

Keeping our Water Clean and Safe

Glenn Isaac, North Saskatchewan Riverkeeper
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Who we are:

-The North Saskatchewan Riverkeeper (NSRK) Program is a local waterbody preservation group based in Edmonton.

-We are dedicated to being a united voice of the North Saskatchewan River watershed and community from the Rocky Mountain headwaters to the forks near Prince Albert-where the North and South Saskatchewan Rivers meet.

-The NSRK is a registered charity in Canada (BN: 81873 8064 RR0001) and a licensed member of the Waterkeeper Alliance.

- Who we are:

-Waterkeeper Alliance is an international organization of over 200 grassroots waterbody protection programs headquartered in New York State. There are currently 9 Waterkeeper programs in Canada.

-The NSRK is a member of the Alberta Environmental Network Water Caucus, a group of environmental NGOs and stakeholders seeking collaborative input and recommendations for water issues in Alberta.

www.saskriverkeeper.ca

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Our vision:

A North Saskatchewan Watershed where we all have the ability to safely and enjoyably swim, drink and fish.

Two Year Plan: 2012/13:

- respond to citizen/community concerns and complaints**

- focus on education, outreach, collaboration and consultations in the Edmonton area/Capital Region and Central Alberta Lakes.

- Highlight issues and assets of the water quality in the North Saskatchewan River Watershed

“Inform, Connect, **Protect**”

www.theswimguide.org

100,000 views in Alberta



State of the Water in Alberta:

Lakes: Central and S. Alberta Lakes threatened by blue-green algae, potential for aquatic invasive species (proactive approach to date)

Rivers: mixed bag, more research required,
-quantity an issue for S. AB, quality in L. Athabasca.

Tributaries: many are in poor shape (e.g. Battle River, Sturgeon)
due to agricultural nutrients—plant and algal production

Wetlands: loss of 67% in the white area, green area has many
threatened areas.

What are the issues?

Lakes-nutrient input leading to increase in blue-green algae: 7 advisories in 2011, 17 in 2012, 36 in 2013 (human and animal health issue), surface water withdrawals

Rivers-industrial input, agricultural nutrients reducing water quality, surface water withdrawals in S. AB.

Tributaries/smaller rivers: reduced water quality, flow, existence from agricultural activity, wastewater.

Wetlands: destruction for residential and industrial development, loss of aquatic, terrestrial habitat.

Other: groundwater, science, monitoring, legislative, enforcement

What processes are in place?

- there have been a number of public and stakeholder feedback and consultation processes in the past 10 years on water quantity and quality.
- WPAC Integrated Watershed Mgmt Plans
- Regional Plans: Lower Athabasca RP, South SK RP
- AWC Project Teams: Wetland Policy, Riparian Policy, Water Allocation, CEP Plans, NPS Plan
- Water Conversations: Lakes, Fracking, Drinking Water, Water Management
- AB Energy Regulator Public Consultations
- We have been consulted, have we been heard?

What can you do?

- keep up the good work, you are here, you care
- evaluate the actual implementation to date
- ask for proactive implementation and enforcement (e.g. groundwater contamination, flooding, pipeline safety)
- ask for plans that have specifics,
- the government is the steward of our water by law, voluntary efforts by the citizenry and industry augment, not replace, this fact
- ask for leadership with 50-100 year goals, the current trend is untenable

How do we secure a clean water future?

Realise: research and mapping, baseline monitoring

Prioritise: science-based triage of most threatened and significant natural areas

(e.g. Riparian areas, “no go zones”)

Strategise: land and watershed plans with specifics and metrics, all stakeholders want certainty

Legitimise: water quality and quantity issues solved by legislative changes and legislative-backed specific plans and regulations (e.g. *Water Act* to include unallocated water conservation and science-based minimum flow, public access to the regulatory process, parks legislation).

How do we secure a clean water future?

Actualise: implement, regulate, enforce, evaluate

Synergise: today's wants with tomorrow's basic human and environmental needs. Maintain and improve current state, no more purposeful reduction in quantity or quality.

Improvise: maintaining or improving current state may allow for developing technologies to make our increased land/water use less impactful

Harmonise: We all have a role to play.

What will we be remembered for?

Thank you

**‘Unless someone
like you cares a whole awful lot,
Nothing is
going to get better. It's not.’**

Dr. Seuss, The Lorax



E-Harmony



Protect:
Maintain all that is of ecological
value in a place.

To protect/preserve/enhance/steward you
must inform and connect the public and
influence the decision-makers.