

The Origins of ARBRI

Robert Holmberg

Emeritus Professor



**Athabasca
University**

ARBRI Days, 23-24 November 2015

**1970: Tim Byrne chooses a
non-political name for the 4th
Alberta university ...**



Athabasca Hall at the University of Alberta

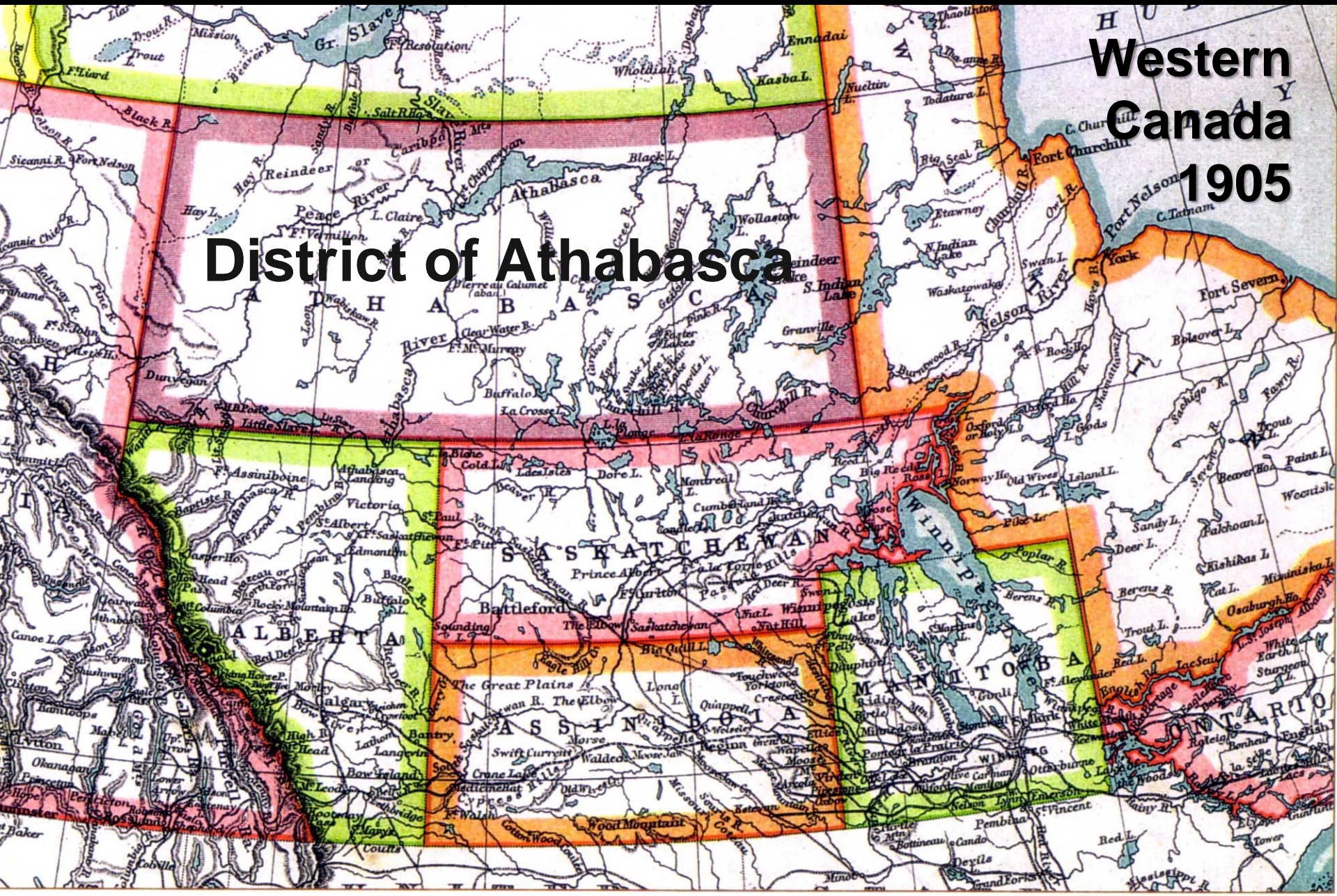
A photograph of Athabasca Hall at the University of Alberta. The building is a large, multi-story red brick structure with numerous white-framed windows. The ground is covered in a thick layer of snow, and the sky is clear and blue. In the foreground, a black signpost stands in the snow, with the words 'Athabasca Hall' written vertically on it. The building's architecture features a central entrance with a small arched doorway and a set of stairs leading up to it.

1970 – possibility of demolition
1911 – first building on campus

New university to reflect a northern perspective

Western
Canada
1905

District of Athabasca



Athabasca University

Established 25 June 1970 in Edmonton

AU's Relocation to Athabasca

- Late 970s: secret Government decision to move AU headquarters to Town of Athabasca



Frank Appleby, MLA for Athabasca

Athabasca University



The first building of the University was
officially opened on June 15, 1985

by
James Corson and Anne Dobbie
two of its students

supported by
Hon. Dick Johnston, Minister, Alberta Advanced Education
and
Rt. Hon. Lord Perry of Walton

John P. C. Elson, Chairman
Athabasca University Governing Council

Frank Appleby, M.L.A.
Athabasca

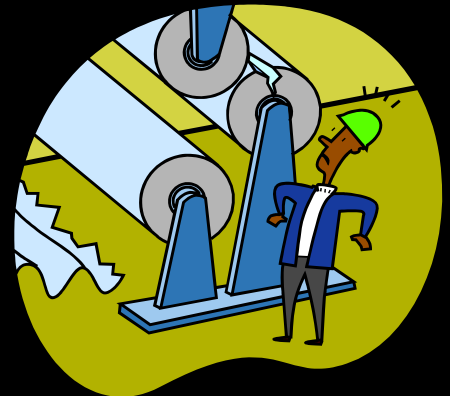
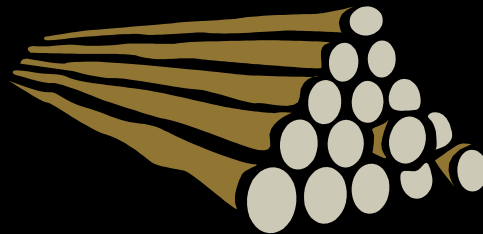
Wayne H. Wright
Architects Ltd.

Stephen Griew
President

Anton J. Schinkinger
Mayor of Athabasca

Carlson Construction
Company

**1988: announcement of world's
largest single-line Kraft pulp mill
to be built just downstream from
Town of Athabasca**



Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for New Pulp Mill

- no consideration of 4 other pulp mills on the Athabasca River
- no consideration of logging operations

Alberta-Pacific Forest Products pulp mill (Al-Pac), 2007

1988: formation of Friends of the Athabasca Environmental Association (FOTA)

→ need to consider the whole basin and accumulative impacts



Bill Fuller



Louis Schmittroth

1989-1992: Pulp Mill Bibliographies

Pulp Mills and the Environment: An Annotated Bibliography for Northern Alberta

Robert Holmberg

May 1992

Friends of the Athabasca Environmental Association

Pulp and Paper Mill References

February 26, 1989

Robert Holmberg
Sciences, Athabasca University
Athabasca, Alberta
TOG 2R0

This is an annotated list of books and other materials related to the development and operation of pulp and paper mills in the Athabasca River basin. The purpose of the list is to encourage members of the public to learn about these industries so that they can ask informed questions, and better understand the answers given, at Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and other meetings that will be held when new or expanded mills are proposed. The materials are grouped into various categories including: **Air Pollution, Chemistry, Economics, Environmental Impact Assessments, Forestry, Human Health, Legal, Logging, Monitoring, Planning, Pulp and Paper Mills, Water Pollution, Water: Rivers and Lakes, Waste Management.**

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University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta
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University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta

Why a bibliography?

- Main role of any university is to improve the knowledge of the general public

- Teaching
- Research
- Service



Why a bibliography?

- In order to make the best decisions, one needs to know what is known



1995-2000: formation of idea that AU should “adopt” Athabasca River Basin (ARB)

Basin, not watershed



Why “adopt” the ARB?

Major reasons:

1. ARB was important and not being examined in a comprehensive way



Why is ARB important?

- Human health
- Natural resources
- Ecological problems
- Political issues
- Social and economic concerns
- Intellectual interest



Why “adopt” the ARB?

Major reasons:

1. ARB was important and not being examined in a comprehensive way

2. A focus for AU research

- Promote multi- and interdisciplinary research
- Promote collaboration
- ARB was big but not too big



Why “adopt” the ARB?

Minor reasons:

- AU shared the “Athabasca” name
- AU headquarters located centrally in the basin
- AU owned land on the banks of the river
- Still a northern focus



What is the Athabasca River Basin (ARB)?

- ~1,230 km long
- ~133,000 km²
- >101 tributary rivers
- >307 named creeks
- >328 named lakes
- no dams or reservoirs



2000-2006: several unsuccessful attempts to get AU to “adopt” ARB

- **Centre for Science**
- **Possible collaborations
with AI-Pac**
- **Rotarian club of Athabasca**
- **Inside Education**
- **Etc.**

Research in the Athabasca River Basin: Implications for Science

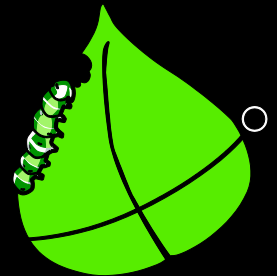
**Robert Holmberg
Centre for Science
Athabasca University
25 September 2002**

2001 April 1: Formation of Science Outreach – Athabasca



2001: Objectives of Science Outreach – Athabasca:

- 1. Increase science awareness
in greater Athabasca area**
- 2. Develop a knowledge base
about Athabasca River Basin**



2006: Open staff meeting with President Frits Pannekoek

- → government grant
to study feasibility of
a research institute
on ARB
- 2 Campus Alberta
Innovates Program
Research Chairs (CAIP)



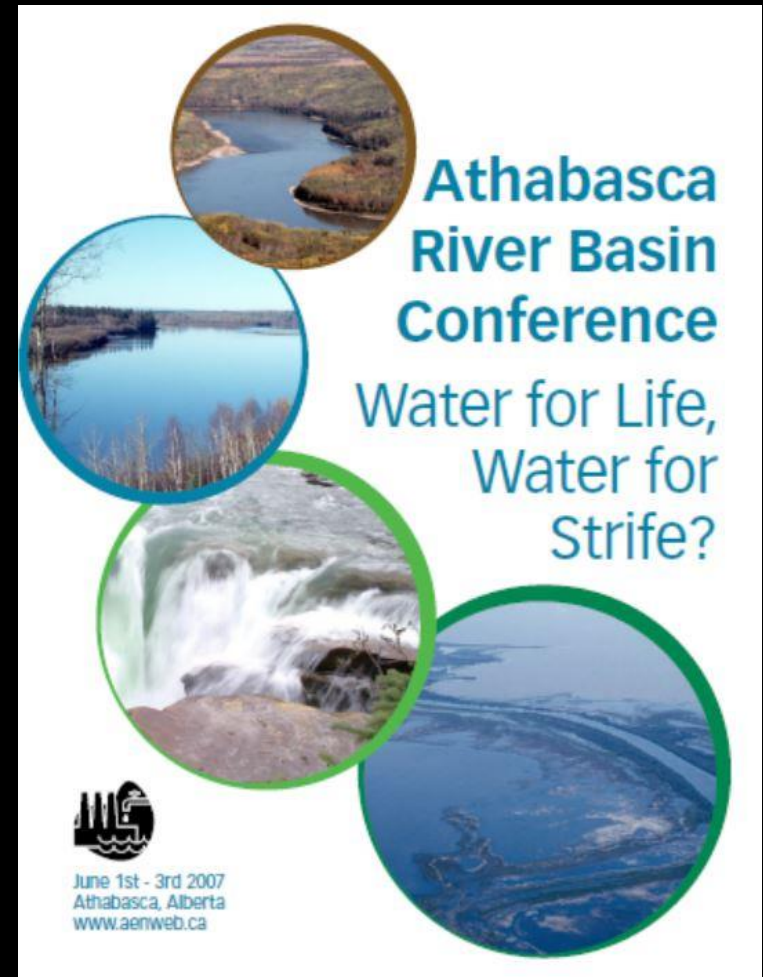
2007 March 21:

- I gave notice that I would retire at the end of the year



2007 June 1-3: Athabasca River Basin Conference

- Initiated by: Harvey Scott, Don Kvill, Jerry McLean (Athabasca Peace Initiative)
- Science Outreach – Athabasca people helped organize conference
- > 200 attendees from general public, government and industry

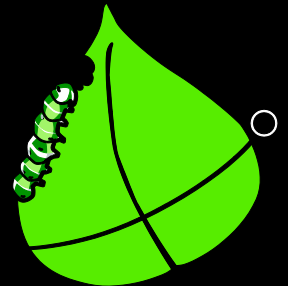


2007-2010: Science Bibliography of ARB

- Suncor Energy Foundation and Government of Alberta grants
- → 25,000 references in 2.5 years



Pamela Carlton,
Science Bibliographer



2007-2008: Formation of Athabasca River Basin Research Institute (ARBRI)



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.



Athabasca
University

2009 November 28: Formation of the Watershed Panning and Advisory Council for the Athabasca River



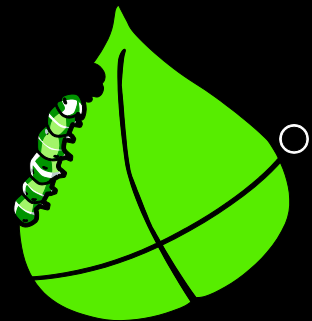
Our Watershed
Our Responsibility

2008-2010: David Locky, Interim Director ARBRI

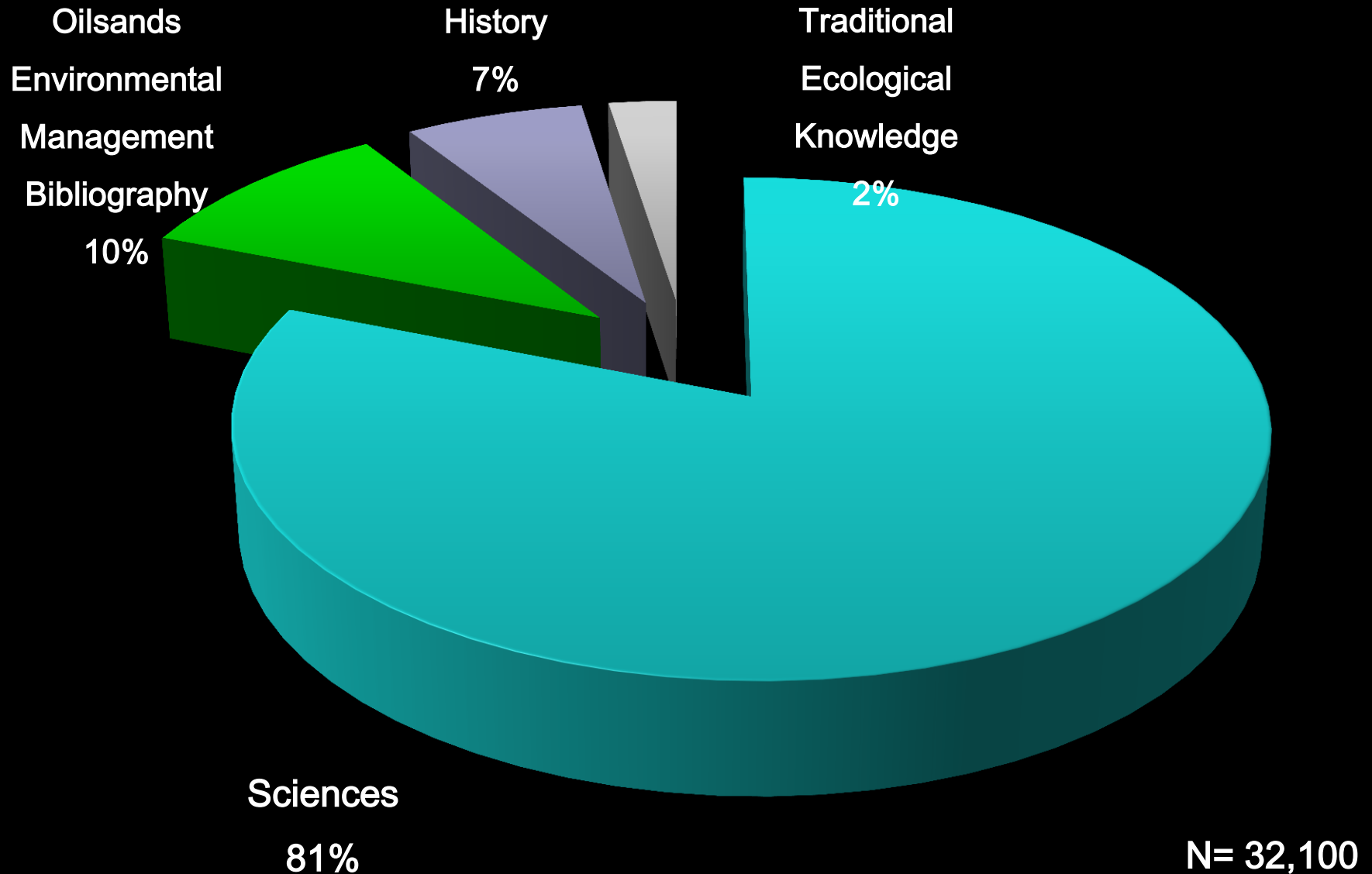
- **Scope of ARBRI**
- **Web site:** <http://arbri.athabascau.ca/>
- **Bibliography of the Athabasca River Basin (BARB) with AU Library and various academics**
- **Helped obtain grant from Imperial Oil**
- **Member of Watershed Public Advisory Council (WPAC) for the Athabasca River**



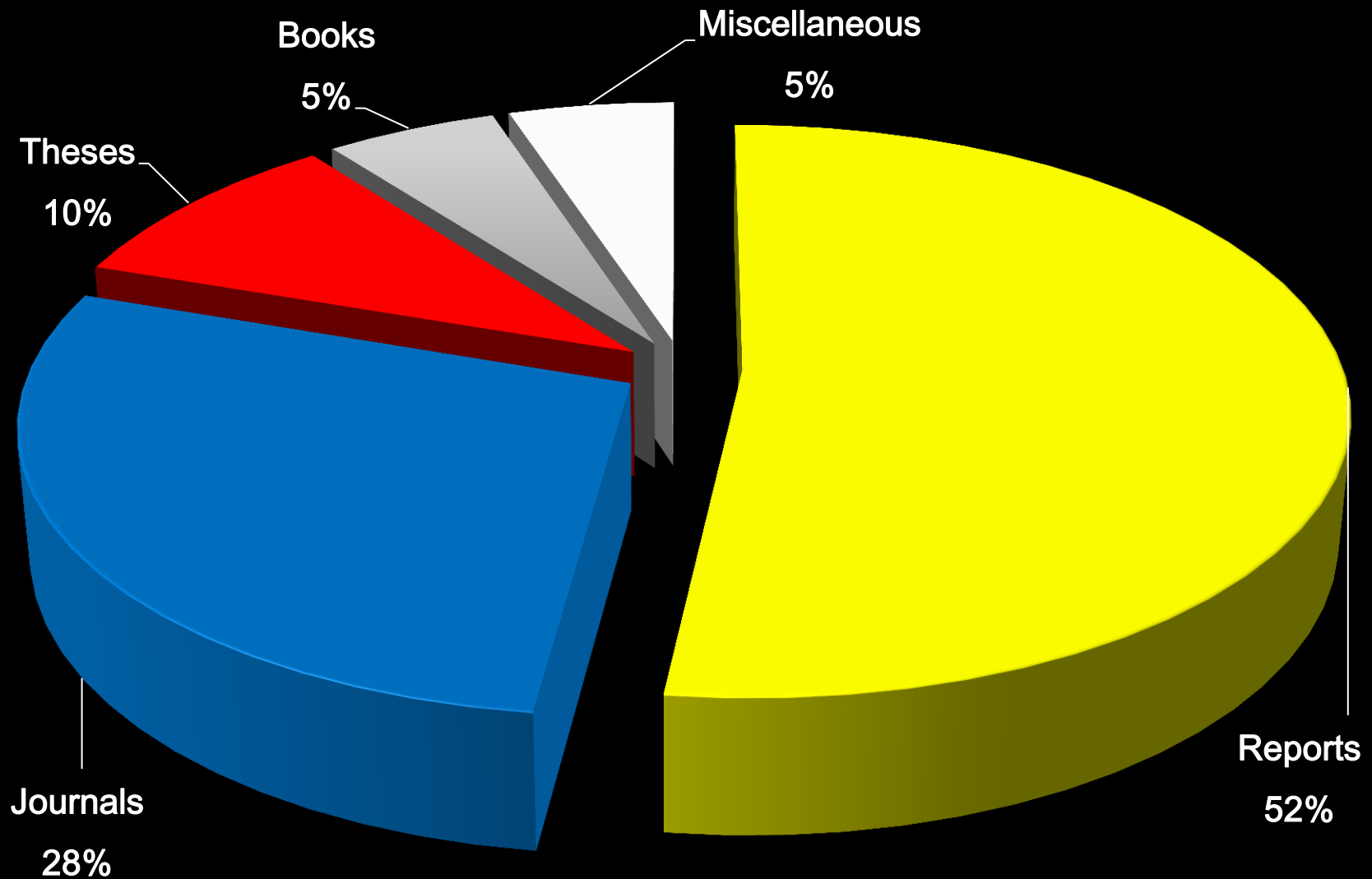
**2009: Science Outreach –
Athabasca donated 25,000
science references to BARB**



General Subjects now in BARB

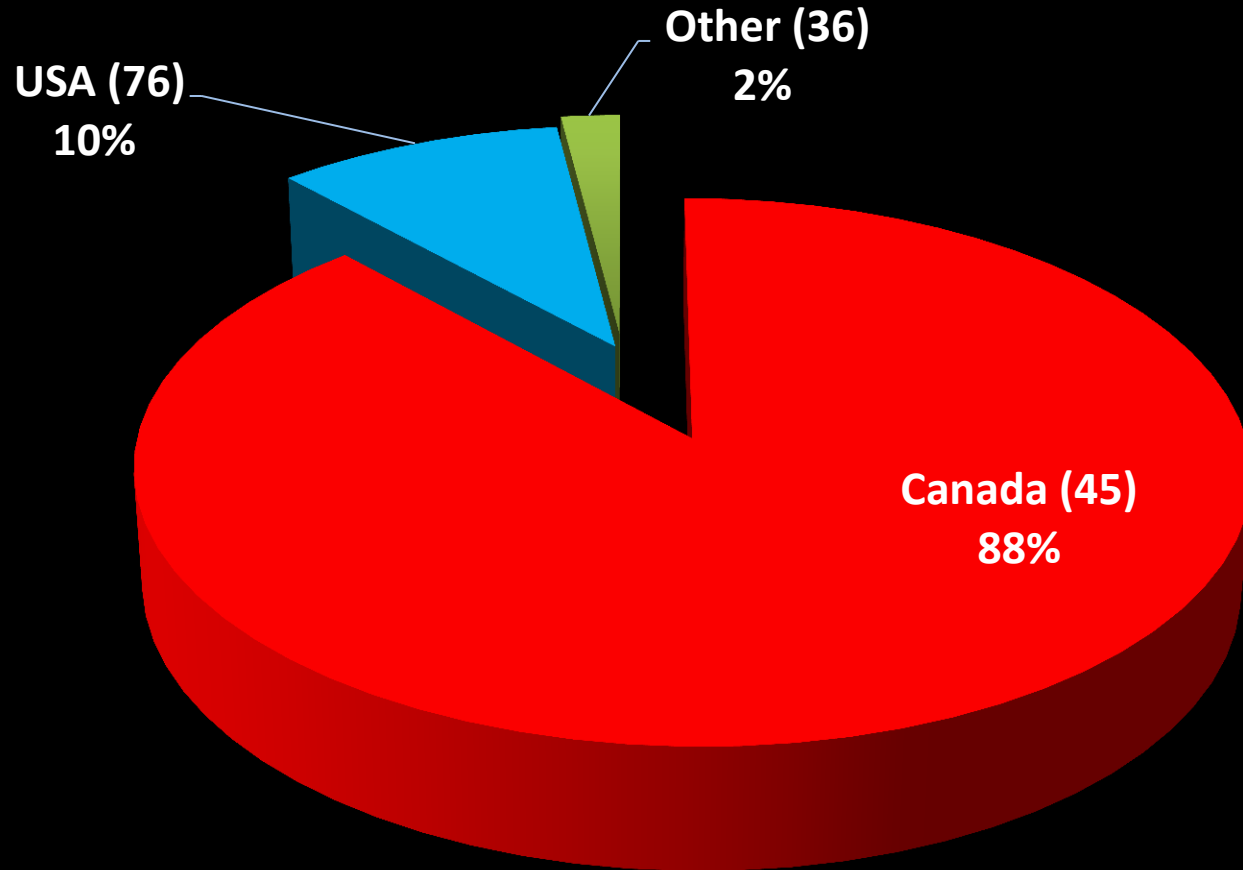


Types of Documents now in BARB



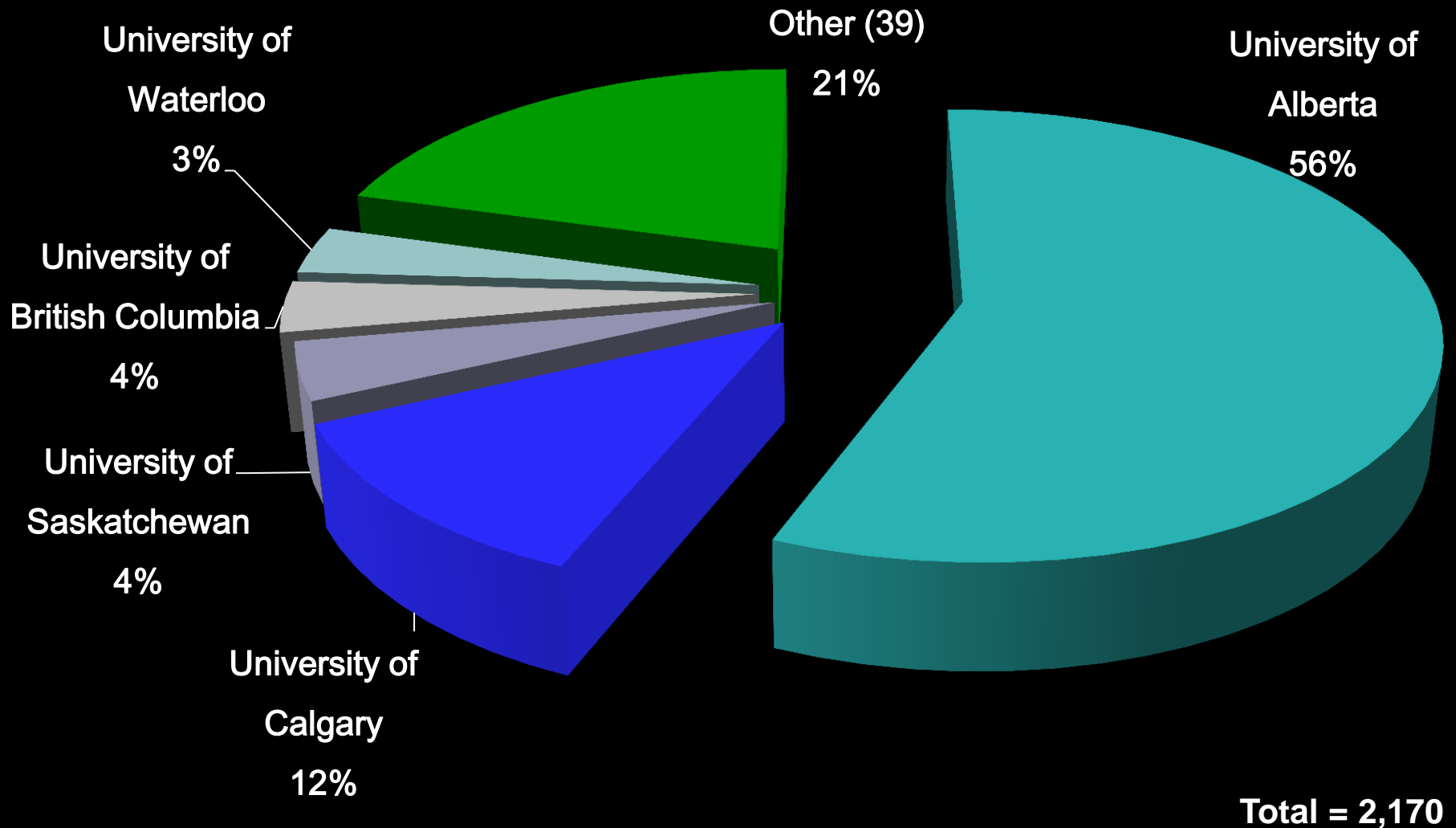
N= 30,467

Home Universities (157) of ARB Theses



Theses = 2,458

Canadian Theses on ARB



Athabasca River Basin Image Bank

<http://digicon.athabascau.ca/cdm/landingpage/collection/auriver>



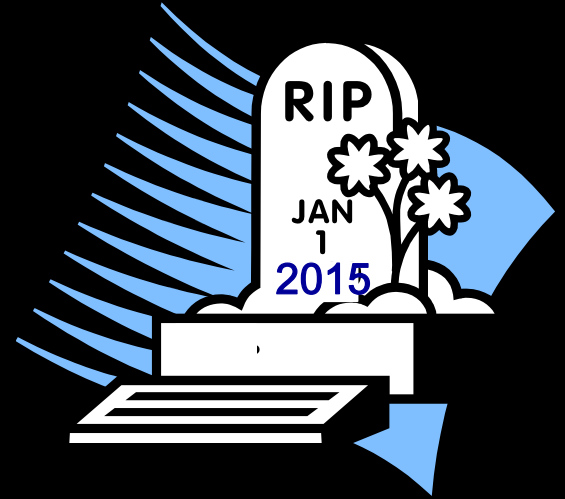
ARBRI in 5 years?



F U T U R E

Future of ARBRI?

- **Scenario 1:**
slow death over next few years



Future of ARBRI?

- **Scenario 2:**
limited survival over several years



Future of ARBRI?



- **Scenario 3:**
very active and successful for many years
 - **Appointment of full-time director**
 - **Collaborations with several institutions**
 - **Acquisitions of several research grants by several AU people**
 - **AU Library = central depository for all published materials related to ARB**

Future of ARBRI?

- **Scenario 4:**
as Scenario 3 but with:
- **AU research building on the banks of the Athabasca River**
 - **Labs with pumped in river water**
 - **Dock with jet boats**
 - **Storage space for equipment and specimens**
 - **Public exhibits**



The future of
ARBRI is in
your hands

