



# A Year of Growth

## Annual Report 2022/23

[climatewest.ca](https://climatewest.ca)



Prepared: December 2023

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Executive Director 1**

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ClimateWest's work occurs on the traditional land of Treaties 1 through 8, and 10. This area includes many Indigenous Nations. The ClimateWest office is located on Treaty 1 Territory, the historic meeting place of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Inninewuk, Anishininiwag, Dakota and Dene, and the Homeland of the Métis Nations.



## Message from Our Chair and Executive Director



ClimateWest has evolved from years of climate work in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. While the work was not always referred to as climate 'adaptation' or 'resilience', various sectors, organizations, Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments, and businesses have been independently increasing their knowledge about a changing climate and the impacts on them. ClimateWest is now meeting the need for an organization dedicated to serving all these diverse audiences by connecting, collaborating, championing, amplifying, and translating climate adaptation information for ease of use. Being part of a national network alongside other regional climate service organizations, ClimateWest will continue to distribute free, reliable climate data, information, and tools tailored to the Prairie region.

**Elaine Fox, Board Chair**



I am delighted to have contributed to ClimateWest's growth over the past year. Our latest knowledge products, webinars, workshops, and the Inaugural Forum have positioned ClimateWest as a trusted source of information for many in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. Building this trust has been possible due to the invaluable support of our three founding partners: the International Institute for Sustainable Development, Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative, and the Prairie Climate Centre, along with the ongoing support from the governments of Canada, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. Recognizing the significant task ahead to build climate resilience in these provinces, we are committed to upholding our core values of inclusivity, collaboration, and equity. Everyone is welcome to reach out to ClimateWest with their climate questions, big or small.

**Kerra Chomlak, Executive Director**



## **Vision**

Communities, businesses, non-profits and governments across Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba are equipped to thrive in the face of a changing climate based on decisions informed by the best science, expertise and training that is tailored to meet their needs.

## **Mandate**

To deliver credible, useful, and timely climate information, data, tools, and training tailored to the Prairie region in support of positive adaptation to a changing climate.





## Our Beginnings

**The Prairies Regional Adaptation Collaborative (PRAC) was one of the first programs to bring together the provincial Governments of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, and the federal Government of Canada to collaborate on building climate adaptation knowledge amongst decision-makers.**

The PRAC provided valuable opportunities to share information and focus on the unique climate adaptation attributes of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. It also helped to identify the excellent work and expertise that existed in the Prairie region and the need to bring it together.

The Canadian Centre for Climate Services (CCCS), within Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) approached the PRAC about creating a regional climate services organization in the Prairies, which presented an opportunity to take the best of what had been learned through the PRAC and blend it with the National Network of Climate Services Providers being developed by CCCS.

The four governments collaborated with three highly respected organizations - the Prairie Climate Centre (PCC), the Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative (PARC), and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) - to launch ClimateWest. These

founding partners harnessed their unique strengths to create a hub of Prairie-focused climate information, research, analysis, training, outreach and tools. ClimateWest was established as a non-profit organization in 2021 with both financial and in-kind support from the Government of Canada through the federal Department of Environment and Climate Change, and the Governments of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.

The Founding Partners continue to play an essential role in providing climate services to the Prairies, Canada and beyond. We thank them for their significant and valued contribution to ClimateWest.

## THANK YOU

ClimateWest gratefully acknowledges the valuable contributions of the founding partners, past board members, government support staff, and secretariat:

### FOUNDING PARTNERS

- **International Institute for Sustainable Development:** Jo-Ellen Parry, Cameron Hunter, Georgia Exell & Alanna Evans
- **Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative:** Dave Sauchyn & Jon Belanger
- **Prairie Climate Centre:** Danny Blair, Ian Mauro, Christie Allen, Matthew Loxely & Izabella Robak



### Past Board Members and Government Support Staff

- **Government of Alberta:** Kendra Isaac, Roger Armstrong & Justin Toner
- **Government of Saskatchewan:** Dinah Tambalo, Jared Wolfe, Anna Hall, Adeyinka Ajayi & Pablo Rodriguez
- **Government of Manitoba:** Neil Cunningham
- **Environment and Climate Change Canada:** Lo Cheng, Kelly Murphy & Katherine Witherspoon

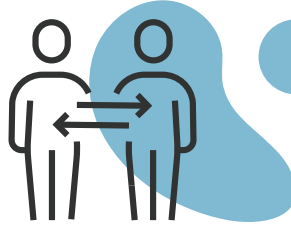
### Past Secretariat

- Jane Hilderman, Executive Director
- Bryce Gallant, Network Coordinator

## Our Journey



2011-2022



### PRAC

Brought together provinces and federal government to collaborate and build knowledge.

JUNE 2021



### ClimateWest

- Incorporated under the Canada Not-for-Profit Corporation Act
- 3 founding partners
- 4 supporting governments

JAN 2023



### Strategic Expansion

- In-person strategic planning session
- Secretariat expanded to 3 staff members

MARCH 2023



### Advisory Committee

Board of Directors elect to establish an advisory committee

MAY 2023



### Inaugural Forum

- Winnipeg, MB - attended by 108 guests & 75 virtual guests
- 16 speakers over two days



## ClimateWest Today

### Today, ClimateWest continues to build on these strong foundations.

During 2022/2023, the Board of Directors has focused on strengthening the secretariat which expanded to three staff members in 2023. The board also elected to establish an advisory committee to help advance ClimateWest's vision, and gain a wider range of perspectives and knowledges

to inform ClimateWest's work. Through strategic planning, we have further refined our core purpose and priorities. Over the past year, ClimateWest has continued to grow a broad network of adaptation actors, and support the development of regionally relevant knowledge products, climate data, outreach efforts, and training opportunities.



### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Elaine Fox, Board Chair, Government of Manitoba
- Delaney Boyd, Board Vice Chair, Government of Saskatchewan
- Jessica Spina, Government of Alberta
- Heather Morrison, Government of Canada

### GOVERNMENT SUPPORT STAFF

- Government of Manitoba: Alexandra Bourne & Ramon Sales
- Government of Saskatchewan: Colten Goertz & Jessica Vanstone
- Government of Alberta: Katie Peterson
- Government of Canada: Casey Clunas

### CLIMATEWEST SECRETARIAT

- Kerra Chomlak, Executive Director
- Taya Triffo, Network Coordinator (until January 2024)
- Ailsa McKeen, Communications Officer



This project was undertaken with the financial support of:  
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de :



Environment and  
Climate Change Canada

Environnement et  
Changement climatique Canada



## National Network

**Working closely with the Canadian Centre for Climate Services (CCCS), ClimateWest is proud to be part of a growing network of regional climate service providers who are dedicated to helping Canadians prepare for our changed and changing climate.**

ClimateWest seeks to learn from others outside our region. Regional climate service providers, such as CLIMAtlantic in Atlantic Canada, are doing similar work to increase Canadians resilience to climate impacts. ClimateWest stays informed about best practices nationally and internationally and tailors them for our regional network.

Our secretariat also attends national and international gatherings to stay updated on the latest climate knowledge. These included: Public Infrastructure Engineering Vulnerability Committee (PIEVC) Global Forum; Adaptation Futures Conference; Tamarack Virtual Gathering; and Livable Cities Forum.

### **We are connected at a local, provincial, and federal level.**

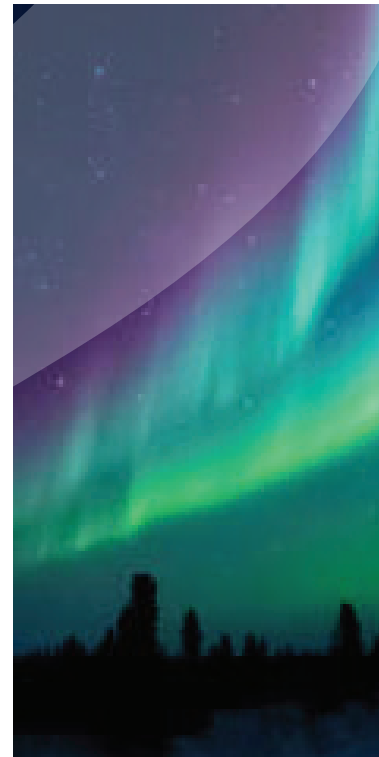
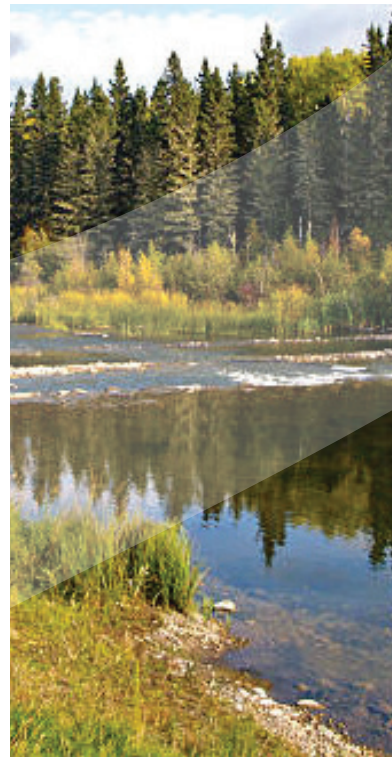
We monitor policies and initiatives across this spectrum and have provided input during the engagement phase of national strategies and report development.

- National Adaptation Strategy
- Sustainable Agriculture Strategy
- *Building a Green Prairie Economy Act*

ClimateWest also participates in Environment and Climate Change Canada's Regional Coordinating Committee (RCC) alongside the other regional climate service providers. The RCC provides a forum to enable collaborative, coordinated and strategic provision of climate services across Canada.

### **Regional Hubs:**

- CLIMAtlantic - Atlantic Canada
- Ontario Resource Centre for Climate Adaptation (ORCCA) - Ontario
- Ouranos - Quebec
- Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium - British Columbia and Yukon





## Our Work Focuses on Four Priorities:



### Data Access & Outreach

ClimateWest makes regionally relevant climate data and information more accessible by connecting users to the right level of climate data for their decision-making, providing guidance on how climate data can be incorporated into various tools and processes.



### Risk Management & Adaptation Planning

ClimateWest provides support and guidance to facilitate integration of climate data and information into risk and vulnerability assessments, and champions the need for adaptation planning and proactive investment in resilience measures.



### Networking & Communication

ClimateWest is a community of practice that facilitates cross-sector and inter-provincial networking opportunities and infrastructure across the provinces related to climate resilience and preparedness.



### Training & Capacity Building

ClimateWest is the curator of localized training materials for the three provinces by providing access to existing training and professional development opportunities, while offering informative webinars that support education and peer learning.



## Financials

### 22/23 REVENUE APRIL 2022-MARCH 2023

FUNDER	22/23 CONTRIBUTION
Environment and Climate Change Canada	\$400,000
Government of Manitoba	\$170,000
Government of Alberta	\$200,000
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$770,000</b>

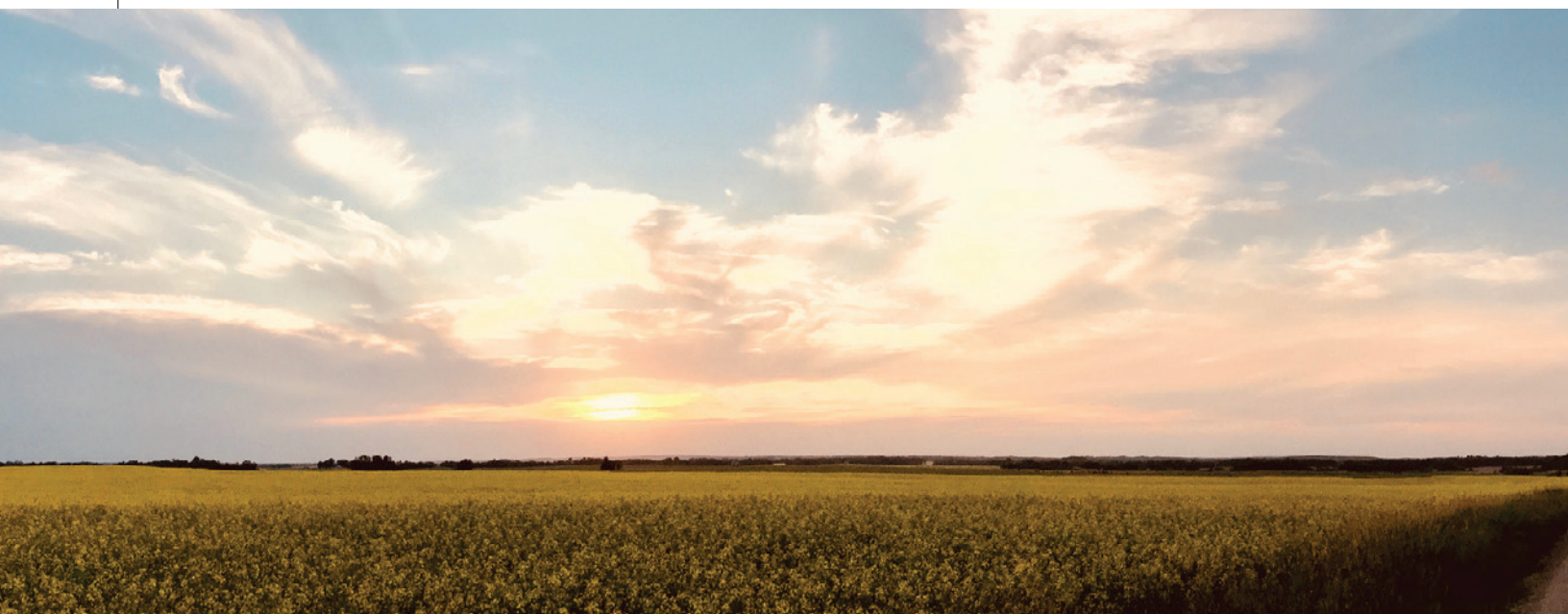
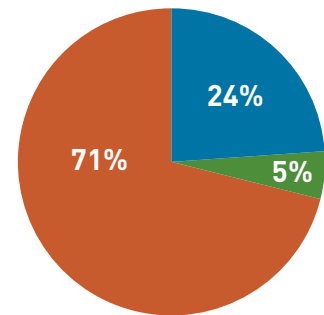
### IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

Government of Saskatchewan	\$50,000
Government of Manitoba	\$30,000
<b>Total Contributions</b>	<b>\$80,000</b>

### 22/23 EXPENSES APRIL 2022-MARCH 2023

CATEGORY	EXPENSE	% OF EXPENSES
Secretariat and Board Operations	\$169,000	24%
Communications	\$32,000	5%
Projects and Knowledge Products	\$490,000	71%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$691,000</b>	

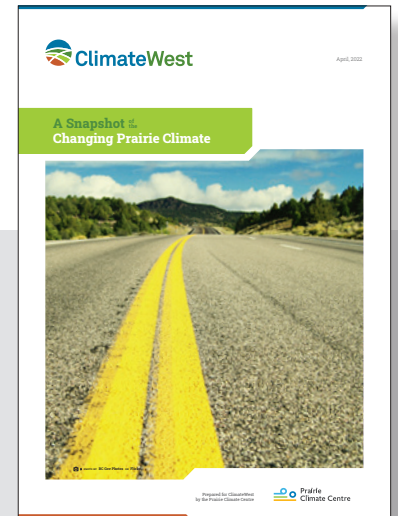
ClimateWest operations are supported with financial and in-kind contributions from the Government of Canada, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.





# Advancing Climate Adaptation

**The need to prepare and adapt to our changing climate is becoming ever more pressing.** Municipalities, Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, businesses, non-profits, and governments in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, need reliable tools, resources, and services to inform the actions that will increase their resilience to climate impacts. During 2022/23, ClimateWest supported the development of several valuable regional adaptation resources, initiatives, and events specifically to address the adaptation needs of the Prairie provinces.



## A SNAPSHOT OF THE CHANGING PRAIRIE CLIMATE

### Collaborator: Prairie Climate Centre

This plain language report provides a snapshot of the past, present, and future climate in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. The report highlights three major weather and climate events specific to the Prairies, and how they are affecting, and will continue to affect, our way of life across seven sectors.

### Why it matters

“The first step in becoming more prepared is to learn what to expect from our changing climate, and how it will affect us and our communities. ClimateWest can help people take that first step by making the information they need more accessible and easier to understand.”

Kerra Chomlak, Executive Director

### KEY TAKEAWAY:

**The Canadian Prairies are projected to warm much faster than the global average and the resulting risks to ecosystems, communities, and economies will be substantial. Examples of risks include new invasive species, extreme heat causing more heat-related illnesses, and variable water supply.**





## UNDERSTANDING AND ACCOMMODATING UNCERTAINTY IN CLIMATE CHANGE DATA: A CLIMATEWEST PRIMER

### Collaborator: Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative (PARC)

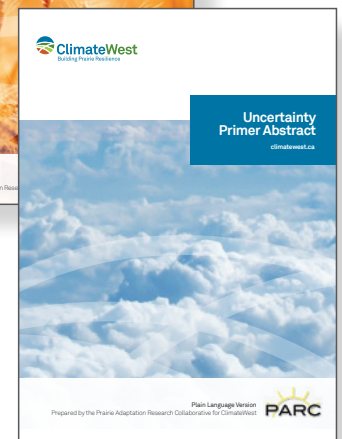
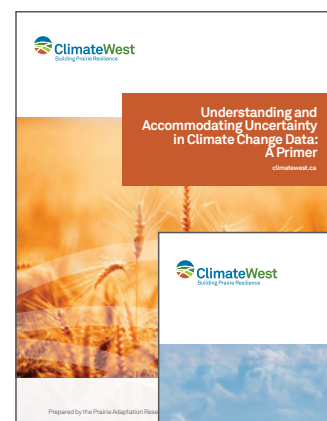
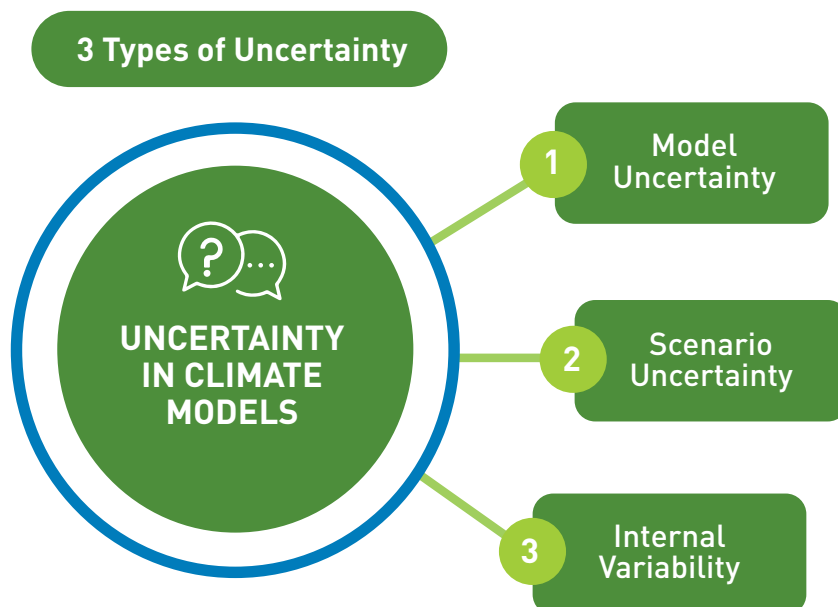
This primer was developed to explain the types of uncertainty associated with climate modelling. Written in plain language, this primer explores the causes of uncertainty, and how to manage uncertainty for climate adaptation planning.

### Why it matters

Recognizing, understanding, and accounting for uncertainty can inform robust adaptation and decision-making, and help prepare for the future.

#### KEY TAKEAWAY:

When communicating climate data, be sure to provide information on assumptions and explain the three types of uncertainty. Plan for a range of future climate changes and use information from multiple sources, including Traditional Knowledges.







## MAP OF ADAPTATION ACTIONS WEBINAR

**Collaborator: Canadian Centre for Climate Services, International Institute for Sustainable Development, and the Town of High River**

This webinar attracted 144 participants to learn about the Map of Adaptation Actions, a user-friendly tool that showcases examples of adaptation actions across Canada. This webinar explored the Map's features and how it can be used to inspire adaptation projects. The Town of High River, Alberta, shared climate adaptation actions that were put in place following a severe flood in 2013.

### Why it matters

"The sharing of knowledge is a powerful tool to inspire and motivate adaptation action. ClimateWest facilitates opportunities for communities in the Prairie region to learn from other communities who face similar challenges."

Jessica Spina, Board Member

### KEY TAKEAWAY:

The Town of High River turned adversity into opportunity by redesigning a resilient downtown space following severe flooding in 2013. Future flooding is now taken into consideration in the design of neighbourhoods making High River one of the most flood-resilient communities in Canada.





## COSTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE PRAIRIES

### Collaborator: All One Sky Foundation

This report reviews various existing studies that investigated the costs of climate change on the Prairies and in Canada. The report synthesizes this literature into a single compendium of the costs of inaction for the Prairies reflecting the current state-of-knowledge. The report outlines the potential economic impact of our changing climate, across five climate-sensitive sectors in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.

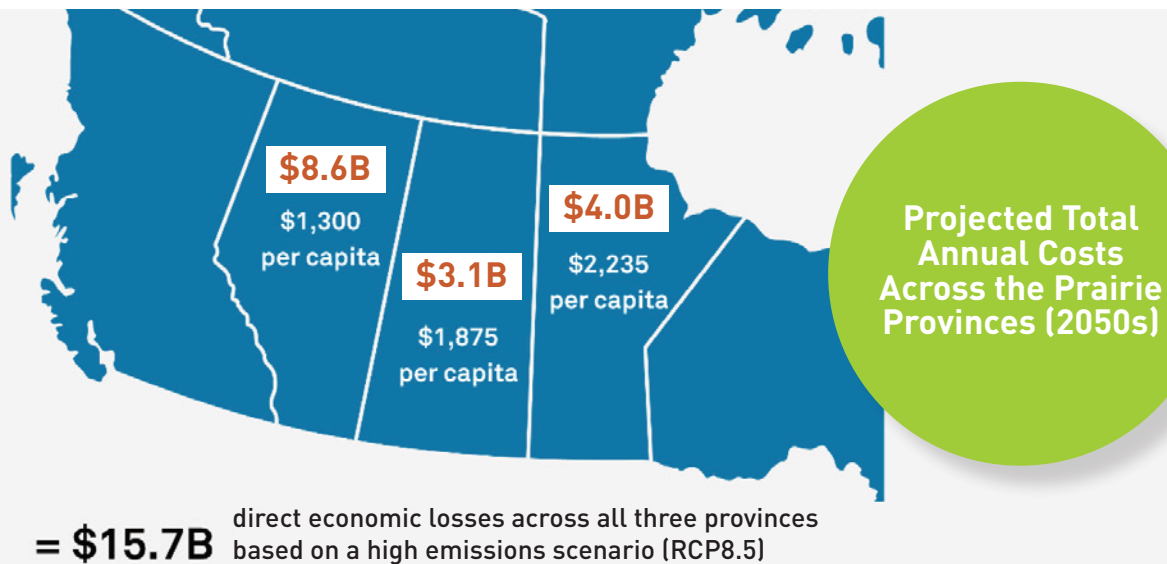
### Why it matters

“Decision-makers across Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba need to be equipped with accurate and regionally relevant information to help them make informed choices. The information in this report presents a strong business case for early investment and being proactive to current and future hazards, which ultimately will save them money in the long run.”

Elaine Fox, Board Chair

### KEY TAKEAWAY:

Economic losses for Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba combined are conservatively estimated at \$16 Billion per year by the 2050s under a high emissions scenario. The largest losses result from impacts to public health, estimated to be \$12 Billion per year. These are attributed to higher temperatures, deteriorating air quality in the three provinces, and increased cases of Lyme disease in Manitoba.







## FROM ABSTRACT TO APPLIED: MOBILIZING CLIMATE RESEARCH TO ENHANCE CLIMATE RESILIENCE IN EDMONTON

**Collaborator: City of Edmonton, International Institute for Sustainable Development, Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative, Prairie Climate Centre**

ClimateWest hosted a one-day climate data workshop for City of Edmonton staff as part of a project funded by the Alberta Ecotrust Foundation. Participants learned how to access and integrate climate data into their work and improved their confidence communicating climate data within and outside their department. In 2024, ClimateWest will develop communication materials based on the learnings from this workshop and share them more widely with other Prairie municipalities.

### Why it matters

Understanding your climate risk starts with having good climate data. ClimateWest provides guidance on where to find climate data and how to use it to build climate resilience. ClimateWest strives to reduce barriers and increase access to accurate climate information to help people prepare for our changing climate.

### KEY TAKEAWAY:

When providing climate data, know your audience. Help them define their objectives and needs. Consider more than one variable. Use trusted messengers and present data in various formats to improve understanding.



## ClimateWest Forum

**On May 3 and 4, 2023, we brought together ClimateWest's expanding network for the inaugural *ClimateWest Forum: The benefits of early adaptation action*.** More than 100 in-person guests and 75 virtual participants joined us for this free, hybrid event. The Forum was an opportunity for the climate adaptation community in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba to gather, to share experiences, and to learn about the state of knowledge on climate adaptation.

Guests included Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators, climate monitoring teams, university researchers, watershed managers, environmental network members, climate communications specialists, engineers, policy advisors, government staff, consultants, farmers and producers, and more. Over two days, 16 knowledgeable speakers and panellists presented on a variety of climate adaptation topics.



**“The ClimateWest Forum highlighted the value of being in a community with other climate action practitioners who understand the challenges and the importance of working together to take climate action based on mutual respect, strength in diversity, and the**

**inclusion of Indigenous ways of knowing and being. The sense of connection I felt at the forum has inspired me to attend future adaptation conferences to fill the tank for more work and progress. I'm looking forward to the next ClimateWest forum and further**

**exploring a prairie-specific approach to climate action that taps into our unique culture, resources, and potential.**

Kayla Dawson, Civil Engineer/  
Community Consultant, Urban  
Systems

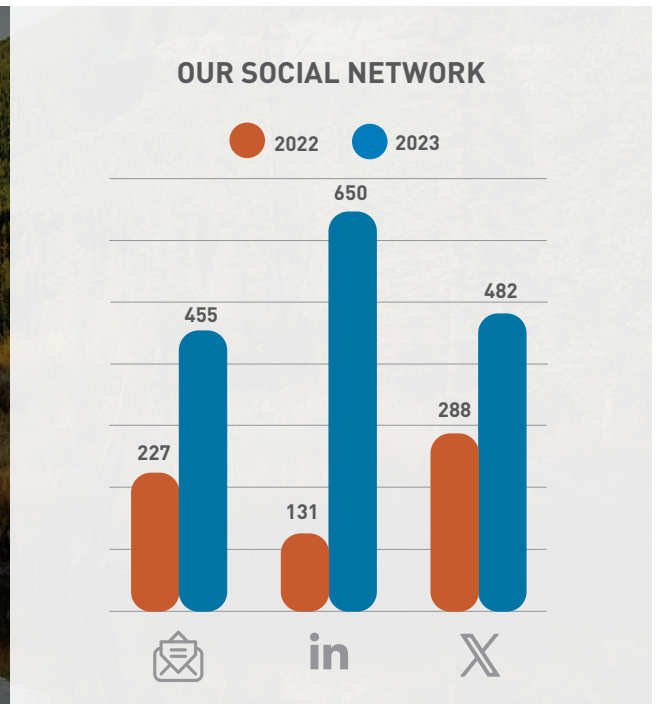
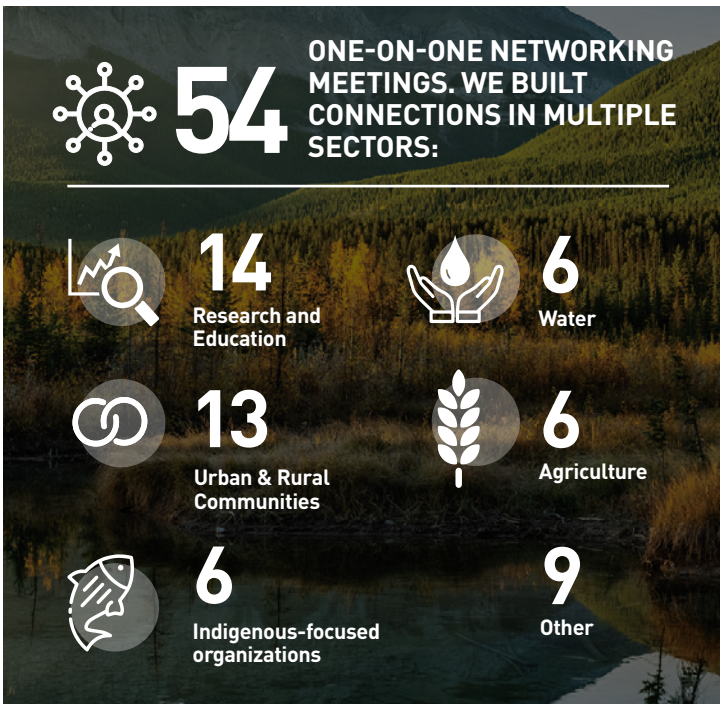




# Network Building

**In 2022/23, a core priority for ClimateWest was to build and strengthen the climate adaptation network in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.**

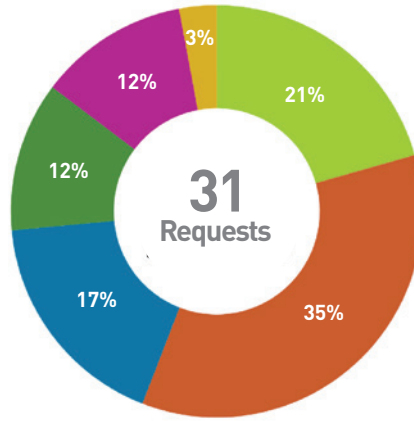
Operating as a hub, our network values our role as a central source for regionally specific climate adaptation information. Our network brings together the three provinces to collaborate in a shared space, promoting cooperation and knowledge-sharing. We make it easier for our network to navigate the complex, expanding world of adaptation guides, service providers, data products, experts, and frameworks.



**Bottom right & middle photo:** Régénération Canada farm-to-table event, Axten Farms, SK, July 2023  
Photo credit: Hamaka Creativity Lab

## Supporting People on the Prairies

**We strive to be a trusted, reliable source of information for our network.** Our network reaches out to us with a range of questions and requests. ClimateWest's Help Desk is a free, public resource that supports people living in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba with their climate adaptation needs and questions. During 2022/23, ClimateWest helped organizations and communities build Prairie resilience to our changing climate by:



Delivering presentations on climate adaptation and resilience



Facilitating partnerships between organizations and experts



Participating in media interviews



Providing support in accessing and using climate data and services



Providing policy input



Providing event information

**ClimateWest maintains a roster of credible climate adaptation experts who can support Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, businesses, non-profits and governments with their needs.** Developed in collaboration with the International Institute for Sustainable Development, the roster includes 79 individuals, and it continues to grow. We draw upon this resource to efficiently guide help desk users and network members toward relevant adaptation planners, facilitators, researchers, and more.

The Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre, based in Manitoba contacted the ClimateWest Help Desk to request advice on completing a climate risk assessment for a new building. Our Network Coordinator provided free resources on risk assessments for buildings, options for consultants familiar with prairie-specific climate data, potential funding sources, and information on the PIEVC Protocol.

**The information you provided was useful for me, and helped me to better see the landscape of companies doing this kind of assessment.**

Adolfo Cuetara, Executive Director, Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre

# 79

INDIVIDUALS ON OUR ROSTER OF CLIMATE ADAPTATION EXPERTS







## Looking Ahead

### In 2024, ClimateWest will focus on:

- **Raising awareness about ClimateWest** and the free services we provide to build climate resilience in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.
- **Expanding our network** by connecting with more organizations working on climate resilience in the three provinces.
- **Encouraging the use of climate data** in decision-making and promoting early action.
- **Hosting the second annual ClimateWest Forum** in Edmonton, Alberta in Spring 2024, followed by another in Saskatchewan in 2025.
- **Engaging with Indigenous communities and organizations** to enhance ClimateWest's role as a trusted messenger on climate resilience in the Prairies.

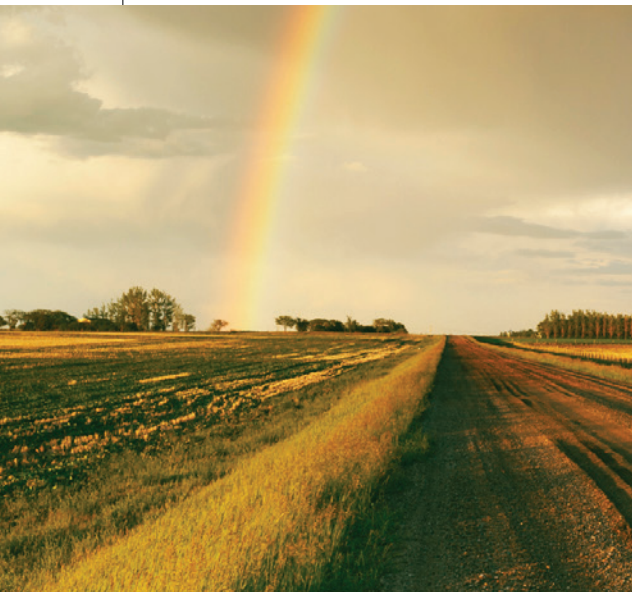
### ADAPTATION IN ACTION PROGRAM

In December 2023, ClimateWest launched the [Adaptation in Action Program](#), a call for project proposals that advance climate adaptation in the Prairie provinces. The goal of the Adaptation in Action Program is to support impactful projects in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba that:

- Build understanding about the range of plausible future climate conditions and how this may impact communities, businesses, governments, and/or organizations;
- Bridge Indigenous and Western knowledges to better advance climate adaptation;

- Identify and assess climate risks and vulnerabilities that result in learnings that apply across the region; and
- Develop information or communication materials that enable adaptation action and investment.

The results of the call for proposals, will determine ClimateWest's project priorities for the next two years.



“Through the Adaptation in Action Program, our hope is to share project outcomes to build capacity and empower a community of change-makers across the Prairie provinces.

We look forward to fostering strong partnerships and collaboration to improve preparedness for our changed and changing climate.

Kerra Chomlak,  
Executive Director

## CONNECT WITH US

We want climate adaptation knowledge to reach as many people as possible across the region to ensure Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba thrive in the face of a changing climate. Creating resilient communities needs an all-of-society approach. Connect with us, grow your knowledge, and help spread the word! Sign up for our newsletter, engage with us on social media, attend an event or simply read one of our blogs. Every little bit helps.

