

# Shaping the Athabasca River Basin Research Institute

ARBRI Day, March 14, 2012



The Athabasca River Basin has been defined not only by its waters, its lands and its abundant natural resources but also by the people who live and work there, those who have shaped the landscape.



# Comprehensive Institutional Plan

- ❖ Athabasca University is one of four comprehensive research universities and is the largest specialist in distance education.
- ❖ As part of its mission, Athabasca University is dedicated to removal of geographical, educational, social and cultural barriers to knowledge and learning.
- ❖ Its mandate includes demonstration of excellence in research and scholarship.



# How does ARBRI fit in this plan?

Some goals of the CIP include:

- ❖ Build research capacity in humanities, social science, science, public health, technology and innovation
- ❖ Support research initiatives and collaborations
- ❖ Foster partnerships with community and other stakeholders

# Defining the Research Institute

**The Research Institute focuses and sustains activities in specific research areas and encourages collaboration among disciplines.**

- ❖ Provides identity and reputation
- ❖ Flexible and responsive
- ❖ Creates synergy and community engagement
- ❖ Environment for mentorship and development of expertise

Source: [http://www2.athabascau.ca/secretariat/policy/academic/research\\_institutes\\_policy.htm](http://www2.athabascau.ca/secretariat/policy/academic/research_institutes_policy.htm)



# ARBRI specifics

ARBRI is an interdisciplinary research centre that studies the Athabasca River Basin and its people from a broad range of perspectives.



# Vision

The Athabasca River Basin Research Institute plays a **trusted** role with Athabasca River Basin stakeholders and academia through **facilitation** of open and transparent interdisciplinary research and knowledge exchange on issues of key regional importance.

# Mission

The Athabasca River Basin Research Institute **supports interdisciplinary research, community engagement, and knowledge transfer** in the Athabasca River Basin for all stakeholders by improving awareness of past and contemporary issues, and encouraging collaboration among scientists, scholars, and basin stakeholders.



# Principles

- ❖ Advance understanding of the basin across disciplines
- ❖ Engage the community, government, stakeholders
- ❖ Foster research linkages across disciplines
- ❖ Communicate research results to all sectors



# Disciplinary areas

❖ Science

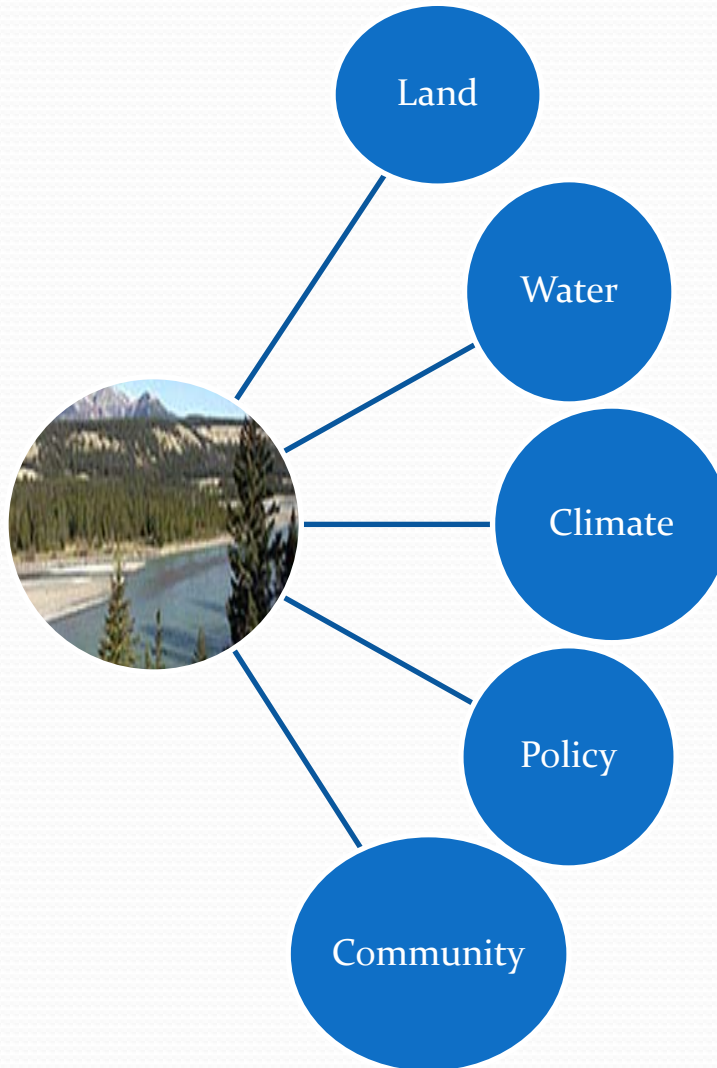
❖ Health

❖ Social science

❖ Global studies

❖ Business

❖ Governance



# Current activities related to ARBRI

- ❖ Bibliography project (BARB)-Imperial Oil funding
- ❖ Sustainability of Economic and Environment project-Alberta Rural Development Network funding
- ❖ Learning Communities Project-Alberta Rural Development Funds
- ❖ Blue Water Project-Royal Bank of Canada funding
- ❖ Science Outreach-various funding, but mainly volunteer
- ❖ Community workshops-SSHRC funding



# BARB: <http://www.barbau.ca>

- ❖ Identify, locate, and make freely accessible an extensive list of research and scholarly information of the Athabasca River Basin.
- ❖ Project led by Athabasca River Basin Research Institute with support from Office of the VPA, AU Library, Advancement Office, academic centres, and researchers.

ARBRI website: <http://arbri.athabascau.ca/>

Athabasca University

ATHABASCA RIVER BASIN  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The River Basin

The Institute

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Research Paths

Leading the Way

Resources

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Important Links

Image Gallery

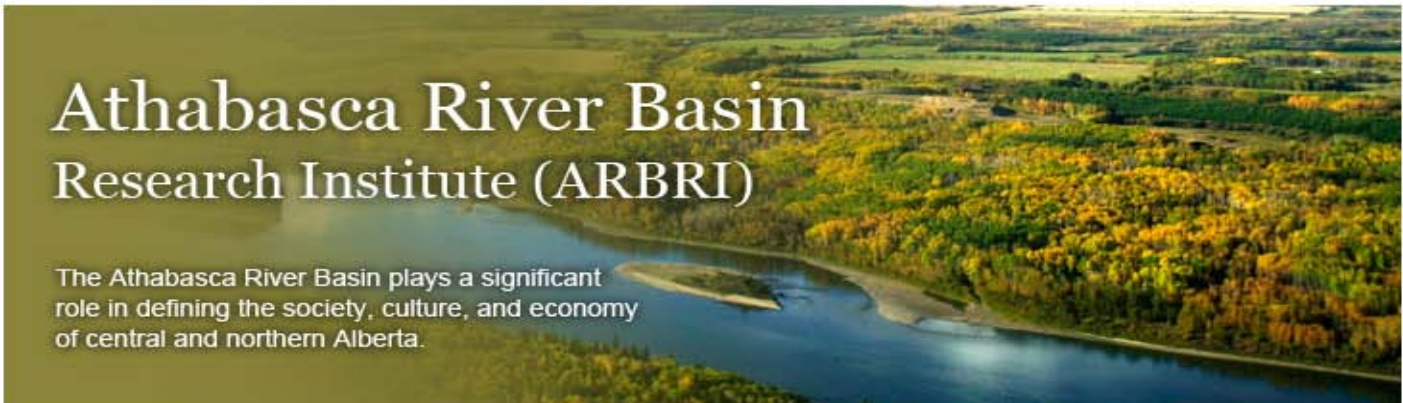
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GO

# Athabasca River Basin Research Institute (ARBRI)


The Athabasca River Basin plays a significant role in defining the society, culture, and economy of central and northern Alberta.





## The River Basin

At 1,538 km in length, the Athabasca River is Alberta's longest undammed river and its second largest by volume.



## The Institute

The newly created Athabasca River Basin Research Institute is an innovative interdisciplinary research centre.

## News and Events

**A future beyond coal, oil and gas**  
**August 15 2011**  
*AU embarks on a community sustainability project for Hinton and Grande Cache.*

**Athabasca Watershed Council 1st Annual General Meeting**  
**May 29, 2010**  
*Royal Canadian Legion*

## The Institute and the Basin: A Unique

# Bibliography project

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THE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE  
ATHABASCA RIVER BASIN

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## The Bibliography of the Athabasca River Basin

### Welcome to the Beta Version of the BARB site

The digital online Bibliography of the Athabasca River Basin (BARB) will greatly enhance research opportunities and access for Athabasca University and Athabasca River Basin stakeholders by removing barriers and making scientific research on the Athabasca River Basin openly accessible.

The



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#### Syndicate

Done



# The Bibliography of the Athabasca River Basin

## Science Section of BARB

### Current Status

Between 1 February 2008 and 31 August 2010, more than 25,000 references related to science work done in the Athabasca River Basin (ARB) were identified and the bibliographic information added to an electronic spreadsheet. There were three main categories of published materials: 1) reports (technical industrial or governmental publications produced in relatively small numbers and not usually peer-reviewed; usually produced by consulting companies), 2) journal articles (papers written in scientific periodicals which were usually peer-reviewed), and 3) theses (undergraduate, masters and doctoral). Reports constituted 62% of the total, followed by journal articles at 28%, with the remaining being theses. See Figure 1. There were very few science books dealing with the ARB. (Scientific books tend to summarize journal articles.) In addition a few URLs were documented.

### Types of published materials

### Search this site

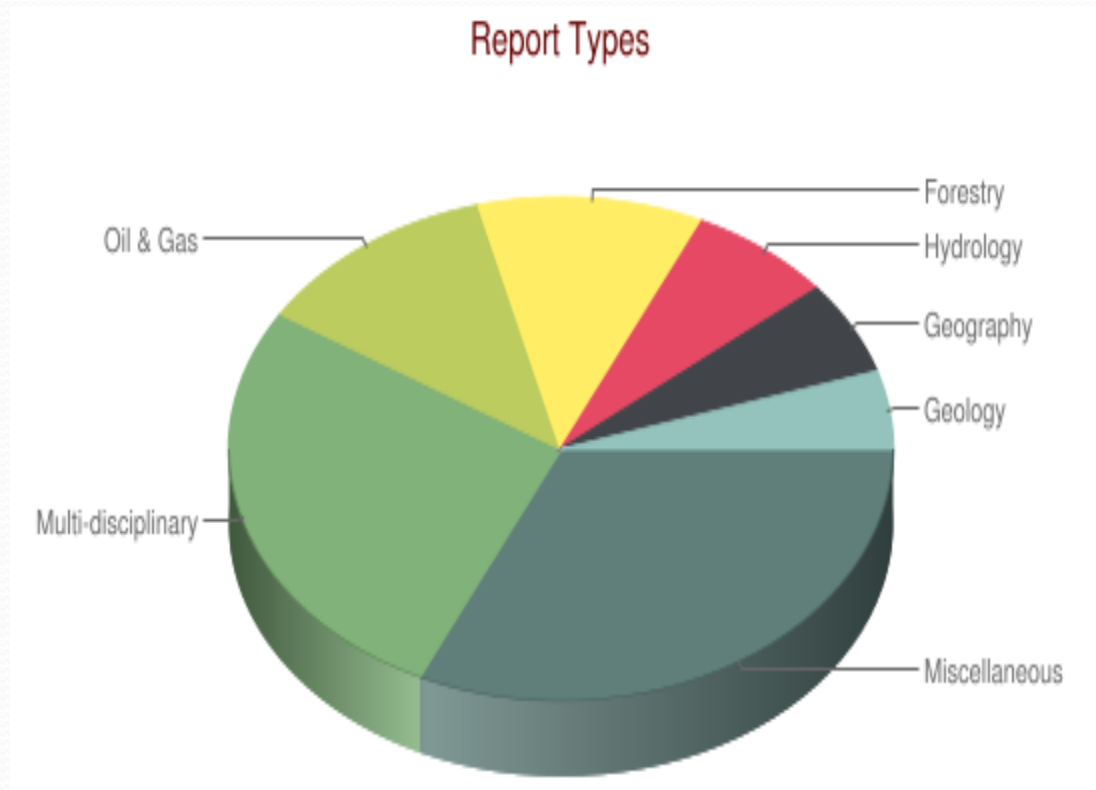
  
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### More like this

- [How to get copies of ARB Science Materials](#)
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# Science bibliography



## Athabasca University

THE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE  
ATHABASCA RIVER BASIN

## Home

## Browse/Search

## What is BARB?

[Athabasca River Basin \(ARB\)](#)[Geographical features of the  
ARB](#)[Lakes](#)[Rivers](#)[Creeks](#)[Settlements](#)[Other features](#)[Importance of ARB](#)

## How to use BARB

[Economic](#)[Humanities](#)[Sciences](#)[Social Sciences](#)

# The Bibliography of the Athabasca River Basin

## Geographical features of the ARB

Using menu items on the left sidebar menu, you are able to look at the bibliography through specific geographic features. For example, by going to rivers and then selecting "Chaba River", you are able to quickly find research done on that specific river. More will be added in the future.



## Search this site

## More like this

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# Advancing economic, environmental and social sustainability

- ❖ Community sustainability from a community perspective (Hinton/Grande Cache)
- ❖ Expand to other communities
- ❖ Involves researchers from social science, environmental studies, business, education
- ❖ Community driven, community initiated

# Learning Communities Project

- ❖ Capacity building in northern Aboriginal communities.
- ❖ Based on the principle of increasing learning awareness for success.
- ❖ Aboriginal mentor circle program based on cultural and spiritual grounding.



# Blue Water Project

**Engaging diverse communities in the understanding and preservation of a vital natural resource**

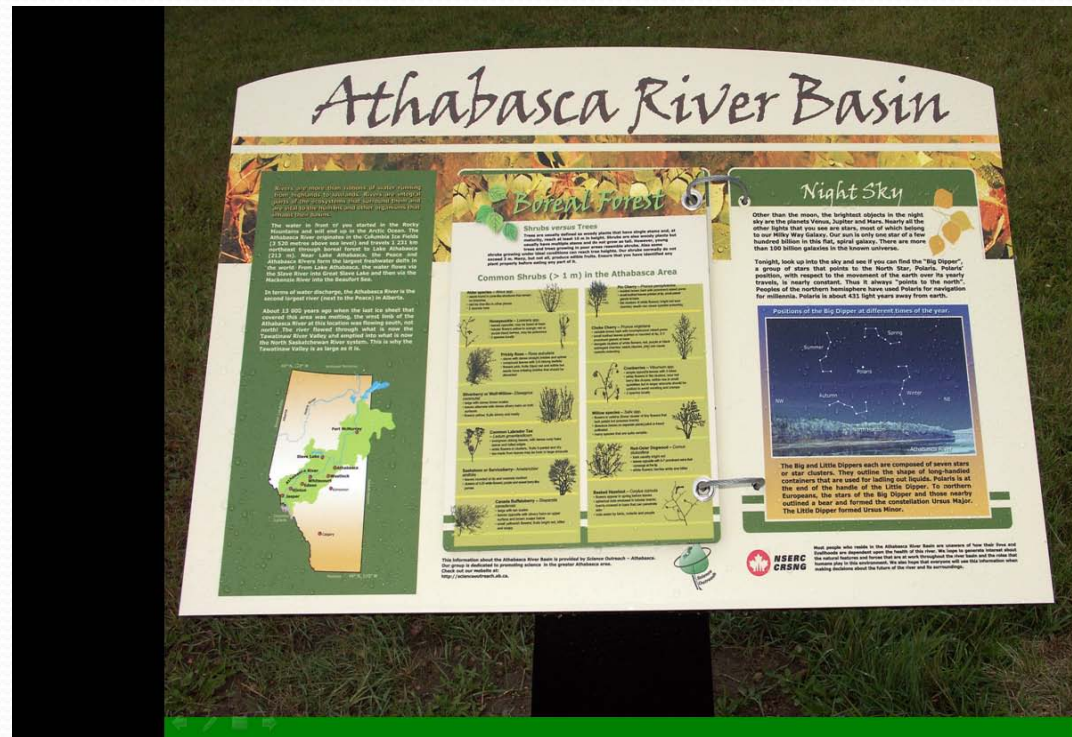
- ❖ Stakeholder focussed, especially Aboriginal and indigenous communities
- ❖ Community engagement: evidence-based information
- ❖ Removal of knowledge barriers

# Science Outreach

❖ BARB

❖ Science awareness initiatives

❖ Community and science literacy



# Community engagement

- ❖ Workshop engaging industry stakeholders, community representatives and others concerned with the watershed

**Athabasca River Basin Conference** June 1, 2007  
Water for Life, Water for Strife? RECAP



Assistant Deputy Minister Environmental Stewardship, Bev Yee presented an overview of the Alberta Government's river management framework and faced some tough questions from the audience.



Les Cardinal and Alan Adam (seated) from the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation both presented emotionally powerful accounts of the environmental and health issues faced in Fort Chipewyan.



**The Future?**

- Integrated planning for cumulative impacts
- Monitoring – arms-length, long term public access

Robert Holmberg, Professor of Biology at Athabasca University, provided a thorough overview of the Athabasca River Basin. He ended on a positive note for the future on a rainbow background.



David Trew, executive director of the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance provided examples of his experience with watershed stewardship.



Athabasca University president Dr. Fitz Parnell discussed the human history of the Athabasca River Basin in 1857 including the role of British explorer and geographer John Palliser. Palliser shown with fellow geographer James Hector (right), were part of the British North American Exploring Expedition whose report helped end the control of the Hudson Bay Company.



Documentary filmmakers abound at day one of the conference as issues and concerns generate considerable interest.

# So here we are.....





## CAMPUS ALBERTA INNOVATES PROGRAM (CAIP)

<http://www.campusalbertainnovatesprogram.ca/>

This prestigious program provides an initial sixteen research chairs at Alberta's four Comprehensive Academic and Research Intensive institutions.

Athabasca University will have two research Chairs

# CAIP priority areas

❖ Energy and environment

❖ Food and Nutrition

❖ Neuroscience and prions

❖ Water



University of  
Lethbridge







# AU's two CAIP positions

- 1. Computational Sustainability and Environmental Analytics**
- 2. Hydroecology and Environmental Health**

# Position description (1)

## **Computational Sustainability and Environmental Analytics**

- ❖ Works in semantic technologies, modeling algorithms for environmental applications and dynamic mathematical modeling.
- ❖ Provides analytical evidence to support interpretation of data in establishing meaningful models and recommendations for policy and land-use decisions of the land and water.

# Position description (2)

## Hydroecology and Environmental Health

- ❖ Works in ecotoxicology, health effects and nutrition, environmental and atmospheric chemistry and applied ecology.
- ❖ Complements existing work on biology and organismal ecology of Athabasca land and aquatic environments.

# How do we continue to shape ARBRI?

- ❖ Interdisciplinary alignments
- ❖ Expand community engagement
- ❖ Funding

