



ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN AND BUDGET

2022-2023

May 2022

Acronyms

ACP	Alberta Community Partnership (grant)
AEP	Alberta Environment and Parks
AGM	Annual General Meeting
ALMS	Alberta Lake Management Society
ALUS	Alternative Land Use Services (non-profit organization)
AUMA	Alberta Urban Municipalities Association
AWC	Alberta Water Council
CAP	Canadian Alberta Partnership (program and grant)
DIZ	Designated Industrial Zone
EMRB	Edmonton Metro Region Board
GOA	Government of Alberta
HA	Headwaters Alliance
IHCRWQF	Industrial Heartland Capital Region Water Quality Framework
IWMP	Integrated Watershed Management Plan
LSC	Land Stewardship Centre (non-profit organization)
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NSR	North Saskatchewan River
NSWA	North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance
RMA	Rural Municipalities Association (Alberta)
SC	Steering Committee
SOW	State of the Watershed
SRWA	Sturgeon River Watershed Alliance
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
UoA	University of Alberta
VRWA	Vermilion River Watershed Alliance
WQM	Water Quality Monitoring
WMP	Water Management Plan
WPAC	Watershed Planning and Advisory Council
WSG	Watershed Stewardship Group
WRRP	Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program (grant)

About NSWA

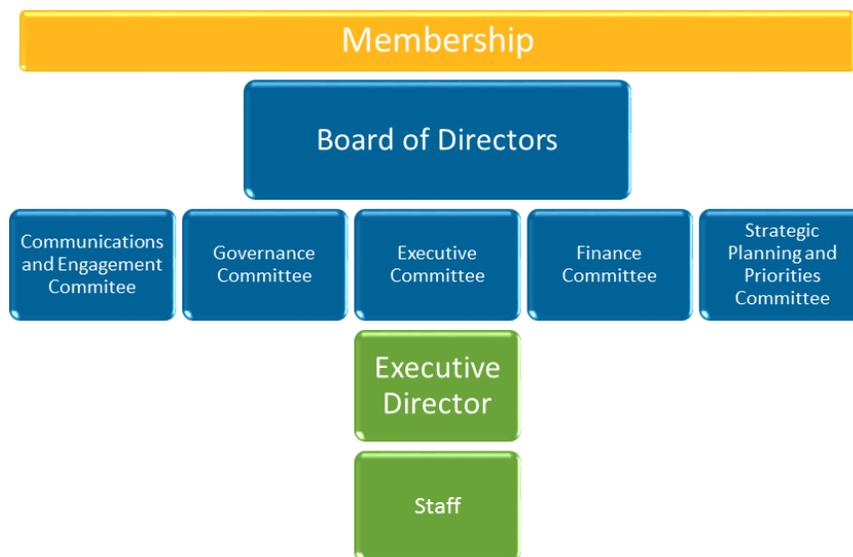
The North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) is a multi-stakeholder watershed protection partnership formed in 1997, incorporated as a non-profit society in 2000 and designated as a Water Planning and Advisory Council (WPAC) by the Government of Alberta (GoA) in 2005. The NSWA was granted charitable status in 2016.

The NSWA provides a forum to recognize and address issues affecting the North Saskatchewan River (NSR) watershed in Alberta. It encourages and facilitates collaborative partnerships, watershed studies and watershed knowledge sharing.

The NSWA is comprised of both individual and organizational members including:

- Municipal, provincial, and federal governments
- First Nations and Metis organizations
- Industry and utility corporations
- Agricultural and drainage associations
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- Educational and research institutions
- Members at large

The NSWA has a broad and diverse membership of about 150 individual members and the 50 sectoral organizations including over 30 rural and urban municipalities. The organizational structure of the NSWA includes the general membership, a Board of Directors, Board Committees, the Executive Director, and staff.

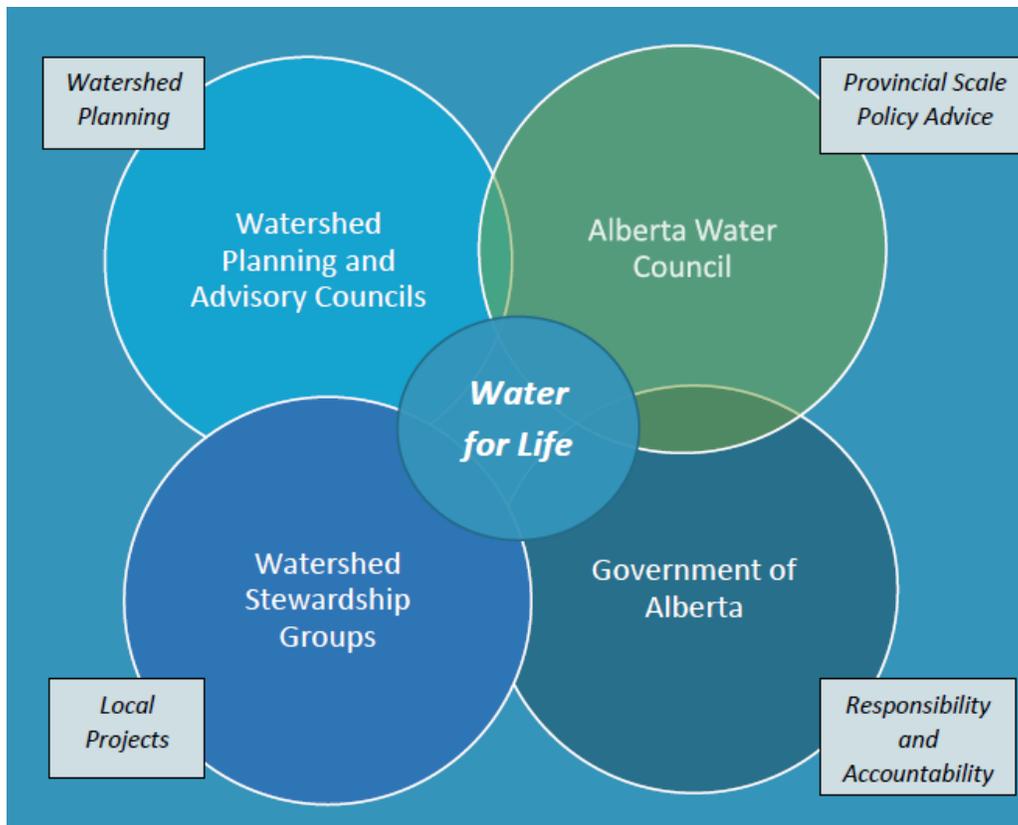


In 2005, the NSWA was appointed by the Government of Alberta as the Watershed Planning and Advisory Council (WPAC) for the North Saskatchewan River watershed under the [Water for Life: Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability \(2003\)](#). The three goals of the Water for Life Strategy are:

1. Safe, secure drinking water supply
2. Healthy aquatic ecosystems
3. Reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy

The NSWA is an independent, non-profit organization that is designated by Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) to report on the health of the watershed, lead collaborative planning, and facilitate education and stewardship activities.

As one of the partnerships under the Water for Life Strategy, the NSWA works closely with the other groups including the Government of Alberta (GoA), Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP), the Alberta Water Council (AWC), the 10 other WPACs and Watershed Stewardship Groups (WSG).



NSWA 3-Year Strategic Plan 2022-2024

To achieve the NSWA’s Vision and Mission the Board regularly updates a strategic plan which includes Goals, Priorities and Actions. The Goals of the NSWA are:

Goal 1: *The NSWA supports Collaborative Watershed Planning*

Goal 2: *The NSWA provides Leadership in Watershed Management*

Goal 3: *The NSWA promotes Watershed Knowledge Sharing*

Goal 4: *The NSWA remains a Functional and Sustainable Organization*

The NSWA Board set three strategic priorities in January 2022 to advance the organization towards our vision and mission and desired outcomes. These are summarized in the following tables along with specific activities or projects related to the workplan for 2022-2023.

NSWA STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 2022-2024



Focus collaborative efforts on partnerships that can most effectively address the directions and actions of the *Integrated Watershed Management Plan*.



Complete a 2025 State of the Watershed report to provide an update on the watershed health and implementation status of the *Integrated Watershed Management Plan* of the the NSWA.



Focus and align communication efforts on key stakeholders who have the greatest influence on watershed health.

NSWA Annual Operating Plan 2022-2023

This workplan provides the basis for the NSWA's 2022-2023 budget and allocating staff and financial resources for the next year. The NSWA is an adaptable organization and recognizes that this workplan may evolve as opportunities or challenges present themselves throughout the year.

Goal 1: *The NSWA supports Collaborative Watershed Planning*

PRIORITY: *Focus collaborative efforts on partnerships that can most effectively address the directions and actions of the Integrated Watershed Management Plan.*

Collaborative partnerships are the core to successful watershed planning for the NSWA. For the next three years we will be focusing our efforts on partnerships that address the directions and actions of the IWMP including water quality, water quantity, aquatic health and land use.

NSWA participates in or provides input for many provincial and partner committees to advance watershed planning actions as outlined in the IWMP including:

- [North Saskatchewan Regional Plan: Surface Water Quality Framework](#)
- Alberta Water Council projects including the [Water for Life Action Plan Update](#)
- [WaterSHED Water Quality Monitoring Project](#)
- [Modeste Natural Infrastructure Project](#)
- Work with [ALUS Canada](#), [Cows and Fish](#) and AEP on the [Riparian Web Portal](#)
- Many local ALUS Partnership Advisory Committees (PAC) including [Brazeau](#), [Lac Ste Anne](#), [Parkland](#), [Sturgeon](#), [Two Hills](#), [Vermillion River](#) and [Wetaskiwin-Leduc](#)

Our three sub-watershed partnerships specifically allow us to study and address local watershed issues with local solutions:

- [Headwaters Alliance](#)
- [Sturgeon River Watershed Alliance](#)
- [Vermillion River Watershed Alliance](#)

We are also working on pressing lake issues with the [Wabamun Lake Watershed Management Plan](#) Implementation Committee, [Alberta Lake Management Society](#) and local Watershed Stewardship Groups (WSGs).

North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance

OPERATING PLAN AND BUDGET 2022-23

Objectives	Actions
Work with provincial, regional, and municipal levels of government on water and land use focused projects.	NSWA provides advice to the GoA on water management plans, regional planning, and government policy such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Saskatchewan Regional Surface Water Quality Framework. • Industrial Heartland/Capital Region Water Quality Framework. • Designated Industrial Zone Project (DIZ)
	Work with EMRB , RMA and AUMA to investigate potential for municipal policy alignment projects on watershed protection.
	Work with Alberta Water Council , other WPACs and AEP on the update of the Water for Life Action Plan and other projects.
Partner with industry/utilities on watershed projects.	Participate in WaterSHED Long Term Water Quality Project with EPCOR, AEP, and the City of Edmonton.
Support academia on research related to the NSR watershed.	Support academic research projects related to watershed health of the NSR such as the University of Guelph/ALUS Natural Infrastructure Project .
Work with NGO and WSG partners to promote on the ground actions related to NSWA Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP), strategies and subwatershed priorities.	Continue to work with NGOs such as ALUS , Cows and Fish , AWES and others on the implementation of Riparian Conservation and Restoration Strategy .
	Provide information via the Riparian Web Portal to NGOs to encourage on the ground projects.
	Work with NGOs on the development of new Wetland Strategy including promotion of on the ground restoration projects on wetlands.
	Work with NGOs such as ALUS, Ducks Unlimited and Edmonton Area Land Trust to promote the conservation of riparian areas and wetlands.
	Support the volunteer work of Watershed Stewardship Groups in using the resources from the Riparian and Wetland Strategies.
	Leverage work of Alberta Lake Management Society and the Land Stewardship Centre to support landowner and WSG projects.
Facilitate and support subwatershed alliances to address directions and actions of the IWMP.	Support and facilitate the development of the Headwaters sub-watershed group to encourage watershed planning at a local scale.
	Complete deliverables for the Riparian Health Action Plan Watershed Restoration and Resiliency Program (WRRP) grant (\$130,000) by December 2024 including literature review, setback calculator, policy alignment and riparian web portal.
	Support and facilitate the development of the Sturgeon River sub-watershed group to encourage watershed planning at a local scale.
	Complete deliverables for the Sturgeon River Watershed Priority Implementation Projects Alberta Community Partnership (ACP) grant (\$200,000) by December 2023 including wetland strategy, overlay maps, policy alignment and communications plan.
	Support and facilitate the development of the Vermilion River sub-watershed group to encourage watershed planning at a local scale.
	Facilitate Vermilion River Watershed Alliance on prioritizing next priority action items from to advance Vermilion River Watershed Management Plan and apply for grants if needed.
Support and facilitate the development of other sub-watershed groups such as Beaverhill and White Earth .	

Goal 2: The NSWA provides Leadership in Watershed Management

PRIORITY: Complete a 2025 State of the Watershed Report to provide an update on the watershed health and implementation of the Integrated Watershed Management Plan of the North Saskatchewan River Watershed.

The foundational watershed planning documents of the NSWA are the [State of the Watershed Report](#) (2005) and the [Integrated Watershed Management Plan](#) (2012). The NSWA has used the recommendations for these reports to guide our watershed planning work for the last decade.

The Board has given direction to do a 10-year review of the State of the North Saskatchewan River Watershed, assess the progress we have made on the IWMP and challenges the watershed could be facing in the future. This project will take 2-3 years to complete and will include engagement with our key stakeholders including the board members and sectors and indigenous communities.

NSWA will also continue work on basin wide watershed planning through its subwatershed alliances and riparian and wetland strategies.

Objectives	Actions
Complete an updated State of the Watershed report.	Meet with key stakeholders including AEP and board members to discuss the scope and details of the update.
	Review watershed health data available and select a suite of high integrity, long-term indicators for update.
	Develop an online based GIS Story Map to host update of State of the Watershed information.
	Meet with key stakeholders at key milestones to gather feedback and input.
Provide a status update of the Integrated Watershed Management Plan .	Review five goals, 20 watershed management directions, and 51 actions of the IWMP and report on progress.
Continue to work on related to recommendations of Riparian Conservation and Restoration Strategy .	Increase public awareness via education and outreach.
	Provide greater support to private stewardship initiatives.
	Facilitate policy alignment and integrated water and land use policy.
	Advocate for restoration efforts on publicly owned lands.
Develop inventory and education programs as part of the NSWA Wetland Strategy .	Promote research and knowledge building.
	Use updated landcover data to develop a wetland inventory.
	Enhance the capacity to implement a provincial wetland replacement program.
	Host educational forum on wetlands.

Goal 3: The NSWA promotes Watershed Knowledge Sharing

PRIORITY: Focus and align communication efforts on key stakeholders who have the greatest influence on watershed health.

The NSWA is a key resource for watershed information on the North Saskatchewan watershed and focuses its communication efforts on strategic issues with its key stakeholders. We align and complement the communication efforts of AEP, NGOs and other organizations to reinforce watershed knowledge and stewardship messages.

Objectives	Actions
NSWA Communications and Engagement Plan focuses efforts on key stakeholders.	Work with Communications and Engagement Committee to update Communication and Engagement Plan annually.
Information sharing is aligned between Water for Life Partners including AEP, Alberta Water Council, other WPACs and WSGs.	NSWA works with Government of Alberta departments that promote issues related to watershed health, such as Water for Life , Water Literacy and Respect our Lakes programs.
	NSWA participates with Alberta Water Council on provincial wide watershed studies and projects.
	Support WPAC Education/Outreach staff meetings which focus on shared communications such as WPAC annual summary .
Watershed related communications resources are leveraged from NGOs.	Support watershed stewardship groups with communications and on the ground efforts.
	Promote NGO resources related to watershed health programs, such as Land Stewardship Center, Alberta Lake Management Society, ALUS Canada, Cows and Fish, Ducks Unlimited and others
Promote the NSWA and watershed resources through multiple communications mediums.	Promote and optimize the use of the NSWA website for sharing information on the North Saskatchewan Watershed.
	Provide information on NSWA and partners activities, reports, events, and milestones through emailed newsletter .
	Organize Educational Forums to highlight work of NSWA and partners to membership and others.
	Use printed materials such as the Living in the Shed and NSWA Calendar to promote NSWA’s mission and vision.
	Provide timely updates and reminders through Social Media channels.
	Use the NSWA Annual Report to summarize work and accomplishments of organization and partners.
	Utilize Summer Students to support communications efforts of NSWA.

Goal 4: The NSWA remains a Functional and Sustainable Organization

The NSWA is a registered non-profit society organization guided by a 20-member multi-stakeholder Board and is run by an Executive Director and five staff. The Board meets six times a year and the Annual General Meeting (AGM) is held in June.

The operating budget of the NSWA is approximately \$800,000 with major contributions provided by:

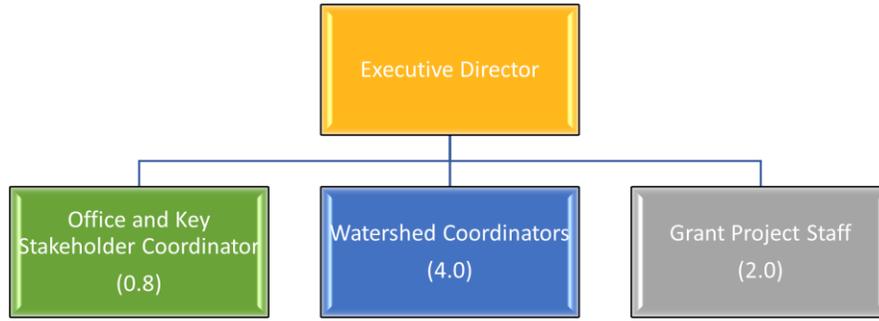
- Alberta Environment and Parks
- EPCOR
- Municipal Partners

Specific watershed management technical projects are funded through separate federal and provincial grants and municipal and watershed stewardship group contributions.

Objectives	Actions
<p>NSWA is a functional organization with a strong multi-stakeholder society and board structure.</p>	<p>NSWA Society obligations are met annually such as annual general meeting, financial audit, record keeping and reporting.</p>
	<p>NSWA Board of Directors has regular meetings to discuss watershed issues, provide strategic direction and support to the NSWA Society.</p>
	<p>NSWA Board of Directors reviews Society Bylaws and Board Liability Check list annually.</p>
	<p>NSWA Board of Directors to review Governance Manual and policies regularly.</p>
<p>NSWA is a sustainable organization with predictable core funding and well supported staff</p>	<p>Review and report on the progress of Strategic Priorities annually.</p>
	<p>Draft and approve a 1-year operational plan and budget.</p>
	<p>Work with key funders (Alberta Environment and Parks, EPCOR and municipalities) to ensure core funding and in kind support is sustained.</p>
	<p>Apply for grants for key project areas such as basin wide studies and subwatershed focused work.</p>
	<p>Partner with other organizations on projects that would increase watershed knowledge.</p>
	<p>Review staff organizational and compensation structure to ensure effective delivery of the NSWA strategic priorities.</p>
	<p>Review staff succession planning to ensure organizational sustainability.</p>

NSWA Staff

The day-to-day operations of the NSWA are managed by the Executive Director and five permanent staff. Grant contract staff and consultants are hired to support projects or provide technical expertise if grant resources are available.



Work Plan Timelines

The annual strategic planning process for the NSWA begins in the fall with the Board reviewing its strategic planning priorities for the upcoming fiscal year (April 1 – March 31). Once the Board Strategic Plan is approved it provides the foundation for the operational workplan and budget. Key dates include:

- November – Strategic Planning Session
- January – Strategic Plan Approved
- March – Annual Work Plan and Budget Approved
- June – Annual General Meeting

Confirmation of funding from the Government of Alberta, EPCOR, and municipal contributions is spread out throughout the year and the budget may require updates based on final numbers.

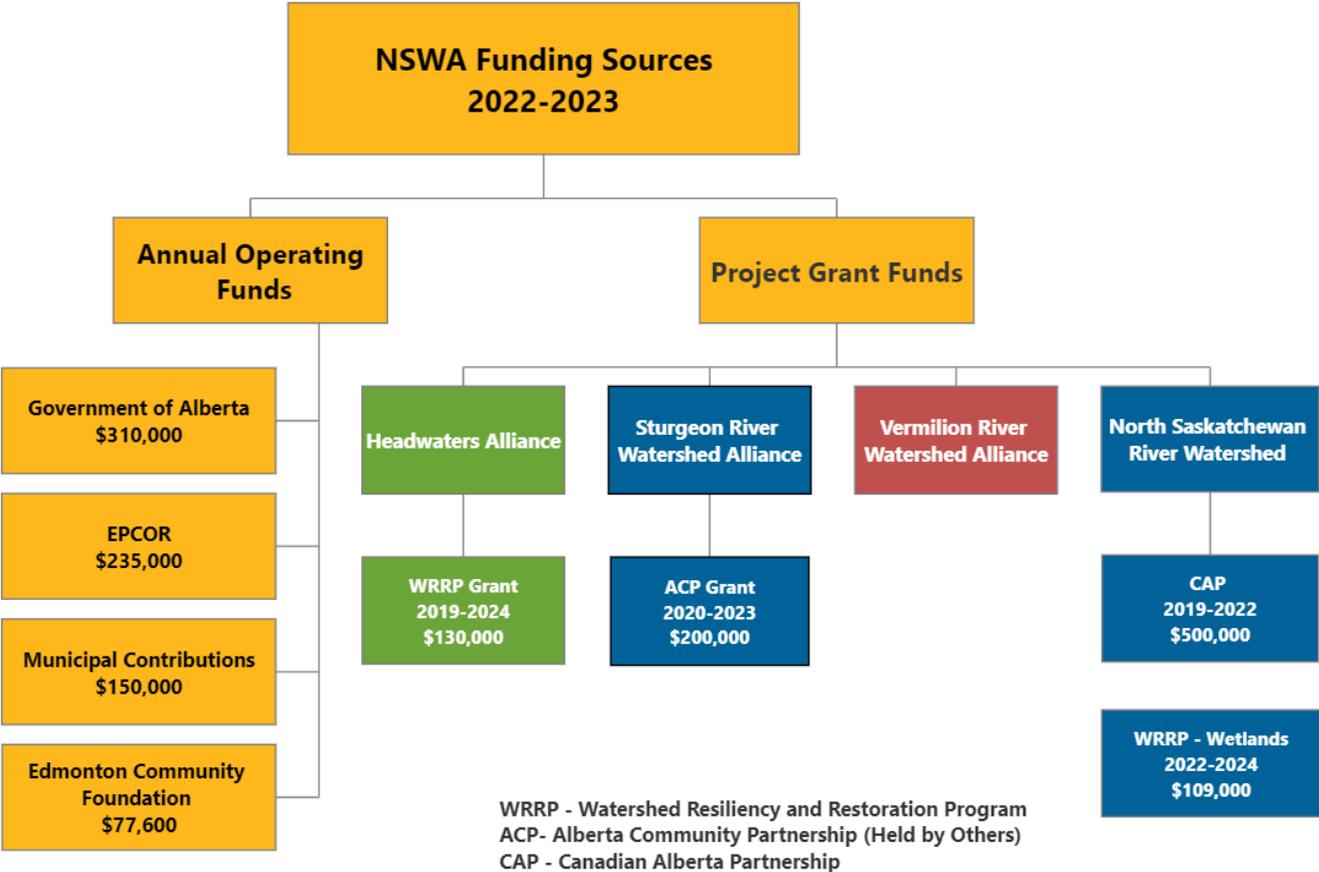
NSWA Funding Sources

Operational funding for the NSWA is provided by:

- Government of Alberta
- EPCOR
- Municipal contributions
- Edmonton Community Foundation Operational Grant
- Others (training/summer student grants, donations, interest)

The NSWA also receives grants from federal and provincial government programs for project specific work, such as technical studies and on the ground projects. See Figure 2.

Figure 2: NSWA Funding Sources

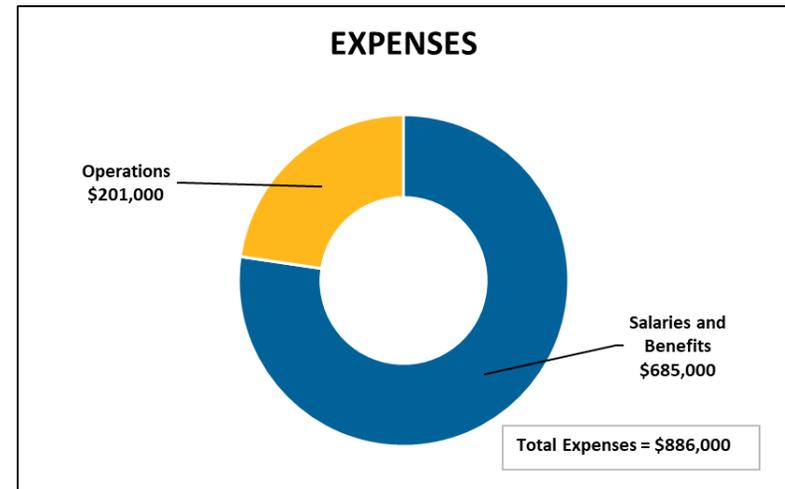
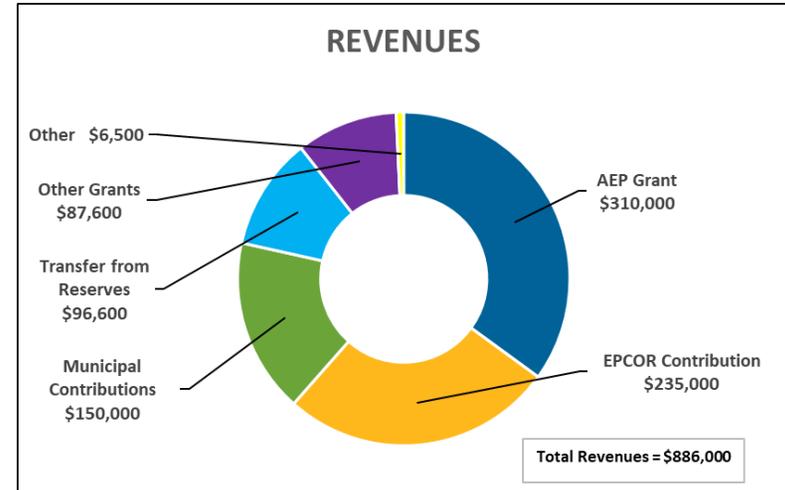


2022 – 2023 Operating Budget

REVENUE	
AEP Grant	310,000
EPCOR Contribution	235,000
Municipal Contributions	150,000
Transfer from Operational Reserves	96,600
Other Grants	87,600
Other	6,500
TOTAL	\$886,000
EXPENSES	
Salaries and Benefits	685,000
Operations	201,000
TOTAL	\$886,000

Operating Funds	
Operating Fund Balance March 31, 2022	\$588,765
Projected Balance March 31, 2023	\$492,165

Other Funds	
Operational Fund Reserve	\$205,000
Future Opportunities Fund	\$400,000





VISION:

People working together for a healthy and functional North Saskatchewan River watershed – today and tomorrow.

MISSION:

To protect and improve water quality, water quantity (instream flow) and the health of our watershed by:

- *Seeking, developing and sharing knowledge*
- *Facilitating partnerships and collaborative planning*
- *Working in an adaptive management process.*