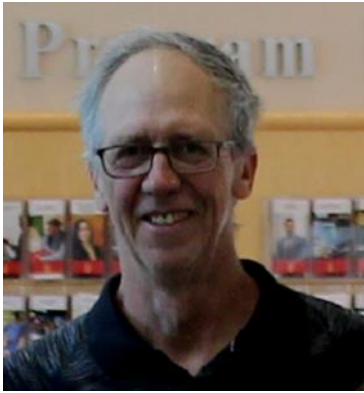




Annual Report 2020-2021

A healthy watershed that provides balance between social, environmental, and economic benefits.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



This has been a busy year for SEAWA. I was elected as Chairman at the AGM in July 2020 at the last in-person meeting before COVID-19 restrictions were fully in place. Subsequently, our board and staff quickly adapted to online video meetings, and the staff has continued to work throughout the year adhering to Alberta Health Services COVID-19 guidelines.

In spite of an initial delay in funding announcement from Alberta Environment and Parks, Marilou has managed to ensure that work continued uninterrupted

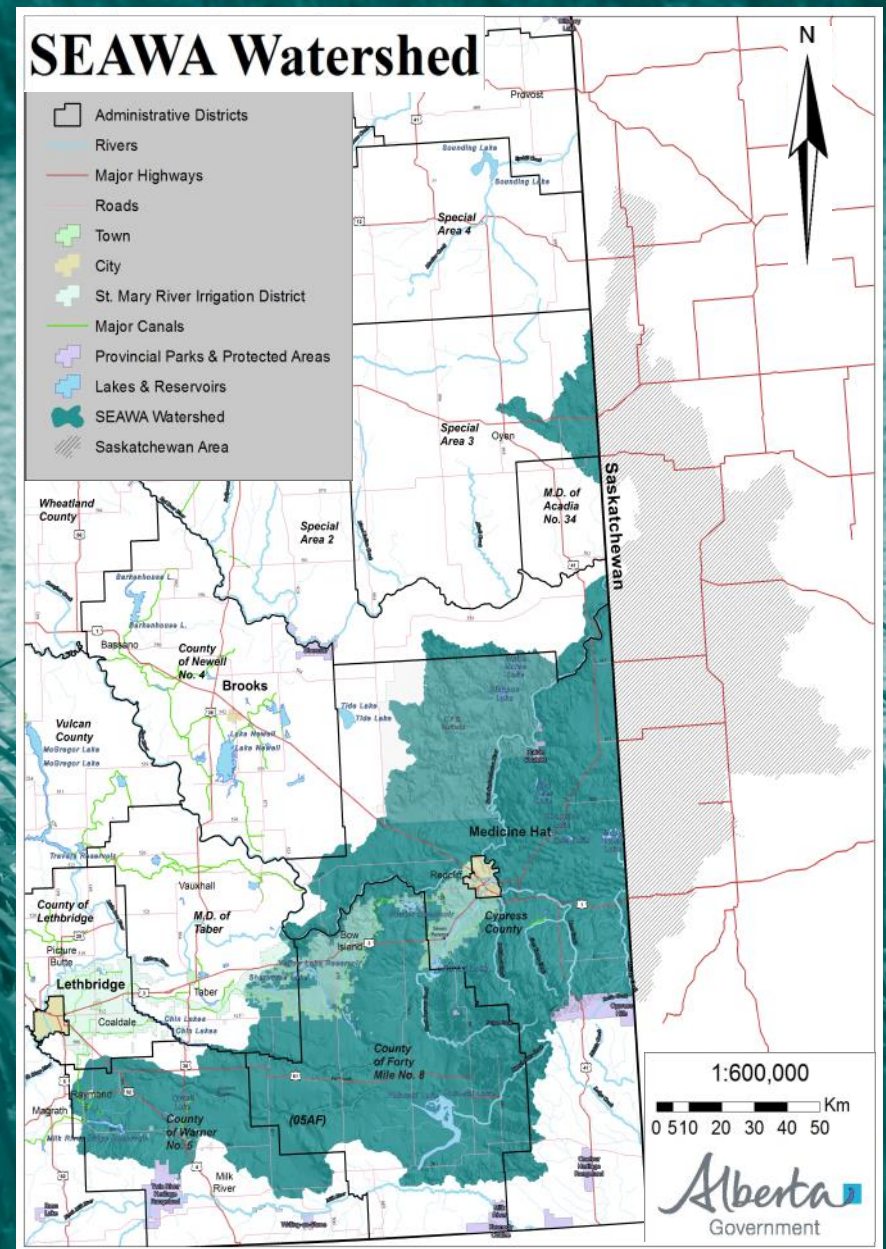
throughout the year and has acquired additional funding from various sources for both staff salary and projects.

Staff has seen Ben and Larry return from the previous season and have added Hanna, Alexi, and Chris into the 2020 season's complement of technical and field staff.

Several highlights stand out for me this year. The SEAWA website was reorganized and given a facelift to make it easier to access more current and relevant information. The restoration field work has continued under challenging conditions and past year efforts are showing significant results. Partnerships have been strengthened with the City of Medicine Hat, rural land owners and the Saint Mary Irrigation District (SMRID) and proving to be mutually beneficial in applying restoration work. Knowledge development of invasive species management practices is gaining traction in the community. Source water protection is becoming more relevant and partners are being engaged in planning. The SEAWA art gallery and Adopt-a-Pond stand out as significant success among the many communication and outreach events this year.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the South East Watershed Alliance (SEAWA), I would like to thank all of our supporters, members and volunteers for their participation and contributions during the past year as we look forward to further stewardship success in 2021-2022.

Ryan Davison



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Another year of hard work and rewarding accomplishments. Three seasons of riparian restoration projects—revegetation with native shrubs and trees and studies on riparian invasive plants control have evolved into a collection of original local knowledge that has been the source of relevant information for SEAWA's education and outreach. On-the-ground projects have created partnerships,

inspired people to join SEAWA or volunteer, and provided relevant experience to students and new graduates. A circular model naturally emerged as shown on page 11: Stewardship -> Applied Research -> Watershed Knowledge -> Education & Outreach -> Community Action. Revegetation has been the most challenging restoration activity being labourious, time-consuming, and weather-dependent. It requires the application of a wide-range of knowledge and field experience involving wild plants, soil, hydrology, ecology, geomorphology, climate and micro-climate, horticulture techniques, semi-arid agriculture, and project management. Nevertheless, there is immense joy in understanding the connections of natural components, processes and phenomena unique to this part of the grassland ecoregion and the SEAWA watershed, and witnessing them converge into a successful ecological restoration. Our projects and outdoor education have demonstrated flexibility amidst the COVID-19 pandemic such that we have maintained our temporary/summer employment with generous wage subsidies.

Many thanks to the SEAWA board, committees, volunteers, partners, funders, supporters, and the restoration team (Ben White, Alexi Nelson, Hannah Sabatier, Larry Paik, and Chris Beck).

Marilou Montemayor, P. Ag.
Master of Environmental Studies, B. Sc. Environmental Science

COVID-19 Impacts

SEAWA followed provincial health guidelines and limited its in-person gathering activities starting March 16, 2020. Meetings have been held virtually. Committees did a lot of work via emails.

Education and Outreach activities have been the most affected. Spring and summer community activities that provided opportunities to connect with its stakeholders were cancelled along with SEAWA's in-person spring and fall education forums. However, SEAWA continued outdoor volunteer activities where COVID restrictions could be maintained such as shoreline clean-ups, riparian invasive plant removal, and field tours. SEAWA has stepped up its social media presence. The new website launched in December 2020 has been a key educational and communication tool in addition to regular quarterly newsletters.

The main impact on the riparian restoration projects was increased travel cost due to the avoidance of carpooling as a precaution against person-to-person transmission.

Staff have been working remotely since December 2020. Physical presence in the office has been reduced to one person at a time. Short office visits were necessary to maintain the ongoing winter plant propagation, pick-up physical mail, sign documents, check on voicemails, get and put back field tools and equipment, and perform general office upkeep.

There has been an increase of online forums such as webinars, workshops, consultations, and meetings. Being a small organization, the time and financial savings from unrealized travel were significant benefits for SEAWA, freeing-up resources for other important work.

The number of employees was not affected by the pandemic. However, temporary staff hours were reduced from 7.5 hours per day to 7 hours per day, 5 days a week.

The pandemic has changed our methods and approaches for accomplishing our objectives for this year. Outdoor work such as riparian restoration, applied research, outdoor education and events have become more important as they easily adapted to COVID gathering restrictions. Our overall workload has not been affected by the pandemic.



ENHANCING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Another productive and engaging year! We exceeded our objectives. Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) provided four years of funding to all Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils (WPACs) beginning in the fiscal year 2019-2020. The South East Alberta Watershed Alliance (SEAWA) was provided an annual grant of \$195,000 for four years. This annual report covers the second year, April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021, of the four-year period.

The AEP grant of \$195,000 was fully utilized as the total of operational expenses was close to \$220,000. The bulk of AEP grant was spent on: Salaries, wages, and benefits followed by General Administration, and , Community engagement. The gap of \$25,000 was covered by wage subsidies and donations.

Staff capacity was at minimum, with two full-time employees – Executive Director, and an Intern. There were two summer students, and a fall youth employee primarily hired as Riparian Restoration Assistants for the ongoing riparian restoration project funded through the Watershed Resiliency Restoration Program (WRRP). All four positions received subsidy – summer students through ECO Canada, and Intern and fall youth positions through the Canada Summer Jobs Program, Government of Canada.

The 13th Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on July 22, 2020. The Board consisted of new directors, directors that were re-elected and continued their term, and the past chair (Garry Lentz). The Board including the past chair (voting privileges) totaled 14 out of 17 board seats plus the past Chair. The new set of officers included: Ryan Davison – Chair, Alf Belyea – Vice-Chair, Tina Regehr – Secretary, and Karen Saffran, Treasurer.

Committees included: Executive Committee: four officials of the Board and the Past Chair. It also functions as the Human Resources

Committee. The Technical Committee: 14 members – Karen Saffran as the Chair. Communications Committee: 6 members – Martha Munz Gue as the Chair. Policy Committee: Audrey Goodwin as a member. The Policy Committee includes the Health and Safety Committee with Alf Belyea as a member.

Membership and mailing list recipients were updated. Inactive accounts were deleted. Membership stood at 72, and 658 mail recipients.



BOARD AND COMMITTEES



Directors of the Board

Ryan Davison—Chair, Alf Belyea—Vice-Chair, Karen Saffran—Treasurer, Tina Regehr—Secretary, Garry Lentz Past Chair, Mike Zmurchyk, Greg Paxman, Kezia Gosselin-Lesko, Diane Harty, Audrey Goodwin/ Chad Willms, Jean Beriault, Stuart Murray, Brent Smith, Allison Campbell, Laurie Oulette

← Board meeting, 11Feb2021

Policy Committee—Audrey Goodwin

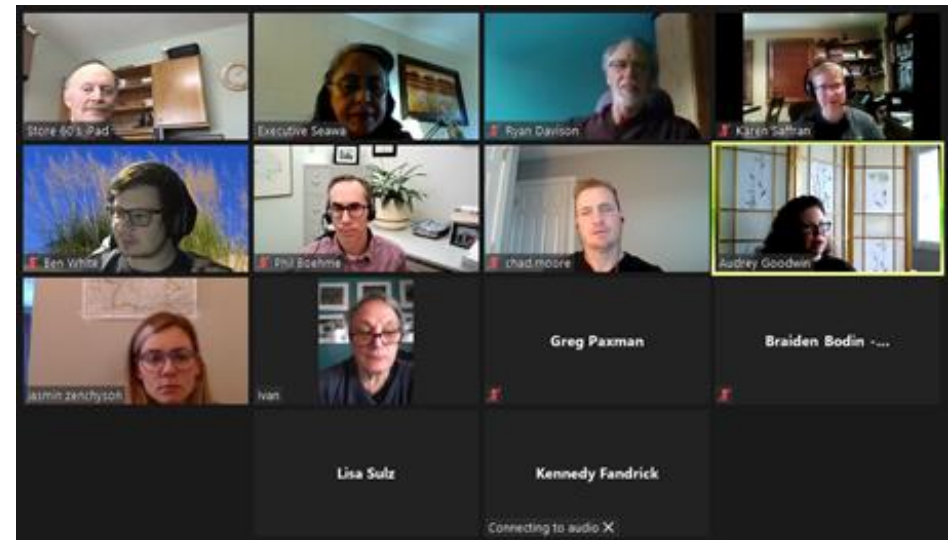
Technical Committee

Karen Saffran—Chair, Ryan Davison, Stuart Murray, Greg Paxman, Kezia Gosselin-Lesko, Garry Lentz, Ivan Shukster, Larry Liepert, Ron Linowski, Maggie Romuld, Allison Campbell, Natalie Kromrey, Colleen Walford, Lisa Schultz, Kennedy Fandick, Roland Kappel, Jamie Meeks

Technical Committee meeting, 12Jan2021 →



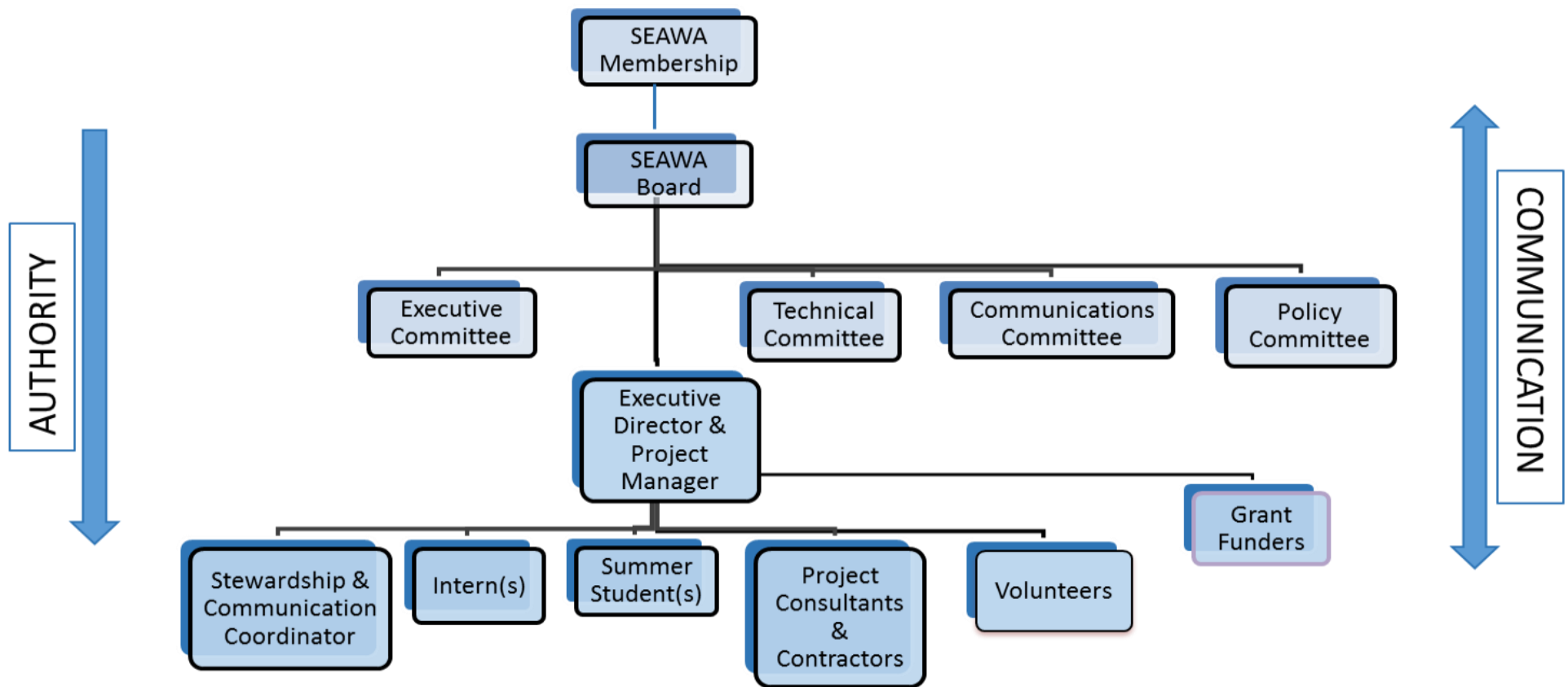
Communications Committee meeting, 14Dec2020



Communications Committee

Martha Munz Gue—Chair, Terry Lawson, Paula Munro, Maggie Romuld, Tina Regehr, Alexi Nelson

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

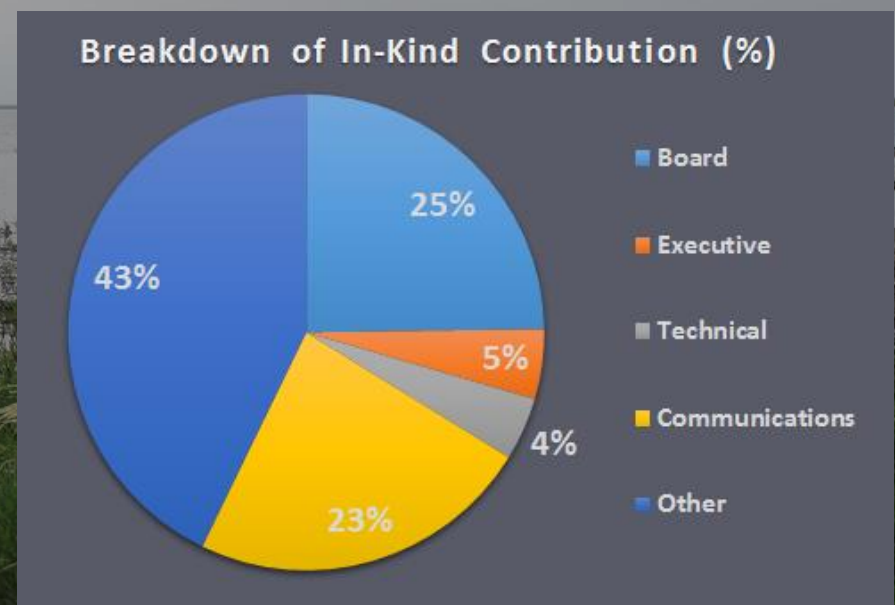
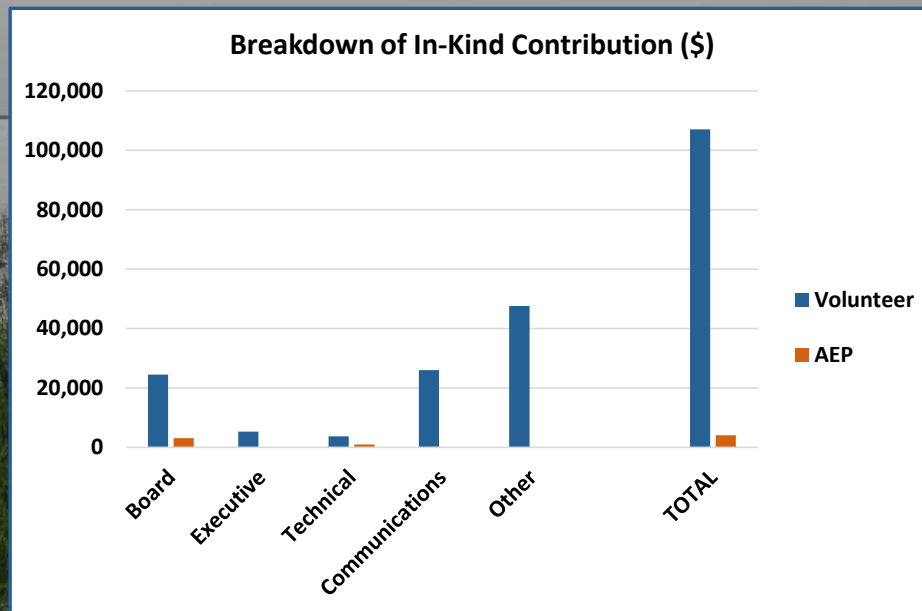


IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION

Volunteer services form the backbone of SEAWA. SEAWA is a volunteer-based, multi-sector organization that functions as a Watershed Planning and Advisory Council (WPAC) as well as a stakeholder to local and provincial government initiatives, and non-government organizations. Volunteer services have been provided through the board, board committees, partnerships, membership, artistic publication designs, fieldwork at riparian restoration sites, and participation at SEAWA events and initiatives. The value of in-kind contributions for individuals

was determined as if SEAWA was to pay for the goods and services provided by volunteers. Board and committee services were valued at \$85/hr and fieldwork and other services at \$25/hr. The higher value of in-kind contribution this year compared to the previous year was mainly due to the 10 months of rent-free commercial space donated for the SEAWA art gallery plus the artists' time, and the design for the previous annual report.

The total in-kind contribution for the year 2020-2021 was \$111,116



FINANCIAL REPORT

	March 31, 2021 (Unaudited)	March 31, 2020 (Unaudited)
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION		
ASSETS	<u>\$198,852</u>	<u>\$208,161</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES	27,484	50,906
NET ASSETS	<u>171,368</u>	<u>157,250</u>
	<u>\$198,852</u>	<u>\$208,161</u>
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS		
REVENUES	<u>\$256,550</u>	<u>\$277,389</u>
EXPENDITURES - AEP	218,529	226,696
EXPENDITURES - WRRP	<u>23,908</u>	<u>42,654</u>
	<u>242,437</u>	<u>269,350</u>
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER OPERATIONS	<u>\$14,113</u>	<u>\$8,039</u>
STATEMENT OF CHANGE IN ASSETS		
BALANCE – BEGINNING OF PERIOD	\$157,255	\$149,216
BALANCE – END OF PERIOD	<u>\$171,368</u>	<u>\$157,255</u>

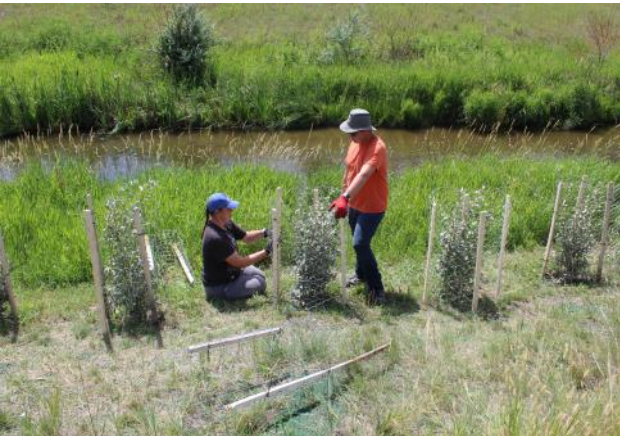
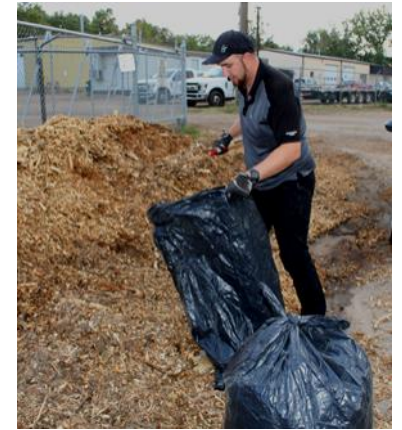
STEWARDSHIP—RIPARIAN RESTORATION

We started on-the-ground projects in 2018 which consisted of fencing, installation of livestock off-stream watering systems, and revegetation with native shrubs (chokecherry, golden currant, Saskatoon, wolf willow, thorny buffalo berry, red osier dogwood, western snowberry) and trees (Manitoba maple, plains cottonwoods, and green ash). To date, we have **restored a total of 11 km, and 900 plants** have survived and grown. Revegetation has been the most challenging restoration activity. This year's activities focused on post-planting care of shrubs and trees that were planted in 2018, 2019, and 2020 to four revegetation sites: Connaught Pond and Saratoga Park (City of Medicine Hat); Sauder reservoir (SMRID), and Yeast site (private landowner). Challenges were directly related to plant survival and establishment in a semi-arid climate, and ecological issues related to weeds, invasive plants, and wildlife. Post-planting care activities consisted of: weekly watering, manual weeding and motorized mowing

every 2 weeks, installation or widening (to accommodate growth) of temporary fences or plant cages, spraying with browsing deterrent or organic fungicide (for cottonwoods), and wood chip mulch application. It has been a pesticide-free restoration. Post-planting care is necessary for at least four seasons. All restoration methods and practices were developed by Marilou Montemayor and specifically suited for the semi-arid climate, native vegetation characteristics, site-specific topography, hydrology, and microclimate. Projects were funded by the Watershed Resiliency & Restoration Program (WRRP), Government of Alberta; and the Recreation Fisheries Conservation Partnerships Program (RFCPP), Government of Canada. Partnerships have been with the city of Medicine Hat, St. Mary River Irrigation District, and individual landowners. Details and additional information are available here: [Riparian Restoration | South East Alberta Watershed Alliance \(seawa.ca\)](#)



RIPARIAN RESTORATION



Restoration & Research Team: Marilou Montemayor (Lead), Ben White, Alexi Nelson, Hannah Sabatier, Larry Paik, Chris Beck



WATERSHED KNOWLEDGE

Stewardship projects involving riparian revegetation with native shrubs and trees and applied research on riparian invasive plant control have naturally evolved as sources of locally developed **SEAWA watershed knowledge**. Project results and recommendations on land, water, and biodiversity are locally visible so that watershed stakeholders can directly relate and understand. These projects have promoted SEAWA's relevance to its stakeholders, motivated participation within SEAWA's board and committees, and fostered partnerships with local landowners and organizations. Projects have also attracted volunteers to help in fieldwork, community clean-up and invasive plants removal events. Work experience in these projects became academic practicum to students. SEAWA's locally-derived watershed knowledge has provided a meaningful and relevant basis for its education and outreach activities. A process model has organically developed over a period of three seasons as illustrated by the chart on the right.

Applied research focussed on the organic or cultural control of invasive weeds in riparian areas such as: leafy spurge, Russian olive trees, reed canary grass, and Japanese and downy brome. Experiments using native shrubs e.g. wolf willow (*Elaeagnus commutata*) and silver sagebrush (*Artemisia cana*) that would likely express allelopathy (when one plant inhibits the growth of another) were used mostly for leafy spurge. Details and additional information are available here: [Invasive Plant Management | South East Alberta Watershed Alliance \(seawa.ca\)](https://seawa.ca/invasive-plant-management-south-east-alberta-watershed-alliance). We have successfully propagated cottonwoods and silver sagebrush for use in restoration and applied research: [Native Plant Propagation | South East Alberta Watershed Alliance \(seawa.ca\)](https://seawa.ca/native-plant-propagation-south-east-alberta-watershed-alliance). In addition, a report on the water quality of Seven Persons Creek was completed: [Water Quality of Seven Persons Creek at Two Riparian Restoration Sites \(seawa.ca\)](https://seawa.ca/water-quality-of-seven-persons-creek-at-two-riparian-restoration-sites)



EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Stewardship and applied projects have proven to be effective educational tools (demonstration sites), credible sources of new and locally relevant water and watershed knowledge for educating stakeholders, and an effective way to promote SEAWA and motivate to volunteers and participation.

Education leads to awareness, which in turn, leads to action. One cares about what one understands. This applies to all aspects of watershed stewardship—water, land, air, ecosystems, and biodiversity. Stewardship actions bring people together to share knowledge and resources, and to support not-for-profit organizations such as SEAWA.

Since the advent of pandemic restrictions in March 2020, SEAWA focused its education and outreach activities outdoors. Paintings of riparian plants and scenes by local artists as well as SEAWA's educational displays could be viewed by appointment and COVID prevention guidelines were followed. The art gallery attracted new people who heard about watershed, riparian areas and SEAWA for the first time, and became SEAWA members and/or volunteers. Outdoor activities with volunteers included: Earth Day 2020 and World Water Day 2021 shoreline clean-up, National Forest Week walk with Grasslands Naturalists, Halloween Russian olive saplings removal, riparian restoration field tours, and SEAWA urban pollinator garden. A volunteer also propagated cottonwoods and planted them at the Connaught Pond restoration site. Additional information is available here: [Community Engagement | South East Alberta Watershed Alliance \(seawa.ca\)](#). An exciting new initiative was started in March 2021—Adopt-a-pond, in the city of Medicine Hat. Adopt-a-pond invites volunteers to regularly pick-up trash around stormwater ponds and riparian areas, and report provincially declared invasive plants on the online app [EEDmapS https://www.eddmaps.org/alberta/](https://www.eddmaps.org/alberta/). SEAWA's Executive Director participated as a WPAC representative on the Alberta Water Council's project team that reviewed the Wetland Policy. SEAWA also publishes quarterly newsletters, available here: [Newsletters | South East Alberta Watershed Alliance \(seawa.ca\)](#) and is active on twitter and facebook.



NEXT STEPS

To achieve SEAWA's Vision and Mission, the SEAWA Board established five goals for the period 2020-2023. SEAWA's annual activities are organized according to these goals and are aligned with WPAC roles under the Government of Alberta's Water for Life strategy, <https://www.alberta.ca/water-for-life-strategy.aspx>. Goals 1 and 2, and the knowledge base for Goal 3 are totally dependent on successful project-specific grant applications. Goals 3 and 4 are funded by the Government of Alberta, Environment and Parks (AEP) and successful project grants. Goal 5 is mainly funded by AEP with additional funding from stakeholder donations and wage subsidies to summer students or youth employment.

Monitoring & Reporting

Goal 1—The SEAWA watershed is assessed and watershed knowledge is expanded.

Policy & Planning

Goal 2—SEAWA watershed management plans are developed.

Literacy & Education

Goal 3—The community is engaged in watershed issues through education and stewardship.

Convenor & Collaborator

Goal 4—Relationships with stakeholders and the broader water and watershed networks are developed and improved.

Operational

Goal 5—SEAWA attains sustainable funding and improved organizational capacity.

SEAWA's objectives for the upcoming year:

Goal 1. SEAWA applies for grants to continue studies on invasive plant management in riparian areas, and conduct an assessment of grassland ecosystem carbon sinks that includes shrubs and trees.

Goal 2. SEAWA applies for a grant to prepare a source water protection plan.

Goal 3. SEAWA applies for grants to continue riparian restoration/revegetation projects. Local knowledge gained from

applied research and stewardship projects are shared through outdoor educational events, demonstration sites, newsletters, SEAWA website, social media, and local media.

Goal 4. New project partnerships are developed and previous partnerships are maintained.

Goal 5. SEAWA continues to promote its achievements and relevance to the watershed, and encourage stakeholders to provide financial support to SEAWA.

SEAWA MISSION

SEAWA brings together diverse partners to educate the public, to support knowledge development, and to develop and facilitate the implementation of management plans for the sustainable use of the South Saskatchewan River Basin and the Pakowki Lake watershed.

THANK YOU TO ALL SEAWA SUPPORTERS!

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry
Alberta Environment and Parks
Alberta Irrigation Districts Association
City of Medicine Hat
County of Forty Mile
County of Warner
Cows & Fish
Cypress County

ECO Canada
Government of Canada
Grasslands Naturalists
Medicine Hat College
Praxis Society
St. Mary River Irrigation District
Town of Redcliff
Arcade Plaza, Medicine Hat
Get Growing Organic Farm

Dave Yeast
David Gue
Paula Munro & family
Keely Gilham
Kira Vlietstra
Terry Lawson

Artists:
Adolph Erdmann
Andrea Dumanceaux
Annette Ten Cate
Betty Kirschenman
Dale Beaven
Diane Smyth
Dr. Ian Gilchrist
Elaine Zimmer
Harvey Fix
Joseph Cayenne

Loretta Fix
Margaret Velichko
Martha Munz Gue
Michele Winger
Pat Davies
Darlene Chatten
Donna Christensen
Elaine Spitzer
Fran Lauzon
Judy Russill
Kelly Blair
Marlene Hubbard
Penny Cumberland
Vicki Hadland

Individual supporters & volunteers

South East Alberta Watershed Alliance Society

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Twitter: SEAlbertawaters