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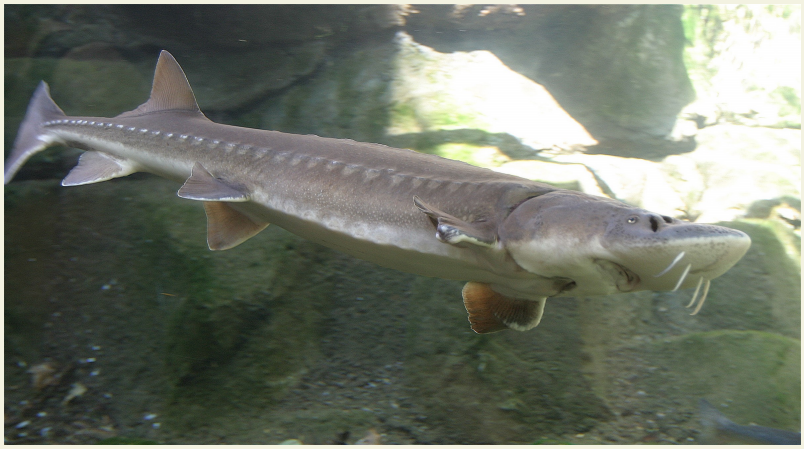
IN STREAM NEWSLETTER
OCTOBER 2022

CONNECTING and COLLABORATING

NSWA staff organized our first water field day with **O'Chiese First Nation** school this month! It was a day full of hands-on, outdoor learning for the school's grade 8 and 9 students. In the morning, the students learned about watershed pollution management and then headed out to the Nordegg River to do some water quality monitoring with a multi-parameter testing kit. After lunch, the kids strapped on waders and life jackets for a sunny afternoon of water sampling and identifying benthic invertebrates on the Nordegg River!

A big thanks to **O'Chiese First Nation School,** the teachers, and the teaching assistants for helping with this fun day of watershed learning!

WATERSHED WEDNESDAYS WEBINARS - FALL 2022 - BIODIVERSITY



Are there any fish out there?

Sign up now for the Watershed Wednesday webinar series or you'll miss out on hearing about **lake sturgeon** populations from Dr. Stephen Spencer (Alberta Environment and Parks) and **native trout** populations from Lesley Peterson (Trout Unlimited Canada). Stephen and Lesley are speaking **November 2 at noon**, so don't wait to register! Learn about the North Saskatchewan watershed from your desk while eating your lunch!

Register now!

Watershed Wednesday webinars feature expert speakers on various watershed topics each month, delivered virtually over the lunch hour (noon to 1 p.m.).

The webinar theme this fall is **Biodiversity in Our Watershed.** Join the watershed community to learn from experts on different aspects of biodiversity. October was all about *Bats and Bugs*, November 2nd is about *Fish Species*, and December 7th will be on *Aquatic Monitoring Biodiversity*.

Check out October's webinar recording featuring speakers on Bats and Bugs (invertebrates) on the NSWA YouTube channel.

Sign up today for the *Watershed Wednesday* **Biodiversity in our Watershed** webinar series.

Can you do us a favour? Encourage a friend (or two) to register for the webinar and let's build our watershed community together.

Don't Forget to Register!

VRWA UPDATES

On September 17th, numerous organizations came together with volunteers from the Vermilion area to plant two eco buffer sites in the Town of Vermilion. Over 1200 native plants were planted by 23 volunteers over the course of the day!

Check out the blog post written by Lakeland College student Jack Jenkins for more details about this fantastic event!

VRWA POST

ALMS CONFERENCE RECAP

The **Alberta Lake Management Society (ALMS)** held their annual conference on September 28th and 29th at the Kinsmen Club in St. Albert. The NSWA was there in full force, supporting the conference organization, providing a sponsorship, speaking on the Riparian Portal, and assisting in break-out group facilitation.

It was great to reconnect with so many familiar faces and meet some new people interested in lake management. The conference featured excellent speakers presenting on topics from community-led initiatives to data access and management to the Water for Life Strategy.

In addition to the great lineup of speakers, the conference provided an opportunity for an in-person Lake Stewardship Community of Practice session, an initiative being led by ALMS since April of this year. NSWA staff helped to facilitate the session where conference attendees discussed strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the lake management landscape in Alberta. Input from conference attendees is being compiled by ALMS and we look forward to seeing the results.

The conference concluded with a powerful Indigenous Engagement and Relations Training session delivered by Teneya Gwin of Eleven Eleven Consulting. Teneya offered insights into land acknowledgements, terminology, protocol, and more with humor, grace, and reflections from her own family history.

NSWA was pleased to attend and sponsor this event, and we're already looking forward to next year's conference!

Join the **North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance and the Battle River Watershed Alliance on November 15 and 16** for the interactive **Riparian Web Portal Training.**

In the Riparian Web Portal 101 workshop, you will learn the Why and How of the Riparian Intactness Assessment Project, how it applies to your work, and how it can improve the health of our watersheds.

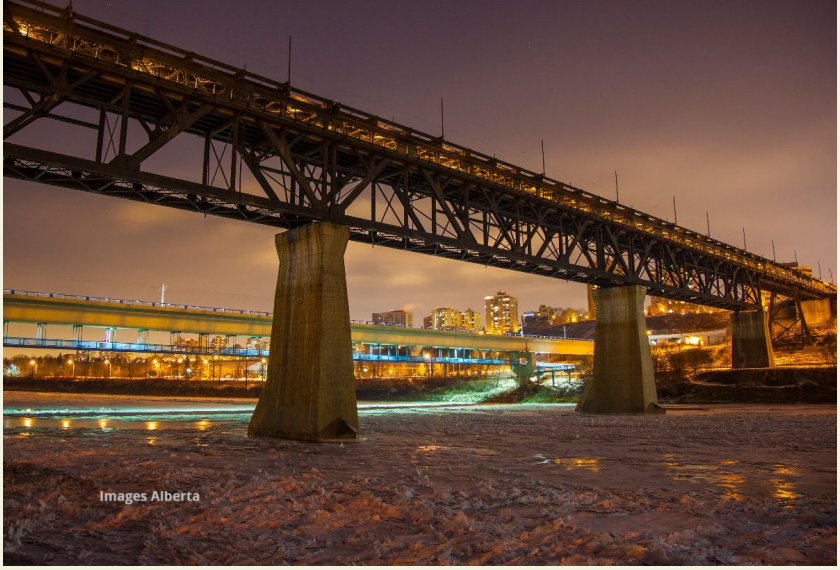
In the Riparian Web Portal 102 workshop, you will gain login access to see and understand riparian data and be trained on adding your projects to the site. Attendance at the 101 workshop is necessary before taking the 102 workshop.

For more information and to register use these links:

Riparian 101

Riparian 102

ROAD SALT MANAGEMENT In the WATERSHED



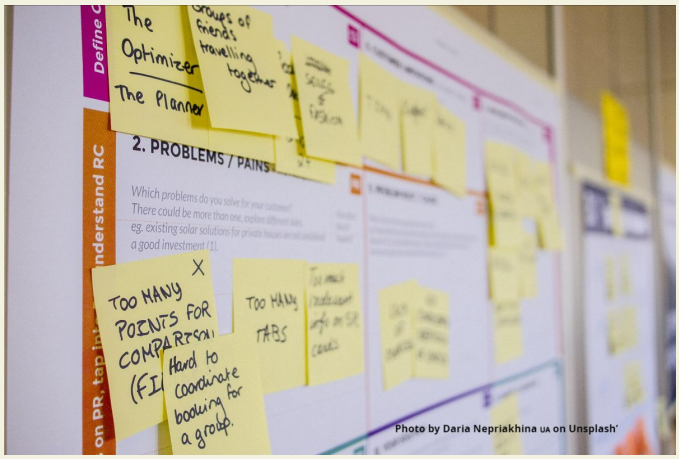
As the weather gets colder, we all know what that means- Winter driving is just around the corner.

Check out a recently published road salt management summary for the Sturgeon River watershed. While the report focuses on salt management in the Sturgeon subwatershed, many of its findings apply across the entire North Saskatchewan River Watershed. This information can aid in creating and adopting some best management practices for ice and salt in the months ahead.

Drive safe out there!!

ROAD SALT MANAGEMENT

IAP2 North American Conference 2022



I recently had the opportunity to attend the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) North American Conference 2022, held in mid-September at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity in Banff, Alberta. Speaking to the theme of *Connecting with Purpose*, the conference brought together more than 350 public engagement professionals from across North America. After a two-year long drought of in-person gatherings, it was fantastic to meet again in person, share, eat, and celebrate.

Every conference and workshop offers something different to the people who attend, and I felt it was important to share some of my thoughts from the IAP2 conference.

More Participation
IAP2 conferences are much more than just “sit and listen” events. When we fill a room with engagement experts, both as presenters and audience, every session becomes an opportunity to participate. Sessions began with a context setting presentation, but then moved into a variety of participatory activities, from facilitated conversations, the ubiquitous sticky-notes, improv, spoken word poetry, and more.

We can learn so much from the IAP2 participatory conference approach that can and should be applied by those of us working with a variety of interests and perspectives. Too often we rely on stand-and-deliver presentation style where the audience is passive and there is no call to action. One thing we can all take from this kind of approach is that action comes from involvement, engagement, and participation. We should all spend more time designing our events to be more participatory and less passive.

More Inclusive
Engagement professionals always strive to hear everyone's voice and ensure everyone can be heard. We strive to ensure that our work includes those whose voice is not normally heard. What really struck home for me from the conference was how potentially diverse those voices can be and, more importantly, how deliberate we need to be in ensuring our engagement embraces that diversity. Through some of the specific conference sessions, we explored practices for examining who might be left out of the conversation and how we could bring those voices to the table.

The North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance works typically with those who are interested in water and aquatic ecosystem related matters in the watershed, focusing limited resources on a fairly homogeneous group of influencers and decision-makers. I wonder whether we are doing enough to hear those who are often overlooked, because we never think to see them as having an interest in watershed stewardship. I'm thinking about Indigenous people, people who are new to the watershed, people from across the gender spectrum who might not feel safe in traditional engagement forums, people in prisons, young people, elderly people, people without homes. How many of these people are we not including that we should? With new tools and approaches available (e.g., social media, deliberative process, crowdsourcing), we might begin to enable these people to help them to become part of watershed stewardship and sustainability.

Different approaches
The IAP2 conference was held over about 2½ days with multiple concurrent sessions highlighting a broad diversity of engagement approaches. Each session highlighted a real-life project designed for a specific purpose and to achieve a specific outcome. All fell somewhere on the IAP2 Spectrum from *Inform* to *Empower*.

And yet when I think of the work we do in watershed stewardship and sustainability, we often rely on the same handful of techniques and methods to engage the people in our watershed. It may be that the methods we use today are actually detracting from the outcome we are trying to achieve. Perhaps it is time to start using more interesting and more novel approaches that make it easier and more attractive for people to participate and engage.

As the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance moves forward to connect land, water, and people to steward and sustain our watershed, we are committed to ensuring that our engagement with watershed citizens will be inclusive and diverse, use novel and interesting engagement approaches, and able to generate actions that improve the health of our watershed.

Final word
I want to extend my appreciation to the IAP2 Wildrose Chapter, whose generous sponsorship made it possible for me and numerous others to attend.

Scott Millar
Executive Director

OTHER WATERSHED RESOURCES

Working Well Progam has a new schedule of workshops. This fall, the Working Well program is offering a mix of in-person and virtual water well management and maintenance workshops for private water well owners across the province. Check out this link for more information and how to register.

The **Wetland Knowledge Exchange** will be holding a series of webinars this fall. For more information and to register check **here**.

Check out a website with information on **Alberta's Native Trout** , which provides tools to help protect and support these important species.

Check out the **NSWA DISCOVERS** section on our website with watershed resources and activities for adults and children. There are many activities to encourage watershed learning for your family.

SUPPORT THE WORK OF NSWA

The NSWA accepts donations through the **ATB Cares** program which matches 15% of every

dollar donated to Alberta-based charities through their **ATB Cares Web Portal.** It is easy to use and automatically issues a charitable tax receipt for donations $10 and over.

For more information on supporting our watershed projects go to our **DONATE** webpage.

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