



“The rose has thorns only for those who would gather it.”

Chinese Proverb

January 2016

Green New Year's Resolutions

SAGE Meeting every third Wednesday - January 20th at the Lethbridge Public Library downtown, 7 to 9 p.m.

Green Drinks YQL. First Tuesday of the month at 4 p.m.—Owl Acoustic Lounge.

Greensence is continuing its fundraising for **Jessica Ernst** and her brave efforts to protect water from contamination from fracking, and to give voice against corrupted regulatory processes.
www.greensence.ca

From [Eco-Slacker](#), here are 10 green New Year's resolutions:

1. No bottled water: “help make a dent in the 1.5 million barrels of oil used to make plastic water bottles each year.”
2. Brew your own fair trade coffee.
3. Remember your useable bags when shopping.
4. Cut back on paper towels: “help eliminate the 3,000 tons of paper towels that end up in landfills every day.”
5. Use a bike for short trips: “Ride your bike for trips shorter than 2 miles and you

could cut your carbon footprint significantly, save money on gasoline and car maintenance, and increase your fitness level.”

6. Support farmer's markets and Community Supported Agriculture: (eg. [Noble Gardens](#)).
7. Become a weekend vegetarian: “Cutting meat out of your diet just two days a week can decrease your carbon footprint by about 1/3 of a ton.”
8. Eliminate phantom power: as much as 10% of your electricity power is lost on electronics that are turned off (eg. Televisions, game

systems, and charging devices).

9. Switch to green power: options for green electricity providers in Alberta can be found online at www.albertaenergyprovider.com/renewable-energy-alberta.html
10. Replace your lightbulbs with low-energy options like compact fluorescent and LED: These are more expensive but last longer and use 6 to 10 times less energy. Plan to change your most used lights first.

Happy New Year.

Director for Environment Lethbridge

After an extensive search, Environment Lethbridge has recently welcomed Kathleen Sheppard as its new Executive Director.

“We are very excited to have Kathleen join the Environment Lethbridge team,” said Mike Spencer, Chair of Environment Lethbridge's Executive Committee. “We have big plans for the next three years and I know that Kathleen's skills and experience will be crucial in ensuring Environment Lethbridge's success.”

Originally from southern Alberta, Kathleen brings more than 25 years experience in the non-profit sector to Environment Lethbridge. Her experience includes work in land conservation, wildlife rescue, wilderness protection and environmental sustainability.

Kathleen has a Bachelor of Science in Geography and Biology and a Certificate in Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Management.

Most recently, she was the Executive Director with Social Planning Cowichan, located in Duncan, BC. Prior to that, she worked as the Director of Operations for The Land Conservancy of BC.

“I am thrilled to be joining Environment Lethbridge at this critical time,” Sheppard explained. “I look forward to working with local businesses, government and community members to establish Lethbridge as a leader in sustainability.”

During the upcoming year, Environment Lethbridge will focus on providing information and resources related to waste reduction and recycling. Among the first

tasks for Environment Lethbridge's new Executive Director will be to develop sustainability benchmarks, to establish a one-stop hub for sustainability information and to collaborate with local community partners to promote existing sustainability initiatives.

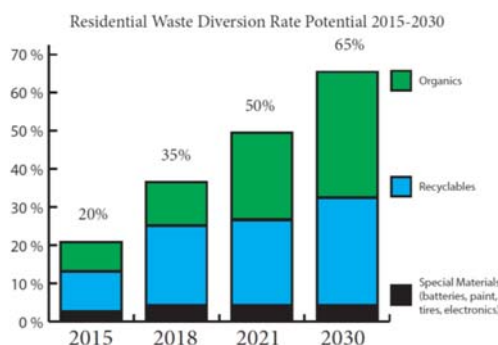
Established in 2013, Environment Lethbridge inspires and equips people to create widespread community action and engagement towards sustainability. Environment Lethbridge is always looking to involve the community in the work it does.

Community members and anyone who wishes to volunteer are encouraged to contact Environment Lethbridge through their website at www.environmentlethbridge.ca.

Residential Waste Diversion Strategy Presented to City Council

The City of Lethbridge has adopted a policy to achieve a diversion of 50% of residential waste by 2021, and 65% by 2030. We currently divert between 10% and 15% of our waste from the landfill using three recycling depots and voluntary compliance. Currently, 72% of what we put into our garbage can be diverted.

To achieve these results the Residential Waste Diversion Strategy suggests that curbside recycling of recyclable materials will increase waste diversion rates to 35%. By implementing an organics collection system, this diversion rate can be increased to 50%. The date is 2021. The diversion rate would eventually increase to 65% by 2030 through experience.



The timelines proposed for residential waste diversion begins with a pilot study with biweekly curbside recycling implemented throughout the city by the end of 2018 once a Materials Recycling Facility is in operation. A curbside organics pilot would be initiated in 2018 with weekly curbside organic pickup fully implemented by 2021. Traditional waste pickup will be reduced from weekly to biweekly rates, as the greater amount of the waste is diverted.

Interesting Links:

Residential Waste Diversion Strategy

meetings.lethbridge.ca/sirepub/mtgviewer.aspx?meetid=991&doctype=AGENDA

Climate Change Counter-Movement

www.desmogblog.com/2015/12/01/new-study-exposes-true-extent-influence-climate-denial-echo-chamber-first-time

Climate Change as a Health Issue

www.vox.com/2015/6/22/8824579/lancet-commission-climate-change

Renewable Energy

www.scientificamerican.com/article/139-countries-could-get-all-of-their-power-from-renewable-sources1/?print=true



Southern Alberta Group for the Environment (SAGE)

A Leading Voice for a Healthy and Environmentally Sustainable Community.

Visit us at: <http://sage-environment.org/>

If you are interesting in getting involved, contact us at:

sage-communications@sage-environment.org

Ongoing engagement programs will help residents learn to most effectively divert their wastes. SAGE has committed to assist Environment Lethbridge in their efforts to promote best practices for recycling and diverting compostable materials.

The costs to residents to implement curbside recycling is estimated to be as much as \$10/month. Organic curbside recycling is estimated to cost an additional \$8/month. And reducing waste pickup to biweekly rates would save \$2/month.

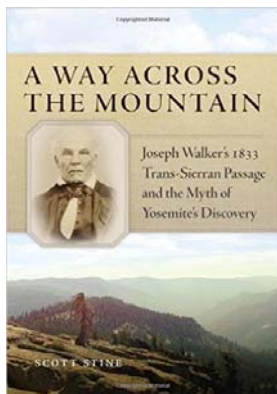
To put this in perspective, the monthly recycling cost could be saved by replacing six incandescent lights in your home with LED (operated 10 hours per day) ... and this pays for the light bulbs, too.

The Residential Waste Diversion Strategy *"will be the most effective and proven method for achieving targets based on research from other similar municipalities. By focusing on customer convenience and providing an enhanced level of service this will ensure the highest possible rate of participation in order to achieve City Council's waste diversion targets."*

It should be noted that the City of Lethbridge will also be working with industry, commercial businesses, and institutions to help reduce ICI and C&D wastes, which comprise 58% and 19% of the total waste stream, respectively. The City has already set policy direction for diversion targets in these sectors.

City Council will consider the strategy in early 2016. If you support waste diversion, it would be beneficial for the City of Lethbridge to hear from you - share your thoughts with City Councillors and Mayor Spearman. (Unfortunately, they too seldom hear from those people who support city initiatives.)

Double Feature: A Way Across the Mountain & Heart Waters: Sources of the Bow River



A Way Across the Mountain is part mystery and part adventure. It is also an inquiry into the making of a legend.

The story is about Joseph Walker who is an acclaimed Mountain

Man of the American intermontane west. As legend has it, as he was leading a group of trappers across the Sierran mountain in what is now California, he became the first Euro-American to lay eyes on what is now Yosemite Park. Biographers since the late 1800's have retold the story many times, often with detailed maps of the trek.

The problem, according to author Scott Stine, is that none of it is true.

Stine uses the daily notes written by one of the people on the trans-Sierran passage to detail the actual route. Each day of the journey is surmised from observations made in the diary. The book is well written and shares interesting descriptions of the terrain, and the adventure of a group of mountain men blindly flinging themselves across a mountain range.

Stine compares his more probable route with the legendary path, and is able to make a clear case against the possibility of Joseph Walker having stumbled upon one of the most breathtaking natural sites in the United States.

The author also sets the story into the context of the fur trade raging at the time, and the strain caused by settlers moving west. He also describes the confusion caused by maps and narra-

tives, as the features of the terrain are named and renamed with each passing group of Euro-Americans. From the European perspective, the west was an empty map - the stuff that legends are made of.

My first reaction to a book as beautiful as this one is that the prose will be so vacuous that it would dislodge the toupee from the head of a presidential nominee. This is certainly not the case with *Heart Waters*!

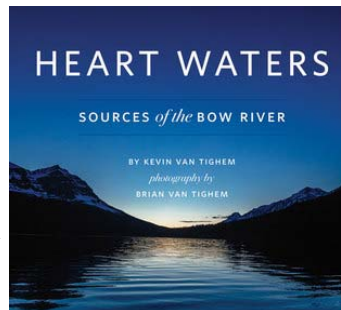
Heart Waters is a magnificent book.

The photos by Brian Van Tighem are arresting - clearly taken by a person with a sublime connection to the region. And as for the text by Kevin Van Tighem, well, it is equally impressive: Lilted, informative, and compelling.

Heart Waters is about the watershed of the Bow River: it is about the headwaters, it is about our economy, and it is about our selves. The author does a remarkable job weaving together stories, science, issues and conflicting land uses, almost like a series of streams flowing and joining to make a river.

The chapter on 'river origins describes the formation of the watershed after the last ice age as the great inland sea east of the Rockies drained away. The reader is informed about how the geology of glacial till stores cool water that feeds the creeks and rivers through the summer.

A chapter on the history of native fish and the stocking of alien fish over the past century describes the impact of



past decisions on the health of the river. There is perhaps no better indicator of the health of a river than its ability to sustain native cutthroat and bull trout.

Another interesting chapter traces the history of capturing water for electricity generation, and the negative impacts on riparian health, the condition of river beds and the deleterious effects on fish populations.

The author tackles forestry in a balanced and informative way, and he addresses the impact of cattle on the headwaters with understanding. Van Tighem seeks input from all the actors and captures the complexity that comes with competing uses for land and water. Many of these issues, he discusses, can be balanced by sharing best practices of good stewardship. And sometimes it might require public investment when economic barriers are manifest [read: externalizing the environment in the race to the bottom line].

Though he takes a highly balanced approach to the issues, the author does not shrink from identifying land uses that absolutely do not belong in the headwaters - that is, 'off-road vehicle vandalism'. The appalling damage to creeks and wetlands is effectively captured in many of the photographs that accompany the text.

I usually love to quote striking passages from a book, but in this case I would have to quote the whole book.

At the risk of gushing, I believe this is one of the best books I have read on the environment - and we are so lucky to have a book of this caliber about *our* environment.