



GOVERNANCE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT

Title Oldman Watershed Council Report

Meeting Date December 17, 2024

Submitted By Councillor Crowson, Chair - Governance Standing Policy Committee

Recommendation from Governance Standing Policy Committee:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT that City Council:

1. Accept the report for information; and
2. Continue to support and actively participate in partnership with the other primary stakeholders to benefit our watershed through the work of the Oldman Watershed Council.

Vote:

In Favour: 3-0 (Unanimous)

Public Speakers at the Meeting: None

Public Submissions: None

Submitted By Doug Kaupp, Special Project Manager

Summary

The Oldman Watershed Council achievement highlights summarized in OWC Achievements and Impact for Lethbridge 2023-2024 (attached) include:

- Restoring Natural Infrastructure to Boost Drought Resilience
- Supporting Municipal Drought Response
- Pesticide and Water Quality Monitoring
- Youth Engagement
- Assessing our Economic Impact
- Boards and Committees
- Communications and Community Engagement

Recommendation(s)

That the Governance Standing Policy Committee recommends that Council:

3. Accept the report for information; and
4. Continue to support and actively participate in partnership with the other primary stakeholders to benefit our watershed through the work of the Oldman Watershed Council.

Financial

The City of Lethbridge provides annual support to the Oldman Watershed Council of \$52,209 is included within the approved Water utility operating budget. All municipalities within the watershed are requested to contribute \$0.49 per resident. Irrigation Districts contribute on a per irrigated acre basis. A summary of donors and funders (p8), as well as in-kind contributions (p9) can be found in the OWC 2023-2024 Annual Report.

Background and Prior Decisions

In 2003, the Alberta Water for Life Strategy established three partnerships (Alberta Water Council, Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils, and local stewardship groups) as mechanisms to achieve goals. The Oldman Watershed Council was formed in 2004 through a merger of the Oldman River Basin Water Quality Initiative and the Oldman River Basin Advisory Committee. Today, the Oldman Watershed Council is one of eleven Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils (WPACs) that cover the entire province.

The City of Lethbridge appoints one director to the OWC board as specified in the society bylaws. Councillor Barbara Lacey was appointed to the founding board in 2004 and served as board chair until 2009. Subsequent appointments were Jeff Carlson from 2009 to 2011, and Jeff Coffman 2011-2013. Following a 2013 decision by City Council to appoint a member of administration to the OWC board, rather than an elected official, Doug Kaupp was appointed to the OWC board and has been reappointed each year since.

Engagement

Descriptions of the Oldman Watershed Council's extensive and ongoing engagement of youth, the public, First Nations, municipalities, and industry is summarized in the OWC Achievements and Impact for Lethbridge 2023-2024 (attached) and the OWC 2023-2024 Annual Report (link).

Recommendation and Option(s) Analysis

The Oldman watershed is a large diverse land and water system, covering 23,000 square kilometres in southwestern Alberta and 2,100 km² in Montana. It extends eastward from the forested slopes of the Rocky Mountains, through rangelands in the foothills, dryland and irrigated plains, to the prairie grasslands. For twenty years, active participation in the success of Oldman Watershed Council has been the cornerstone to protecting the Oldman River as the source of our community water supply.

It is recommended that the City of Lethbridge continue to support and actively participate in partnership with the other primary stakeholders to benefit of our watershed through the work of the Oldman Watershed Council:

- as a diverse and inclusive forum for sharing information and spurring collective action.
- providing watershed information and local knowledge that governments need to make informed decisions.
- and to give all residents of the watershed opportunities to learn about their watershed and understand how to protect it.

Attachment(s)

1. OWC Achievements and Impact for Lethbridge 2023-2024

Link(s)

1. [Oldman Watershed Council](#)
2. [OWC 2023-2024 Annual Report](#)

Approvals

Department Director: Joel Sanchez

City Manager: Lloyd Brierley