



WATERTON BIOSPHERE RESERVE ASSOCIATION

OUR PAST AND OUR FUTURE

Photo: Nora Manners/WBR



Photo: Jen Jenkins

Over the last 30 years, the Waterton Biosphere Reserve has supported our communities in many practical ways, by providing support for projects, forums, and research that addresses local land management concerns.

Waterton Biosphere Reserve Association

The Waterton Biosphere Reserve Association [WBRA] is a non-profit organization focused on linking biodiversity conservation to sustainable human use of resources in the Waterton Biosphere Reserve area. Established in the early 1980s, the association has worked closely with local people for over 30 years to integrate conservation values with traditional livelihoods.

Planning for the Future

During the next year, the association will be exploring with others how the WBR can best support and help facilitate the excellent work being done by many organizations in southwestern Alberta on conservation and sustainability.

As an initial step forward, we intend to develop a cooperation plan to guide biosphere related activities which partners in the region consider to be a priority. The association views the cooperation plan as a starting point for moving ahead in a coordinated way with a wide range of stakeholders, communities and decision-makers.

Waterton Biosphere Reserve Association Key Objectives

- To encourage a sustainable community-based regional economy, with high quality biodiversity, landscape and social values.
- To promote public awareness of resource management concerns facing residents of the Waterton Biosphere Reserve area.
- To participate with area residents in developing projects to address local concerns.
- To encourage cooperative resource management practices between private landowners and governments by providing a forum for the exchange of information.

As part of the plan development, the reserve board hopes to have wide ranging discussions with organizations and individuals, many of whom are involved with conservation, sustainability and education initiatives throughout the region.

The cooperation plan will better define WBRA's role in the region, provide direction on the establishment of partnerships, and map out projects and strategies to address priority biodiversity and sustainability issues pertinent to the Waterton Biosphere Reserve area.

A key focus of the Waterton Biosphere Reserve in the coming years is to continue developing partnerships with other organizations in the region to address priority conservation and sustainability issues.

Cooperation Planning

The cooperation plan will join the goals for the three functions of Waterton Biosphere Reserve with the challenges and actions that best reflect local needs and desires:

Biodiversity Conservation: What are our priorities for preserving natural diversity in the Waterton Biosphere Reserve area?

Sustainable Development: What are our priorities for encouraging sustainability of human activities in the reserve area?

Logistic Support and Capacity Building: How can we best improve the ability and capability of communities to make sound decisions for conservation and sustainable resource use in the reserve area through research, monitoring, education and information exchange?



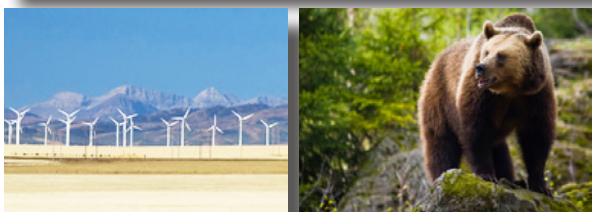
Photo: Kim Pearson

Like other biospheres in Canada, the Waterton Biosphere Reserve has no authority over land or water use. Everything we do in the reserve depends on cooperation, partnership and participation. For this reason, the term 'cooperation plan' is often used to describe a reserve's future work and direction.

Association History and Activities

The Waterton Biosphere Association [WBA] was established in the early 1980s by staff of Waterton Lakes National Park and members of the local ranching community. By the late 1980s, the WBA had established a management committee made up of ranchers and park staff, and a technical committee which was active until 1990.

The WBA continued to exist as an informal steering committee throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, when it was absorbed by larger scale initiatives by other organizations which strengthened the biosphere reserve functions over a broad area. The organization was revitalized as the Waterton Biosphere Reserve Association in 2009.



The Waterton Biosphere Reserve Association is actively involved in conservation and sustainability initiatives, and has supported many projects over the years related to the conservation of biodiversity, sustainable development, stewardship, and education, including:

- **Supported the Waterton Park Front Project**, in which more than 30,000 acres of rangeland in the reserve area, under long-term development pressure opposed by many local landowners, was secured by the Nature Conservancy of Canada. The association produced a short video outlining subdivision issues that was used to build support for the project in its early stages. [1997-98]
- **Designed a community-based management and education program to control non-native species** in the reserve, in cooperation with a variety of management agencies. [1998]
- **Partnered with the Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network** to establish community-based monitoring networks in Pincher Creek and Brocket (Piikani Nation). [2002-2003]
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- **Supported Waterton Lakes National Park Land Care Program** in which students and teachers explore different perspectives on land management. [2004 - present]
- **Sponsored several public seminars over the years** at which information was exchanged on topics such as grazing lease conversion policies, elk/cattle interaction and haystack depredation, and carnivore-livestock-human conflict issues. [1982 - present]
- **WBRA is currently partnering with several organizations on 'Carnivores and Communities in the Waterton Biosphere Reserve,'** a project focused on carnivore-livestock-human conflict mitigation, and the **Southwest Alberta Cooperative Weed Management Area**, an initiative designed to control non-native plants that pose a threat to agriculture, rangeland, and parks in southwestern Alberta. [2009 - present]

For more information about the Waterton Biosphere Reserve, please contact us at:

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