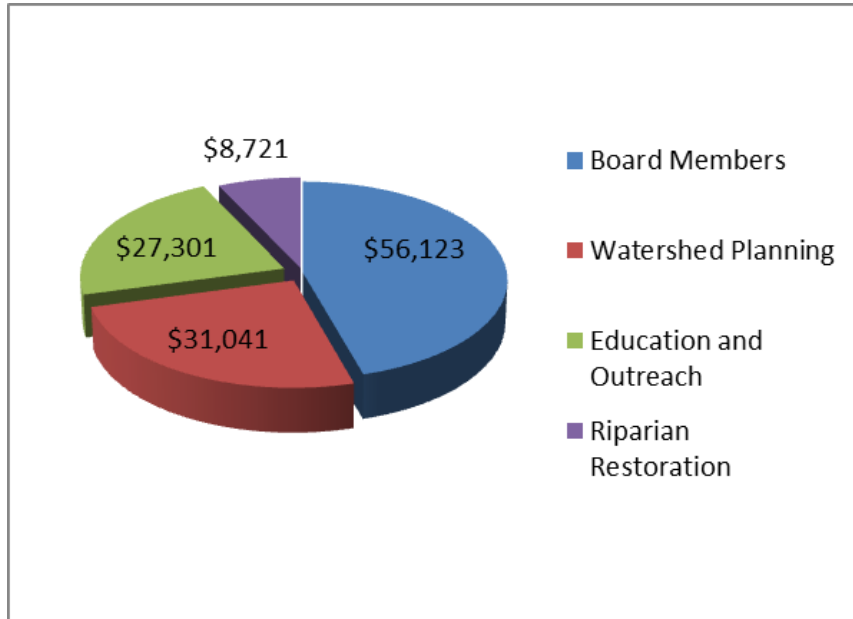
The LSWC works with many partners to deliver education and stewardship programming in the watershed. The in kind time contributions from teachers, educators, volunteers, and partner organizations help us achieve our goals of enhancing watershed literacy in our region.

The LSWC is working with Peace Country Beef and Forage Association, Big Lakes County, Cows and Fish, and landowners in the watershed on projects and events that will lead to watershed health improvements. We track in kind for these projects as well as a part of our grant reporting requirements.



The graph below breaks down the in kind contribution to the LSWC over the 2016-17 year.

2017-18 In-kind contributions to the LSWC



Seasonal Celebrations!



The LSWC staff get into the holiday spirit! The awesome Watershed themed pumpkins (left) were carved by Meghan, Kaylyn, and volunteer Kyla M. We also celebrated the Town of High Prairie's Christmas Light up with cookie decorating and hot chocolate at our office. Our MLA Danielle Larivee (right, middle) stopped in for a sweet treat and to say hello.

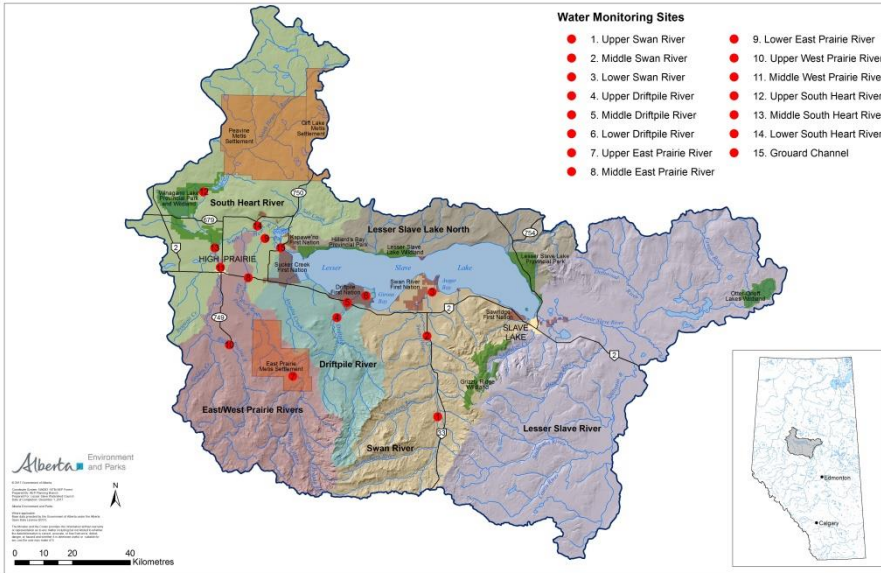
2017-18 Statement of Financial Position

Bobby's Accounting in Slave Lake, Alberta with support from Benjamin Dyck and Associates have completed our April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018 financial review engagement. The LSWC's revenues and expenses are outlined below.

	2018	2017
TRADE SALES		
Provincial government grant income	\$255,000	\$332,480
Municipal government grant income	\$21,000	\$25,000
Non-government grant income	\$26,021	\$21,774
Donation income	\$4,699	\$13,726
Revenue deferred from previous period	\$119,532	\$64,900
Revenue deferred to subsequent period	(\$87,104)	(\$119,532)
	<u>\$339,148</u>	<u>\$338,348</u>
EXPENSES		
Advertising and promotion	\$3,917	\$12,835
Amortization	\$747	\$879
Donations	\$5,000	\$10,050
Insurance	\$3,768	\$3,862
Interest and bank charges	\$213	\$122
Education and Outreach	\$17,736	\$18,719
Office	\$5,342	\$8,185
Project expenses	\$49,793	\$27,163
Administration	\$1,195	\$1,220
GST expense	\$4,902	\$5,158
Professional fees	\$2,014	\$2,015
Office Rent	\$12,000	\$11,809
Repairs and maintenance	\$360	\$2,057
stakeholder engagement	\$6,082	\$1,995
Salaries and benefits	\$145,875	\$145,824
Phone, fax, and web	\$3,073	\$4,834
Training & professional development	\$1,430	\$1,616
Travel	\$6,605	\$19,645
Water quality monitoring	\$26,362	\$2,634
Watershed planning	\$61,364	\$91,371
	<u>\$357,778</u>	<u>\$371,993</u>
DEFICIENCY OF TRADE SALES OVER EXPENSES	<u>(\$18,630)</u>	<u>(\$33,645)</u>

The Lesser Slave Tributary Monitoring Program

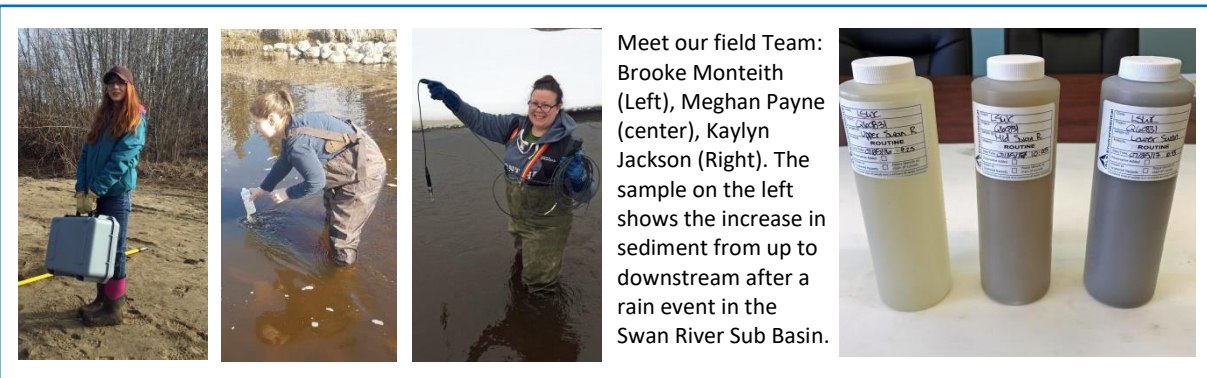
In the spring of 2017 the LSWC began monitoring water quality at 15 tributary sites in our watershed. This program supports recommendations made in the Integrated Watershed Plan and will fill data gaps that prevent science based water quality objectives from being developed for our rivers. The program is modeled after the Milk River Watershed Council’s program which has been successfully running for 11 years.



The sites were selected at an upstream, mid and downstream location on each of the rivers. Access and safety were considered as well as whether a site had been sampled in the past. In addition to the 15 sites on the map we also receive data for a site on the Lesser Slave River near Smith, Ab sampled monthly by Alberta Environment and Parks.

The LSWC is measuring and analyzing for key parameters as budget allows. We measure: temperature, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, pH, total suspended solids, fecal coliform bacteria, total and dissolved Phosphorus and Nitrogen in various forms. Nutrient loading and sedimentation are major concerns in our watershed, as well as concerns about fecal contamination.

The funding for this program is from sponsorship and donations from the forest sector, oil and gas sector, and our municipalities. In 2017 West Fraser donated \$10,000 towards the project and in early 2018 the LSWC received confirmation of a 5 year grant from Vanderwell Contractors Ltd in the amount of 100,000. Big Lakes County, Town of High Prairie, Summerland Energy & Vermillion Energy have also contributed.



Meet our field Team: Brooke Monteith (Left), Meghan Payne (center), Kaylyn Jackson (Right). The sample on the left shows the increase in sediment from up to downstream after a rain event in the Swan River Sub Basin.

Annual water quality summary reports are available online at www.lswc.ca. After 5 years of monitoring we will work with a professional to complete a comprehensive analysis of results. Get in touch with our staff if you would like to know more.

Innovative Watering systems improving riparian health

The LSWC has been working with Blackhurst Ranch to solve a water supply problem and



improve the health of an intermittent creek that runs through their pasture land. The creek is the only source of water for 2 quarter sections of pasture. In dry years there is limited water and the quality declines in the remaining pools throughout the summer. There is a spring fed pond located about 600 meters from the intersection of 3 fence lines that has good quality water.



The pond is also located at a higher elevation than the pasture. Blackhursts came up with the idea of a gravity feed watering system that runs downhill from the pond to the pasture via a buried pipeline that comes up through an insulated culvert to a bowl set up.

The Blackhursts first ran the water line above ground and ensured that it would in fact gravity feed. They used a vac truck to prime the line and get the water flowing. The trial



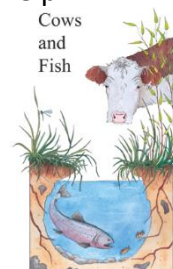
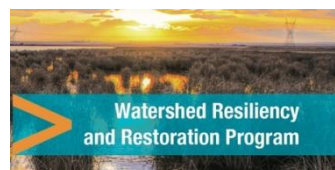
was a success so in the winter of 2017 they trenched in the line about 8 feet below the surface and ran the end up through a 24 inch culvert that was buried about 15 feet deep. They purchased a watering bowl set up that fits over the top of the culvert and connects to the water line (picture to the right).

They began using the water system in November. This was the first time they were able to use this land as winter pasture and reduce the impact of winter feeding in the same location all the time. In



December temperatures dropped to -35 and below. The water system did not freeze up. The 4 bowls developed ice over them but once broken the cows kept it open by drinking from it throughout the day. This system uses no power, no pump, and is usable year round.

Our next steps in the project will involve some electric fencing to provide the riparian area on the creek with some rest to recover. Improving the riparian health will help improve water holding capacity and water quality.



Aquatic Invasive Species Awareness

Lesser Slave Lake is one of the largest easily accessible recreational lakes within Alberta. Being a popular tourist destination and fishing destination Lesser Slave Lake is host to three major fishing tournaments throughout the year as well as entertaining hundreds of recreational anglers. Preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species to our lake is essential to its sustainability. The Lesser Slave Watershed Council worked with Alberta Environment and Parks to host an Aquatic Invasive Species workshop in the lakeshore community of Faust, AB. Resort & campground owners and staff were invited along with recreationalists, municipal staff and councilors, First Nations, anglers and the general public. We were also joined by a grade 7 class from the Bigstone School in Wabasca. Our workshop featured experts Kate Wilson and Nicole Kimmel from Alberta Environment and Parks, who spoke on topics such as invasive mussels, boat inspections, terrestrial and aquatic weeds and much more.



Participants were guided through the process of completing a boat inspection by AIS Team staff. There are many places mussels can hide on a boat and a juvenile muscle can be very tiny and hard to see.



Zebra and Quagga Mussels, Prussian Carp, Goldfish, and a many invasive plants are a threat to our lake and watershed health. Do what you can to prevent them!



Kids Can Catch – Ice Fishing Extravaganza



The LSWC partnered with the Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) to plan a Kids Can Catch ice fishing event off the shore of Jousard, AB on Lesser Slave Lake on Family Day Free Fishing Weekend. Despite frigid temperatures (-20 and below) we still had over 80 people attend our event. Many participants were trying ice fishing for the first time!

The ACA provided us with ice fishing rods and tackle to loan out to participants and our awesome volunteers were able to help new folks get the hang of ice fishing.

A big Thanks to the volunteers, local business and organizations who helped host a great event: The Jousard Community Association who graciously donated their hall for the event, The Lesser Slave Forestry Education Society, High Prairie and District Children's Resource Council, Freson Brother, Jerry's Store, Kinuso Mercantile, Glamour and Gear and the Alberta Conservation Association.

We were able to provide games, crafts, door prizes, a free lunch and other activities for everyone who attended to the event. The LSWC looks forward to planning another ice fishing extravaganza for February 2019.



The crafts and game in the Jousard Community hall were a hit with the kids. Big Thank You to the Boreal Center and the High Prairie Children's Resource Council staff for the awesome indoor activities on a frigid day



Little Green Thumbs

In 2017 the LSWC was able to support the Little Green Thumbs program in 11 classrooms around the watershed. In the fall of 2017 the LSWC hosted a Teacher’s workshop for our program participants at Christies Greenhouse in High Prairie.



Agriculture in the Classroom
 Little Green Thumbs is trademarked and managed by AITC-SK

Founding Partner
Agrium

Everyone learned about the program, the garden kits and how to be successful with their seeds. Our Watershed Coordinator Kaylyn Jackson worked with teachers to ensure the program ran smoothly throughout the school year, made classroom visits to do presentations, and participated in yearend celebrations.



Christies Garden’s and Greenhouse hosted grade 4’s for a celebration where they did some hands on planting and a fun scavenger hunt at the greenhouse.



Kids at the Peavine Bishop Routhier School combined their garden year end celebration with a teddy bear picnic and a harvest of their lush garden.



Christie’s Gardens & Greenhouse has been a fantastic supporter of the Little Green Thumbs Program and LSWC. From providing her expertise to help us grow successful gardens, donating plants for classroom gardening activities and opening up the greenhouse for educational tours and scavenger hunts. On the left Christie and our teachers pose for a picture after our workshop at the greenhouse.

CHRISTIE’S
 GARDENS & GREENHOUSES

Partners in Environmental Education



Exploring the Spruce Bog with MJ Kristoff



Searching for "Marsh Monsters" on the north shore of Lesser Slave Lake.



Dissolving tablets to measure dissolved oxygen during our water quality station.

The LSWC has been working with the Lesser Slave Forest Education Society (LSFES) to deliver curriculum based environmental education across our watershed since 2010. Water related programs make up 25% of the LSFES's work and the LSWC is able to contribute financially to the LSFES along with providing our staff lead programs and presentations as instructors.

Our programs include:

- "Marsh Monsters" or aquatic invertebrate studies
- Water Quality testing
- Spruce Bog Ecology Hikes
- Snow Studies
- Fish Life Cycles
- X-Stream Science
- and more based on requests

For many programs we do both a classroom presentation to teach the curriculum portion of the unit then take kids out to local bogs, marshes and beaches so they get a chance for hands on learning and exploration.

In 2017 the LSWC donated \$5,000 in cash to the Lesser Slave Forest Education Society to support water and wetland related programs across our watershed.



The LSWC also participated in the Spring Songbird Festival, Christmas in the Park, and Frost Fest hosted by the Boreal Center for Bird conservation.





Our Home, Our Playground, Ours to Protect



Get in touch with the LSWC

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