

The Athabasca Dispatch

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Athabasca Watershed Council officially recognized as Alberta's 10th WPAC!

Shortly after forming its first board of directors in November, the Athabasca Watershed Council sent a letter of request to the Government of Alberta. We are now pleased to announce the Council has received official designation as the **Watershed Planning and Advisory Council (WPAC)** for the Athabasca watershed.

Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils are important regional multi-stakeholder partnerships under the province's

Water for Life strategy.

Councils are responsible for coordinating watershed assessments and developing watershed management plans. As noted by Alberta Environment "Watershed management is a complex undertaking, requiring the expertise, efforts and resources of many."

Councils are also responsible for creating a forum for watershed residents and sectors to learn about their basin and its water issues.

The Athabasca Watershed



Small White Water Lily (*Nymphaea tetragona*) Of the 4 known locations where this rare and delicate water lily are found - two are in the Athabasca watershed! M. Hayward

Council is excited to be undertaking this role and looks forward to talking to basin residents in the near future. Stay tuned!

Book the Date!!

The Athabasca Watershed Council's first Annual General Meeting will be held in Fort McMurray at the Royal Canadian Legion Hall Saturday May 29, 2010.

Council to hold its first AGM in Fort McMurray!

Come find out what the Athabasca Watershed Council has been up to lately! Hear interesting speakers, see displays, have lunch and catch up with old friends. Council's Annual General Meeting will be

held Saturday, May 29, 2010 at the Royal Canadian Legion Hall in Fort McMurray. Coffee will be available at 9:30 a.m. with the official agenda starting at 10:00. Please RSVP by email to prowell@shaw.ca

or by calling 780 690-9167.

The Council will be holding elections for an Aboriginal board member vacancy at the AGM. Nomination forms are available by emailing prowell@shaw.ca.

Council has been Busy!



The geese have returned!
J. VanPatten

Since its first Board of Directors was elected in November, 2009, the Athabasca Watershed Council has been busy!

Meeting monthly, the Council has applied for, and received, official WPAC status. It has also applied for, and received, funding for core operations for the next two years.

Core funding will help the

Council as it finds and sets up office space. Council is also hiring an Executive Director, to help carry out its many tasks.

With a board, a budget, office and staff, the Council will soon be able to turn its full attention to achieving its goals, strategies and actions as stated in its three-year strategic plan. A key goal is to carry out

watershed assessment and planning for the Athabasca watershed—an ambitious but important task.

The Board of Directors acknowledges the excellent work of their predecessors—the Initiators Group—who laid a solid foundation for today’s Council. Many thanks to the individuals that participated in this work!

Council President grew up in Brule



“I am honoured to be President of a really dedicated and enthusiastic group!” AWC President Lavone Olson

The first President of the Athabasca Watershed Council is Lavone Olson. Lavone, the daughter of an outfitter, grew up in a small community called Brule located on the Athabasca River just outside Jasper National Park. During the fur-trading era, Lavone’s Métis ancestors also lived by the river in what is now

Jasper National Park.

Lavone and her husband, Wald, owned and operated a back country lodge for 25 years, providing horseback vacations through the mountains in Jasper National Park and Willmore Wilderness Parks.

Today Lavone , a Councilor for Yellowhead County,

represents Municipal Government on the Athabasca Watershed Council

Her hobbies include riding horses, hockey, hiking and grandchildren. She also provides riding lessons and coaches horse drill teams to perform rodeo grand entries.

Board Members / Sector

| Non-Government Organizations | Industry Sector | Government Sector | Aboriginal Sector | Other Sector |
|------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| Paula Evans (Treasurer) | Janice Linehan | Richard Chabaylo | Doug Badger (Vice-President) | Wayne Brehaut |
| David Locky (Secretary) | Daniel Moore | Sonny Flett | Vacant | Marsha Hayward |
| Tom Weber | Janice Pitman | Lavone Olson (President) | Bill Loutitt | Jay White |



Council has been busy as a beaver! J. VanPatten

Six Committees Formed

To carry out its many task, the Athabasca Watershed Council has created six working committees as follows:

Communications—to keep those that live, work and play in the Athabasca basin informed of the activities and progress of the Athabasca Watershed Council.

Technical—to understand the physical state of the Athabasca watershed includ-

ing the state of current knowledge, information gaps and priorities for further research.

Finance—to ensure the Athabasca Watershed Council is financially solvent and fiscally responsible.

Watershed Stewardship—to encourage and enable stewardship activities in the Athabasca basin by collaborating, networking and sharing information, expertise and tools.

Aboriginal and Rural Engagement—to effectively engage people and communities in the work of the Athabasca Watershed Council by providing opportunities to build trust, share information and provide input.

Nominations—to ensure all 15 board positions are filled with the best possible candidates, selected in an open, fair and transparent manner.



The glacial silt-laden Athabasca River flows through wide gravel bars in the foothills region of the watershed; steep escarpments and the snow clad peaks of Pyramid Mountain lay beyond. L. Olson

Technical Committee starts State of Report

The Athabasca Watershed Council Technical Committee is eager to dig into its first task—developing a *State of the Athabasca Watershed report*.

The Technical Committee has held its first meeting and is now developing a workplan to complete the state of report.

Because of the large amount of information currently available about the Athabasca watershed, this first report will include a literature search and synthesis. It will also point out where data and information gaps exist.

The state of the watershed report will guide future

work of the Committee and the Council. It will also provide a good foundation of shared knowledge from which to start a watershed management plan.

“Once it is completed, the State of the Watershed report will give us a good foundation to move forward on.”

Communications Committee Hard at Work!

The Communications Committee wants you to know that a website is coming soon!

While this committee has been busy developing a logo, brochure and other communications tools, it is

also looking forward to having a presence on the World Wide Web.

In the future, many of the Council’s activities and reports will be posted on the website. We’re also hoping to have a photo-bank and a

blog to get your thoughts on the watershed and its issues. So stay tuned!



Oak Fern (*Gymnocarpium dryopteris*) These delicate ferns may be found growing in Boreal Mixedwood forests, usually in colonies in semi-shaded, cool habitat. M. Hayward



Athabasca Watershed Council

...working from the mountain headwaters...to the delta lowlands.

To contact us:

Phone: 780 690-9167

Please leave a message. We will get back to you as soon as possible.

Coming soon!

www.AthabascaWatershedCouncil.org

*The **Athabasca Watershed Council** is a not-for-profit society and the designated Watershed Planning and Advisory Council for the Athabasca watershed under Alberta's Water for Life strategy.*

Vision

The Athabasca watershed is ecologically healthy, diverse and dynamic.

Mission

The Athabasca Watershed Council promotes, fosters respect for, and plans for an ecologically healthy watershed by demonstrating leadership and facilitating informed decision-making to ensure environmental, economic and social sustainability.

Why the "Dispatch"?

In 1904, Billy Louttit, a Métis dispatch carrier for the Hudson Bay Company, ran 100 miles from Athabasca to Edmonton in 16 hours to get help for the town, threatened by an imminent flood. Then, like now, water was an issue to be taken seriously. "Dispatches" were often official messages, sent with haste and importance, to a particular destination. And so it is with this newsletter—important information about the Athabasca Watershed Council and its work, sent to keep you informed and up-to-date.

We hope you enjoy!

Looking for more info?

For more information on *Water for Life*, Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils, water and water partnerships in the Athabasca watershed and elsewhere in Alberta, check out the following links:

Alberta Stewardship Network www.ab.stewardshipcanada.ca

Alberta Water Council www.albertawatercouncil.ca

Alberta Water Portal www.albertawater.com

Athabasca River Basin Research Institute www.arbri.athabascau.ca

Beaver River Watershed Alliance www.beaverriverwatershed.ca

Lesser Slave Watershed Council www.lswc.ca

Lac la Nonne Enhancement and Protection Society www.lepa-ab.com

Regional Aquatics Monitoring Program www.ramp-alberta.org

Water for Life Strategy www.waterforlife.alberta.ca



Hudsonian whiteface (*Leucorrhinia hudsonia*) This small, colourful spring emergent dragonfly loves mosquitoes and hangs out in quiet pond environments.

M. Hayward