

# Alberta WaterPortal Society

## ANNUAL REPORT TO MEMBERS

Welcome to our annual report to members covering the year ending March 31, 2018. This was the Society's twelfth year in operation and our fourth full year as a registered charity. This year the Society Board and management focused on the development of new funding strategies, as well as on the completion of significant projects. In order to conserve funds, we reduced operational activities to minimal core functions and in this way were able to remain at a self-sustaining level while we sought additional funding.

### Strategy update

The Society has been working on drafting a new business plan, which will guide strategy going forward.

Our project-based funding model has continued to be successful. We delivered the second phase of the Nexus project and the Water Quality project and packaging of the News Alerts as a project for term sponsorship has been successful.

It is key to the Society's future to secure funding for ongoing operations and we have continued to seek potential new sources of support. Several potential sponsors and organizations are being approached for core funding.

The Society is also considering bringing in an additional fundraising strategy of paid membership plans. We currently have approximately 85 non-paying members who would be encouraged to become paying members once the membership plan is implemented. On top of these members, the WaterPortal's News Alerts have over 900 email subscribers who will be encouraged to join the membership program. We anticipate a 5-10% growth of members every year.

Membership incentives may include:

- A yearly donation receipt
- Receiving advanced notice of events, talks and member discounts
- Access to Premium web content: Popular items, such as Water Maps, would be locked with a paywall and only accessible to paying members
- News Alerts frequency may be greater for paying subscribers
- Access to monthly "members-only" email newsletter, featuring documents, news articles, papers, and studies chosen by the members. This feature would provide members with the opportunity to share their work with a relevant, engaged audience and remain connected with an informed science community.
- Opportunity to publish approved, relevant content in the newsletter twice a year. This would provide members with a channel to promote personal studies, reports, and project to an engaged audience of over 900 subscribers

## Operating model

The WaterPortal continues to operate using contractors to work on projects and operations, supported by the volunteer Executive Director along with some additional volunteer support. Red To Black Inc. has continued to provide the Society with excellent financial oversight and reporting capabilities and, as a result, we had another very smooth audit.

## Finances

Combined, the Nexus Phase II and What's in Your Water? Keeping it Clean! (water quality project) delivered \$195,000 to the WaterPortal. We also worked with funders to budget a small percentage of the overall project to administration and operation costs, allowing the charity to approach 100% self-sustainability.

A copy of the audited financial statements prepared by Collins Barrow has been distributed with AGM materials. Any Society member can request the statements via [info@albertawater.com](mailto:info@albertawater.com). Previous years' financial information for the Society can be found via the Canadian Revenue Agency's Charities Listings at <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-gvng/lstngs/menu-eng.html>.

## Active projects

### Alberta Water Nexus Project

[www.albertawater.com/nexus](http://www.albertawater.com/nexus)

Phase I of the Nexus project - which included the development of an interactive simulation and Sankey diagram to depict the complexity of the nexus in the Bow River Basin - ran through fiscal 2015/16. This \$75,000 project secured funding from the Alberta Real Estate Foundation, Enbridge, and Veolia North America. Phase I rapped up in May 2016 with a presentation to funders.

Phase II of the project launched in April 2017. The Alberta Real Estate Foundation funded this phase, and subsequent funding was provided via an anonymous source. To match the funding secured in 2016, we approached Alberta Innovates who matched the funding for this phase in early 2017. Total funding for this phase was \$120,000 and includes delivery of the Alberta WaterPortal News for 14 months. Phase II will wrap up in April 2018 with reports to funders.

### Resilience and Mitigation Branch Web Presence

<https://albertawater.com/climate>

In October 2015, the WaterPortal secured a year long contract to provide a web presence for the Alberta Environment and Parks Resilience and Mitigation Branch (now Water and Resilience) to enable public communication, collection of feedback and collaboration on water issues.

This contract was extended in October 2016 and the WaterPortal continued to be proud to deliver high quality research and content as part of this work with the Government of Alberta.

In January 2017, the budget for the project was paused due to internal changes and planning in the Government of Alberta. The contract resumed in April 2017 and ended October 31, 2017.

## Water Quality 2017

<https://albertawater.com/water-quality/>

This project was developed and scoped for fundraising as a direct response to the User Survey, which outlined water quality as people's key interest for water in Alberta.

In December 2016, we secured funding from the Calgary Foundation, and this was leveraged to attract funding from the Bow River Basin Council, Western Irrigation District and Royal Bank of Canada. Total funding for the Water Quality project was \$90,000.

This project was launched in April 2017. Reports to funders are being written in May and the project will be fully completed in June 2018 with the presentation at the BRBC quarterly forum. The project has included development of interactive webpage content, 4 public events with engaging educational displays developed through the project work, and online promotion. The goal has been to debunk misconceptions about water quality in Alberta and directly tackles the issue of sensationalized and false information about water quality. It also provides detailed online information on constituents in Alberta's water sources and how they get in the water. There are also specific webpages that explore activities in the province that influence water quality, and actions businesses and individuals can do to help improve the quality of the water in the Bow River Basin and beyond.

## Ongoing Services and Watershed Support

The Alberta Water News and Events Alert Service continued to deliver bi-weekly water news updates and compare and contrast news from around the globe. Subscribers increased 11% over the course of the year. Ongoing social media coverage of water news was also provided, delivering frequent activity on our social channels which contributes to more engaged audiences.

From April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018 our Facebook ([facebook.com/waterportal](https://facebook.com/waterportal)) audience increased 35%. The Twitter (@waterportal) audience also increased organically with growth of approximately 100% over the past year.

The Elbow River Watershed Partnership continued its ongoing commitment of \$361 per month for website hosting and content support.

The Nose Creek Watershed Partnership requested support in maintaining the security on their website and the WaterPortal signed a contract to provide security for a small monthly fee, in addition to start-up work and uploading work upon request.

## Looking ahead

Based on the success of the projects this year, we anticipate being able to gain funding support for future Nexus project work and Water Quality project work. We are excited about a new brochure developed as an initiative of the Albert Real Estate Foundation which will be useful in getting out word on the Society's work out to more potential users and funders.

We also hope to leverage the volunteers who supported the WaterPortal through the public events for the Water Quality project and participate in other public events hosted by other organizations. For Fiscal 2017/18 we look forward to further developing new and existing relationships with partners and funder organizations.

This year our primary goal is to secure funding from a forward-thinking individual or organization to allow us to continue growing and increasing the satisfaction of our user base, as we continue to provide timely and necessary water education to Albertans.

### **Acknowledgements**

Thank you once again to our dedicated Board members, Graeme Bate, Greta Raymond, Darlene Halwas, John Van Ham, Grant Bishop and Terry Mah for their invaluable service.

I would also like express my sincere gratitude to the funders, donors, in-kind stakeholders and project advisors who believe in the Society's vision. On behalf of the Board we are also grateful to everyone who has developed and managed the Society's projects and operations over the year, with special credit going to Brie Nelson, Victoria Pleavin, Megan Van Ham and Courtney Clarkson. And last but not least, our gratitude to Red To Black and to Joe Lougheed for their excellent work and support of the Society cannot be overstated.

Thank you all!



Dr. P. Kim Sturgess  
Executive Director