
REDBERRY LAKE BIOSPHERE REGION

2021
ANNUAL
REPORT

<https://redberrylake.ca> / (306) 549-2360 / info@redberrylake.ca



A Word From The Executive Director



Hello everyone,

Through the challenges of the existing pandemic, 2021-2022 has been a remarkably busy year for the Redberry Lake Biosphere Region and its growth. All of this would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of our staff and volunteers.

Our 2021 growth encompassed some exciting activities. These include rebranding with a new unique logo, updating our website, and a boundary expansion which includes seven rural plus thirteen small urban municipalities and two First Nation communities. This has led to a name change from “Biosphere Reserve” to “Biosphere Region” creating more opportunities for new projects and partnerships.

As you read our report you will learn more about our organization, the projects and partners that support us, and the accomplishments achieved collectively. We look forward to working in our new enlarged region to develop innovative projects, establish new partnerships, and generate opportunities for growth and development for our communities.



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OUR HISTORY



The Redberry Lake Biosphere Region embodies cultural and historical influence. This stems from both the Indigenous peoples who first inhabited the area along with the European's who settled the land in the 18th century. The start of it all however, began with the naming of the lake- Mihkomin sâkahikan (Redberry Lake).

The saline lake got its name for the red berries that grow here: Silver and Canada Buffaloberry, Rosehips (Prairie, Prickly, Woods') and Hawthorn. The berries, which also have medicinal properties, were used as a food source for Indigenous communities who travelled to the lake to use the area as a seasonal site for hunting bison. Though the sustenance that was provided is what initially brought people to return each year, the lake further became known for its spiritual and cultural significance.

Cree Narratives have long since regarded Redberry Lake as a spiritual place. Many origin stories describe the lake being a place where people went to fast and where horses were seen emerging from the water (McLeod, Neal. Cree Narrative Memory: From Treaties to Contemporary Times).

Over the years these powerful narratives, along with the lake's abundant food sources, eventually led to the area becoming named as a meeting place for both species and cultures alike. Since then, many communities and their cultures have migrated to the region.

DESIGNATION

On January 21, 2000 The Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) designated the area of the Redberry Lake watershed as the Redberry Lake Biosphere Region (RLBR). The RLBR is presently the only UNESCO designated biosphere region in the province.

This designation was largely significant for a few reasons:

- It was driven by the local community through the founding of The Redberry Pelican Project. This project garnered international attention for being recognized as an important site for the American White Pelican to nest and breed. Thereafter, it became a Migratory Bird Sanctuary, prompting further interest in becoming a designated site.
- The area is not attached to a national or provincial park (like many other biosphere regions), so it is unique for its landscape.

LOCATION



Located on the edge of the Aspen Parkland in Saskatchewan, Canada, the RLBR sits in the central northwest corner of the province. It includes the entire Redberry Lake watershed and its borders which touch several municipalities and small communities. It encompasses Treaty 6 Territory, the traditional territories of the Cree Peoples- Mistawasis Nêhiyawak, Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, Lucky Man Cree Nation and the homelands of the Métis Nation- Western Region 2 and 2A. The town of Hafford is the gateway to the biosphere region.

Within its location lies a transitional ecosystem- the boreal forest to the north and grasslands to the south. A diverse range of species inhabit the area and rich, fertile, black soils are a part of the natural environment. The region used to be largely undisturbed and at one point in time, wild bison herds could be seen freely roaming the land. These wild herds, in conjunction with the landscape's natural, fertile features have largely contributed to the abundance of diverse history in the RLBR today.

VISION & MISSION

“People and nature- in balance”

Our Vision

In The Redberry Lake Biosphere Region we share common values of equality, miyo-mahcihoyān (physical, emotional, mental and spiritual well-being), appreciation of local nature, culture and heritage. Interconnectedness is what sustains our unique landscape, people and economy. We hope to inspire future generations to live harmoniously in an ecosystem that thrives in sustainable, environmental practices and community.

Our Mission

To nurture a balance between humans and nature where conservation, shared initiatives and sustainable resource use is encouraged and explored through research, education, and collaboration.



In the Redberry Lake Biosphere Region, our mandate of conservation, sustainable development and capacity building is accomplished through collaboration and partnerships at the local, provincial, national and international levels. We partner with businesses, governments, and local organizations to achieve these goals throughout the region.



Least Chipmunk (*Tamias minimus*)

OUR 5 PILLARS OF ECOLOGICAL, ECONOMIC & CLIMATE RESILIENCE



BIODIVERSITY & CONSERVATION

TO MAINTAIN A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT WITH CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR AND A THRIVING DIVERSITY OF NATIVE SPECIES.

TO CONTINUE TO RESTORE DEGRADED SOILS AND WATERS, AS THEY ARE OF ECOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND NEEDED FOR SURVIVAL.



COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

TO BUILD DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES IN DECISION-MAKING FOR ACTIONS THAT AFFECT THE COMMUNITY AND REGION.

PRESERVE THE RIGHT TO MEANINGFUL AND DIRECT PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES OF OUR CHOICE WITHOUT INFLUENCE FROM OUTSIDE AGENCIES.

TO ENGAGE YOUNG PEOPLE IN SELECTING AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION, EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, AND SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING.

TO COLLABORATE WITH OTHER COMMUNITIES, AGENCIES AND GOVERNMENTS IN ALL CASES WHERE TANGIBLE MUTUAL BENEFIT IS ASSURED.



REGIONAL & SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE CONCEPT OF MARGINAL LAND REFERS ONLY TO AGRICULTURAL SUITABILITY AND THAT NON-AGRICULTURAL LANDS ARE ALSO VALUABLE TO SOCIETY AT LARGE AND ARE WORTHY OF CAREFUL MANAGEMENT.

TO PILOT AND DEMONSTRATE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES AND SHARE LESSONS LEARNED WITH OTHER REGIONS IN CANADA.

TO HAVE PROFITABLE FARMS, BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES.



RECONCILIATION

TO FOSTER RECONCILIATION BETWEEN INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS PEOPLES THROUGH LAND-BASED PROGRAMS AND STEWARDSHIP.



CLIMATE CHANGE

SUPPORT MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND OTHER ASPECTS OF GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE.

CONSERVE BIODIVERSITY, RESTORE AND ENHANCE ECOSYSTEM SERVICES AND FOSTER SUSTAINABLE USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES.

2021 Achievements

REDBERRY LAKE BIOSPHERE RESERVE CHANGES NAME TO "REGION" AND EXPANDS ITS BORDERS!

JANUARY 1, 2021

We are excited to announce our new name: Redberry Lake Biosphere Region. This comes in accordance with recently expanding our borders to include the RM's of Leask, Blaine Lake, Meeting Lake, Great Bend, Mayfield, and Douglas. We look forward to connecting and building partnerships with these new regional municipalities. Welcome!



RLBR RECEIVES TOURISM SASKATCHEWAN GRANT FOR A NEW "EXPERIENCE THE BIOSPHERE" INITIATIVE!

JANUARY 26, 2021

The Redberry Lake Biosphere Region received funding from Tourism Saskatchewan's Destination Experience Development Program to launch a brand new "Experience the biosphere!" Visitor Package.

This grant will help showcase the following:

1. Our Commitment to growing community and regional tourism markets;
2. Create a new and exciting experience for the RLBR.

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA ANNOUNCES LARGE INVESTMENT TO PROTECT SPECIES AT RISK HABITAT IN THE GREATER REDBERRY LAKE BIOSPHERE RESERVE AREA! (NEWS RELEASE)

FEBRUARY 25, 2021

The Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, announced that the Government of Canada will invest \$402,400 over three years to conserve and restore habitat for species at risk in the greater Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve area. Located in West-Central Saskatchewan on the traditional lands of the Métis, Mistawasis Nēhiyawak, and Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, the habitat spans over 600,000 hectares and supports many species, including twenty-two listed species at risk, such as the piping plover and the bobolink.



RLBR RECEIVES FUNDING FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT CONSERVATION LANDS IN THE REGION

APRIL 1, 2021

The RLBR received funding from The Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment fish and Wildlife Development Fund (FWDF). The project objective is to increase public understanding and awareness of conservation lands in the RLBR and the rules associated with these lands. The funds will contribute to designing signage that will be installed in the spring of 2022 at six locations. This is a pilot project that if successful, will be administered on other FWDF lands across Saskatchewan.



REDBERRY LAKE BIOSPHERE REGION RE-BRANDS WITH NEW CREATIVE LOGO AND WEBSITE TO MATCH

MAY 1, 2021

We are excited to announce that the RLBR has re-branded with a unique, creative logo that was built off of the existing brand. The new logo brings with it a fresh vibe and a perfect fit for our new striking website design. Both additions were greatly needed and will be a staple for the RLBR moving forward into the future.



BUDGET PERFORMANCE

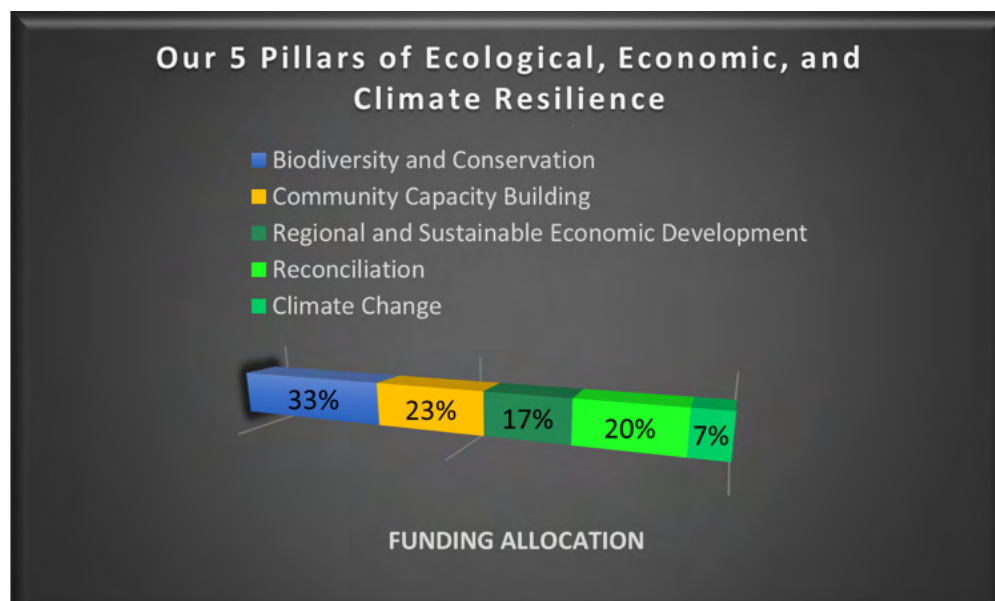
Financial Overview

Our overall budget for 2021 was approximately \$250,000 dollars. The budget was supported by three different funding organizations. These include: Saskatchewan Environment Fish and Wildlife Development Fund (FWDF), Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), and Tourism Saskatchewan.



Budget Allocation

The overall budget for the 2021 RLBR helped to support our 5 pillars of Ecological, Economic, and Climate Resilience. The figure below displays the benefit each pillar received with the highest being Biodiversity and Conservation.

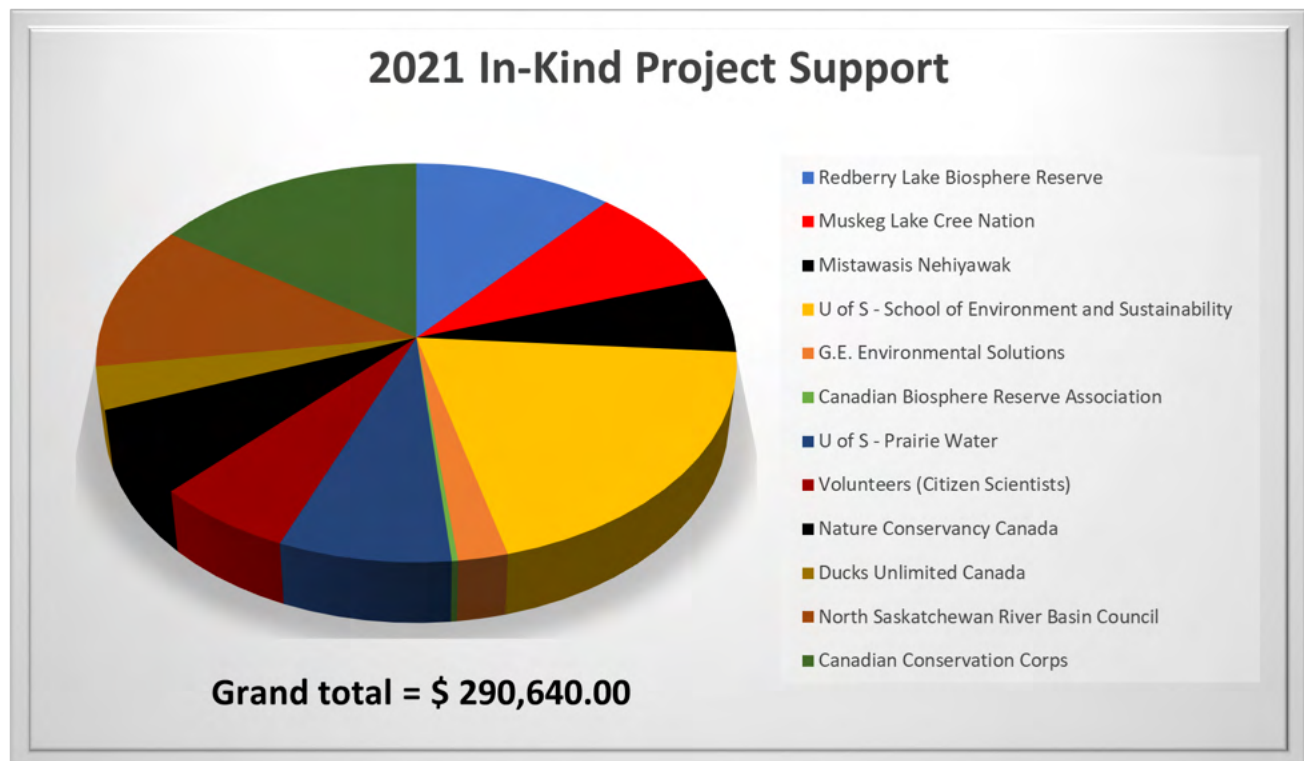


BUDGET PERFORMANCE CONTINUED....

Project In-Kind Support Funding

In-kind support is defined as donations of goods or services that are received by an organization for use towards project funding. This can be used as match funding towards cash support that has been provided by a funding organization.

Each and every project the RLBR conducts, it must seek out in-kind support. The figure below displays the in-kind support that the RLBR received for 2021. We would like to thank all of the organizations below who provided us with these contributions!



PARTNERSHIPS

The Redberry Lake Biosphere receives endless support from our generous partnerships with other organizations. These include other non-profits groups, non-governmental organizations (NGO's), governmental organizations, for-profits, conservation and stewardship groups, post-secondary educational institutes, rural municipalities, small rural communities, citizen scientists, volunteers. The list goes on....

We truly cannot thank these organizations enough for their continued support towards our goals and initiatives. The RLBR would not be where it is at today if it wasn't for you. We will continue to be a strong support group for whoever may need it!

OUR PARTNERS

- Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)
- Canadian Wildlife Federation: Canadian Conservation Corps (CCC)
- Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC)
- Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association (CBRA)
- North Saskatchewan River Basin Council (NSRBC)
- Mistawasis Nehiyawak
- Muskeg Lake Cree Nation
- Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC)
- GE Environmental Solutions
- Prairie Conservation Action Plan (PCAP)
- Prince Albert Model Forest (PAMF)
- Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment (MOE)
- Tourism Saskatchewan
- Nature Saskatchewan
- University of Saskatchewan - School of Environment and Sustainability (SENS) & Prairie Water (Global Water Futures)
- Fox Box
- Citizen Scientists and Volunteers



THANK YOU!

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Over the past 4 years, the Redberry Lake Biosphere Region has grown significantly. A vision for positive change and forward thinking has brought success to the organization. The RLBR continues to strive towards becoming self-sufficient, solidifying partnerships, promoting sustainable land-use practices, and most importantly to protect our natural environment.

Our 5 Year Vision...

The list below identifies our goals for the next 5 years:

1. Develop and promote nature-based solutions
2. Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) designation for the RLBR
3. Create/sustain opportunities for Tourism
4. Join the Living Laboratories Initiative developed by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
5. Continue building long-term relationships with our First Nation partners through truth and reconciliation
6. Designate the buffer zone surrounding Redberry Lake as a Other effective area-based conservation measures (OECM)
7. Establish other core areas within the expanded RLBR boundaries

“There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature – the assurance that dawn comes after the night and spring after the winter.” — Rachel Carson



American Red Squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*)