

NSWA 2025-2026 Operational Plan

Draft 19 March 2025

1. STEWARDSHIP: The NSWA is a leader in watershed stewardship.

Level	Strategy	Operational Objective	Actions
Primary Work	Accessible Data and Tools	Riparian Health Action Plan	Hire and onboard a WRRP funded Riparian Coordinator position
			Expand reach and use of Riparian Web Portal
			Riparian Web Portal Outreach- Riparian 101 and 102 Training Series
			Riparian Web Portal- Ongoing management and maintenance
		WaterSHED Program	Support ongoing planning, monitoring and implementation
		Whitemud/Blackmud Natural Assets Program	Hire and onboard a Natural Assets project coordinator position
			Whitemud/Blackmud NA Inventory
			Natural Assets Steering Committee
			Grant Application and Management
	Integrated Watershed Management	NSR Water Management Roadmap	Grant management
			Project and funding oversight
			Stakeholder Committee "convener"
			Technical input to working group and collaborative modelling
			Water management roadmap development
			Watershed stakeholder and Indigenous engagement contractor
		NSRB Wetland Strategy Implementation	Grant Management and Reporting- WRRP Wetlands Grant
		On-the-Ground Projects	Wetlands hydrological assesment (WaterSmart)
			Restoration sites
			Lake outreach events and lake stewardship support
			Support ongoing planning, monitoring and implementation
	Research and Innovation Partnerships	NSR Basin Science and Knowledge Mobilization Steering Committee	Support ongoing planning, monitoring and implementation
	State of the Watershed	NSRB State of the Watershed	Data analysis and visualization
		Vermilion River State of the Watershed	Data analysis and visualization (Pending Ecotrust funding)
		Increase awareness of FHI methods	Publishing, workshops (Pending Ecotrust funding)
Developing	Integrated Watershed Management	NSR Water Management Roadmap	Ongoing support and maintenance of the model, Roadmap, and implementation planning
Marginal or Supporting	Accessible Data and Tools	CABIN Eastern Slopes Collaborative Working Group	Participate in meetings, provide training, assist/support funding applications
	On-the-Ground Projects	ALUS PAC	Member of the PAC
	Research and Innovation Partnerships	Alberta Lake Management Sampling Support	Connect with ALMS, coordinate sampling with summer students
		Applied and Academic Research Projects	Dr. Patrick Hanington (UofA) - Alberta Innovates - "Early detection and rapid response to aquatic invasive species and species at risk using environmental (e)DNA and metabarcoding"
			Dr. William Zhang (UofA) - NSERC - "Monitoring and Modelling Water Quality under Ice Affected Conditions in Rivers"
		fRI Research Water and Fish Program	Participate on Activity Team

2. KNOWLEDGE: The NSWA is a key resource for watershed information and education.

Level	Strategy	Operational Objective	Actions
Primary Work	Public	NSRB Documentary Video	Plan and develop video
			Video completion and editing
			Documentary release and circulation
		Community engagement	Arrange Community events
			Summer Students supporting engagement
		Information provision	Graphic design and presentation
	Youth	Youth Water Council	Website content development and presentation
			State of the Watershed web content
			Organize and deliver Youth Water Council program (year 2)
			Support YWC project completion and distribution
	Agriculture and Industry	Designated Industrial Zone	Planning, logistics, and fundraising for year 3.
Contribute to Aquatic Ecosystem Health Study Sub-task Team and LSPC Model Update			
Contribute to LSPC Model Update Sub-task Team			
Indigenous knowledge	Drought Resilience Needs Assessment	Industrial Heartland - DIZ Water Task Team	
		Drought Guide Needs Assessment with Confederacy of Treaty 6 First Nations	
Municipal	WaterSHED Knowledge Mobilization	Implement knowledge mobilization	
Developing	Public	Information provision	Community information sessions to engage new audiences (e.g., cultural groups)
	Indigenous knowledge	Drought Resilience Needs Assessment	Plan for and seek grant funding Drought Guide Phase 2 (in collaboration with Confederacy of Treaty 6 First Nations)

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3. COLLABORATION: The NSWA is the preferred partner for water and aquatic ecosystem management.

Level	Strategy	Operational Objective	Actions
Primary Work	Sub-watershed Leadership	Sturgeon River Watershed Alliance (SRWA)	Coordinate SRWA Steering and Technical Committees
		Vermilion River Watershed Alliance (VRWA)	Develop strategic plan and priorities to guide project planning and grants
			Pursue targeted project funding for the activity book project
			Advance completion of the activity book project
		Urban Creeks Collaborative	Begin development of a Urban Creeks Strategy
			Develop 2-pagers for key urban creek topics
		Headwaters Alliance (HA)	Reinvigorate the partnership, Ongoing information, project updates, and opportunities to provide input
		Lake Stewardship Groups	Lake Isle
			Lakes Community of Practice
			Wabamun Lake
		NSR Heritage River Designation	River Manager reporting (annual and decadal)
		Regional Lakes Stewardship	Community of Practice
	Government Partnerships	SRWA Water Quality and Infrastructure Project (ACP)	Grant Management with Parkland
Marginal or Supporting	Government Partnerships		Infrastructure element of ACP project
			Water quality element of ACP project
	General Collaboration	Social Media presence	Social media content and following
		Improved awareness and information sharing	Content creation
			Newsletter
			Webinars
	Sub-watershed Leadership	Water for Life partnerships	Alberta Water Council
			WPAC Collective
		Joint WPAC Engagement	Connect with other WPACs including World Water Day event
	Sub-watershed Leadership	Beaverhills Biosphere	Participate on Science Committee
			Supporting Biosphere in water management planning

4. MANAGEMENT: The NSWA is a sustainable and well managed organization.

Level	Strategy	Operational Objective	Actions
Primary Work	Management	NSWA Board and Society Governance	Administer the NSWA Board
			Administer the NSWA Board Committees
			Deliver the NSWA AGM and Annual Report
		NSWA Operations	Guide and direct staff and project work
			Overall NSWA and project budgeting and grant tracking
Developing	Governance	Board and staff Indigenous literacy	Staff and NSWA board internal learnings
		Funding diversification	Begin to explore sponsorship or other corporate giving mechanisms