



## NEWSLETTER

June 2006

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A leading voice for a healthy and environmentally sustainable community.

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### *Announcements*

#### **SAGE Picnic at Setaspell Outpost**

*11:30 a.m., Saturday, 17 June 2006*

Debby Gregorash will host SAGE's annual potluck picnic, a lunch, at her country place near Police Outpost Park. Bring hotdogs, smokies or hamburgers for roasting over the fire (if it's not too windy). Folks with last names starting A to N bring salad, and M to Z bring desserts. Debby will provide sandwiches, and condiments as well as juice, tea and coffee. Also, bring dishes, cutlery and lawn chairs. Come earlier with good walking shoes, if you want to do a little hike.

Directions: Go south of Cardston on Highway 2 until you reach the turnoff sign to Police Outpost Provincial Park (POPP). Turn and head that way, watching for potholes. When you get to a 4-way intersection you'll see a small blue "Provincial Park" sign so turn south and go to POPP. Do not turn into the park where the big park sign is but go straight on a little dirt road that leads down a hill to a gate. Go through that gate and head west. It will take you over Boundary Creek at the west edge of the park's wetland. There's another gate after that culvert to go through. Setaspell is the first driveway on the left. The Gregorash sign is there at the driveway entrance. Follow the driveway to the cabin.

#### **Groundwater Sustainability in Southern Alberta**

*Friday, 16 June 2006*

*Telus Convention Center, Calgary*

The workshop is planned to share current research knowledge about the state of groundwater in Southern Alberta and identify priorities for sustainable groundwater management. To register, \$75, phone (403) 932-3700 or visit [www.brbc.ab.ca](http://www.brbc.ab.ca).

#### **Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. Open House Proposed Power Line Update**

*4 – 8 pm, Monday, 19 June 2006*

*Heritage Hall, Milk River*

The purpose of the open house is to provide an update on the proposed route of the power line and a potential

alternate route around the Milk River Ridge. MATL's contact is [cathy.acton@amec.com](mailto:cathy.acton@amec.com).

#### **Biodiversity Monitoring in the White Zone**

*10:45-11:45 am, Thursday, 22 June 2006*

*Lethbridge Research Centre Cafeteria Conference Room*

Dr. Jim Schieck, Alberta Diversity Monitoring Program will address opportunities and challenges of monitoring biodiversity in the agricultural landscapes of southern Alberta.

### *SAGE News*

**Tribute to Sheila Petherbridge** – SAGE member Sheila Petherbridge passed away in late March. For many years Sheila and her husband, Doug, have been loyal supporters of SAGE. Sheila loved nature and supported local efforts to protect it. She lived a long, full life. Our condolences go out to her family.

**Consultation re Confined Feeding Operations** – SAGE member Ann Baran continues work as an Alberta Environmental Network (AEN) representative in a collaborative process of the Clean Air Strategic Alliance (CASA) to address air quality concerns related to confined feeding operations. Information on this initiative can be found at the CASA website. Currently the team is debating whether odour should be a consideration along with a list of priority substances (ammonia, hydrogen sulphide, total reduced sulphur, particulates, volatile organic compounds, pathogens).

A consultation process to inform interested Albertans and get their views is being defined. Ann is seeking SAGE members' views on an appropriate consultation process. What information do we want to consult on, and what info do we want from the public? Who are some key audiences? What are some key messages e.g. let them know the CASA team exists? What are some options for communication/consultation with the public? How could SAGE's and AEN's existing communications functions help this team? Contact Ann at [couleesedge1@hotmail.com](mailto:couleesedge1@hotmail.com) with your ideas.

**AEN meets Alberta Environment** – On June 13 SAGE and other environmental organizations in the Lethbridge region will meet with officials from Alberta

Environment. The meetings are organized by the Alberta Environmental Network. The purpose is to provide feedback on the department's strategic priorities, the future direction of the department, and AEN member group priorities. The department's three-year business plan, [www3.gov.ab.ca/env/dept](http://www3.gov.ab.ca/env/dept), will be the focus of discussion. If you have comments or suggestions contact Kelsey at 394-0837 or [kelsey@kyotofuels.com](mailto:kelsey@kyotofuels.com).

## Notes and Updates

**Used Plastic Pails Wanted** - Soil Foodweb Canada Ltd. is looking for 325 to 350 five-gallon used plastic food grade pails a couple of university coop education projects in Vulcan which involve a grow-out trial. If you know a source, please contact Ted Leischner at (403)485-6981 or [info@soilfoodweb.ca](mailto:info@soilfoodweb.ca).

**Volunteers Needed for Presentations on Recycling** –The Recycling Council of Alberta (RCA) is launching a waste reduction speaker's bureau project, in partnership with Alberta Environment. Each year more requests are received than can be met by current staff. Presentations and background materials will be provided to minimize preparation time required of speakers. If you are willing to respond to requests for a waste reduction speaker in the Lethbridge area, please contact the RCA office at (403)843-6563 or [info@recycle.ab.ca](mailto:info@recycle.ab.ca).

**Shared Environmental Governance Unfolds** – In a presentation to the May, 2006 Alberta Environment Conference, Alberta Government representative Keith Leggat identified the need for a new approach to environmental management.

Rapidly growing pressure on the environment (oil sands development, coal-bed methane development, climate change, water scarcity, cumulative effects of all land use activities), increasing complexity of environmental issues, and rising public expectations are overwhelming government agencies that have responsibility for environmental protection. Initiatives are afoot provincially to move away from a traditional hierarchical bureaucracy with a command-and-control approach towards partnerships and networks which define shared goals and outcomes and accept shared responsibility for accomplishing them.

An evolving example of a new approach towards shared, place-based governance is the provincial Water for Life Strategy and its delivery through the multi-stakeholder Alberta Water Council, River Basin Councils and Watershed Stewardship Groups.

The success of a shared governance approach relies on an informed, empowered citizenry engaging fully in democratic process. It also needs elected representatives that are supportive of the process and accountable for the outcomes.

**Study of Water Conservation Practices Completed** – A recently completed report for the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) examines water conservation approaches in use across Canada

and in several other countries. More efficient and productive use of water can reduce conflicts among water users, protect aquatic ecosystems, enhance growth, and save money and energy.

The analysis focuses on how freshwater resources are used and managed by major sectors – municipal supply, agriculture, thermal power generation, resource extraction, manufacturing and recreation. Water efficiency opportunities are identified. A summary follows.

*Municipal* – Water efficiency improvements can avoid investments in water and wastewater infrastructure. Universal metering and conservation-oriented rate structures are shown to reduce water use. Some communities are moving towards mandatory use of water efficient plumbing fixtures and appliances. Smaller communities may need help from higher levels of government in making improvements.

*Agriculture* – Irrigated-crop production is contributing to water sustainability concerns and user conflicts across Canada. Demand management opportunities include minimizing water losses in conveyance systems, better monitoring and scheduling of water use, using more efficient application technologies, and determining net economic return in irrigating lower-value crops.

*Thermal Power* – In Canada more water is withdrawn for cooling, condensing and steam generation purposes than for any other purpose. Significant reductions in water use would occur if closed-loop systems and air cooling were required.

*Industrial* – Best practices include repairing leakages, increase water recycling, and reengineering processes. Guidelines or standards that quantify acceptable industry performance are suggested.

*Resource Extraction* – Use of water in enhanced oil recovery operations and deep well injection has raised public concern, especially in Alberta. Industry is being encouraged to pursue other alternatives including use of saline water sources and increased water recycling and reuse.

*Recreation* – Golf course operations, like agricultural and landscape irrigation, exert high seasonal water demands. Advancements are needed in siting, design, construction and operation to make more efficient and sustainable use of water than is currently the norm.

The full 274-page report can be found under 'new publications' at [www.ccme.ca](http://www.ccme.ca).

**Alberta's Integrated Energy Strategy, Say What!** – A government discussion document enunciating a new vision for Alberta's energy sector recently found its way into the hands of environmental interests. *Alberta's Integrated Energy Strategy: A Vision, A Legacy* emphasizes an "aggressive" pace of development of nonrenewable resources (coal, oil and gas) for export and streamlining approval process. Token lip service is given to renewable energy and "managing environmental impacts". Noticeably absent is any mention of increasing energy efficiency and conserving energy. Isn't this the old vision?

If you wish to see a copy of this document and provide comment to Alberta Energy, contact Cheryl at [cebradley@shaw.ca](mailto:cebradley@shaw.ca).