

ANNUAL REPORT

RIVERWATCH
INSTITUTE
OF ALBERTA 2020



ACCEPTING THE CALGARY AWARD FROM MAYOR NENSHI
ON BEHALF OF CREEKWATCH VOLUNTEERS, TECHNICIANS, FUNDERS,
PARTNERS, DIRECTORS AND STAFF.
PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT: WADE SCHULER, HSBC;
REED FROKLAGE,
RIVERWATCH INSTITUTE OF ALBERTA;
AND MAYOR NAHEED NENSHI, CITY OF CALGARY.

RiverWatch Institute of Alberta
Suite 433, 17008 – 90 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5T 1L6

www.riverwatch.ca

PANDEMIC PAUSE

This report highlights the amazing programs, accomplishments and champions behind our work at the RiverWatch Institute of Alberta. Following on the heels of several back-to-back record-breaking years, the Covid-19 pandemic brought RiverWatch operations to a full and abrupt stop on March 15th, but then a gradual light at the end-of-the-tunnel developed for relaunching programs in 2021. These unprecedented times created a pause that was leveraged in a relaunch strategy to refocus, rebrand, reboot and re-equip for 2021. Receiving the Calgary Award for Environmental Achievement was the singular highlight in the midst of tough times.

26TH OPERATIONAL YEAR

Following on a year of more than 10,000 School Afloat students and a thousand Summer EcoFloat participants, the 2020 pandemic year was understandably characterized by no on-water programs and no guide training. The one bright note was the relaunch of CreekWatch Citizen Science and Stewardship Programs involving four previously trained and already organized community groups backstopped by support from former guide technicians, all operating under new Covid-19 Protocols and Best Practices. Accomplishing something was a significant win when so many public programs were shuttered by the pandemic.

WHAT IS RIVERWATCH?

The multiple award-winning RiverWatch Institute of Alberta is a registered Canadian Charity delivering four of Canada's best watershed education programs in three cities – the namesake RiverWatch School Afloat Program; CreekWatch Citizen Science and Stewardship; River Ambassador Summer Outreach and EcoFloats; and Youth Climate Leadership Conferences.

In a good operational year, a focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) allows all program participants to explore their local waterway, with many having the opportunity to join a raft float trip. River rafting adventures take everyone into the natural world to experience an interesting mix of ecology, wildlife, history, geology, engineering, science, data collection and stewardship. Our programs showcase rivers and creeks like nothing participants have ever seen before and create an experience they'll never forget!!

Pause

Noun

1: a temporary stop

2: temporary inaction especially as caused by uncertainty

PURPOSE

RiverWatch delivers science education, environmental awareness and outdoor adventures on and along Alberta's rivers and creeks.

MISSION

Through the use of river float trips, stewardship activities, portable water quality labs and other opportunities, program participants learn the science and importance of Alberta waterways.

VISION

By becoming more watershed knowledgeable, Albertans of all walks of life can better understand, enjoy and care for a sustainable environment.



SAIT INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT STUDENTS PRACTICING WATER QUALITY TESTING UNDER COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The RiverWatch Board of Directors operated with nine Shareholder/Directors holding quarterly meetings in Red Deer. Kyle Fawcett had the role of Chairman for a second year without any changes to Board membership. Four directors hailed from Edmonton; four from Calgary; and one from Red Deer. One in-person meeting was held Feb 29th, but after that, all meetings were via video conference. Director's time, expertise, highway driving and video meetings were much appreciated.

Kyle Fawcett, Chairman
 Mike Tyler, Vice Chairman
 Chris O'Brien, Past Chairman
 Joanne Steinmann, Secretary
 Al Borkent, Treasurer
 Kathy Barnhart, Director
 Geoff Heise, Director
 Chris Bjornson, Director
 Cal Kullman, Director

STAFFING

All RiverWatch Institute programs operate out of Edmonton and Calgary under the management of three full-time staff augmented in good years by seasonal and part-time river guides.

- Strategic guidance and financial oversight is provided by a nine-member Board of Directors meeting quarterly.
- The fulltime Management Team consisted of Executive Director Cal Kullman, Business Manager Andrea Myers and Citizen Science Coordinator Reed Froklage.
- CreekWatch Citizen Science employed four part-time guides.



ROUNDTABLE BOARD MEETING VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE NOV 21, 2020

CONTRACTED SERVICES

RiverWatch is a small organization undertaking a big operation, and the external contracted services we required included:

- Brickbubble Mike Fillinger provided graphic design for logos, decals and publications.
- Web3 and Chihiro Okamoto handled website services.
- Speedpro undertook creation of our new bus decals.
- Catalyst LLP provided our financial review and year-end financial services.

SAFETY

Safety is top priority for everyone involved in RiverWatch programs, and this year included pandemic public health guidelines for masks, hand-washing and physical distancing. CreekWatch volunteers and RiverWatch guides were made aware of protocols, best practices and an acknowledgement of risk.



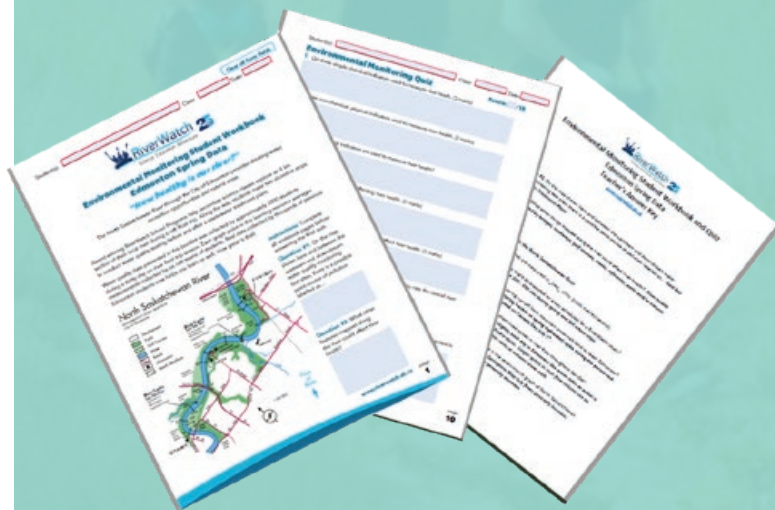
CORPORATE VOLUNTEER PLANTING EVENT UTILIZING PHYSICAL DISTANCING

SCHOOL AFLOAT SCIENCE PROGRAM

School Afloat Programs did not operate during pandemic-related school closures March-June, nor during the related fieldtrip restrictions September-December. As a helpful stop-gap resource, a new online Student Water Quality Monitoring Workbook, Quiz and Answer Key was created for Edmonton and Calgary river data for distribution to all teachers who attended 2019 programs. The 12-page documents were in writeable PDF format suitable for student assignments.

STEM EDUCATION

STEM is at the heart of RiverWatch School Programs, and the importance of this focus was acknowledged with receiving the 2017 NSERC National Award for Science Promotion. STEM is a curriculum-based concept of educating K-12 students in four specific disciplines (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) using an interdisciplinary and applied approach.



THREE NEW ONLINE RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

SCHOOL AFLOAT PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS



0 hours of
environmental science
(51,735 in 2019)



0 km of river travel
(6,810 km in 2019)



0 participating schools
(149 in 2019)



10
current supporters
(10 in 2019)



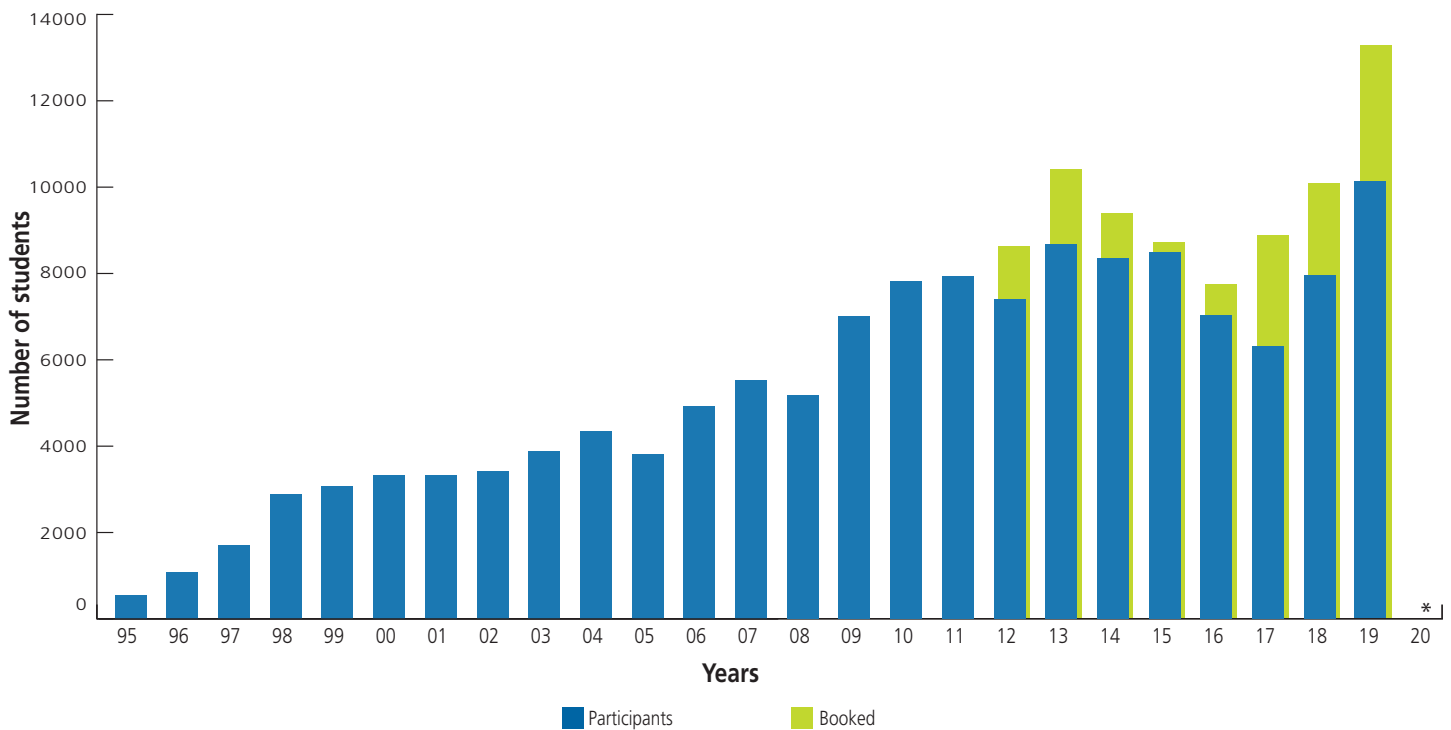
0
school participants
(10,347 in 2019)



0
raft trips
(681 in 2019)



13
current funders
(20 in 2019)



*No on-river school programs were possible in 2020

TEACHER FEEDBACK

Teachers were appreciative of the new RiverWatch Student Water Quality Monitoring Workbook and Answer Key provided for use during mandatory stay-at-home online learning March-June.

- Thank-you so much! This will help tremendously with our Bio 20 Field Trip on-line! See you next year! [Edmonton Teacher](#)
- This is a remarkable resource! Thank you and your staff for developing and sharing it. We look forward to resuming our trips when we come out the other side of this pandemic. Please keep healthy and safe. [Edmonton Teacher](#)
- These are incredible resources. I was really looking forward to doing this field trip again with my grade 9 students. Thank you. [Edmonton Teacher](#)
- Thanks! Attempting to teach the related unit next on-line, so these may be some good resources! [Drayton Valley Teacher](#)
- Thank you so much! This will be very helpful as we come up with materials to send to students. I hope to see you guys next year! [Calgary Teacher](#)
- Thank you for these! I can use them for my science 9 Environmental Chem unit...you just saved me hours of time creating something similar, so I really, really appreciate your support! [Calgary Teacher](#)
- Fantastic! Thanks for sharing. Hope you and your family are keeping safe and healthy. [Calgary Teacher](#)

CREEKWATCH CITIZEN SCIENCE AND STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

CreekWatch Citizen Science allows corporate and community adult volunteers to answer the question “*How healthy are our local stormwater creeks?*” Through CreekWatch, community and corporate adult volunteers become more knowledgeable and engaged concerning the health of their local creeks. We don’t tell volunteers how healthy their creek is – instead, we provide them with the support and tools to research and discover answers on their own. Notable accomplishments this year included:

- This 6th year of CreekWatch community-based environmental monitoring was the only RiverWatch program able to relaunch and operate under pandemic constraints.
- For the first time, funding made it possible to employ part-time technicians to supplement data collection in both Edmonton and Calgary.
- Operations were made possible by volunteers, technicians, our anchor funder HSBC, City of Calgary and additional support from Dream Development, Park Paving and Brookfield Development.
- For the sixth time, CreekWatch published year-end-reports on World Water Day (March 22) to showcase data collected for each individual creek.
- CreekWatch received the Calgary Award for Environmental Achievement

CREEKWATCH BY-THE-NUMBERS



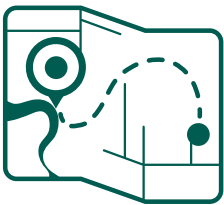
3,586

water quality data points
(3,053 in 2019)



296

hours spent sampling
(317 in 2019)



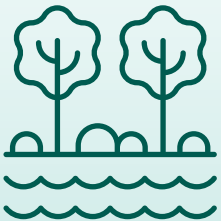
439

site visits
(308 in 2019)



37

active volunteers
(71 in 2019)



14

creeks across Alberta
(15 in 2019)

GUIDE/TECHNICIAN FEEDBACK

My season with CreekWatch was sudden and amazing! I was really glad to hear that you needed a hand. It was the perfect part time job while going to school. It was a really great way for me to get outside and enjoy the creeks in Edmonton! I would definitely return! Thanks for an awesome few months. **Rating 5/5**

The season was a little different to usual for obvious reasons! I really enjoyed being involved with testing the different creeks in Edmonton and would definitely look to be involved again in the future. **Rating 4.5/5**

This season was great, I would have loved to have been able to finish it out completely but life had other plans. Definitely enjoyed checking out new corners of the watershed! **Rating 4/5**

My season with CreekWatch was a great experience. There were many times that the public would come up and be interested in what we were doing so I would talk to them for a little while about the program and water quality. I really enjoyed that it was flexible and I could work sampling in around my other job. Between the other staff members and Reed I felt I had a lot of support in the role and was able to ask questions when they came up. **Rating 5/5**

An awesome time traveling all across the city, to do hands-on science while being outside in cool locations. Getting to feel like you're a part of important environmental monitoring and citizen science programs that are part of a bigger overall goal to monitor our waterways. Thanks again for giving me this opportunity, I had a lot of fun! **Rating 4/5**



FEEDBACK ...CALGARY AWARD FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT

"We are proud to have you join this year's group of outstanding Calgary Awards recipients that make our city a great place to live. I hope you and your staff will take pride in knowing that your organization has been chosen as a leader and a role model for our community. On behalf of City Council and the citizens of Calgary, I thank you for enhancing the quality of life for Calgarians and for being an inspiration to our city."

Calgary Mayor, Mayor Naheed Nenshi

Congratulations! Well deserved!!

Kim Hallwood, Head of Corporate Sustainability, HSBC Bank Canada

Just wanted to pass along a congrats on the Calgary Award for Environmental Achievement.

Wade Schuler, Head of Commercial & Corporate Banking, Prairies, HSBC Bank Canada

Congratulations on another award! It's great that the program continues to receive the recognition that it deserves, especially during these times.

Kate Minson, HSBC

Wonderful news – congratulations!

Alice Cohen, Associate Professor, Earth & Environmental Science, Acadia University

Congratulation on the nomination!
A richly deserved recognition of Riverwatch's efforts. A little good news coming out is welcome indeed. I am sure much more to follow.
Mike Murray, BRBC

Wow.... congratulations! Fairly certain your work and advocacy will finish in the top tier if not the top! Will be waiting and watching June 15th!

Janice Deere, Confederation Creek Volunteer Group

Congrats on the nomination!

Lisa Tough, Waskasoo Volunteer Crew

That's so exciting and well deserved!

Simone Lee, Calgary River Valleys

Congratulations on the nomination! So proud to be able to support your work.

Sandy Davis, City of Calgary

Yeah!!!! Congratulations. That is so exciting! (Though, I am not surprised) WELL DESERVED. A fantastic program. You should be so proud!

Jaclyn Angotti, Education Director, CPAWS Southern Alberta

That's great! Congratulations! Very well deserved.

Lesley Peterson, Trout Unlimited Canada

Well deserved!

Greg Shyba, Ann and Sandy Cross Conservation Area

Congratulations & best wishes!

Dr. David Swann, Priddis Volunteer Group

Congrats. CreekWatch/RiverWatch is going to need a trophy case soon!

Mike Christensen, EPCOR

Congratulations! That is a wonderful accomplishment for CreekWatch.

Cecilia Chung, AEP

Congratulations! Fingers crossed!

Darren Finney, Bonnybrook Plant D, City of Calgary

That's so awesome. Congrats again! nSo what does Edmonton need to do to step up and get nominated next year?

Giang Nguyen, P.Eng., General Manager, Edmonton Land, Dream Development

Congratulations! This is a well-deserved recognition for the impact your team has on Calgary's rivers and environment. Big (distanced) high fives to all of RiverWatch!

Julie Guimond, MSc. Urban Forestry Lead, Calgary Parks, City of Calgary

Congratulations! A very well-deserved award for all the great work done by you and the CreekWatch program.

Eric Camm, MSc, P. Biol. Senior Watershed Biologist, Water Quality Services, City of Calgary Water Resources

Congratulations, very well deserved. You guys have such a great organization and do so much with so little. Keep up the good work!

Rick Robinson, Ph.D., Acting Leader – Regulatory Affairs and Compliance, Water Quality Services, Water Resources, City of Calgary

Congratulations to everyone involved in Creekwatch!

Katie Bakken, Program Coordinator, Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society

Fantastic news! Congratulations all round!

Darren Finney, P.Eng., Leader BB Plant D Expansion, Water Resources - Infrastructure Delivery

Congratulations on this award – it is very much deserved!

I have tremendous respect and appreciation for both the CreekWatch and RiverWatch programs.

Kathryn Hull, B.Sc., M.E.Des. P.Biol., Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society (Cows and Fish)

Way to go! Congrats!

Mike Kelly, Chairman, Bow River Basin Council

Fantastic work! Great for RiverWatch, too!!

Mac Hickley, President, Alberta Professional Planners Institute

Great Job. Keep up the great work!

Ross Bulat, Manager, Environmental Monitoring and Compliance, EPCOR

Councillor Shane Keating thanks you for bringing this to our attention ahead of the Calgary Awards announcement. He asked that I share a big 'Congratulations' to Creek Watch AND River Watch for all the work you continue to do.

Shannon Martel, Executive Assistant for Councillor Shane Keating, Ward 12

Thank you for the email and congratulations on the receipt of the Calgary Award for Environmental Achievement – well done. I have been aware of your teams important efforts since 2018 when I served as a judge on the Alberta Emerald Awards Foundation. The Office of the Chief Scientist recognizes the value in citizen science and that the benefits not only include direct contributions to science, but also help to build scientific literacy, and improve civic engagement. Congratulations again.

Garry, Chief Scientist – Interim, Office of the Chief Scientist, Environment and Parks, Government of Alberta

Congratulations to You and all the CreekWatch and RiverWatch People on recognition of their vital work.

Press on!

Daryl Wylie, Confederation Creek Volunteer Group

Congratulations! I know it takes a lot of hard work and coordination from organizing funding to volunteer management and everything in between. Great to see the program being recognized, keep up the great work!

Elliot Lindsay, Project Biologist, Trout Unlimited Canada



RIVER AMBASSADOR SUMMER OUTREACH AND ECOFLOAT PROGRAM

The fourth year of River Ambassador Summer Outreach was not possible during pandemic constraints. In previous years, public outreach was a helpful presence in 30 urban parks in three cities, engaging 6,000 citizens in conversations to better understand, appreciate and experience their urban natural areas and rivers. Eco-Float Trips introduce young and old to three-hour river adventures that make our cities such great places to live.

ECOFLOATS BY THE NUMBERS

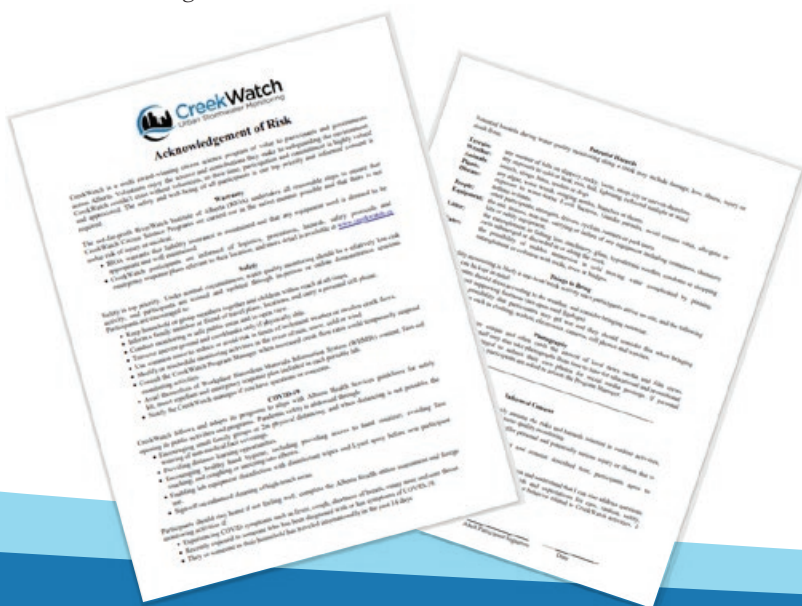
| Summer Adventure EcoFloats | 2020 | 2019 |
|----------------------------|------|------|
| Participants | 0 | 1122 |
| Rafts | 0 | 85 |
| Days | 0 | 21 |

SPECIAL PROJECTS

RiverWatch undertook five special projects in preparation for relaunching programs in 2021:

- New CreekWatch Covid-19 Protocols and Best Practices
- RiverWatch logo redesign
- RiverWatch website redesign
- RiverWatch bus refurbishing
- Financial review

A new Acknowledgment of Risk Form helped CreekWatch volunteers get back into the field

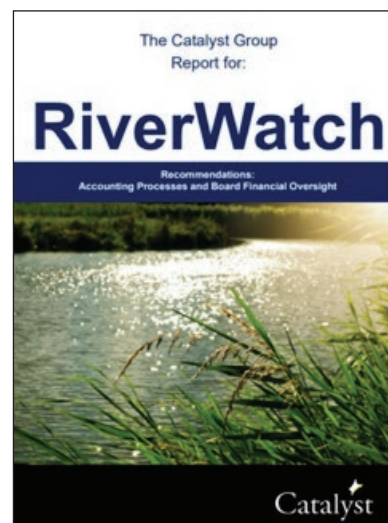


Science. Education. Adventure.

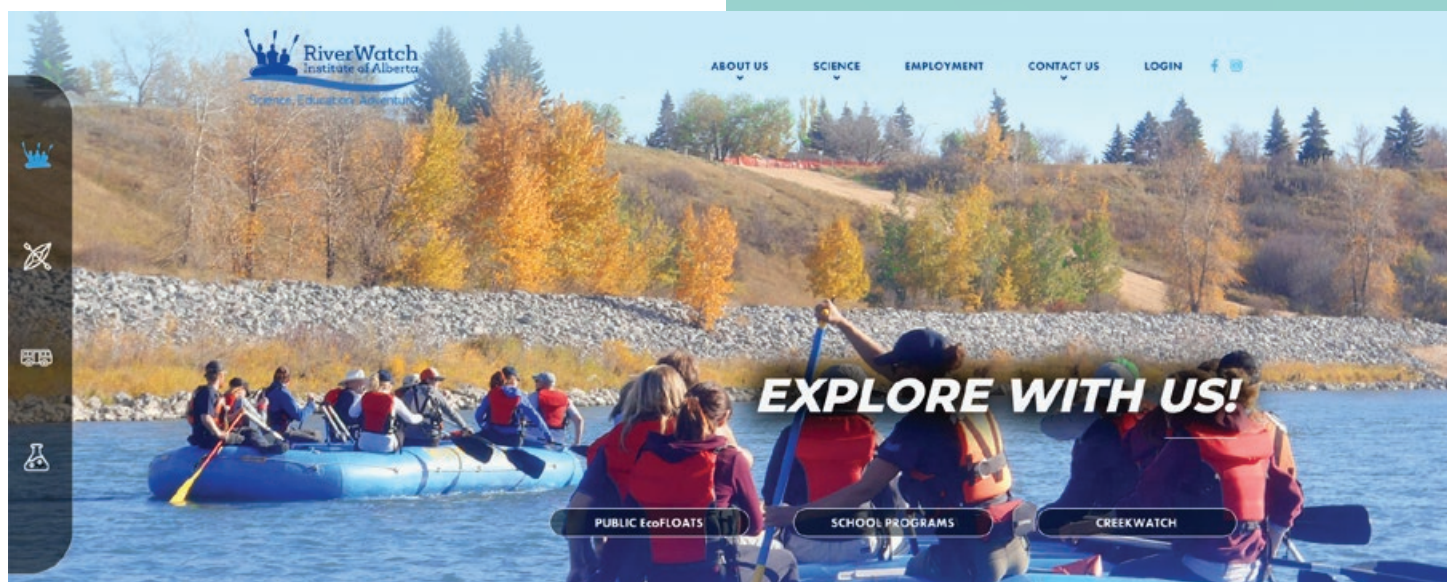
A revised RiverWatch logo emphasized one organization with three programs



Our equipment buses underwent repairs and painting in preparation for new decals



A contracted financial review suggested full utilization of all QuickBooks functions



A NEW RIVERWATCH HOMEPAGE FRONTED A CLEAN, CRISP LOOK AND NEW CALL-TO-ACTION

NEW PANDEMIC RELAUNCH STRATEGY

The Board of Directors Q4 Meeting Sept 26th considered and approved a RiverWatch Relaunch Strategy aimed at this year's preparations towards operations with as many boats and programs as safely possible in 2021.

OPPORTUNE TIMING

RiverWatch Institute of Alberta (RWIA) will undertake a Relaunch Strategy 2021 that capitalizes upon:

- a.) the 2020 pandemic year and program hiatus
- b.) anticipated recruitment of a new executive leadership
- c.) new logo, website, bus refurbishment and online resource projects
- d.) new Covid-19 protocols and best practices
- e.) deferred-to-next-year and new funder support

GOAL

Our 2021 strategic goal is to have as many boats and participants back-on-the-water as possible to maintain:

- a.) presence with funders, public, schools and wastewater treatment plants
- b.) corporate culture with overall values, knowledge and operating procedures
- c.) capacity with functioning, fully-maintained equipment
- d.) expertise residing in a board, management team and guides
- e.) service to as many former and new clientele as possible

FUND DEVELOPMENT

A bright light in the 2020 pandemic year was the continued support by our funders during tough times. No funder discontinued their support despite the scarcity of program participants. Some funders were fully behind a pivot to preparing for better times in 2021, and others offered to defer their school support to the next possible on-river season. RiverWatch has such amazing partners!

THE BUS MOCK-UP LOOKS GREAT! CAN'T WAIT TO SEE IT IN PERSON. HAPPY TO HELP MAKE THIS PROJECT POSSIBLE.

KERI SCOBIE
P&GA MANAGER, STRATHCONA REFINERY
PUBLIC AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS, IMPERIAL

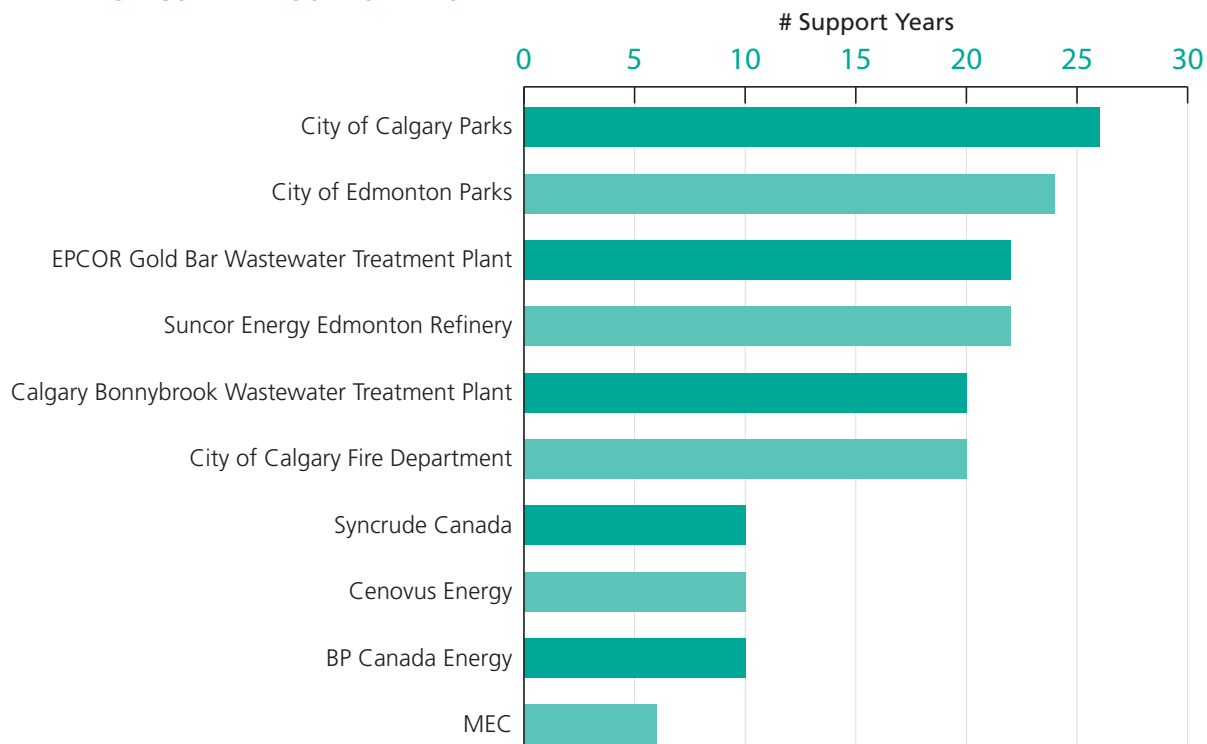
THE BUS LOOKS GREAT AND WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO HAVE OUR LOGO ON IT.

ADRIANNE LOVRIC
GEOGRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS
DOW CANADA

RIVERWATCH CURRENT FUNDERS



RIVERWATCH CURRENT SUPPORTERS



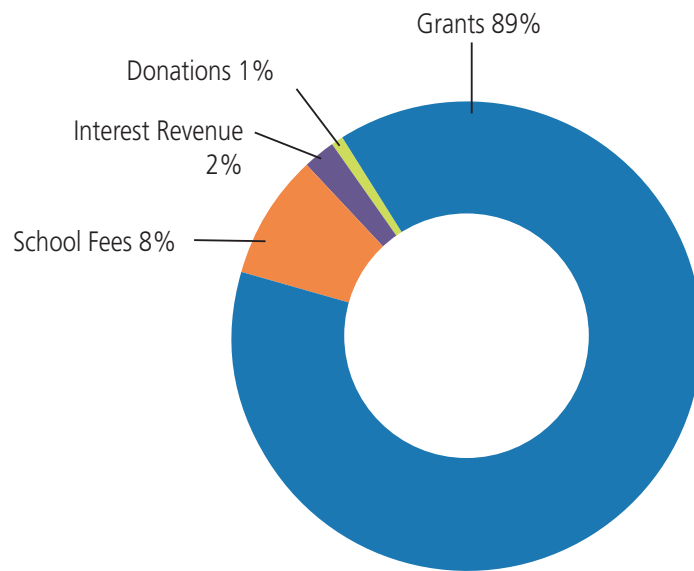
FINANCES

Overall, RiverWatch revenues (\$315,229) and expenses (\$395,193) were lower this pandemic year. Grants and school fee revenues decreased and the year finished at a loss.

| FINANCES | 2020 | 2019 | % DIFF |
|----------------|---------|---------|--------|
| Total Revenue | 315,229 | 858,857 | 37% |
| Grants | 279,549 | 465,286 | 60% |
| School Fees | 26,542 | 379,798 | 7% |
| Total Expenses | 395,193 | 809,847 | 49% |
| Net Income | -79,664 | 49,000 | -163% |

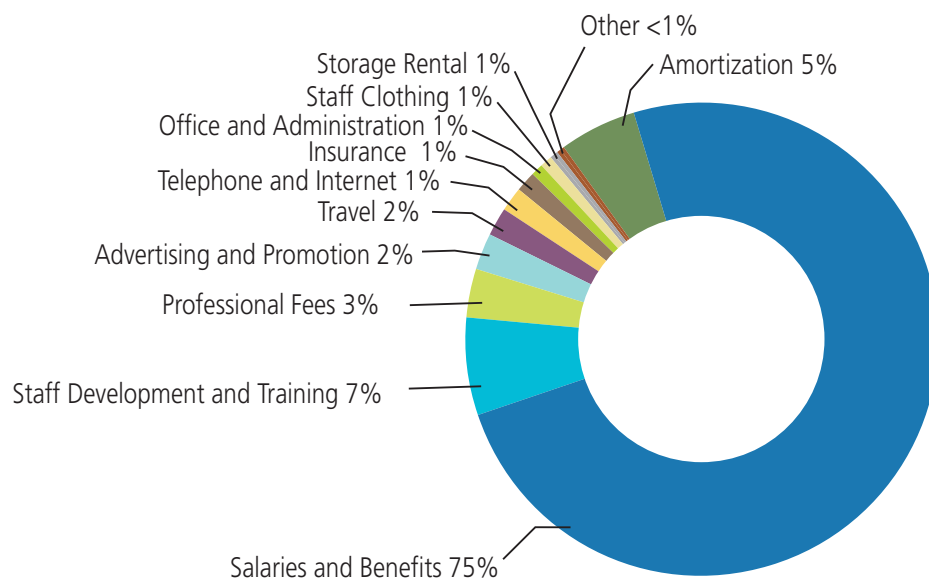
REVENUE

RiverWatch lost all school fee revenue this pandemic year, and instead relied on Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) and Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) to replace some of the loss.



EXPENDITURES

Salaries and wages continue to be the largest expenditures, especially in a year with minimal program operation.



THANK YOU, CURRENT FUNDERS!

In the twenty-six years that RiverWatch has operated in Alberta, more than 150,000 participants have had a RiverWatch education, opening eyes and minds to the vital importance of rivers and watersheds. Our program participants are better equipped as citizens to be aware of watershed issues, stewardship opportunities and career pathways. We accomplish all this with the generosity of our funders and supporters. Staff and Directors extend a big thank you to:



PROVIDING MORE



PURPOSE

RiverWatch delivers science education, environmental awareness and outdoor adventures on and along Alberta's rivers and creeks.

MISSION

Through the use of river float trips, stewardship activities, portable water quality labs and other opportunities, program participants learn the science and importance of Alberta waterways.

VISION

By becoming more watershed knowledgeable, Albertans of all walks of life will better understand, enjoy and care for a sustainable environment!

