



Oldman Watershed Council December News

Merry Christmas
and Happy Holidays

from the
Oldman Watershed Council
Board and Staff



OWC Welcomes Newest Staff Member

Welcome to new staff member, Sofie Forsström!



Greetings! I am the new Education Program Manager with the Oldman Watershed Council. As a strong believer in lifelong learning, I am eager to share my passion for education and the environment. I hope to use my experience as an educator to contribute to the projects at OWC by creatively engaging watershed residents and stakeholders, in order to promote environmental literacy and cultivate a strong sense of place. Prior to joining the team at OWC, I worked as a bilingual science educator at the Royal Tyrrell Museum in Drumheller. I have also worked as an interpreter for Alberta Parks, and conducted pasture research, all of which fueled my fascination with southern Alberta.

Having grown up in rural Alberta, the outdoors is a large part of my life. In my spare time, I enjoy hiking, camping, gardening, horseback riding, and travelling.

I spent two years abroad for my graduate studies, working with an international cohort of students and exploring ecosystems as diverse as the Baltic coast of Germany, the Fenno-Scandinavian arctic, and the semi-arid rangelands of Central Asia.

I hold a Master of Science in Applied Ecology from the University of East Anglia in Norwich, UK, and a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies from the University of Alberta Augustana Campus in Camrose.

OWC Project Updates

Watershed Legacy Program is Now Accepting Applications!

- **Cody Spencer, WLP Manager**



As the busy season for landowners winds down, they will be shifting their focus to planning for the year ahead. If you are a landowner or have landowners in your municipality or part of a watershed stewardship group the OWC's Watershed Legacy Program can

help with funding and other resources to help with your next land improvement project. From riparian fencing, off-stream watering sites, weed pulls to nutrient management projects, the WLP covers a wide variety of watershed improvement ventures.



Deadline for application: February 1, 2016

[WLP application Word doc](#) is on our website, [click here](#) for the WLP brochure.

If you have any questions about the application or the program itself, please call or text Cody at 403-360-4572 or email cody@oldmanwatershed.ca. He would love to talk to you about this program and give you an idea of the past projects we've done with landowners.

Drink Up - a summary of the Working Well Workshop

- **Larin Guenther, Planning Manager**



For some of you, living in the Oldman Watershed also means living on an acreage or a farm. In rural areas, the groundwater in the Oldman Watershed is used for everyday drinking, cooking and household uses. The OWC has often received questions and inquiries on the proper maintenance and protection of your wells, and

therefore, on the safety and quality of your groundwater. With this interest and demand for accurate information, we recently attended a "Working Well Workshop" put on by the Government of Alberta and hosted by the MD of Willow Creek.



After some delicious home-cooked turkey dinner complete with cake, we learned a lot about the steps and guidelines to proper construction, maintenance and decommissioning of private wells along with the importance of regular water testing. This [summary](#) is intended to provide the highlights of that workshop. For complete access and a full description, please refer to www.workingwell.alberta.ca

Thanks!

- **Anna Garleff, Communications Specialist**



As this year comes to a close, I'd like to take this opportunity thank ALL of our guest bloggers who have been so generous with their time, talent and passion for our watershed. Our guest bloggers submit opinion pieces to us that may not necessarily reflect the position of the OWC, but are published in the hope that they promote great conversation.

The blog can be viewed on our website: www.oldmanwatershed.ca by clicking on the word BLOG at the top of the screen. You can search the blog by using

keywords that will bring up article suggestions. Curious about what the top blog stories are from this past year? [Click here.](#)

You can be a guest blogger, too! we welcome ALL voices - you needn't be a scientist or subject matter expert - you just need to share your passion for the watershed. If you'd like to submit an article, please send an email to: guestblogger@oldmanwatershed.ca Type your text straight into the email (no .pdfs please - they won't show up). Please attach any photos you'd like to appear in the article. Sending your email will upload it straight to the publishing software, where I'll be able to edit it for typos and formatting before it appears. All our blog articles get relayed straight to all our social media channels.

Thanks also to all the talented photographers who have generously shared their images to build our Photo Library of over 8,000 photos which are free to anyone to use.

Similarly, our Photo Library (over 8,000 photos which are free for anyone to use) is dependent on all the talented photographers who have generously shared their images with us. Our sincere appreciation goes out to everyone who has written in.

Our political science intern, **Mairin Gettman** has successfully completed her communications internship with the OWC/University of Lethbridge. She has done some serious research regarding how the new federal government will change watershed policy. Recently, we released a second article by Mairin which discusses the differences between provincial and federal legislation. Thank you also to Adam Driedzic of the Environmental Law Centre for his help mentoring Mairin. We wish Mairin all the very best for her continued studies in the future.



Engaging Recreationists Project

We said goodbye to our two student interns for the Engaging Recreationists Project - Adam Janzen and Rowan Garleff. Their main responsibility was to build relationships with off highway vehicle users and backcountry campers on public land in the Oldman watershed. Read more [here.](#)



OWC receives boost to Engaging Recreationists Project from Province

Through the Province's Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Grant the OWC will be receiving \$233,000 to be spent over 3 years. The funding will be used to hire 4 Seasonal Outreach Assistants to engage recreational users in Dutch Creek in conversations about watershed health, steering clear of water and avoiding sensitive areas. The project also involves restoring stream banks that have been damaged and is focused on practical solutions that will allow use within the thresholds that the watershed can sustain. The funds will also contribute to monitoring and evaluation so we can be sure our work is effective.



Shannon Frank
Executive Director

This project is important because the health of our resources is declining and it is up to all of us to pitch in and be a part of the solution. Many recreational users have a deep connection to the mountains and go there so that they can reconnect to nature but we also have to respect that these places are sensitive and have needs too. It is up to us as responsible users to avoid water and areas that are being restored so that future generations can enjoy these places too. This project will engage users so they have the information they need to make the right decisions when they are out on the landscape.

It is important that all users of our headwaters, including industry, know that our everyday actions either harm or help our watershed and it is up to us to be disciplined in how we act.

Thank you to the



OWC in the News

[Alberta Invests in natural flood and drought protection with nearly 3 million in grants](#)
November 13, Canadian Underwriter

[Oldman Watershed Film Project at the Blood Reserve - Page 8](#)
Tsinikssini - October 2015, William Singer III

[Off Road Vehicles: Recreation or Wreckreation? The Challenges of Protecting Fragile Ecosystems](#)

SACPA Presentation by Anna Garleff and Becky Cousins, November 19

[Off-Road damage a social problem, not environmental](#)
The Lethbridge Herald, November 20

Events & Activities in and around the Watershed

Waterton Lakes National Park 25th Annual Christmas Bird Count!

Date Changed to Tuesday, December 15

Enjoy an hour or two of bird watching and counting in your favourite area of the park! Share sightings with fellow enthusiasts and be a part of monitoring bird populations.

- Self-register at the Waterton Firehall on the morning of the 15th or the evening before.
- **If attending or for more information,** email dianne.pachal@pc.gc.ca or phone 403 859-5107. (Should bad weather cancel the 15th, this will enable us to reach you with an alternate date for the official count.)
- To share sightings meet 2 p.m. at Waterton Lakes Lodge or email the data sheets to Pat Lucas, Crowsnest Conservation Society, pat.lucas.alberta@gmail.com.
- If open to having a park photographer with you for part of the bird count, email dianne.pachal@pc.gc.ca.



Sorry for the short notice of the change and apologies to those who may have been coming on Saturday the 12th and are unable to come on the new date of the 15th.

In the News

Alberta Water Portal launches Alberta Water Nexus

The Alberta Water Nexus Project is a pilot to look at the trade offs for water across agriculture, energy, and land use in the Bow River Basin. Meeting all of the basin's water

needs is already challenging as Alberta experiences increasing pressure on water supplies due to population growth, economic development, and climate change. [Read more](#)

Cutthroat trout get habitat protection from federal government **Calgary Herald**

Alberta's threatened population of westslope cutthroat trout is getting additional protection from the federal government. The critical habitat order - registered by Department of Fisheries and Oceans Minister Hunter Tootoo on Nov. 20 and announced in Wednesday's issue of the Canada Gazette - prohibits the destruction of the native trout's habitat. [Read more](#)

Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society Southern Alberta and Northern Alberta chapters commissioned The Praxis Group to survey Albertans about their recreation activity and their behaviour, attitudes and values related to nature and outdoor recreation. [Click here](#) for the key findings of the survey.

Conferences/Training

Project Management Training for Sustainability Professionals - January 2016

This four-day certificate course in project management covers the front-end of the project planning processes, takes participants through a complete project definition and planning cycle, and looks at time integration, dependencies, and risk analysis. [More information.](#)

11th Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference - Feb 16-18, 2016

First Call for Posters & Presentations

Saskatoon Inn, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Theme: "Prairie - It's a Happening Place!"

[Registration](#) is now open; early bird rate until January 15.

Restoration Training Workshop will take place immediately preceding the 11th Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference on Tues. February 16 at the Saskatoon Inn in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. [More information.](#)

Call for Abstracts - BRBC Science Forum

Thursday, February 18, Mount Royal University

[More information](#)

Employment Opportunities

Cows and Fish is looking to fill a [Riparian Specialist position, based in Calgary](#) and a [Range/Riparian Specialist based in Southern Alberta](#). Click on the links for details.

Requests for Proposals and Funding Applications

2016-2017 Call for proposals for the National Wetland Conservation Fund (NWCF)

is now open. In its third year, the NWCF supports Canadians in undertaking on-the-ground activities to restore and enhance wetlands in Canada. For more information on the program and to obtain the 2016-2017 application guidelines and form, please visit [Environment Canada - Funding Programs](#).

Alberta Environment and Parks is pleased to announce that the third round of **Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program funding applications** will be accepted until January 15th in a joint program approach with the Agricultural Watershed Enhancement Program.

More details of eligibility for these grant programs are at www.wrrp.alberta.ca. For timely responses please direct any correspondence to our joint program email at GOA.Watershed@gov.ab.ca. You are also welcome to contact Monique Dietrich at monique.dietrich@gov.ab.ca if you have any questions.

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