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The AWC's newsletter will arrive at your inbox three times per year, shortly after each board meeting, providing a quick update for board members and other interested stakeholders. Comments and suggestions are welcome, so please tell us what you think. Email your feedback to [info@awc-casa.ca](mailto:info@awc-casa.ca). Follow us on Twitter and LinkedIn, like us on Facebook, and subscribe to our YouTube channel! We look forward to hearing from you!

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# **The Waterfall**



## **Director Profile: Roxane Bretzlaff, Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils**

Roxane Bretzlaff is an environmental coordinator for Canadian Natural and is the representative for the Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils (WPAC)

sector on the Alberta Water Council (AWC) board.

Growing up on a farm meant that both work and play were always outside the house. She would watch hawks, spend time playing in creeks, and vacations were trips to the lake to go fishing. Her love of nature and being outdoors would eventually start her career as an environmental consultant for 10 years and then with Canadian Natural.

In 2004 Roxane moved to Bonnyville and became involved with the Lakeland Industry and Community Association (LICA), where she stepped into the industry sector seat. In 2007, the Beaver River Watershed Alliance (BRWA) became the designated WPAC that operated as an independent standing committee under LICA. Then in 2017, LICA, the BRWA, and the LICA Airshed were reconstructed and aligned under a single board. Roxane currently holds the one Oil and Gas Sector seat on the new board. It is a seat she is well suited for, given her history with LICA, BRWA, and her knowledge of WPAC business and projects. "I enjoy working for the Oil and Gas Sector. Working directly with industry puts me in a position to influence change."

The WPAC plays a key roll in the education and engagement of communities on Alberta's *Water for Life* strategy. This is the same strategy the AWC was born out of, making the WPAC seat a valued member of the AWC board.

Roxane's experience with the BRWA and LICA made her a natural fit for this seat. "I was approached by the program manager of the Beaver River Watershed Alliance to represent the WPAC sector on the AWC board. I had been involved with the BRWA and LICA in various capacities since 2004 and he felt that my experience would be a good fit for the AWC position."

When asked why it was important for the WPAC to be involved with the AWC, Roxane answered: "As a WPAC you are focused on your specific area of influence, the AWC has helped me understand how WPAC's are part of the big picture." Problems and issues that need to be addressed may often appear to have a simple solution. The solution can often become more complex when you start to consider how other sectors may be impacted by the decision.

Participation with the AWC provides networks and contacts to help gather different perspectives for solutions and can help to bridge the gap between sectors. "I believe everyone can make a difference when we work together. The AWC is where multiple sectors can work together to make good decisions, create good products, and provide good policy recommendations."

To participants new to the AWC process, Roxane suggests you jump with both feet and be prepared for a big commitment. "Don't be intimidated, it's a lot of work but you will gain an in-depth understanding of the project and an appreciation for the contribution you made to the work that was done."

The consensus process is the pinnacle of decision making, but it can also be a contentious and difficult process when addressing certain topics and issues. To achieve success, the right players must be involved. Stronger voices can sway a decision, and those who are reluctant to speak up may not be willing to voice their concerns and offer alternative suggestions. A common goal and the ability to negotiate are important to the success of the consensus process.

The Water Conservation, Efficiency, and Productivity project is one example of the successes of the AWC and its process, but Roxane points out that there is something just as important behind the projects. "What the AWC should be the most proud of is their staff and the culture they have developed. The managers are strong leaders that have created a safe place where all voices are heard and respected. Meetings are professional and discussions are well facilitated ensuring that everyone is engaged and able to contribute. Because your participation is valued committee members and/or board members are fully engaged, they come to meetings prepared and contribute to discussions. This professional and respectful culture happens holistically because of strong leadership."

Alberta has sound policies, innovative technologies, and good management practices that have created a robust water management platform that Albertans can be proud of. In the future, Roxane hopes to see Alberta become a louder, global voice to help educate people about the work being done to maintain and manage watersheds, and generate more good news stories.

As the world of watershed management changes, the AWC is well-positioned to help manage that change for all Albertans. "The benefit of consensus decisions is being able to present a unified voice from all sectors at the AWC table. No matter which process is used if we have aligned vision, mission and goals we will make good decisions."

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# The Confluence



## **Protecting Sources of Drinking Water in Alberta**

Phil Boehme (Alberta Environment and Parks) and Mike Christenson (Alberta Lake Management Society) provided an update on the work of the project team at the November 8 board meeting.

The team has completed the Protecting Sources of Drinking Water in Alberta: Guide to Source Water Protection Planning, and a companion report with information and analysis from the various pieces of completed work, as well as a communications plan. Originally approved by the board in March of 2018, the purpose of the project was to document existing source water protection approaches and provide guidance for protecting the public, private, and individual sources of drinking water in Alberta.

With the completion of the guide, as well as supporting documents, the board voted to approve the final documents and to disband the project team.

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## **Building Resiliency to Multi-Year Drought**

An update on the work being completed by the team was provided at the board meeting by co-chair Margo Jarvis-Redelback with the Irrigation Sector.

The Building Resiliency to Multi-Year Drought Project was originally approved by the board in March of 2018. Upon completion, the project will produce a guide and workshop materials to assist Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils (WPAC) to engage with municipalities and communities within their watershed. The guide will assist in the planning, mitigation, response, and recovery from multi-year droughts.

A draft of the guide is complete, and materials for a pilot workshop have been developed. The pilot workshop is set to be held on December 10, 2019, in the Battle River Watershed. Input from the workshop will be used to revise the guide, and the board is expecting a complete version to be presented at the June 2020 board meeting.

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## ***Water for Life* Implementation Review Committee**

Jason Unger from the Environmental Law Center provided an update on the status of the committee at the November board meeting. The *Water For Life* Review Committee reconvened in the Spring of 2019 and will cover a period from the beginning of 2016 until the end of 2019. One of Alberta Water Councils primary tasks is to steward the implementation of the *Water for Life* strategy, which it achieves through this committee. The review is conducted in a spirit of adaptive management where an evaluation of progress highlights the strengths and weaknesses and recommends areas where additional focus would enable *Water for Life* to advance more effectively.

The committee is also tasked with identifying and developing metrics for advancing Water for Life goals, identifying gaps in the implementation of the *Water for Life* strategy, and prioritizing actions and identifying roles and responsibilities for achieving the outcomes of Water for Life.

Since the previous update in June, preliminary findings of the sector survey have been circulated to members, round table discussions with the Government of Alberta were held in September, and the team has met to discuss hiring a consultant to help develop performance measures.

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## **Improving Resiliency to Drought in Alberta Through a Simulation**

The board approved the formation of a working group to scope terms of reference in June 2019. Nine members assembled to form the working group in September, and have since held two meetings, with the final meeting to be held on December 16.

The simulation proposes is to build on current work being conducted by the AWC, the Government of Alberta, and the Miistakis Institute. The team will develop drought management materials to facilitate a simulation exercise that will allow communities to test proposed drought management structures, communication channels, tools, and resources.

The board is expecting the working group to present the terms of reference at the February 2020 board meeting.

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## **Water Pipes**

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## **Alberta Water Council 15 Year Anniversary!**

2019 marked the 15 year anniversary of the AWC. Staff, directors, key partners, as well as past members of all three, gathered to celebrate the occasion at the Edmonton Federal Building. Guests enjoyed hors d'oeuvres, a host bar, and the opportunity to catch up with their colleagues among the AWC.

Deputy Minister Bev Yee presented a message to the AWC from The Honourable Jason Nixon, Minister of the Environment, and AWC Vice Presidents Keith Murray and Jay White recapped 15 years of success stories. AWC Vice President Tanya Thorne recognized retiring board members Bradley Peter, Carolyn Campbell, Cheryl Fujikawa, and Rick Blackwood.

The AWC would like to thank the Alberta Forest Products Association and Aquality for sponsoring the evening.

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### Upcoming 2020 Meetings and Events

- Tuesday, February 25 in Calgary
- Wednesday, June 17 in Edmonton (AGM)
- Wednesday, November 4 in Calgary (Evening Event)
- Thursday, November 5 in Calgary

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