

2016 SAW Watershed Stewardship Award

I first met Jason Puckett in April of 2007, as he was part of the interview committee that hired me as the inaugural Manager of the Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association. From 2007 to 2015 I worked closely with Jason on the many projects that the AWSA completed over that time frame.

Jason was a fast talking, “government guy” that could ramble off enough acronyms to make a person’s head spin. Jason had a “true” passion for the environment, and the natural habitat, fisheries, and wildlife of the Assiniboine River Watershed; he was my kind of guy! He had a positive, carefree, no quit attitude that was absolutely infectious. And his potty mouth with a no-filter kind of humour, made his stories and jokes priceless, and they seemed to be endless. He definitely kept work and meetings entertaining and truthfully I always looked forward to Puckett being at a meeting and couldn’t wait until our next meeting with him. But with all that said, at the end of the day, he got things done on the ground. He was a guy that wanted to make a difference and truly leave this world a better place for his children, his family... for everyone!

Jason worked as an Agri-environmental Technologist for the Water Security Agency in Yorkton. He led, and was a part of, many grass-roots projects in the East Central region of the province. He worked closely with The Assiniboine, Lower Qu’Appelle and Carrot River Watershed Stewardship Groups, various Conservation and Development Area Authorities, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, Ministry of Agriculture and several other government and non-government agencies.

Some of Jason’s work highlights with the AWSA were:

- Assisting with the formation of the Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association itself, as a member of the planning committee
- Twin Lakes Project – Creation of a riffle section in the Assiniboine River
- Cupar Creek Project – Restoring a natural waterway that was infilled
- Good Spirit Lake Scour Hole Project – Repairing an erosion hole that was causing an annual fish die out
- Yorkton Logan Green Trout Pond – Creation of an urban fishery in the City of Yorkton
- Stony Creek Project – Removal of perched culverts & the installation of a bridge to increase access to upstream fish spawning habitat

Jason also worked with many producers in the East Central region for the implementation of many Beneficial Management Projects. These projects consisted of erosion protection, creek crossings, and numerous water system projects that removed livestock from creeks, rivers and lakes. He was a part of thousands of miles of fencing and windbreak projects that helped producers better manage their pastures and animals. He also was a part of the conversion of over 50,000 acres of cropland to perennial forage in the Assiniboine River Watershed. Jason assisted in many of the AWSA’s wetland restoration projects, and was involved in the identification, protection and decommissioning of hundreds of water wells in the watershed. In addition, he helped administer crucial flood

protection through the WSA's Emergency Flood Damage Reduction Program, where he spent countless hours working with the home, cottage, and cabin owners at Round and Crooked Lakes in the Lower Qu'Appelle watershed.

Jason would want all of us to remember his work legacy. He loved what he did and it was quite apparent to anyone that knew him that his passion for the outdoors was very real, and deeply engrained in so many aspects of his life.

I not only knew Jason through work, but I also got to know Jason as a friend. I had the privilege to hear about and witness his passion for his family. His love for his wife Shelly and his children Ainsly and Jack was second to none!! His love of his entire family and his circle of friends was repeatedly talked about. Jason was one of those "good" guys that would give you his shirt off his back, a fishing rod if you needed one, lend you a rifle, give you a cigarette if you wanted one... or even have the last shot from his bottle of his spiced rum, whether you needed one more or not!

I only knew him for 8+ years, but in that time, he helped me with work, hunting and fishing and most importantly he helped me recognize the value of Family, Friends, and LIFE. Jason's battle was courageous and inspiring. In one of my last conversations with him, he told me, "Aron, spend time with your friends, you know who your friends are, your wife, family and your kids..... hold your wife and kids..... spend that time with them, cause you just never know what happens in life".