



NEWSLETTER

October 2006

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A leading voice for a healthy and environmentally sustainable community.

Announcements

Next SAGE Meeting

7:30 p.m., Thursday, 5 Oct 2006

Fish & Game Hut 9th Ave & 10 St. S., Lethbridge

South Saskatchewan Basin Management Plan: Environmental Issues and Opportunities Danielle Droitsch, Bow Riverkeepers

and

Oldman Watershed Council: Current Activities Stephanie Palechek, Executive Director

Danielle is a lawyer with ten years experience in watershed protection, including work with the Washington-based American Rivers. She is Chair of the Alberta Environmental Network Water Caucus. Stephanie Palechek is the new executive director of the Oldman Watershed Council. Presentations begin at 7:30 pm and will be followed by discussion. Everyone welcome. Refreshments provided.

Lethbridge Naturally

Environmental Education Speaker Series

7 p.m., Tuesday, 17 Oct 2006

Community Theatre, Lethbridge Public Library

Belinda Crawson (Galt Museum), Joanne Hedenstrom (Lethbridge Naturalists Society) and Kelsey Prenevost (SAGE) will share ways to improve environmental stewardship in and around your home and business. Free admission. Sponsored by the Southern Alberta Community of Environmental Educators and the Public Library.

Moving Towards Action

Southern Alberta Environmental Education Summit #4

8:30 am – 4 pm, Wednesday, 11 Oct 2006

Esplanade Arts Centre, 401-1 St. SE, Medicine Hat

Join others from southern Alberta to discuss and learn about environmental education in our community. There will be presentations on the sustainable living project in Craik Saskatchewan, renewable energy,

native prairie, water, waste, air quality and civic leadership. No registration fee. To register email russmi@medicinehat.ca or phone (403) 529-8188. City of Lethbridge is supplying a bus for summit delegates. To sign up for the bus, contact Paul.Bohnert@lethsd.ab.ca. This is an initiative of the Southern Alberta Community of Environmental Educators.

Value of Parks to Neighboring Communities Public Information Forum

7:00 - 9:30 pm, Monday 16 Oct, 2006

Crowsnest Centre, Blairmore

There will be three presentations. Steve Duerr, Jackson Hole Chamber of Commerce, will share his experiences from a community next door to Yellowstone National Park. Jim Johnson, economist with Pacific Analytics Inc., will speak about economic assessments done in Canada and abroad. Scott Jones, planner with Alberta Parks and Protected Areas, will share information on the contribution of parks within Alberta. Admission is free. The forum is co-hosted by Sierra Club of Canada, the "Trail of the Great Bear" ecotourism initiative, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Castle Crown Wilderness Coalition and the Natural Resources Defense Council. Contact Judy Cooke 564-4642 judycooke@shaw.ca or Judy Huntley 627-5950 office@ccwc.ab.ca for more details.

SAGE News

SAGE Display on Risk to Rivers at Kairos Regional Meeting - On 15-16 Sep 2006, SAGE members Sylvia Campbell and Mary MacEachern set up a display at McKillop United Church on risks to the health of the southern tributaries of the Oldman River. The occasion was the Fall regional meeting of Kairos Prairies North. Kairos is an ecumenical organization working for justice and peace. The theme of the meeting was Water: Life Before Profit! SAGE's key message was the degraded health of the St. Mary, Belly and Waterton rivers below dams and diversions. Changes to dam operations, water conservation and returning

saved waters to the rivers are required if the rivers are to be restored to health.

SAGE Member Hosts Radio Show - Earth Matters is heard Tuesdays, 8:30 to 10 am, on CKXU 88.3 FM in Lethbridge or www.ckxu.com on the internet. Host D.J. Gaia (Debby Gregorash) tries to have a guest on each week to talk about whatever interesting thing is happening in nature, eco-business, water and energy conservation, recycling, or anything else to do with our relationship with Earth. A member of the Canadian Search Dog Association will be the guest October 10th; Dr. Alice Hontela will be on October 17th to talk about the effects of toxins on fish; and Dr. Bill Cade will talk about crickets on October 24th.

SAGE Congratulates Minister of Environment on Basin Plan – After reviewing the Approved South Saskatchewan River Basin Water Management Plan, SAGE has sent a congratulatory letter to Environment Minister Guy Boutilier. Recommendations and provisions in the Approved Plan echo those of the Basin Advisory Committees, developed over several years of public consultation. It is now up to the Minister of Environment and the Director to act on the recommendations. The letter from SAGE expresses the willingness of members to work cooperatively through the Oldman Watershed Council and the Alberta Water Council to help implement the SSRB Management Plan and to accomplish the goals of the Alberta Water for Life Strategy.

The Approved Plan recommends a moratorium on further allocation from rivers in the Oldman River and sets water conservation objectives for the southern tributaries which are 10% above existing instream objectives (which are just 10% of mean flow). It recommends establishment of an Interbasin Water Coordinating Committee to advise on managing water during periods of water shortage and on contributions of SSRB sub-basins to interprovincial apportionment obligations.

Changes to the *Water Act* are suggested. These include allowing private parties to hold licences for water conservation objectives, to allow a part of a licence to be cancelled, and to allow water that becomes unallocated in future to become part of a Crown Reservation which can be used for conservation purposes. Visit www.environment.gov.ab.ca to see the plan or come to the Oct 5 meeting to discuss it.

SAGE to Advise on Alternative Energy – Klaus Jericho will represent SAGE on the Southern Alberta Alternative Energy Partnership Advisory Committee. The committee is a joint initiative of Economic Development Lethbridge, SouthGrow Economic Initiative and Alberta Southwest Regional Alliance. Goals are to review information on bio-, wind and solar, energy, identify barriers to development, and make recommendations on strategies to promote growth of the alternative energy sector in southern Alberta. For more information, contact Klaus at 327-4062.

Issues and Updates

City Council Investigates Micro Wind Generation – On 5 Sep 2006, Lethbridge City Council passed a motion directing Administration to investigate how other municipalities deal with the installation and use of micro wind generating equipment in residential, industrial and commercial areas. Currently installation of wind electrical generation equipment within City boundaries is not allowed. Council recognizes a growing interest among citizens to decrease their use of electrical energy.

Canadian Tire Promotes Alternative Energy - Canadian Tire has introduced a special website entitled "Get More Power. Naturally." Visitors to the website can learn about solar panels, wind generators, batteries and inverters. A page on the website helps determine energy requirements for cabins, cottages, homes and farms. It then guides the visitor through the steps of designing a renewable energy system to meet those needs. Visit www.canadiantirepower.ca/en/.

Lethbridge Expands Recycling Program - As of 1 Aug 2006, the City of Lethbridge is accepting all numbered plastics (rinsed and squished) and plastic bags (bundled) at recycling depots. In addition to plastics, City recycling depots accept cardboard (not milk cartons), clear glass (rinsed, lids and labels removed), metal cans (rinsed, labels removed) and mixed paper. It is not necessary to remove staples from paper prior to recycling or to remove windows in envelopes as these are now made of water soluble fibres. Fluorescent light bulbs should be taken to Toxic Round-Up for proper disposal since they contain toxic heavy metals.

Visit www.lethbridge.ca for information on recycling depot locations and dates and location of Toxic Round-Up. According to the website, a curbside recycling program is one of many options being considered for the future.

Getting Serious about Species at Risk – On 8 Aug 2006, five provincial and national conservation organizations, represented by Sierra Legal Defence Fund, served Federal Environment Minister Rona Ambrose with a petition giving her 60 days to step in to protect two endangered plants in Alberta or face a lawsuit. Tiny cryptanthe and sand verbena are listed under the federal *Species At Risk Act*. Currently the province does not have legislation to protect plant species evaluated at risk. Within the last few years, populations of both sand verbena and tiny cryptanthe in southern Alberta have been negatively affected by human activities.

Postcards for Suffield National Wildlife Area – SAGE members will be receiving a postcard in the mail regarding the shallow gas drilling project proposed for the Suffield National Wildlife Area. Please take the time to reply to the Prime Minister expressing concern about

the fate of Suffield NWA and the unfortunate precedent for all NWAs if this development is allowed to proceed.