



PRAIRIE WATER
GLOBAL WATER FUTURES



2020 ANNUAL PARTNERS MEETING

ON JANUARY 23RD, 2020, THE PRAIRIE WATER PROJECT HOSTED THEIR THIRD ANNUAL PARTNERS MEETING IN SASKATOON.

Over 80 researchers and partners engaged on the project's progress thus far and discussed water in the prairies.

The meeting began with an opening blessing by Elder Roland Duquette, who provided guidance on the significance of water and its role in connecting people. Attendees were then re-oriented to the Global Water Futures programme and the objectives of the Prairie Water project, which were addressed by Drs. John Pomeroy and Colin Whitfield, respectively.



Those attending built webs of yarn based on shared water experience.

We were then immersed in a warm-up activity: "Building Water Networks". The activity had participants develop webs of yarns based on connections among shared water experience. This activity aimed to visualize and emulate the role of water in connecting people and ecosystems. Moreover, the activity echoed the message given by Elder Duquette during the event's opening. We then transitioned to break to allow for conversations initiated by shared experience.

Next, researchers gave updates on Prairie Water's four research themes: surface hydrology, subsurface hydrology, wetlands, and governance. Presentations were given by Drs. Chris Spence, Grant Ferguson, Colin Whitfield and Helen Baluch, and Graham Strickert. Each update ended with a crystallization slide to capture the update in a single, cohesive synthesis.

An objective of the Annual Meeting was to feature projects undertaken by our young professionals. As such, project-

level thematic updates were followed by seven lightning talks given by students and research staff. Topics featured new approaches to modelling prairie hydrology, building integrated watershed models, prairie pothole gas dynamics, collaborative water governance, participatory flood risk planning, and documenting water stories. The morning ended with a poster session that provided the opportunity for young research professionals and partners to converse directly on projects and new research results.

Focus shifted in the afternoon as participating learned from Prairie Water partners about pressing challenges related to water management and research. Members of the Prairie Water User Community Advisory Committee presented on behalf of their representative organizations to a panel of Prairie Water investigators on topics such as their organization's mandate, ongoing projects, and scientific challenge and opportunities. Six presentations were given including those on federal and provincial governments, conservation organizations, food producers, First Nations partnerships, and watershed stewardship groups.



Build-your-own-burritos are a great way to keep up morale and refresh your audience.



Project-level thematic updates were followed by seven lightning talks given by students and research staff.



We hosted a series of breakout tables after the panel to discuss common themes and ideas arising throughout the day. Three tables were formed to address themes of “Creating Knowledge Pathways and Facilitating Transfer”, “Building Tools and Toolboxes”, and “Research and User Group Synergies”. After the breakout groups, we closed the event with a summary by the Prairie Water Principal Investigators regarding what was heard and directions for the future.

The Annual Partner’s Meeting was organized to coincide with the Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds (SAW) annual conference. This represented an exciting new opportunity to work directly with project partners on engagement events and facilitate dialogue on research findings and community needs. As a result of this partnership, both events had a high number of people attending, including many new registrants. Moreover, Prairie Water hosted an “Experimental Decision Laboratory” activity officially in the SAW meeting agenda, which allowed participants to directly contribute to scientific work and outputs of Prairie Water.

On behalf of the Prairie Water team, we would like to thank all who participated and made the event a great success. We would especially like to thank the Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds and the watershed stewardship groups for their support of the research at their event following. The Prairie Water team is very much looking forward learning from the discussions had and to future engagement opportunities.

Jared Wolfe

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Prairie Water research was in action during an “Experimental Decision Laboratory” the following day at the Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds conference.

LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS THAT ATTENDED THE PRAIRIE WATER ANNUAL PARTNERS MEETING 2020:

- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association
- City of Saskatoon
- Ducks Unlimited Canada
- Environment and Climate Change Canada
- Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations
- Lower Qu’Appelle Watershed Stewards
- Lower Souris Watershed Committee
- Meewasin Valley Authority
- Mistawasis Nēhiyawak
- Moose Jaw River Watershed Stewards
- North Saskatchewan River Basin Council
- Pheasant Rump First Nations
- Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve
- SaskWater
- SK Association of Watersheds
- SK First Nations Water Association
- SK Ministry of Agriculture
- SK Ministry of Environment
- SK Water Security Agency
- South SK River Watershed Stewards
- Swift Current Creek Watershed Stewards
- University of Calgary
- University of Saskatchewan
- WaterSMART Solutions
- Wascana Upper Qu’Appelle Watershed Association Taking Responsibility