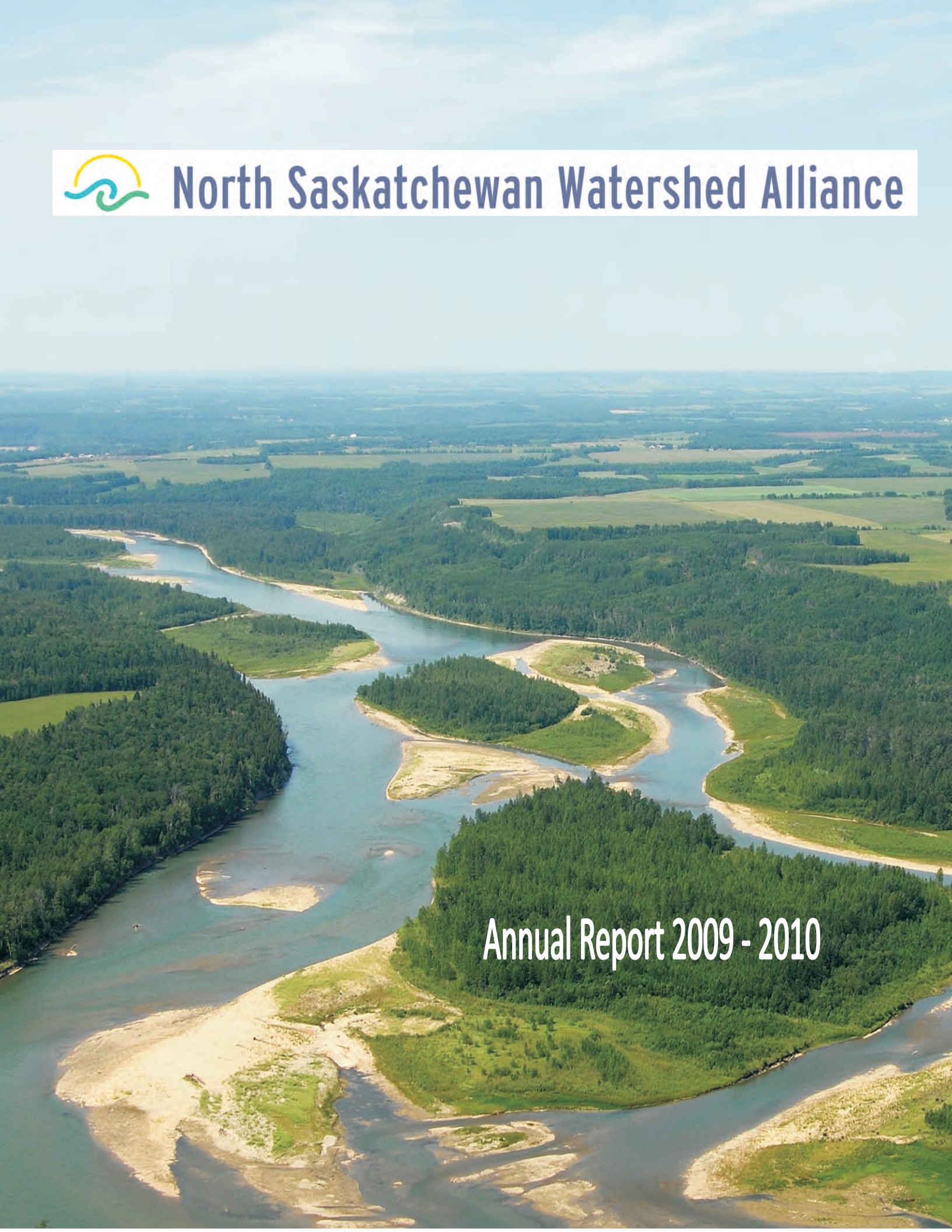




# North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance



Annual Report 2009 - 2010

# North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance

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## **NORTH SASKATCHEWAN WATERSHED ALLIANCE SOCIETY**

### **ANNUAL REPORT 2009 – 2010**

The North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) is a multi-stakeholder watershed planning partnership that was formed in 1997. The organizations that originally aligned to form the NSWA were:

- EPCOR
- Trout Unlimited Canada
- The Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- TransAlta
- The City of Edmonton Drainage Services Planning Branch.

The NSWA was incorporated as a non-profit society in 2000, and now provides a forum for sharing information about issues affecting the North Saskatchewan River (NSR) watershed in Alberta. It also supports and initiates activities that positively impact the watershed. The NSWA is comprised of about 180 individual and organizational members including: municipalities; federal and provincial governments; industries; utilities; agriculture producer groups; environment and conservation groups; recreation, culture, and tourism groups; education and research institutions; and individual citizens.

The NSWA was appointed as the *Watershed Planning and Advisory Council (WPAC)* for the North Saskatchewan River basin in May 2005, according to the mandate provided under *Water for Life: Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability*.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS**

#### **VISION**

*The NSR is a watershed where ecological integrity is the foundation for environmental, cultural, social and economic decision-making. Actions taken and policies implemented will result in the wise use and management of the North Saskatchewan River watershed in Alberta.*

#### **PRIMARY GOALS**

- To promote and encourage collaborative watershed planning and decision-making
- To raise awareness, share information and promote watershed protection initiatives to our members and the wider community
- To foster the wise use and integrated management of land and water resources throughout the North Saskatchewan River basin
- To improve basin water quality by identifying human impacts and advocating for the enhancement of ecological function throughout the watershed
- To ensure the sustainability of the NSWA as the key watershed planning body for the NSR.

## NSWA MEMBERSHIP

The NSWA continues to engage with as many stakeholder groups as possible. It is important that all sectors, user groups and interested citizens from across the watershed be encouraged to become actively involved in the watershed management planning process.

The NSWA introduced an annual membership renewal protocol early in 2009, using a new online membership form which directly updates the membership data base. Outdated contact information was corrected, and we rekindled relationships with many of our members. We saw a rise in the number of individual members this year. During the 2009-10 year we received 95 individual and 86 organizational membership applications.

Part of the membership renewal process was a targeted effort to increase representation within certain sectors. Through a focused effort we were able to successfully secure many more counties as members. Rural municipalities are key to the success of the Integrated Watershed Management Plan due to the authority they hold for land use planning decisions. We are also pleased to have new representatives from the Forestry and Oil & Gas sectors.

Board members are elected at the Annual General Meeting and commit to two years of service from the date of the AGM. The following individuals served on the NSWA Board during 2009-10. We acknowledge and appreciate their dedicated efforts to support watershed planning in Alberta.

<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Sector Representation</b>
President	Dr. Les Gammie	Utility
Vice-Pres	Pat Alexander	Municipal
Treasurer	Ted Bentley	NGO
Secretary	Candace Vanin	Government of Canada
Director	Sid Lodewyk	City of Edmonton
Director	Bill Fox	Agriculture
Director	Tracy Scott	NGO
Director	Jamie Wuite	Alberta Government
Director	Andrew Schoepf	Alberta Government
Director	Vanessa Higgins*	Municipal (Interim Appointment)
Director	Dr. Naomi Krogman	Member at Large
Director	Aaron Rognvaldson*	Petroleum (Interim Appointment)
Director	Vacant	Métis
Director	Vacant	First Nations
Director	Dr. Laurie Danielson	Industry
Director	Rod Kause	Utility
Director	Bob Winship	Forestry
Director	Pat Gordeyko	Municipal

## NSWA STAFF

The NSWA continued to employ six full time staff in 2009-10: David Trew (P. Biol.), Executive Director; Tom Cottrell, M.A., IWMP Coordinator; Billie Milholland, B.A., Communications Manager; Gordon Thompson (P. Eng.), Technical Program Coordinator; Graham Watt, M. Sc., Basin Planner; and Jayme Nelson, Basin Planning Technician.

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

An audited financial statement for the fiscal year April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010 was prepared for NSWA by Gadowsky Lim and Associates, Edmonton.

The NSWA began the fiscal year on April 1, 2009 with \$691,717 in total assets, and completed the fiscal year on March 31, 2010 with \$856,433 in total assets. Full details are available in the audited financial statement, which has been posted to [www.nswa.ab.ca](http://www.nswa.ab.ca).

## PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS

We thank Trout Unlimited Canada and the City of Edmonton for continuing to provide significant in-kind support to NSWA operations in 2009-2010. These contributions provided payroll and benefits administration, office space, furniture, equipment and computer support for our operations. Members of our Board of Directors, IWMP Steering Committee, Technical Advisory Committees and the VRWMP Steering Committee also provided in-kind support in terms of their time, expertise and travel costs. NSWA gratefully acknowledges the contributions of these individuals and their respective organizations. Total in-kind support to NSWA in 2009-10 has been estimated at approximately \$350,000.

We also thank: Alberta Environment; Alberta NAWMP Partnership; EPCOR; the City of Edmonton; the Sturgeon River Watershed Initiative; Alberta Beef Producers; Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; the North East Alberta Water Management Coalition; and Rural Municipalities for providing direct cash contributions to support both NSWA operations and projects during the fiscal year. NSWA also appreciates the continued commitment from our volunteers to support our work.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The NSWA's primary strategic goal for 2008-11 is the preparation of an *Integrated Watershed Management Plan* (IWMP) for the North Saskatchewan River basin. The development of the IWMP is a complex undertaking and is aimed the integration of land and water management to ensure the long-term supply and quality of water resources for future generations. Terms of Reference for this work were developed in 2005. The initial phase of this basin-wide planning process is targeted for completion in 2011.

Other major NSWA strategic initiatives in 2009-10 included:

- The Vermilion River Watershed Management Project
- Alignment with the Industrial Heartland Water Management Framework
- A riparian assessment methodology development project
- The development of a new atlas for the NSR basin
- An improved web-site
- An extensive outreach program
- Province-wide interaction with other *Water for Life* partnerships

## **INTEGRATED WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN (IWMP)**

NSWA's IWMP Steering Committee continued its work toward the preparation of an initial draft IWMP for the North Saskatchewan River (NSR) watershed. The Committee's work evolved throughout the year, from a focus on the completion of technical projects to the writing of the plan, and also on the development of an engagement and consultation program.

The Committee held meetings in Fort Saskatchewan, Drayton Valley, at EPCOR's E.L. Smith Water Treatment Plant and in Edmonton in order to become more familiar with issues and concerns in different areas of the watershed. The Committee received information regarding various topics including: local watershed resource management issues; treatment processes for drinking water; and subdivision development pressures in rural and agricultural areas.

The Committee's role to provide direction on the work was carried forward by NSWA staff who organized, managed and completed several technical projects needed to provide the pertinent information on which the plan could be built:

- *An Overview of Groundwater Conditions, Issues and Challenges* (by WorleyParsons)
- *Water Quality Indicators and Objectives* (by Golder and Associates)
- *A Cumulative Effects Assessment using the ALCES model* (by Dr. Michael Sullivan)
- *Engaging Rural Municipalities* (by Teleologic Strategic Communications)
- *Development of a Basin Scale Water Quality Model* (by TetraTech, Inc)
- *Development of Collaborative Planning Partnerships* (by Abells Henry Public Affairs)
- *Assessment of Economic Activity and Ecosystem Services in the NSRB* (by Watrecon)
- *Development of a Watershed Runoff Model* (by Kessler Environmental).

During the summer of 2009 the Committee struck a writing sub-committee to consider technical information and planning issues, and to develop potential recommendations for inclusion in the IWMP. Throughout the fall and winter, the sub-committee developed a DRAFT table of four goals with a series of objectives and actions (specific statements of "who does what") intended to form the basis of recommendations to be included in the IWMP.

The Committee and the NSWA also recognized the need for a comprehensive, multi-sector stakeholder engagement and consultation program to develop the sort of collaborative planning partnerships that would foster consensus on the recommendations of the IWMP. As a consequence, NSWA hired Abells Henry Public Affairs to help organize and conduct a cross-sectoral, regional consultation process. Its goal was to foster better understanding of watershed planning, the mandate of the NSWA and regional consideration of watershed issues and concerns.

NSWA staff continued to support development of collaborative planning partnerships by making many presentations and sending information to towns, counties, agricultural organizations, industries, and other groups. The NSWA's intent is to build better relationships by informing people about the IWMP process and the results of our various watershed studies.

The NSWA initiated the process to hire a contract writer to assist the Steering Committee with writing the IWMP, with the aim of completing a first draft by the end of July 2010.

During 2009-10 NSWA staff continued to become better informed about the policy, planning and assessment initiatives of other authorities in order to understand how best to integrate the recommendations in our IWMP with the results of these other initiatives. Of particular relevance are: the *Industrial Heartland Water Management Framework*; Alberta Environment's *Cumulative Effects Management System*; a forthcoming project to develop the North Saskatchewan Regional Plan under the *Alberta Land Use Framework*; and the *Capital Region Growth Plan*. NSWA staff and Board members met with the representatives of these various initiatives on many occasions during 2009-10.

### **WATER QUALITY OBJECTIVES**

Water quality planning and management recommendations will form an important component of the IWMP. The cumulative effects of all human activities, superimposed on the natural characteristics of the watershed, are reflected in the resulting chemistry, biology and physical attributes of the NSR mainstem. Therefore, water quality management provides a practical template for integrating watershed planning recommendations at the basin scale. Water quality management at the sub-basin scale provides the same opportunities.

During 2009-10 work was completed on the following tasks: the selection of water quality indicators; the review of published water quality guidelines to protect current water uses; and the analysis of historical NSR data. Based on this work, objectives for water quality have been proposed for the five long-term, mainstem sampling locations and are described in the NSWA report entitled "*Proposed Site-Specific Water Quality Objectives for the Mainstem of the North Saskatchewan River*". NSWA also advocates the development of water quality objectives for the major tributaries, as more data become available. Stakeholders are being encouraged to review these proposed objectives and evaluate their implications to current and future development.

## **WATER QUALITY MODELLING**

The initial portion of this modeling work was completed early in 2009-10. The purpose was to configure, calibrate and verify a one-dimensional, basin-wide, water quality model (EFDC) for the North Saskatchewan River. This was followed by a second project to develop and calibrate a watershed model (HSPF) in order to provide improved estimates of non-point source loads to the mainstem. The hydrologic portion of the HSPF model was developed and implemented in 2009-10; more work will be required to develop the water quality component.

## **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

NSWA hosted an IWMP engagement session in December 2009 for representatives of rural municipalities. The December meeting, led by consultants Bob Halliday, Sheldon McLeod and Abells Henry, examined watershed issues over the broad scale of the entire Saskatchewan River Basin. There was further discussion as to how those broad issues appear in the headwaters, central and downstream areas of the North Saskatchewan watershed, and how the rural municipalities might address the issues at the local level.

In answer to requests resulting from the organization and hosting of that forum, NSWA participated in panels, gave presentations and fielded questions at the NSWA display booth at a series of conferences, regional trade shows and recreational events. NSWA also heavily increased the number of presentations delivered to municipalities, industry and community organizations in 2009 – 2010. (See *Outreach Highlights* below)

Using the foundation developed at the December 2009 Rural Municipal Watershed Planning Forum, the NSWA hosted two Regional Watershed Planning Forums in March, 2010. The Headwaters Watershed Planning Forum was held at Drayton Valley on March 4, 2010 and was attended by participants representing a variety of sectors including: forestry; oil and gas; rural municipalities; and regional NGOs. The Downstream Watershed Planning Forum took place at Lakeland College in Vermilion on March 10, 2010 and was attended by participants representing a similar mix of sectors.

Participants had an opportunity to respond to the comments made at the December Forum with regard to how the major watershed issues (vulnerabilities) across the entire Saskatchewan River basin impact their region. Using the four DRAFT goals from the IWMP, participants discussed IWMP assumptions and the implications for each stakeholder group. Details of these forums are posted at: [www.nswa.ab.ca](http://www.nswa.ab.ca)

## **INDUSTRIAL HEARTLAND WATER MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK (IH-WMF)**

NSWA is represented on the Implementation Steering Committee by Dr. Les Gammie and on the Baseline Science and Engineering committees by Gordon Thompson. An engineering study of five municipal/industrial water supply and wastewater treatment/reuse options is at the final draft stage. Results of the study will be used to select two options for more detailed evaluation. Alberta Environment will employ water quality modeling to compare the two options for their potential to improve river water quality in the Devon to Pakan reach.

Recent work under the Baseline Science Committee has included additional monitoring of contaminants and aquatic ecosystem health indicators. Work is also being done to identify and evaluate governance and asset management requirements of an integrated water supply and wastewater reuse system.

## **VERMILION RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PROJECT**

The Vermilion River Watershed Management Project (VRWMP) is a collaborative initiative between the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance, the Alberta North American Waterfowl Management Plan Partners (AB-NAWMP) and the North East Alberta Water Management Coalition (NEAWMC). The project was initially conceived under *Water for Life: Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability* as an opportunity to integrate watershed management concepts and activities at a sub-watershed scale. The Vision for the VRWMP is that *"the Vermilion River Basin is a healthy and sustainable watershed"*, and the mission of the VRWMP is to *"Complete a locally-developed and supported watershed plan that balances social, economic, and environmental needs of the watershed community."*

A local Steering Committee for the VRWMP was established with participation from: four rural municipalities (Beaver County, Minburn County, Two Hills County, and County of Vermilion River); two urban municipalities (Town of Vegreville and Town of Vermilion); the Vermilion River Operations Advisory Committee; Holden Drainage District; Alberta Environment Water Management Operations; Alberta NAWMP; Lakeland College; and the NSWA. The NSWA is providing coordination, funding development, technical assistance and Board oversight to the project, and will integrate the VRWMP into the NSR-IWMP process. The VRWMP-SC will complete a draft Watershed Management Plan for the Vermilion River by spring 2011.

The NSWA worked with Golder Associates to complete the *Vermilion River Water Supply & Demand Study*, with funding support from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and NEAWMC. The study analyzed basin hydrology and water use and demand, and developed a hydrological model that accounts for land use, wetland drainage, and management of flood-control structures. The results of this study form the foundation for watershed management planning in the Vermilion Basin.

## **WEBSITE UPDATE**

In March 2010, NSWA staff reorganized our website (<http://nswa.ab.ca>) to make it easier to navigate. In addition, we added new feedback tools to gather responses after the stakeholder forums held in March 2010. News (<http://nswa.ab.ca/nswa-news>) and Publications ([http://nswa.ab.ca/resources/nswa\\_publications](http://nswa.ab.ca/resources/nswa_publications)) sections were re-organized into an easy to update table, and all of our recent publications have been added.

## **NORTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER BASIN ATLAS PROJECT**

The NSWA continues to work toward understanding the full range of watershed management issues in the North Saskatchewan River Basin. In order to communicate these issues and to increase stakeholders' understanding of watershed geography, we have created a draft atlas depicting themes including hydrology, terrain, land cover, land use, population, wastewater sources and planning jurisdictions. The first of these maps were presented at the 2008 AGM, and a final selection of maps and accompanying will be printed as an atlas in summer of 2010. This project was made possible by the financial support of Alberta Beef Producers, Alberta Ecotrust and Petro-Canada, and by the diligent efforts of Candace Vanin at AAFC and Graham Watt at NSWA.

The NSWA also worked with the Sturgeon River Watershed Initiative to create a series of maps and an interactive mapping tool to support their local watershed assessment and stewardship activities.

## **RIPARIAN ASSESSMENT PROJECT**

A key gap noted in the 2005 State of the North Saskatchewan Watershed Report (SOWR) was the lack of information on riparian conditions for the majority of the watershed. SOWR Recommendation #7 stated that the NSWA should "work with... riparian assessment experts, to develop a collective GIS-based riparian assessment process that is objective, universal, unconstrained by sharing issues and more accessible to the public".

The NSWA still does not have a clear picture of current conditions of riparian areas, or of all the landscape factors that cumulatively compromise riparian integrity and function. The NSWA has also recognized that methodologies available for different scales of riparian assessment (i.e. site, stream, watershed and landscape) have not been well integrated in Alberta. Therefore, the NSWA initiated a project to gain a better understanding of riparian assessment methodologies. In 2008 the NSWA obtained a Major Project Grant from Alberta Ecotrust to support this work.

In October 2008 the NSWA held a workshop on riparian assessment and management in Alberta, with presenters from: NSWA; Alberta Conservation Association; Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society; and the Alberta Terrestrial Imaging Centre (ATIC- University of Lethbridge). This led to a partnership with ATIC to develop a research project entitled: "*Monitoring System for Mapping Non-Cultivated Areas in the Agricultural Landscape of Alberta Using Remote Sensing*", which will use the Vermilion River watershed as a prototype. This proposal received funding from Ag-Food Council of Alberta and commences May 2010. From December 2008 to the summer 2009, the NSWA gathered available data on aquatic, riparian and upland conditions into a comprehensive geospatial database for subsequent analysis in this and other projects.

The NSWA used the resources and networking opportunities provided by this grant to build capacity and leverage resources for other NSWA projects, including:

- The development of GIS analysis and mapping products to support the NSWA project entitled: *“Cumulative Effects Assessment of the North Saskatchewan River Watershed using ALCES”* ([http://nswa.ab.ca/cumulative\\_effects](http://nswa.ab.ca/cumulative_effects) ).
- The preparation of land use, riparian and wetland information to support two other NSWA projects: *“Economic Activity and Ecosystem Services in the North Saskatchewan River Basin”* and *“HSPF Watershed Model for the North Saskatchewan River Basin”* (completed March 31, 2010).
- The preparation of land use, land management and aquatic systems data to support NSWA's *North Saskatchewan Watershed Atlas & Sturgeon River Watershed Atlas*.



Hair Brush island in the North Saskatchewan River near Lindbergh, Alberta

## OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2010

### APRIL 2009

- Participated in the ***Cows and Creeks Trade Show*** in Caroline.
- Participated in the Alberta Council of Environmental Education (ACEE) conference – ***Bridging Science and Communication***.

### MAY 2009

- Participated in the ***Pathways 2 Sustainability Conference*** and sat on the watershed panel with Battle River Watershed Alliance, Red Deer Watershed Alliance and Oldman Basin Council.
- Sponsored a page in ***Enviro Kids*** publication and a banner advertisement in the ***Edmonton Examiner*** for Environment Week.
- Held a ***NSWA Special Members Meeting*** to ratify new By-laws.
- Attended the ***Sturgeon River Watershed Initiative*** meeting.
- Participated in the ***Wetland Policy Workshop***, University of Alberta.
- Gave a presentation to ***Clearwater County*** at Rocky Mountain House.
- Gave a presentation to the ***Alberta Capital Region Wastewater Commission***.

### JUNE 2009

- Completed the financial audit for fiscal 2008-09 (Gadowsky Lim and Associates).
- Gave a presentation at the ***International Conference for Local Environmental Initiatives World Congress*** in Edmonton.
- Gave a presentation to the ***Cows and Fish 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Grazing School for Women*** – Smoky Lake. NSWA also provided sponsorship support along with Smoky Lake County, County of St. Paul.
- Gave a presentation at the City of Edmonton ***Master Naturalist Outreach Night***.
- Provided feedback to the ***City of Edmonton DRAFT Municipal Development Plan and Transportation Master Plan***.
- Participated in the ***Alberta Learning Network Funding Workshop***, sponsored by the Sustainability Network.
- Held the ***NSWA 2009 AGM*** with Morris Seiferling, Stewardship Commissioner for the Land Use Secretariat, as guest speaker.
- Attended the ***Alberta Agriculture and Food Council AGM***
- Attended the ***Partners for the Saskatchewan River Basin State of the Basin Report*** release.

### JULY 2009

- NSWA Executive Officers for 2009-10 appointed by the Board of Directors.
- Attended the ***National Stewardship and Conservation Conference***.
- Provided feedback for the ***Alberta Environment Water For Life Renewal*** website revisions

**AUGUST 2009**

- Gave a presentation to the ***Vermilion River Operations Advisory Committee***.
- IWMP Steering Committee met in Drayton Valley and toured the ***Cynthia Solar Aquatics Waste Water Plant and the Brazeau Dam***.

**SEPTEMBER 2009**

- NSWA offices moved from Century Place downtown Edmonton to the newly renovated Eastgate Building at 9504 49<sup>th</sup> Street, Edmonton.
- Attended the ***WaterEdWest Conference***.
- Participated in the ***River Rally 2009***.
- Participated in the ***Conservation and Stewardship Education and Awareness Program Inventory***.
- Attended the ***Canadian Low-Impact Development Conference*** at U of A.
- Gave presentation on *lake management* to ***Alberta Health Inspectors Conference***.
- Participated in the provincial ***WPAC forum*** on the implications of the Land Use Framework.

**OCTOBER 2009**

- Gave a presentation on the IWMP to ***NAIT Biological Sciences staff and students***.
- Gave a presentation to the City of Edmonton's ***Environmental Advisory Committee***.
- Participated in the ***Alberta Water Learning Network*** funding seminar sponsored by the Sustainability Network.
- Participated in the ***Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin Workshop*** on water management and watershed planning for the Saskatchewan River Basin, in Calgary
- IWMP Steering Committee met at and toured ***EPCOR's E.L. Smith Water Treatment Plant***
- Gave a presentation at U of A to the ***Canadian Water Resources Association, Student Chapter***
- Attended a public consultation workshop sponsored by ***Institute of Agriculture, Forestry and Environment*** (IAFE), Edmonton regarding their forthcoming report to the Government of Alberta.
- Participated in the ***2009 WPAC Summit***, sponsored by Battle River W.A., Camrose

**NOVEMBER 2009**

- Co-sponsored the ***Alberta Lake Management Society Annual Conference***.
- Gave a presentation to ***North East Zone, Alberta Agriculture Service Boards Association***, Tulliby Lake.
- Attended an Information Workshop on In-stream Flow Needs, sponsored by federal ***Department of Fisheries and Oceans***, Edmonton.

**DECEMBER 2009**

- Attended the ***Bridging Interests, Building Agreement (BIBA) Public Participation Workshop*** hosted by the Clean Air Strategic Alliance (CASA).
- Co-hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> ***NSWA Rural Municipal Watershed Planning Forum*** with Strathcona County.
- Hosted a joint meeting of the ***Board and IWMP-SC***, then the ***NSWA Christmas Soiree***.

**JANUARY 2010**

- Participated in the ***Cold Regions Hydrological Model Review*** – Red Deer.
- Gave a presentation to the ***Drainage Council of Alberta*** – Wetaskiwin.
- Gave a presentation to the ***Vermilion River Watershed Management Plan (VRWMP)*** Steering Committee.
- Received a briefing on CEMS from ***Bev Yee, Assistant Deputy Minister*** of Environmental Stewardship Division Alberta Environment.
- Gave three presentations to ***Farm Tech 2010***, Edmonton
- Received a briefing from Kathleen LeClair, Chief Officer, ***Capital Region Board***.

**FEBRUARY 2010**

- Held an ***NSWA Members' Meeting*** to provide mid-year updates on projects and initiatives
- New NSWA booth displayed and staffed at the ***Alberta Fish & Game Show***.
- Attended the ***Evolving World Water Management Conference***.
- NSWA participated in the Steering Committee, Baseline Science Committee, and Governance Committee meetings for the ***Industrial Heartland Water Management Framework (IH-WMF)***.
- Gave a presentation to the ***Northeast Capital Industrial Association***.
- Gave a presentation to the ***Vermilion River Watershed Management Plan (VRWMP)*** Steering Committee.
- Gave a presentation to the ***Vermilion River Operations Advisory Committee***.

**MARCH 2010**

- Received a briefing from Jason Unger, ***Environmental Law Centre*** on jurisdictional issues surrounding watershed planning and management in Alberta
- Held a ***Headwaters Regional Watershed Planning Forum*** at Drayton Valley.
- Held a ***Downstream Regional Watershed Forum*** at Vermilion.
- Gave a presentation to the ***Town of Drayton Valley***.
- Gave a presentation to the ***County of St. Paul***.
- NSWA booth displayed and staffed at the ***Alberta Association of Municipal Districts & Counties Conference***.
- Attended the ***Sturgeon River Watershed Initiative*** meeting.
- Co-sponsored and participated in the ***Canadian Water Resources Association Conference***.
- Participated in the ***Industrial Heartland Water Management Framework (IH WMF)*** Governance Committee meetings.
- Gave a presentation to the ***Vermilion River Naturalists Society***.
- Gave a presentation to the ***Alberta Association, Canadian Institute of Planners***.



North Saskatchewan River near  
the mouth of the Vermilion River

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

The NSWA Board of Directors and staff designed a strategic planning retreat during the winter of 2010, and held it in late April, 2010. The purpose of the retreat was to: develop a new 3 – 5 year strategic plan for the organization; review core business functions; and identify key priorities for the next operational year (2010-11). The preliminary results of this workshop are listed below in bullet form, and will be reviewed by the new Board of Directors at its inaugural meeting in July 2010.

### STRATEGIC GOALS 2010-2015

- Demonstrate leadership in regional watershed planning
  - Develop water quality and quantity management plans
  - Meet milestones of IWMP implementation schedule
  - Develop longer-term planning horizon (~30 years)
  - Foster stewardship and continuous improvement
  - Establish NSWA as credible watershed planning entity
- Become a leader for water research and education in the basin
- Develop performance measures (lead and lag indicators)
- Develop appropriate basin monitoring needs
- Grow engagement capabilities
- Established NSWA with key “influencers”
- Business model: NSWA is sustainable, has continuity, clear governance, and capacity

### CORE BUSINESS FUNCTIONS

- Basin research, analysis, planning
- Information, advice and assistance
- Engagement, education, communication
- Advocacy
  - Public input
  - Partner Advocacy
  - Provincial Government
- Development of secure funding

### NSWA STRATEGIC PRIORITIES (2010-11)

- Seek stakeholder input on draft IWMP and Water Quality Objectives (WQOs)
- Expand engagement with all sectors
- Align IWMP with Capital Region Growth Plan and NSR LUF Reg. Plan
- Align NSWA WQOs with Industrial Heartland WMF targets and objectives
- Prioritize sub-basin and lake planning needs
- Evaluate water quality loadings in upper basin
- Draft the Vermilion River sub-basin plan
- Review NSWA Bylaws and Terms of Reference
- Develop a Sustainable Funding Model
- Assess instream flow needs and related water quantity issues

## PROVINCIAL ACTIVITIES

The NSWA continues to work with the other key partnerships established under *Water for Life: Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability*. The NSWA is currently serving as the alternate WPAC representative on the Alberta Water Council, and will assume the seat in 2011. The NSWA was also active on a number of AWC project teams, including: the Conservation and Efficiency team; the AWC-WPAC-WSG Communications team; and the Non-Point Source Runoff team.

The Executive Directors of all WPACs meet quarterly to discuss mutual progress, operational concerns and to organize the Annual WPAC Summit. The NSWA actively contributes to discussions regarding watershed planning mandates and capacities in Alberta, and has positioned itself to contribute to forthcoming planning activities under the Land Use Framework.



Clearwater River and North Saskatchewan River near Rocky Mountain House, Alberta

**YOUR WATERSHED**

**YOUR VOICE**