

Annual Report 2018-2019



seawa

South East Alberta Watershed Alliance

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

SEAWA's Vision is to have a healthy watershed that provides a balance between social, environmental, and economic benefits.

Our mission is to bring 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 Sub-Basin and the Pakowki Lake watershed.

2018 was a busy year for SEAWA as we worked towards our vision and our mission.

Executive Director-Marilou Montemayor was able to access project funding from several sources that enabled us to hire Natasha Rogers in March for the Restoration Intern position and in October she became our Stewardship Facilitator. Seline Solis returned for another summer, and in September, Brooklyn Neubeker joined the team as the Stewardship Intern.

In addition to the ongoing Education and Outreach programs that included classroom visits, co-sponsorship of a Science Fair, an education booth at community events, a World Water Week event, newspaper articles, 2 Forums, and a newsletter that goes out 6 times a year to 700 people, we were able to do a water quality study, and an Aerial Riparian Areas Assessment of the Seven Persons Creek.

Areas were identified and chosen for Restoration Projects when funding became available.

SEAWA partnered with 5 land owners to work on 5 projects, with 5 km being restored. 3.7 km of fence were constructed, over 2,000 shrubs and trees were planted, and areas of leafy spurge were dug out and/or mulched.

Thank you to the college students and Methanex employees that came out to help our staff members, and occasional paid employees to work on these projects.

Three other projects in the watershed also included an off stream watering system, a cattle crossing, and the planting of 169 native shrubs.

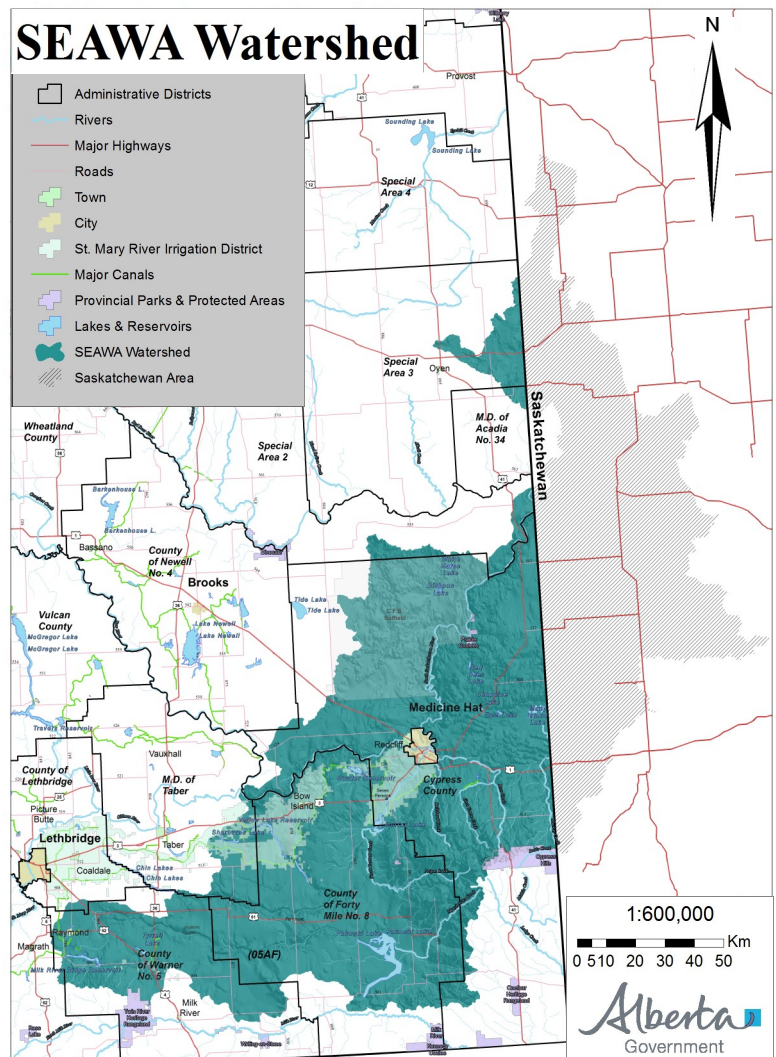
More projects will be conducted in the future if funding becomes available.

Thank you to Ryan Davison for accepting the Vice Chairman position when it became vacant in December.

I would like to thank the members of the SEAWA for their interest and attendance at the various functions through out the year.

And a special thank you to Marilou and her Staff, and to all of the Board and Committee members for their time and dedication to the SEAWA organization.

Garry Lentz



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It was a year of hard work, quick decision-making, accomplishments, and role fulfillment. The entire year was packed with on-the-ground riparian restoration activities, learning and developing methods appropriate to each restoration site; acquiring tools, equipment, and help; convincing and educating landowners to do riparian restoration; and implementing experiments designed to provide answers to practical issues.

We planted at Yeast and McKinley properties in May 2018, Connaught pond, Medicine Hat in August and November 2018, and at Sauder reservoir in November and December 2018. Late season planting was facilitated by the completion of 3.7 km fence by St. Mary River Irrigation District at the Sauder reservoir in October 2018. Fencing must be accompanied by planting to qualify for funding contribution from the Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnerships Program (RFCPP); with a time-constraint that all project expenses must be incurred on or before March 31, 2019. Luckily, there were three warm weather spells that allowed fieldwork, in November and December 2018, and January 2019. Riparian restoration projects with funding from the Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program (WRRP) had a wider scope and included installation of an off-stream livestock watering system and a stream crossing, in addition to fencing and planting.

We restored 5 km of riparian areas with RFCPP funding and 2.1 km (0.9 km of which is ongoing) with WRRP funding; a total of 7.1 km. We were short of the target of 10 km with RFCPP funding, primarily due to low uptake by landowners. We hope to do better next year, the final year of the WRRP funding, ending on March 31, 2020, also with a target of 10 km. We will share restoration results and lessons learned at SEAWA's educational forum in November 2019.

We were fortunate to be a recipient of wage subsidies from the United Nations Association – Canada Green Corps program. These allowed us to hire staff and supplemented Alberta Environment and Parks' operational grant. This was essential because staff and myself, with occasional help from hired help and volunteers, did all the planting and post-planting care at all sites throughout the year. Donations also helped with operational expenses and a water quality study. Our accomplishments also included community engagement and educational activities. As always, each grant or contribution agreement required working out budgets and cash flows, and preparing interim and final project reports.

Thank you for the leadership provided by the Chairman, and for all the policy and governance work done by the directors of the Board, and committee chairs and members; and support of other volunteers and participants of SEAWA events.



Marilou Montemayor, P. Ag.
M. Environmental Studies, B. Sc.

ENHANCING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Another energetic year followed last year's momentum. This year, SEAWA focused on the implementation of riparian restoration projects in collaboration with partners, meeting project funder reporting requirements, and hiring of staff. In addition, SEAWA participated in community events and initiatives, delivered watershed education, enhanced volunteer recruitment to SEAWA, applied for project grants and wage subsidies, and strengthened its policy and governance documents.

Alberta Environment and Parks provided SEAWA with an operational grant of \$240,000. St. Mary River Irrigation District provided \$5,000 for SEAWA's overall riparian restoration project.

There were two sources of funding for SEAWA's overall riparian restoration project. Contribution from the Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnerships Program (RFCPP), Fisheries and Oceans Canada was provided for the period April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019. A total of \$71,157 was spent out of the available contribution of \$110,333. Total expenses included a total wage subsidy of \$23,556 shared between the summer student and Restoration intern.

The multi-year riparian restoration project grant of \$221,000 for the period April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2020, received from the Government of Alberta's Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program (WRRP), continued on its second year. For this year, the aerial assessment of riparian areas of the Seven Persons Creek was completed. In addition, some partners have completed their restoration work and some are ongoing. Partner recruitment continues to the next fiscal year. Additional information is accessible at www.seawa.ca, Projects page.

Wage subsidy for a total of \$27,766 was received from United Nations Association—Canada Green Corps program (funded in part by the Government of Canada's Career Focus and Summer Work Experience Programs) that was shared between two interns. A Certificate of Appreciation was received for participation and partnership in the program.

The water quality study of the Seven Persons Creek was completed during the period May-August 2018. This project was funded through 2-year donations from Plains Midstream Canada (\$9,000), and Alberta Irrigation Projects Association (\$1,000).

New staff members were recruited: Natasha Rogers, Restoration Intern joined on March 2018 and became Stewardship Facilitator on October 2018; Seline Solis, summer student, May-August 2018; Brooklyn Neubeker, Stewardship Intern joined on September 2018.

In addition to organizational and administrative tasks, the Executive Director, Marilou Montemayor, provided overall project management, scientific/ technical expertise for all riparian restoration projects and applied research, was primary author of educational materials, and guided the implementation of communications and outreach activities.

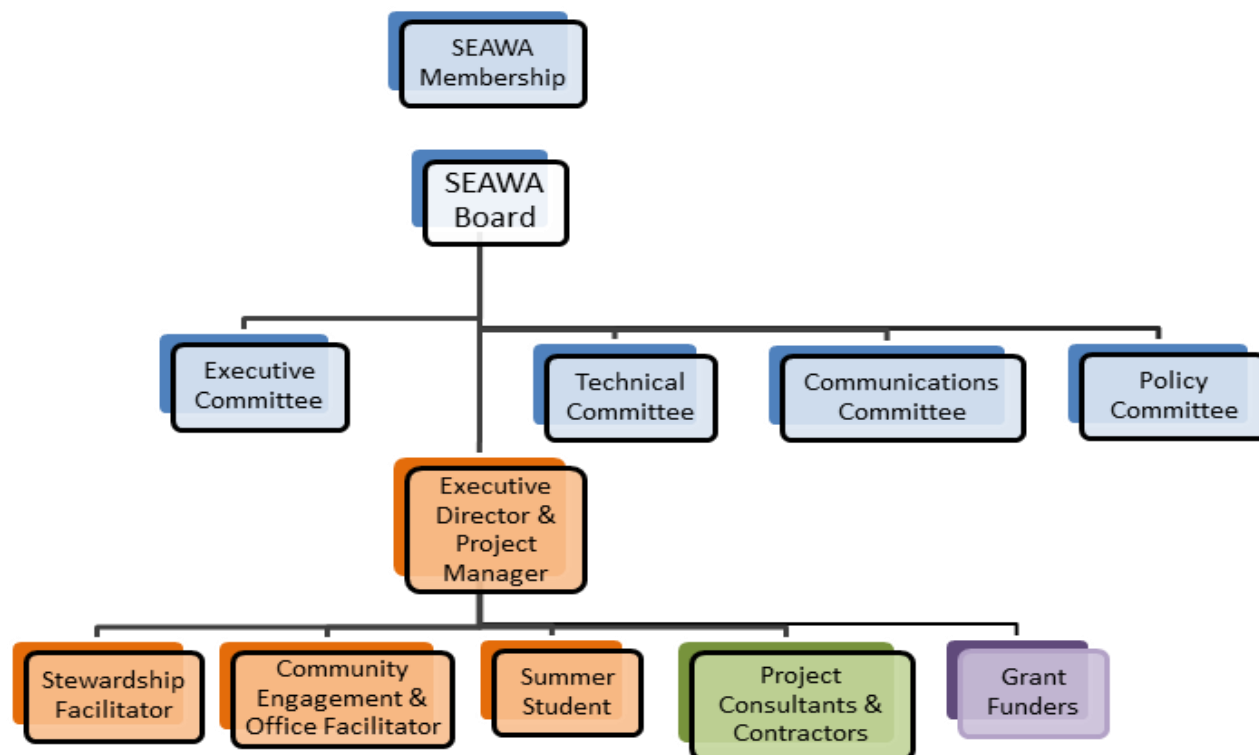
The Annual General Meeting was held on June 14, 2018. Four new directors joined the SEAWA board and 9 directors continued their terms which brought the total to 13 directors. The Past Chair position with voting privileges remained with Stuart Murray. Garry Lentz continued as Chairperson. Amendments to the Board of Directors Terms of Reference (a section was added for compliance with Alberta's *Occupation Health & Safety Act* and the *Alberta Human Rights Act*), Chair's report and Financial Statements were approved by the membership.

Membership stood at 114 individuals of which 25 were associated with organizations. Mail-out recipients total was 700.

The following policy and operational documents were reviewed and approved by the board: Respectful Workplace Policy, updates to the Employee Manual, Annual Operating Plan and Budget 2019-2020, AEP grant (2017-2018) closure report, June 2018; and interim progress report, October 2018. The following documents were reviewed and updated: Communication Strategy 2017-2020, and Three-Year Strategic Plan 2017-2020.

The Technical Committee provided oversight to and review of the aerial assessment of riparian areas project, and the water quality study. The Communications Committee provided suggestions and guidance in the implementation of SEAWA's Communication Strategy—newsletter contents, community events and outreach, and educational forums. Education materials were reviewed by both committees.

SEAWA is looking forward to an increase in cash resources to maintain staff capacity, conduct watershed studies, and implement educational and stewardship projects. SEAWA is also working towards increasing volunteer participation on the board and committees, and stewardship initiatives.



SEAWA Organizational Structure, November 2018

BOARD OF DIRECTORS & OFFICERS

Garry Lentz -Land Resource, Agriculture
(**Chairman**)

Gary Franz—Licensee, Irrigator (St. Mary River Irrigation District)

Alf Belyea—Municipal Government, Rural (Cypress County)

Diane Harty—Municipal Government, Rural (County of Forty Mile)

John Michalopoulos - Municipal Government, Urban (city of Medicine Hat)

Ron Linowski—Outdoor Recreation & Eco-tourism
(**Secretary**)

Greg Heebner—Environmental Non-Government Organization (Medicine Hat Paddling Club)

Audrey Goodwin—Regulatory Member, Provincial (Alberta Environment & Parks)

Janelle Villeneuve—Regulatory Member, Provincial (Alberta Agriculture & Forestry)

Karen Saffran - Member-at-large

Olivia Sederberg - Member-at-large (**Treasurer**)

Sandy Vanderburgh—Academic Institutions (**Vice-Chairman**, June 2017 to December 2018)

Ryan Davison—Declared open & available seat at AGM 2018 (**Vice-Chairman**, December 2018 to June 2019)

Stuart Murray—Past Chair



Directors of the Board

AGM June 14, 2018. Left to Right: front row—Olivia Sederberg, Audrey Goodwin, Diane Harty, Gary Franz, Karen Saffran, Janelle Villeneuve, & Sandy Vanderburgh; back row—Stuart Murray, Greg Heebner, Ryan Davison, Alf Belyea, Garry Lentz

Board Meeting; October 11, 2018. Left to Right: Marilou Montemayor, Ryan Davison, Greg Heebner, Ron Linowski, John Michalopoulos, Garry Lentz, Alf Belyea, Karen Saffran, Diane Harty, Stuart Murray, & Janelle Villeneuve



Executive Committee

Left to Right: Stuart Murray, Garry Lentz, Ron Linowski, & Sandy Vanderburgh; July 16, 2018

Policy Committee

Audrey Goodwin
Sandy Vanderburgh



Hiring Committee

Left to Right : Marilou Montemayor, Stuart Murray, Garry Lentz, Karen Saffran, & Ryan Davison; February 26, 2019.



Technical Committee

Karen Saffran—Chair
Garry Lentz
John Michalopoulos
Ryan Davison
Ivan Shukster
Jerry Fitzgerald
Larry Leipert
Maggie Romuld
Allison Campbell
Cathy Linowski
Stuart Murray
Natalie Kromrey
Ray Walker
Colleen Walford
Janna Casson
Jamie Meeks



Technical Committee meeting November 15, 2018. Left to Right—Natasha Rogers, Marilou Montemayor, Larry Leipert, Karen Saffran, Cathy Linowsky, & Janna Casson



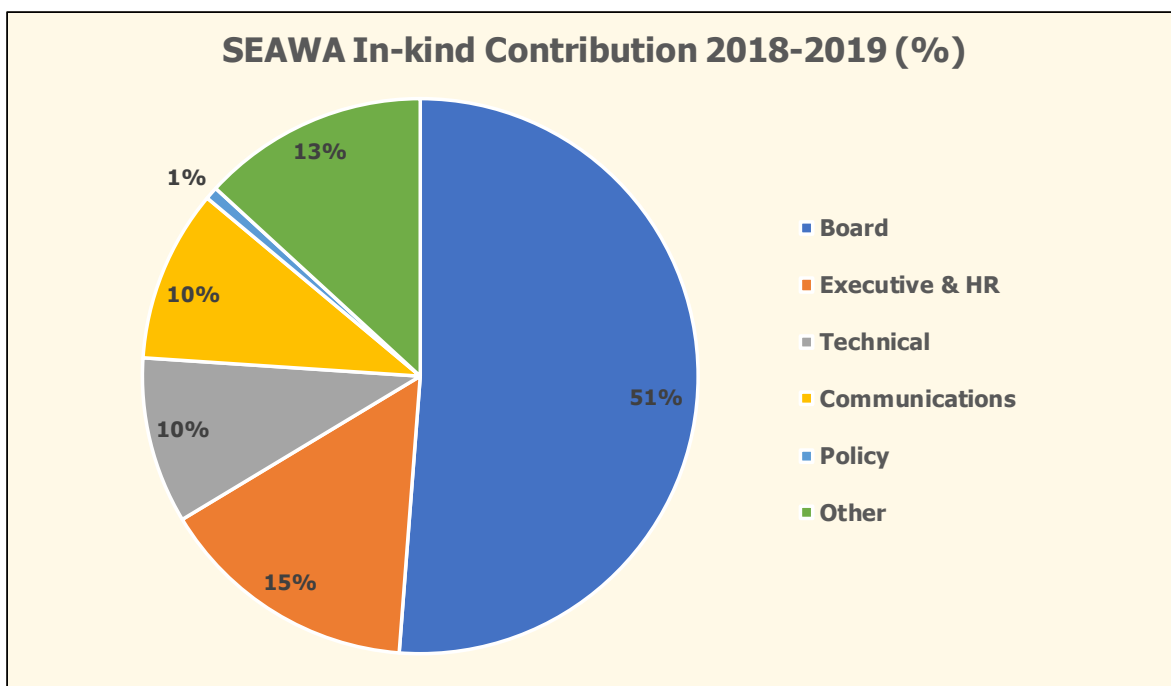
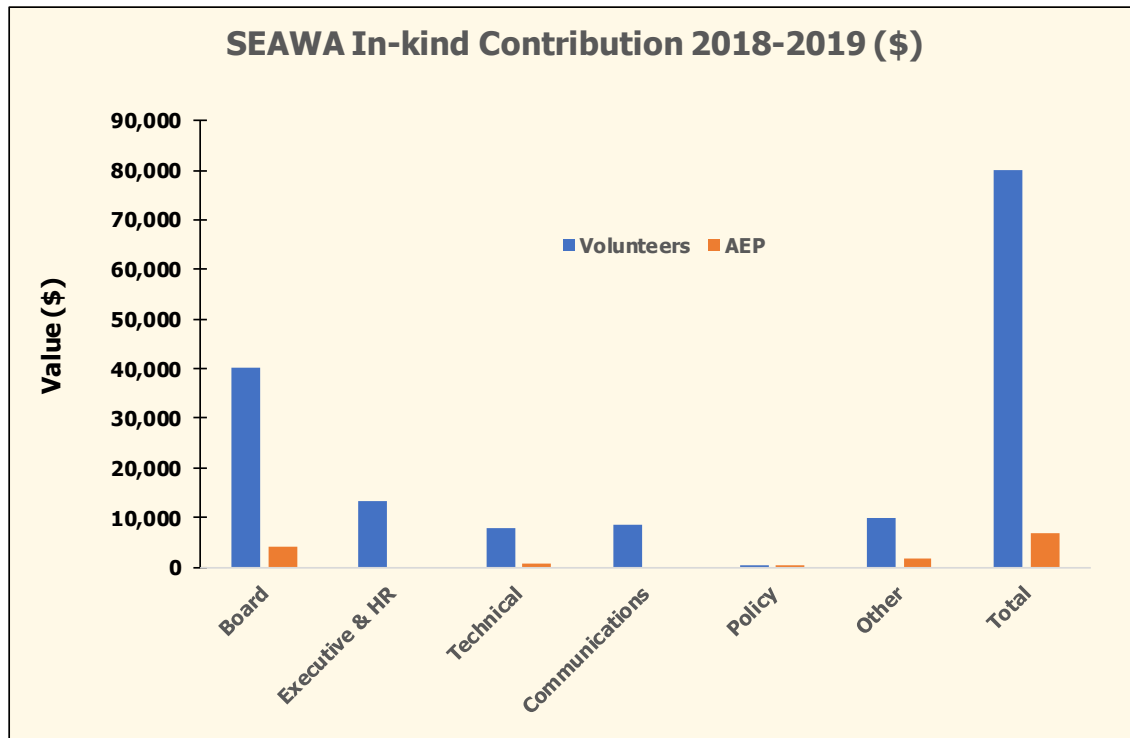
Combined Technical & Communications Committees meeting, February 28, 2019

Communications Committee

Cathy Linowski
Diane Harty
Greg Heebner
Jass Baidwan
Maggie Romuld
Martha Munz-Gue
Olivia Sederberg

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION

SEAWA is financially supported by a cash grant from Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP), contributions from federal government programs, and other organizations and individuals. However, volunteer services (valued as in-kind contribution) form the backbone of SEAWA as a fully functional WPAC, through its Board and Committees, partners and individuals. In-kind contribution was determined based on services provided (board and committees—\$80/hr and other volunteers—\$25/hr); non-reimbursed travel expenses incurred (\$0.505/km, accommodation, and meals) by SEAWA volunteers. Donated goods are also included. The total in-kind contribution of volunteers for the fiscal year under report was **\$79,940**. The total in-kind contribution from AEP staff was \$6,760.



FINANCIAL REPORT

Sources of revenue were: Alberta Environment and Parks, RFCPP, WRRP, United Nations Association—Canada Green Corps program, and donations. SEAWA maintains a reserve fund that was raised from donations in the prior years (2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015).

	March 31, 2019 (Unaudited)	March 31, 2018 (Unaudited)
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION		
ASSETS	<u>\$ 394,801</u>	<u>\$ 315,596</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$ 245,585	204,896
NET ASSETS	<u>149,216</u>	<u>110,700</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$ 394,801</u>	<u>\$315,596</u>
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS		
REVENUES	<u>\$ 410,685</u>	<u>\$ 292,452</u>
EXPENDITURES	<u>372,169</u>	<u>286,000</u>
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER OPERATIONS	<u>\$ 38,516</u>	<u>\$ 6,452</u>
STATEMENT OF CHANGE IN NET ASSETS		
BALANCE—BEGINNING OF PERIOD	<u>\$ 110,700</u>	<u>\$ 104,248</u>
BALANCE—END OF PERIOD	<u>\$ 149,216</u>	<u>\$ 110,700</u>

WATERSHED STUDIES & ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

SEAWA's work is guided by *Water for Life—Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability*; the *South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP)*; WPAC Program Areas as prescribed by AEP; and SEAWA's Vision, Mission, and Strategic Goals. In addition, stakeholders bring forth ideas and suggestions that are considered in accordance with these guiding policies. With the release of the SSRP, SEAWA has moved from information gathering for state of the watershed reporting, and watershed management planning, to the implementation phase of the regional plan.

Riparian Areas Assessment

The Aerial Riparian Areas Assessment of the Seven Persons Creek was completed on May 4, 2018. The complete report and its summary info-sheet are posted on the SEAWA website www.seawa.ca; hover on 'Projects' and under it 'Riparian Areas Assessment & Restoration Project'.

Riparian Areas Restoration

Individual riparian restoration projects funded with contribution from the RFCPP were completed within this year (April 2018-March 2019). The funding program was closed on March 31, 2019. A total length of 5 km was restored, shared among 5 project partners. This consisted of 3.7 km of fencing to manage livestock access, planting of 2,315 native shrubs and trees, and removal of corral from a riparian area. Planting and post-planting care (watering, weeding, and applying mulch) was carried out by SEAWA's Executive Director and staff, hired help, and occasional volunteer help. The total cost of restoration was \$218,210 (cash and in-kind contributions) or \$43,642 per km. The front cover photo of this report shows a section of the Sauder reservoir restoration site, and the back cover photo is a section of the Seven Persons Creek site at the Yeast property.

Riparian restoration projects funded under the WRRP grant for this year consisted of fencing to manage livestock access, installation of livestock corral panels and a crossing, off-stream watering systems, fencing to manage pet access, and planting of 169 native shrubs. A total of 1.2 km was completed by 3 partners, and 0.9 km are ongoing with 2 partners. Three potential partners are listed for the next year.

Water Quality Study

Water Quality of the Seven Persons Creek was checked during the summer May-August 2018. Water samples were collected at two locations: Saamis Archeological Site, City of Medicine Hat, and 61 km upstream at a landowner site. Nutrients, bacteria, and routine parameters were checked. For both sites, total phosphorus was just below 0.1 mg/L; and total nitrogen, was just below 1 mg/L. For *E. coli*, the city site slightly exceeded the guideline value (100 MPN/100 ml) for irrigation and recreation, while the upstream site was slightly below the guideline value.

Riparian Areas Applied Research

1) Implemented this year:

"Cultural control of leafy spurge in a riparian area"

Treatments:

- Dig-out (top- and below-ground parts using a tree-planter shovel)
- Mulch (wood chip mulch 8 cm thick to shade-out)
- Dig-out + mulch
- No treatment

At the end of the season, Dig-out treatment had the least number of stems, shortest height of stems, and no flowers.

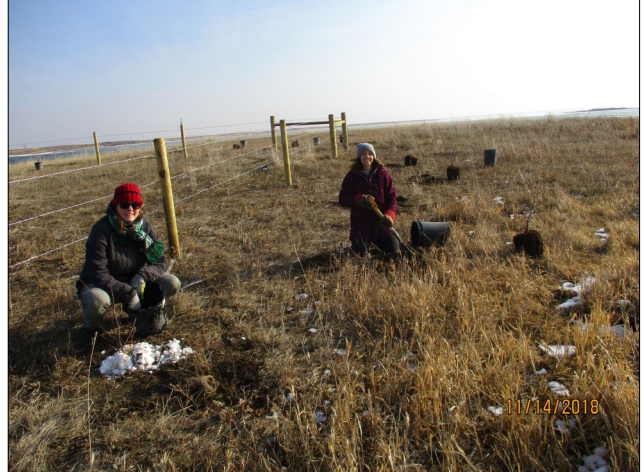
2) Planned in November 2018 for implementation next spring:

"Effect of browsing protection and reduction of the number of sprouts on the growth of cottonwood tree sprouts from a tree taken down by beavers".



RFCPP restoration project signage installed at Yeast property. Left to Right: Back row—Dave Yeast, Kaney Hilderman, Larry Paik; Front row—Brooklyn Neubeker, Sheldon Gill, Marilou Montemayor, Chris Beck, Natasha Rogers, Travis Auger

SOME RIPARIAN RESTORATION ACTIVITIES



STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS & NETWORKS

Collaborative programs and projects, and support to fund these initiatives, need relationship building, networking, that enable the creation of partnerships. Cooperation between governments and environmental and conservation NGOs within the greater South Saskatchewan Region, the Prairie Region, and the Saskatchewan River Basin (upstream and downstream watersheds) is also necessary for a watershed-scale management approach to environmental issues. Therefore, SEAWA participates in activities that build, renew, and strengthen relationships. In addition, SEAWA also forms partnerships among the core and extended networks that share a common interest in water and watershed management. These activities help SEAWA achieve its goals and further the recognition of SEAWA as a relevant and useful organization to stakeholders.

SEAWA co-hosted workshops: Climate Change Express Workshop, and Working Well Workshop

SEAWA-led volunteer events: Leafy spurge weed dig-out with Medicine Hat College students and Methanex employees at private landowner's property, Seven Persons Creek. Downy brome weed dig-out, downtown Medicine Hat.

Public consultation—Provided input to the city of Medicine Hat's upcoming Municipal Development Plan, and the Saratoga Park Open House.

Conferences and Workshops: participated with Food Security, and Renewable Energy and Transition online panel discussion organized by UNAC-Green Corps Canada; Soil Health Field Day at One-four Rangeland Research Station; Science café on Pronghorn Crossing; Project WET – water education for teachers.

WPAC Network - attended the final presentation of the South Saskatchewan River Basin Water Management Plan 2006 review project. Presented at the WPAC Summit 2018, Peace River. WPAC Managers meeting. Education & Outreach Coordinators teleconference. Submitted feedback to Alberta Water Council's Recommendations Tracking.

Local network—Attended the Annual General Meeting of the Grasslands Naturalists Medicine Hat, and participated with their wildflower walks, fall shoreline clean-up, seed exchange and weed-pull events. Maintained a plot at the community garden managed by the Community Food

Connections Association. Participated in Vital Conversations workshop. Led the spring clean-up drive at the Connaught pond, as part of the city-wide spring clean-up drive. SEAWA staff participated in the celebration of AB Farm Days and AB Culture Days. Executive Director attended the meeting of Environmental Reclamation Program Advisory Committee, Medicine Hat College.

Canada-wide initiatives—Staff participated with the Commuter Challenge on Environment Week, and United Nations Day.

Province-wide initiative—sampled for *Didymo* presence in local creeks, a project of Trout Unlimited

Surveys—responded to: National Climate Change Adaptation Assessment—Prairie Chapter; Alberta Water Council Business Planning survey; Community Foundation of Southeast Alberta—2018 Food Swamp & Food Desert Survey; Chamber of Commerce Vote Prosperity Survey, Alberta Energy Regulator Survey.

Membership—joined Medicine Hat Horticultural Society

Conversations— for future potential collaborative projects: Junior Forest Warden, T.R.A.D Worm Industries, Medicine Hat College, city of Medicine Hat Parks and Recreation department.



Greg Heebner, SEAWA Director, presenting at the Climate Change Express Workshop, May 24, 2018



From top left corner then clockwise: April Educational Forum tour; November Educational Forum; Weed dig-out by Methanex volunteers; Grasslands Naturalists walk; Working Well Workshop; Rangeland field day at Onefour; and SEAWA plot at the Community Garden.



SHARING KNOWLEDGE & OUTREACH

Educational Forum— April 6, "Responsible Recreation Near Water", and November 2, "Biodiversity in Riparian Areas", Medicine Hat.

School and youth outreach - Kiwanis Regional Science Fair; School outreach on healthy streams, wetlands, non-point source pollution to Grade 5 students, Medicine Hat, Bow Island, and Redcliff; Operation Minerva with Praxis Society; Family Science Olympics; Ocean Bridge with Redcliff Youth Centre; Youth Educational Summit led by Inside Education and Praxis Society.

Education at community events in Medicine Hat - SEAWA booth at: Spectrum (spring festival), Canada Day, and Stampede (Summer festival). SEAWA organized the World Water Week at the Medicine Hat Public Library;

Newsletters—sent out every two months: May, July, September, November 2018; and January, March 2019;

they are posted on the SEAWA website, Resources page.

Info sheets— "Summary of the Aerial Assessment of Riparian Areas in the Seven Persons Creek Watershed", and "Russian olive—a locally invasive tree"

Social media interaction is ongoing—**Facebook** (@SEAWAlliance) has 137 page likes and 147 page followers, and **twitter** (@SEAlbertawaters) has 1,991 followers.

Newspaper article — wrote the article "SEAWA a leader in greening streambanks and lake shores" and was published in two local newspapers.

Co-sponsorship— Kiwanis Regional Science Fair 2018, Medicine Hat

Summer educational tours—city of Medicine Hat's drinking water treatment plant, and wastewater treatment plant; and Vermi-composting at T.R.A.D. worm industries



From top left corner then clockwise: Family Science Olympics, Operation Minerva, School visit, and Youth Education Summit. Centre: Canada Day

MOVING AHEAD

SEAWA will focus next year on the completion of the final year of the riparian restoration project, implementation of planned and ongoing applied research topics, writing of project and research reports, and dissemination of results and lessons learned from the riparian restoration project and

research work. Community engagement, education and outreach; and networking will continue as ongoing activities. Towards the fall season, SEAWA will look for project grant opportunities that will help address issues identified or raised by its stakeholders.

STRATEGIC GOALS 2017-2020

- Goal 1** SEAWA has sustainable funding, and improved administrative and organization capacity.
- Goal 2** Resources are generated or acquired, the SEAWA watershed is assessed, and watershed knowledge is developed.
- Goal 3** Watershed management plans are developed.
- Goal 4** Stakeholder engagement, and partnerships and networks, are strengthened or enhanced, and education and outreach activities are implemented.
- Goal 5** Resources are generated or acquired, and environmental stewardship projects or initiatives are implemented.
- Goal 6** SEAWA's role in the implementation of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP) is established.

Based on the six Strategic Goals above, SEAWA's key objectives for the upcoming year are:

Goal 1: Board, committees, and membership recruitment and development, staff hiring and training, applications for operational and project grants, continued policy development and update, and performance evaluation of the organization;

Goal 2: Implementation of applied research related to riparian restoration: leafy spurge control, Russian olive tree control, soil amendment with earthworm compost, and cottonwood sprouts protection from browsing. Corresponding technical reports and presentations will be prepared

Goal 3: Preliminary steps to source water protection

planning is being proposed;

Goal 4: Ongoing implementation of the Communication Strategy—stakeholder engagement, partnerships, networking, education, and outreach;

Goal 5: Implement the final year of the WRRP-funded riparian areas restoration project that includes preparation of restoration plans with each project partner, partnership agreements, and on-the-ground restoration work;

Goal 6: Implementation of some of the SSRP recommendations (Goals 2 and 5). Continued conversation with/feedback to municipalities on topics of water and watersheds, land, air, and biodiversity as they arise.

SEAWA VISION

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

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 Sub-Basin and the Pakowki Lake watershed.

THANK YOU TO ALL SEAWA SUPPORTERS

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry
Alberta Environment and Parks
Alberta Irrigation Projects Association
Government of Canada—Fisheries & Oceans
City of Medicine Hat
County of Forty Mile
County of Warner
Cows & Fish
Cypress County

Grasslands Naturalists
Medicine Hat College
Medicine Hat Public Library
Methanex
Plains Midstream Canada
Praxis Society
St. Mary River Irrigation District
Town of Redcliff
United Nations Association—Canada
Green Corps

Chris Beck
Larry Paik
Ian Curry
Kaide Byanham
Tyler Duncan
Other individual supporters & volunteers

Bruce Sederberg
Dave Yeast
Don Krauss
Sage Valley Ranch
Warren McKinley

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