



# North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance

## Annual Report March 31, 2003



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**North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance Society**  
**Annual Report**  
**March 31, 2003**

**Vision**

We envision a watershed where ecological integrity is the foundation for environmental, cultural, social and economic decision making, actions and policies, resulting in the wise use and management of the North Saskatchewan Watershed within Alberta.

**Mission**

The North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) is a non-profit society whose purpose is to protect and improve water quality and ecosystem functioning in the North Saskatchewan River Watershed within Alberta. We work to achieve this goal by:

- Improving the community's ability to make informed decisions about the value of watershed protection and the integrated stewardship of land and water resources
- Maximizing communication, relationships, and partnerships among members and within the larger community
- Promoting a balanced approach to watershed management that recognizes the relationship between cultural, social, and economic desires and ecosystem functions within the watershed.

**Background**

The NSWA is an on-going initiative founded in 1999. Our area of focus is the North Saskatchewan River watershed within Alberta, an area of approximately 80,000 km<sup>2</sup>. Our members emphasize a watershed approach to address the cumulative effects of land use activities on water quality and quantity.

The NSWA uses an inclusive, transparent process to involve as many stakeholder groups as possible. Our members cooperate on projects and activities that will bring about positive environmental changes within the watershed. We work to coordinate watershed-related projects and raise public awareness within the basin community about the value of watershed protection. Our meetings provide a forum for members to share information and provides an opportunity for relationship building and partnerships. We also review government and industry actions and policies and recommend best management practices to achieve quality water resources.

**Short-term Goals**

The NSWA 2000-2005 Business plan sets the following short-term goals for the organization:

1. foundation and relationship building (2000-2001)
2. community-based action (2002-2005)
3. evaluation (2005).

As a result of participation in Alberta Environment's development of a water strategy for Alberta, *Water for Life*, and completion of 2 key projects, the North Saskatchewan River Guide and the Community Watershed Toolkit, as well as a draft Background Study for the Canadian Heritage Rivers Program, it became necessary to re-examine the original NSWA Business Plan. This led to a facilitated day of focus for the Steering Committee hosted by the Land Stewardship

Centre on February 19<sup>th</sup>. Subsequently a working group of 2 Steering Committee members and the manager reviewed the results of the session in several meetings leading to revised elements of the business plan. This plan is now at the member review stage.

The operating budget remained steady as major projects such as the Community Toolkit and River Guide were distributed, marketed and sold throughout the watershed and beyond. Funding support from EPCOR Water Services and PFRA continued for this fiscal year, as well as in-kind support from the City of Edmonton and Trout Unlimited Canada. For the State of the Watershed Project, indicators of watershed health were arrived at through a consultation process, data was sourced and collected and data sharing agreements secured. Membership grew and was revised, and key sectors for membership outreach were determined.

The NSWA became a supporting partner in the Wonder of Water (WoW) – the western Canadian initiative for the United Nations International Year of Fresh Water. This 2 year initiative with a legacy year following, provides the NSWA and its members opportunities for profile raising and increased member and public participation in water-related activities.

Our Community Watershed Toolkit reached groups within our watershed, and was distributed and is used by groups in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario. This is a testimony to the excellent resources developed by our members. The North Saskatchewan River Guide was on the Edmonton Journal's best seller list for 12 weeks, and continues to be a key public awareness tool of the River, the watershed and the NSWA.

### **Accomplishments for the Year Ended March 31, 2002**

The following points highlight the NSWA's activities in the key areas of our operations:

#### *NSWA Development:*

- The NSWA Steering Committee met bi-monthly to provide strategic direction for the organization and participated in a visioning session on February 19<sup>th</sup> with a view of refining the business plan
- The Steering Committee and manager met with Alberta Environment in November 2002, resulting in the document *Role of River Basin Councils and other Discussions* (Appendix A) submitted to Alberta Environment for inclusion in the water strategy consultation documents
- The NSWA maintained and strengthened partnerships with watershed organizations from other basins (such as the Bow River Basin Council, the Humber Watershed Alliance and the Peace River Watershed Council)
- Sharon Willianen was hired as manager in May 2002
- Steering Committee changes saw the departure of Richard Escott (PFRA), Barry Irving (U of A), Lyndon Gyurek (City of Edmonton), Adele Mandryk (U of A) and Cindy Shepel (EPCOR Water Services) and the addition of Nolan Becker (PFRA), Chris Ward (City of Edmonton), Beth Michener (EPCOR Water Services), Tracy Scott (Ducks Unlimited Canada) and Frank Vagi (Petro-Canada)
- Vicki Wishart was hired as an office assistant in November, working 1 day per week
- Sharon attended the National Conference on Wetland Stewardship in Ottawa in February 2002

#### *Member Meetings:*

- The second Annual General Meeting was held on July 2002 to foster communication, education, and long-term planning among watershed stakeholders; and to launch the *North Saskatchewan River Guide*

- The NSWA attended several meetings, workshops and open houses hosted by our member organizations to provide project updates, to distribute our products and promote the NSWA and our vision

*Member Recruitment (Outreach):*

- 9 new member organizations joined the NSWA in 2002/2003
- The NSWA continues to develop and maintain a database of interested and active stakeholder groups to track the participation of our members
- We now have a clear understanding of who comprises our membership, sectors that require further representation and plans for continued outreach efforts
- Throughout 2002/2003, NSWA staff met with and made presentations to various groups about the NSWA's goals, activities and projects

*Member Communications:*

- Members were kept apprised of ongoing activities and news via email and regular mailings
- All members were mailed a copy of the North Saskatchewan River Guide and the Community Watershed Toolkit in August of 2002
- The Manager and Steering Committee spent time in conversation with many established and new members cultivating relationships and raising the profile of the organization
- The NSWA wrote articles for several publications, including member organizations' newsletters

*Website Development ([www.nswa.ab.ca](http://www.nswa.ab.ca)):*

- NSWA staff continue to increase the amount of information available on the website, including NSWA reports, fact sheets, and member profiles
- The Community Watershed Toolkit was posted to the website in March 2002 and continues to be a main reason for visiting our website
- In 2002, the website was reviewed and a contract staff member hired to keep the website updated

*Resource Library Development:*

- The size of the NSWA's resource library increased with the purchase of new books, videos, and CD's. The library is kept updated and the reference list maintained. This list is available to all members who request it
- Newspaper articles continue to be collected and filed
- Paper and digital maps of the watershed and a GPS unit are available for the use of our members
- NSWA publications are available to our members in electronic or hard copy format

*Summer Student Accomplishments:*

- Billie Milholland was hired for the summer of 2002 to market and distribute the River Guide. CBC radio, Global television and countless newspaper interviews were conducted and the River Guide continues to be popular in the North Saskatchewan Watershed and beyond.

## **NSWA Projects**

The following four pages give detailed reports about NSWA projects undertaken during 2002/2003 – the Community Watershed Toolkit, the North Saskatchewan River Guide, the Heritage Rivers Background Study, the State of the North Saskatchewan Watershed Report and the Integrated Watershed Management Plan.

These projects resulted from collaboration between NSWA members and partners. They were adopted because of their potential to unite members and bring about change in the watershed. In-kind contributions to all NSWA projects from Trout Unlimited Canada and The City of Edmonton continued throughout 2002/2003. These contributions are invaluable as they provide payroll and benefits administration, office space and computer support to all of our projects.

Alberta Environment also provided in-kind support in member outreach and project activities during the past fiscal year.

### **Community Watershed Toolkit**

This project was created to empower citizens and community groups to carry out watershed initiatives in their own communities. It contains information about how to start a local watershed partnership and create watershed-friendly projects. The Community Watershed Toolkit will help to bring about the NSWA's vision of a community of active leaders who make balanced decisions about land use and water resources.

Watershed-related publications from Alberta Agriculture, Cows and Fish, EPCOR and Alberta Environment have been included in the Toolkit. A total of 1000 paper copies were printed for distribution to community groups and interested individuals in the North Saskatchewan Watershed. The entire content of the Toolkit is available online at the NSWA website at [www.nswa.ab.ca](http://www.nswa.ab.ca) under the Toolkit heading, and will continue to be a valuable resource for years to come. At the end of March 2003, a total of 722 Toolkits were distributed to NSWA members, watershed groups outside of our watershed and organizations looking for a resource to assist them and their members. Through funding from Alberta Conservation Association, 250 additional Toolkits will be available for 2003/4.

The *Community Watershed Toolkit* makes the following contributions to the NSWA's goals:

- It empowers local communities to take action to protect and enhance the integrity of their local watersheds
- It improves the capacity of rural water users to address their own water issues, such as water scarcity, groundwater depletion, riparian area management, and sound septic & agricultural practices
- It introduces smaller groups to the NSWA and encourages them to use the NSWA as a resource
- It raises awareness of the connections between watersheds, environmental integrity, water quality, and human health

A number of different partner organizations helped bring the Toolkit to fruition. Representatives from EPCOR, PFRA, the Land Stewardship Centre, Living by Water, the University of Alberta, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development; Cows and Fish, and Alberta Environment provided helpful information and reviewed the content for accuracy.

**Funding Partners:**

The Alberta Sport, Recreation and Wildlife Fund, the Community Animation Program (Health and Environment Canada), EPCOR Water Services, PFRA and the Alberta Conservation Association.

**Total Contributions: \$ 30,000.00**

**The North Saskatchewan River Guide**

This project was intended to introduce citizens and visitors to our river's fascinating history and ecology and encourages them to use and enjoy the river responsibly.

This is an extensively researched guide that covers the North Saskatchewan River from the headwaters in the Columbia Icefield to the Forks in Saskatchewan. It provides detailed maps of each of the river's 27 reaches, and features historical, biological, and geographical information. It also explains and encourages ecologically sound camping, canoeing, and recreation practices.

The River Guide is a valuable educational tool that is intended to:

- raise the awareness of all river users on best practices when enjoying the aquatic and riparian areas of the North Saskatchewan River (sustainable recreational use)
- create awareness for all river users about the ecological significance of riparian areas
- encourage use, enjoyment, and personal ownership of the North Saskatchewan River
- raise awareness of the link between watershed use for human purposes, environmental integrity, and water quality
- raise awareness of the value and need for sustainable watershed management.

The initial print run consisted of 7500 copies. The River Guide was launched at the 2002 AGM and became a non-fiction best-seller in the Edmonton region. During 2002/2003 the River Guide was extensively marketed by NSWA staff, and is a popular publication in Alberta and Saskatchewan. The River Guide can be purchased at the following locations:

**In Edmonton at:**

Audrey's Books  
Greenwood's Books  
Volume II Books  
The King's University Bookstore  
Mountain Equipment Co-op  
Totem Outdoor Outfitters  
Map Town  
Ellerslie Gift & Garden  
The Alberta Provincial Museum  
The Fishin' Hole  
Camper's Village  
Fort Edmonton Park  
Muttart Conservatory

**In Fort Saskatchewan from:**

The Fort Saskatchewan Historical Society

In **Nisku** at:

The Leduc County Office

In **Vilna** through:

Friends of Victoria Settlement

In **Elk Point** at:

The Elk Point Historical Society

Fort George/Buckingham House Interpretive Centre

The Elk Point Review

In **Rocky Mountain House** at:

Buddy's Bookshoppe

IGA

and through the Rocky Mountain House Historical Society

In **Calgary** at:

McNally Robinson Booksellers

In **Battleford, SK** through:

Friends of the Battle River Settlement

In **North Battleford, SK** at:

Heritage Farm & Village Gift Shop

In **Saskatoon, SK** at:

McNally Robinson Booksellers

and through the Meewasin Valley Authority

In **Prince Albert, SK** at:

Venturoso Books

Sales revenue generated in 2002/2003 totaled \$8,900.00. The proceeds from the sale of the River Guide will be used for reprinting in subsequent years. A portion of the revenues generated from the sale of the River Guide is intended to fund stewardship initiatives in the riparian zones along the river and in the watershed.

### **Heritage Rivers Background Study**

In May 2001, the NSWA was commissioned by Alberta Community Development's Parks and Protected Areas Division to prepare a background study on the heritage values of the North Saskatchewan River. Because NSWA summer staff were gathering historical and cultural information for the River Guide, the projects became linked and research efforts were expanded to compile additional information for the Heritage Rivers Background Study.

The initial draft study was completed on March 31, 2002 and will form the basis for the nomination of the North Saskatchewan River as part of the Canadian Heritage Rivers System. During the past year the draft has been reviewed by Alberta Community Development where additions to the natural heritage values section are being made. It is anticipated that the final version of the report will soon be forwarded to the Minister of Community Development for approval.

The study itself is a valuable information resource for researchers and interested citizens. A large number of NSWA members contributed information to the River Guide and Heritage Rivers Background Study.

**Funding Partners for these 2 linked projects:**

Alberta Community Development, EPCOR, Edmonton Community Lottery Board, Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin and PFRA.

**Total Contributions: \$115,000.00**

**State of the North Saskatchewan Watershed Report**

The State of the North Saskatchewan Report is key to the NSWA's long-term goals. It is intended to provide a sound scientific base for decision-makers in our watershed. This is an ongoing NSWA project that will be completed in early 2004. The goals of the report are to:

- raise awareness among stakeholders and citizens of the current condition of the watershed and the value of watershed protection
- encourage studies in areas of the watershed that are poorly understood
- make recommendations for sustainable management of the watershed
- form the basis for a North Saskatchewan Watershed Management Plan under the *Alberta Water Act*

The State of the North Saskatchewan Watershed Report will compile information about current water and ecological conditions within the North Saskatchewan Watershed in a GIS database format. The public will be consulted to help identify emerging issues and knowledge gaps and make recommendations for the wise use and management of the watershed.

The work undertaken towards this project In 2002/2003 includes:

- securing necessary funding
- surveying members to see what data and expertise they can contribute to this report
- identifying relevant watershed-related publications and articles
- indicator determination and data sourcing and collection
- finalization of the contract with Aquality Environmental Consulting
- developing partner relationships and securing data contribution agreements

A large number of NSWA members and partners had originally committed their data for inclusion in the report. However, obtaining permission to use this data for the report has proven to be difficult in some cases. Although the project is on target and on budget, it has been very challenging to accomplish this. The working committee for the State of the North Saskatchewan Watershed report includes representatives from the Alberta Conservation Association, Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Land Stewardship Centre, EPCOR and Alberta Environment.

**Funding Partners:**

Alberta Capital Region Wastewater Commission, Alberta Beef Producers, Alberta Conservation Association, Alberta Ecotrust, Alberta Environment, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, EPCOR, The Northeast Capital Industrial Association, Mountain Equipment Co-Op and PFRA

**Total Contributions to date: \$158,000.00**

## **Integrated Watershed Management Plan**

A draft Terms of Reference for this project was developed in March 2003. Although the skeleton of a Project Working group exists, this will be expanded and further developed in the coming year. Sub-basin advisory committees and Technical Advisory Committees will also be established.

The main goal or function of the North Saskatchewan Integrated Watershed Management Plan is to provide a framework to protect, maintain and restore a healthy, natural watershed system where economic and social needs will be in balance with the ecological needs of the watershed. This includes the protection of the aquatic environment and the associated necessary flow needs.

The management plan will deal with surface water, groundwater, existing and proposed land use, social, cultural and economic aspects. Land use issues affecting water will be identified and sub basin recommendations made. The land use element of this process may set the stage for more detailed planning and problem resolution within the context of a watershed based plan. This may lead to the delivery of two linked but distinct plans; a water management plan and a land use plan.

The plan will be prepared in consultation with NSWA members and stakeholders, and will ensure that stakeholders are provided the opportunity to form and participate in the planning process. The plan will incorporate existing regional strategies and related plans.

The draft Terms of Reference was prepared for and in consultation with the NSWA by AMEC Earth & Environmental Ltd. It is intended to provide specific details on the approach to be undertaken during the planning process and is intended to be consistent with:

- The Vision and Goals of the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance
- Province of Alberta's *Water Act*
- Province of Alberta's 'Framework for Water Management Planning'
- *Water for Life: Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability*
- Other pertinent provincial and federal legislation

*Adapted from; North Saskatchewan River in Alberta – Integrated Watershed Management Plan Draft-Terms of Reference. March 2003, AMEC Earth & Environmental Ltd.*

### **Current Funding Partners:**

Alberta Environment and PFRA

**Total Contributions to date: \$8,000.00**

## **NSWA Membership**

Every effort is made to involve as many stakeholder groups as possible in the NSWA. We believe that our membership should include the active participation of all user groups across the North Saskatchewan Watershed.

There are two categories of NSWA members: those who actively participate in working groups and want to receive regular updates, and those who wish to be periodically kept informed about NSWA activities.

The total membership at March 31, 2003 is approximately 127 organizations. This is an increase of approximately 7 organizations over last year. Some organizations have more than one representative, so our mailing lists contain over 150 people. A complete list of members is attached to this report (Appendix B).

## **NSWA Steering Committee 2002/2003**

Steering Committee members are elected at the Annual General Meeting and normally commit to a year of service from the date of the AGM. In 2002/2003, a few positions on the 10-member committee changed hands over the course of the year. The executive officers for 2002/2003 are listed here, along with the period for which they held each position.

<b>Position</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
President	July 2002 – Feb 2003	Adele Mandryk	University of Alberta
President	Feb 2003 – Present	Beth Michener	EPCOR Water Services
Vice-President	July 2002 - Present	Locke Girvan	Strathcona County
Treasurer	July 2002 – March 2003	Lyndon Gyurek	City of Edmonton
Treasurer	March 2003 – Present	Chris Ward	City of Edmonton
Secretary	July 2002 – Present	Diana Rung	Alberta Conservation Association
Director	July 2002 – Present	Bill Fox	Alberta Beef Producers
Director	July 2002 – Present	Ernie Ewaschuk	Land Stewardship Centre
Director	July 2002 – Present	Doug Thrussell	Alberta Environment
Director	July 2002 – Nov 2002	Richard Escott	PFRA
Director	Nov 2002 – Present	Nolan Becker	PFRA
Director	Sept 2002 – Present	Frank Vagi	Petro – Canada
Director	March 2003 – Present	Tracy Scott	Ducks Unlimited Canada

The NSWA Steering Committee meets bi-monthly. All NSWA members are welcome to run for a position on the Steering Committee at the NSWA's Annual General Meeting normally held in June of each year.

The NSWA would like to thank those organizations that allow their staff to sit on our Steering Committee. The NSWA acknowledges the value of our Steering Committee members' time. The success of our organization is directly related to the time these individuals commit to the NSWA mission.

## **Lasting Benefits of the NSWA Initiative**

There are many tangible and intangible benefits to the NSWA's work.

The organization creates tangible benefits for members by:

- *Establishing partnerships* between diverse stakeholder groups, including agriculture, industry, municipalities, First Nations, and NGOs
- *Using resources collectively* to avoid duplication and expand the capacity of the NSWA and its members
- *Addressing cumulative effects* at a watershed level
- *Coordinating programs* to raise public awareness and encourage widespread participation of stakeholders and communication between stakeholders
- *Increasing the information available* about groundwater protection, cumulative use management, and best management practices
- *Improving the understanding* of aquatic and riparian ecology and the link between human land use, ecosystem functioning and water quality
- *Improving the understanding* of the watershed's interconnectedness
- *Developing long-term sustainable use and management plans* for water and land resources
- *Envisioning environmentally sustainable solutions* to watershed issues
- *Enhancing water quality and quantity* to meet human and ecological needs
- *Preserving and enhancing aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity*, ecosystems and the hydrologic cycle
- *Making increased resources, information, and support available* to small groups and rural water users

Intangible benefits:

The NSWA Initiative is a working model of an integrated watershed approach to sustainable resource use and management. This is a relatively new concept and involves voluntary commitment from the watershed community and government. The community drives this process, and all members contribute as equal partners.

The success of this model will serve to:

- *Motivate and stimulate others* to embrace a cooperative, non-jurisdictional approach to water and environmental protection
- *Demonstrate* how local cooperation and action can have far-reaching impacts
- *Illustrate the connection* between land use and water quality
- *Create a sense of ownership and empowerment* in communities throughout the watershed

**Supporting Documents (available upon request or on the NSWA website – [www.nswa.ab.ca](http://www.nswa.ab.ca)):**

- 2000 – 2005 NSWA Business Plan
- NSWA Bylaws
- Member Terms of Reference
- Steering Committee Terms of Reference
- Manager Terms of Reference
- State of the North Saskatchewan Report Terms of Reference
- North Saskatchewan River in Alberta – Integrated Watershed Management Plan Draft Terms of Reference

**Appendix A**  
**Role of Watershed Advisory Councils and Other Discussions**  
**Submitted to: Alberta Environment Jan 2003**

*ALBERTA'S WATER STRATEGY*

**ROLE OF BASIN COUNCILS AND OTHER DISCUSSIONS**

**The North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance**

The North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) is a grass-roots umbrella organization representing government, municipalities, aboriginal communities, industry, environmental NGO's, agriculture, recreation, culture, tourism, education and research groups that function within the North Saskatchewan Watershed. We provide a forum for our members to share and co-ordinate information about watershed issues, to promote community awareness of the value of watershed protection and to foster an integrated approach to the stewardship of land and water resources. Membership in the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance is an opportunity to share concerns and ideas and to work with other like-minded organizations to ensure the sustainable management of the North Saskatchewan Watershed. Membership is free and open to anyone interested in a collaborative, grass-roots approach to watershed management.

**Our Current Business**

The North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance:

- Invites membership from all individuals and organizations that live and operate in the North Saskatchewan Watershed and/or support our vision
- Raises community awareness of watershed initiatives and the value of watershed protection
- Educates the basin community on the value of seeking balanced, collaborative approaches to watershed management
- Facilitates the exchange of information, analysis and debate of issues to promote collaborative decision making and planning
- Reviews and provides feedback on government and industry actions and policy which relate to the vision
- Identifies, endorses, facilitates and undertakes projects and activities which foster sustainable management of the North Saskatchewan Watershed

**Goals**

The NSWA membership has identified four long-term goals:

1. To provide a forum for the exchange of information, analysis and debate of issues to promote collaborative decision making and planning.
2. To raise awareness of watershed initiatives and educate the wider watershed community about the value of seeking balanced, collaborative approaches to watershed management.
3. To foster wise use and integrated management of land and water resources in the NSW to ensure its protection and improvement.
4. To co-ordinate information about existing watershed protection and improvement initiatives.

NSWA's mandate will be advanced by undertaking a **State of the North Saskatchewan Watershed Report**. This will comment on trends and identify data needs within our watershed,

while developing expert knowledge and a database which can be regularly updated. Upon completion of this report in early 2004, the NSWA plans to use this information to develop an **Integrated Watershed Management Plan**, which will address not only water management planning as outlined in the provincial *Framework for Water Management Planning*, but also upstream activities related to land use. Social values will be the third component. Our plan will be a focal point for sustainable, watershed-based stewardship.

Our **North Saskatchewan River Guide**, **Community Watershed Toolkit** and **Heritage Rivers Background Study** are recently completed projects which raise awareness of water and riparian ecology, sustainable recreation practices and empower community-based watershed protection and enhancement.

## **BASIN COUNCILS**

### ***Assumptions:***

1. *Alberta Environment would provide the NSWA with adequate funds to assume these roles or undertake these tasks*
2. *NSWA-Government-Sectoral partnerships continue and grow*
3. *NSWA continues to leverage funds wherever possible*

### **What is the role of basin councils in the following?**

- **State of the basin reports**

*Developers, generators and disseminators of a State of the North Saskatchewan Watershed (SoNSW) report; regularly update the GIS component of this report so that data remains current*

- **Data gaps, requirements and dissemination**

*Identify data gaps and requirements through the SoNSW process and through input from our membership; relay these gaps and requirements to the membership and public at our member meetings and public consultation undertaken through the SoNSW and Integrated Watershed Management Planning(IWMP) processes*

- **Monitoring**

*NSWA does not perceive a role of physically going out into the landscape and monitoring aspects of water quality and quantity in the North Saskatchewan Watershed. We do provide information and contacts for volunteer monitoring programs – i.e. Lakewatch, Shoreline Ambassadors and Riverwatch. We do have a role in examination of monitoring data and providing feedback to Alberta Environment on water data needs within the watershed.*

- **Identifying priority issues in the basin**

*These issues come to us through membership and outreach at federal, provincial, regional and local levels and through NSWA business (as outlined above). NSWA could then relay this information to the appropriate jurisdictional body, academia or other research bodies. Our membership, with its technical/stakeholder knowledge, also has a role in articulating priority issues and relaying new information back to their respective organizations.*

- **Stewardship and Conservation initiatives in the basin, focusing on basin targets.**

*We could identify these priorities in our SoNSW report and IWMP processes and recommend funding be allocated to initiatives where it is most needed. Local groups could undertake local stewardship and conservation initiatives. The NSWA could undertake regional initiatives, such as our Community Watershed Toolkit – (a project with regional and even provincial applications).*

*Targets and priorities must be those identified by NSWA, in conjunction with its partners and fit within our mandate, pilot projects could be undertaken on a regional scale or meet regional or sectoral needs – our focus is not narrow, but broad and far-reaching within our watershed. We could be involved in supporting the local watershed community undertake initiatives to meet/exceed targets – and if so funded and directed provincially, the NSWA could evaluate these initiatives and prioritize them for funding allocation.*

- **License and Approval decisions**

*We envision an ability to provide input into the decision making process, especially when our membership directs us to do so. Major basin groups could be included in a review process, but not as part of a decision-making panel for actual approvals.*

- **Basin planning**

*We desire to be the lead organization among our partners and members in developing an integrated watershed management plan for the North Saskatchewan watershed (of which a water management plan is one part). Because we feel an integrated watershed management plan is the best tool in meeting NSWA's mission, we envision a plan that incorporates water planning, land-use planning and the social and cultural aspects of the NS watershed. Our mission and objectives are tied with such an integrated approach. We bring a high level of stakeholder involvement and trust into this process, as we are consensus based and stakeholder driven.*

- **Sub-Basin planning (watershed protection groups/plans)**

*NSWA could make recommendations regarding sub-basin planning and priorities through the IWMP. It is our business to foster the formation of groups if necessary, to engage in sub basin planning exercises. Our role is to empower these groups as needed and as requested, in the process of watershed planning and management. In the future we could broaden this to include hand-on exercises but would do so promoting a watershed approach and encourage involvement of all stakeholders in these sub-basins.*

- **Public involvement / communication**

*It is our business to educate the public at large on the importance of a watershed approach to land and water management. This will continue through our web site, the media, our projects and programs and written materials. The public will be invited to review our State of the Watershed Report and Management plan through public meetings, member meetings and via our email address and website discussion board. Reports will be distributed to public libraries in our watershed.*

- **Provincial water policies**

*The NSWA expects to provide input to Alberta Environment with respect to their water policies on an as needed/as requested basis. We view our organization as integral to this process.*

- **Land use zoning**

*The NSWA could suggest options for land use zoning through its relationships and partnerships with municipalities and associated initiatives. This could be done on a broad basis in an*

advisory role. A planned municipal resource guide could address issues related to municipal land use in a watershed context. NSWA could be used as a referral organization for changes in land zoning and for developments that impact the watershed.

- **Development permits**

The NSWA does not play a role in development permitting. We could find it necessary to speak publicly where practice or cumulative effects would be contrary to good watershed management practices, i.e. large developments that negatively impact hydrology.

- **EIA project reviews**

The NSWA envisions an advisory capacity whereby we provide comment. We will not be used by special interest groups to validate one side or another, but we could be useful in the process.

- **Flow and water supply forecasts**

The NSWA could be a repository for this information from Alberta Environment. We could have this available for members or the public, either as part of our reference material or on our website.

- **Flood forecasting and warning**

The NSWA does not envision a role here.

- **Flood mapping**

Our role could be as recipients and users of the information from the province, or in the future from other bodies such as a conservation authority – for example updating our SoNSW report GIS database. We could be users of the product, but not producers of the product.

- **Are there other activities that need to be discussed?**

Not at this time. The NSWA would need to spend more time discussing possibilities within our Steering Committee and membership as a whole.

- **What is the role of the provincial government in each of these as related to the basin councils?**

The role of the province would continue to be monitoring, enforcement and policy and legislation development. It would continue to be highly involved in the basin councils, and in the case of the NSWA, it would be necessary to have continuity in our Alberta Environment Steering Committee member. Government would commit to long-term, stable base funding for the councils which would allow us to meet our shared water management objectives. The province recognizes that the basin councils do a great deal to fulfill provincial mandates, and should therefore be supported accordingly (e.g. financially, with letters of support, data exchange, communications, partnerships and various in-kind contributions).

- **What resources should the basin councils provide and the provincial government provide?**

The provincial government should contribute a significant portion of funding, data and information e.g. policies, guidelines, legislation and frameworks. Environment representation on our Steering Committee and in NSWA projects and initiatives should continue. The NSWA could provide resources leveraged from core provincial funding, all interests represented through membership (i.e. multi-stakeholder and partner's involvement), volunteer/in-kind contributions and resources. We could also contribute the technical, professional and social expertise of our members and partners.

- **How should basin councils be formed?**

*Councils could be formed by holding meetings across the basin to involve all stakeholders and determine the needs of a basin council. Frameworks for existing basin groups would be presented to offer potential councils a philosophy by which they could form and operate. The NSWA feels our model of consensus based, flattened hierarchy and equality is the best approach to derive at a council that has a high level of community trust. All members need to ascribe to a common vision, objectives and operating principles.*

- **What should be the membership of basin councils?**

*The membership should be open to all who ascribe to the vision and principles.*

- **How is a broad cross section of interests' achieved/assured in the membership?**

*A constant, active, inclusionary, outreach program should achieve this. This is an important, perpetual aspect of NSWA operations.*

- **What should be the role of the provincial government in forming basin councils?**

*The province should assist facilitation as an equal partner in the process along with interested parties and stakeholders. Provincial staff trained in group facilitation, provincial funding and assistance with potential stakeholder invitation mail outs would be very useful. Other basin groups should be consulted for advice and ideas generation.*

- **When should basin councils form or be formed?**

*Basin council formation should occur in a proactive manner. The NSWA believes resources should be managed using an integrated approach on a watershed level for the best resulting water quality and quantity. Realistically, basin councils and other watershed conservation groups more often form out of deteriorating water conditions. The provincial water strategy might address this by encouraging the formation basin councils within the province where none currently exist. The public has clearly stated that the way in which water is managed must be changed to reflect a more integrated, watershed approach, and the consideration of the aquatic environment is as equally important as that of humans.*

*We here in Canada take our resources for granted, and European visitors are often dumbfounded that we have not learned from their losses and incorporate a more proactive thinking in our natural resource planning and decision-making.*

- **What if no basin council forms for a particular basin?**

*The province, in conjunction with other basin councils could market the River Basin Council Concept at various public venues or meetings such as community trade shows and fairs. The province could contract river basin councils to market the concept beyond their particular watershed boundaries (e.g. facilitating the NSWA's promotion of a Basin Council concept to the Beaver watershed).*

*One of the goals of the provincial water strategy could be that; by the end of 2003, each of the major river basins in the province is represented by a basin council.*

## **PROVINCIAL COMMITTEE/COUNCIL**

*We envision a provincial committee comprised of Basin Council executive members (staff or directors). The basin councils as funded to do so, could provide resources for the provincial*

committee. Appropriate DM or ADM membership would also be required on this committee in order to give it the profile it would require.

### **What is the role of a provincial council in the following?**

- **Tracking the implementation of the Alberta Water Strategy**

*The committee could have a responsibility in this, using a watershed model as the measuring stick.*

- **Changing and adapting the Alberta Water Strategy**

*Changes would have to be made where a watershed model is not proposed or used. The provincial committee would make formal recommendations through the DM or ADM sitting on the committee.*

- **Conservation practices in the province**

*The role could be to challenge practices contradictory to good watershed management on a broad/provincial level. Identify and challenge Alberta Government practices contrary to good watershed management practices. A watershed approach in appropriate aspects of provincial environmental management systems (where EMS's exist) could be emphasized. This committee could assist in the implementation of a wide variety of environmental strategies as they relate to provincial watersheds.*

- **Stewardship practices in the province**

*The committee could oversee these on a provincial scale, and these practices would have to be broad in definition. The committee could monitor and evaluate provincial departments for stewardship efforts. Committee members could also develop stewardship criteria for the basin councils for evaluating success. They could also develop a provincial 'state of the watersheds' document on watershed stewardship issues – i.e. how well are we doing as a province?*

- **State of the basin reports**

*The committee could help develop guidelines and perhaps minimal standards, remembering that each basin is unique, and so some uniqueness in these types of reports is expected. Not all basin groups have the same priorities and resources when it comes to preparing such reports.*

- **Data gaps, requirements and dissemination**

*The committee could play a coordinating role in provincial data requirements and dissemination. A more specific role would be played by the individual basin councils.*

- **Monitoring**

*Again, the committee could coordinate this at a provincial scale, It could also develop and provide standards for local and volunteer monitoring programs and efforts.*

- **Inventories (groundwater supply, wetlands)**

*Assist in the development of these initiatives when they are province-wide in scope.*

- **Identifying priority issues in the basin**

*None.*

- **Stewardship and Conservation initiatives in the basin, focusing on basin targets**

None.

- **License and Approval decisions**

*The committee could become involved when these decisions affect more than one basin. In these cases the committee should seek input from the basin councils.*

- **Basin planning**

*Again, as in state of basin reports, it could develop guidelines and perhaps minimum standards for basin plans, working within the Provincial Framework for Water Management Planning.*

- **Sub-Basin planning (watershed protection groups/plans)**

*It could oversee that the broad objectives of the province – i.e. the Water Strategy, are being addressed.*

- **Public involvement / communication**

*Hold an annual or biannual conference. Work closely with the province on developing provincial communications related to the Water Strategy, and provincial water issues as they arise.*

- **Provincial water policies**

*The committee could have an advisory role.*

- **Land use zoning**

*Advisory, relative to cumulative provincial impacts.*

- **Development permits**

*None*

- **EIA project reviews**

*None*

- **Flow and water supply forecasts**

*The committee could work together with the province on issues related to actual or perceived inter-basin transfers, or arising from agreements on apportionment, etc.*

- **Flood forecasting and warning**

*Assist with warnings when required and where flooding occurs across basin or large watershed boundaries.*

- **Flood mapping**

*Repository only, for use in flood-related communications through the committee.*

- **Are there other activities that need to be discussed?**

- **What is the role of the provincial government in each of these as related to the provincial councils?**

*The province would provide financial resources through the basin councils, and appropriate ADM or DM membership on the committee.*

- **What is the role of basin councils in relationship to a provincial council?**

*One or two members of each basin council would sit on the provincial committee.*

- **Are basin councils members of the provincial council?**

*Yes, they are the membership, along with an appropriate, high level provincial member, as above.*

- **Does the provincial council have any authority over basin councils?**

*No, it would provide guidance or guidelines only and could possibly coordinate basin council input into provincial scale issues.*

- **What resources should the provincial council provide and the provincial government provide?**

*Funding for committee operations would come from the basin councils as it is received by the province. Resources for specific conferences, publications and projects of the committee, would come from the province, or perhaps even a federal fund.*

- **How should a provincial council be formed?**

*The committee should be formed under suitable legislation, to ensure its long term security and existence.*

- **What should be the membership of a provincial council?**

*Watershed Basin Councils which represent key stakeholder sectors, would nominate members from their councils to the committee – perhaps 3 or 4 per basin council. The councils would be responsible for ensuring a balanced membership representing the various sectors. The membership term could be 2 years, ensuring rotation of members (and therefore sectors, if necessary) and at least one third of the committee should be retained into subsequent terms to provide continuity.*

- **How is a broad section of interest's achieved/assured in the membership?**

*As stated above. If this is assured in the basin councils, then by default it will be assured on the provincial committee. The concept of additional members besides basin councils could be considered but this would have to consist of groups/organizations/industry that have a province wide focus, and do not operate in singular basins only.*

- **What should be the role of the provincial government in forming a provincial council?**

*Facilitate the committee formation as part of the provincial water strategy. The province would partner with the council, as a function of the water strategy.*

## **WATERSHED PROTECTION GROUPS**

***AB Env't: Watershed protection groups are starting up all over the southern half of the province. They are started in many ways, for many reasons and with a wide variety of membership. The core purpose however is water quality stewardship and protection.***

**What is the role of watershed protection groups in the following?**

- **State of the basin reports**

*Role is in reviewing and providing input (particularly in the action-setting/response portion of the report) at appropriate stages in the process. This will be their opportunity for input and comment, if they have not already done so as a member of a larger basin group.*

- **Data gaps, requirements and dissemination**

*Can identify these on a local level, which will be important for sub-basin planning.*

- **Monitoring**

*Often perform local, specific, volunteer sampling programs (i.e. Lakewatch)*

- **Identifying priority issues in the basin**

*Role is to identify local issues and address local concerns. May lack information on a basin level, are viewed as 'local' experts.*

- **Stewardship and Conservation initiatives in the basin, focusing on basin targets**

*Contribute to basin targets on a focused, local level.*

- **License and Approval decisions**

*Role can very large, as these affect local water sources, industry and agriculture livelihoods directly.*

- **Basin planning**

*Input as member of basin councils, or through basin councils. See role in State of Basin reports.*

- **Sub-Basin planning (watershed protection groups/plans)**

*Key in developing sub-basin plans, as they address local issues.*

- **Public involvement / communication**

*Key in involving community members, and communication is often directly, person-to-person. Important for the on-the-ground, grass roots, rubber-to-road projects that will actually improve water quality in a measurable way.*

- **Provincial water policies**

*They could provide input to their basin council.*

- **Land use zoning**

*Role is to work within their municipalities to influence decisions that are best for their local watersheds.*

- **Development permits**

*Role is to work within their municipalities to influence decisions that are best for their local watersheds.*

- **EIA project reviews**

*Should be included as part of the public comment portion of EIA reviews.*

- **Flow and water supply forecasts**

*Can play a role in identifying local needs for local activities – agriculture, drinking water, recreational and social needs.*

- **Flood forecasting and warning**

*Could be potentially useful in reaching local communities with warnings. However, the province and municipality would have ultimate responsibility to do this. They could perhaps maintain a contact list of those most potentially affected in their local watersheds. Identify high-risk residents/communities.*

- **Flood mapping**

*No real role, as they would not likely have the resources to perform this function. They could however provide a quality check on mapping based on local knowledge.*

- **Are there other activities that need to be discussed?**

- **What is the role of the provincial government in each of these as related to the watershed protection groups?**

*Provides resources such as educational materials, speakers for local meetings and workshops. Basin councils could receive provincial dollars to assist in local group formation and projects.*

- **What resources should the watershed protection groups provide and the provincial government provide?**

*Local groups would provide volunteer and paid manpower, meeting venues, funding, in-kind contributions, local knowledge, key community contacts and leaders. The province would provide items listed in previous bullet.*

- **How should watershed protection groups be formed?**

*These groups would be formed by local residents identifying a need, or by addressing local issues that may arise through the municipality. The AESA program has a strong local watershed component and they seem to work well in assisting with the formation of local groups. Local groups seem to form in relation to rural/agricultural needs and recreation needs. Finger pointing MUST be avoided at this level, otherwise community division could occur. The NSW encourages the use of its model for formation; a model based on inclusiveness and consensus.*

- **What should be the membership of watershed protection groups?**

*Local community members and stakeholders.*

- **How is a broad cross section of interests achieved/assured in the membership?**

*The process for forming the group should include an invitation to all users of the identified water resource, based on a common interest in quality water for a variety of needs.*

- **What should be the role of the provincial government in forming watershed protection groups?**

*Minimal to none. This needs to be grass roots in foundation. There should be no 'big brother' involvement initially, unless requested and agreed upon by the local stakeholders. .*

- **When should watershed protection groups form or be formed?**

*Ideally as a proactive measure in order to deal with concerns as they arise, and work towards improving or maintaining current local conditions.*

- **What if no watershed protection groups forms for a particular sub-basin?**

*It indicates there is no interest, no suitable leader within an area or no issues that warrant action.*

- **What is the role of basin councils in relationship to a watershed protection group?**

*A major responsibility of basin councils is to foster the formation of and ongoing motivation for local groups. Continuous support (including facilitating access and disseminating funds) from then on would depend on basin council funding levels. Resources, information, funds and meeting forums are just a few means by which to support these groups. Projects to aid these groups (i.e. NSW Community Watershed Toolkit) should be undertaken by all major basin groups, in order to facilitate local, on-the-ground projects that actually make a difference in water quality in the sub basins. This ultimately results in measurable improvements in the larger watershed.*

**Appendix B**  
**North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance**  
**Member/Partner List – May 2003**

1. Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development
2. Alberta Capital Region Wastewater Commission
3. Alberta Beef Producers
4. Alberta Community Development
5. Alberta Conservation Association
6. Alberta Ecotrust
7. Alberta Energy and Utilities Board
8. Alberta Environment
9. Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture
10. Alberta Fish and Game Association
11. Alberta Lake Management Society
12. Alberta Recreation Canoe Association
13. Alberta Research Council
14. Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation
15. Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
16. Alberta Trailnet Society
17. Alberta Urban Municipalities Association
18. AMEC Earth & Environmental Ltd.
19. Aquality Environmental Consulting
20. AquaScience
21. Banff National Park
22. Battle River Tourist Association
23. Big Lake Environment Support Society (BLESS)
24. Bow River Basin Council
25. Bow River Project
26. Breton Plots Soil Conservation Society
27. Butte Action Committee for the Environment
28. Canadian Heritage Parks Canada
29. Capital Health Authority
30. City of Camrose
31. City of Edmonton, Drainage Services
32. City of Edmonton, Planning & Development
33. City of Edmonton, River Valley Rangers
34. City of Leduc, Environmental Advisory Board
35. City of St. Albert
36. County of Camrose
37. County of Paintearth #18
38. County of St. Paul #19
39. County of Thorhild #7
40. County of Two Hills #21
41. County of Vermilion River #24
42. County of Wetaskiwin #10
43. Cows & Fish
44. Department of Fisheries and Oceans
45. Dickson Fish & Game Association
46. Ducks Unlimited Canada
47. Earthkeeping
48. East Central Regional Health Authority
49. ECL Environmental Services Limited
50. Edmonton Catholic Schools
51. EduTransfer Design Association Inc.
52. Elk Island National Park
53. Elk Point Chamber of Commerce
54. Energy Efficiency Association
55. Enoch First Nation
56. EnviroMak

57. Environmental Law Centre
58. EPCOR
59. Federation of Alberta Naturalists
60. FEESA
61. Fisheries and Oceans, Habitat Management
62. Flagstaff County
63. Friends of Lily Lake
64. Grey Wooded Forage Association
65. Golder Associates
66. Intensive Livestock Working Group
67. Iron Creek Watershed Improvement Society
68. Lacombe County
69. Lac Ste. Anne County
70. Lakeland Regional Health Authority
71. Lamont County
72. Land Stewardship Centre
73. Leduc County
74. The Living by Water Project
75. M.D. Brazeau
76. M.D. Clearwater
77. M.D. of Wainwright No. 61
78. Midwest Tourism
79. Noble Resource Management Ltd.
80. North West Alliance Conservation Initiative
81. Northeast Capital Industrial Association
82. Northeast Slopes Riparian Group
83. Northwest Voyageurs Canoe and Kayak Club
84. Nova Chemicals Corporation
85. Parkland County
86. Parkland Residents Association
87. Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin
88. Paul First Nation
89. Pembina Institute for Appropriate Development
90. Petro-Canada
91. PFRA
92. R L & L Environmental Services
93. River Valley Alliance
94. Riverwatch
95. Rocky & Nordegg Cooperative Fisheries Inventory Program
96. Rocky Riparian Group
97. Rosedale Community League
98. Saddle Lake Tribal Administration
99. Shell Canada
100. Sierra Club, Prairie Chapter
101. Smoky Lake County
102. Soil and Water Conservation Association (Alberta)
103. St. Mary's Irrigation District
104. Strathcona County Engineering and Environmental Planning
105. Strathcona County Environmental Operations
106. Sturgeon County
107. Sundance Forest Products
108. Sunpine Forest Products
109. The Canadian Salt Company Limited
110. The King's University College
111. Thorsby Fish & Game Association
112. TOPSOIL & Northeast Edmonton Heritage Conservation Initiative
113. Town of Devon
114. Town of Drayton Valley
115. Town of Elk Point
116. Town of Gibbons
117. Town of Rocky Mountain House
118. Toxics Watch Society

- 119. TransAlta Utilities
- 120. Trout Unlimited Canada
- 121. University of Alberta, Kinsella Research Station
- 122. University of Alberta, Renewable Resources Department
- 123. Vermilion River Naturalist Club
- 124. Village of Marwayne
- 125. Voyageur Ventures
- 126. Water Institute for Semi-arid Ecosystems (WISE)
- 127. Weyerhaeuser
- 128. Wonder of Water
- 129. YoWoChAs

