



NEWSLETTER

April 2007

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A leading voice for a healthy and environmentally sustainable community.

Announcements

SAGE April Meeting

7:30 p.m., Thursday 5 Apr 2007

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

Help SAGE's new Board plan activities for the upcoming year. Refreshments are provided.

Provincial Climate Change Consultations

6:30 – 9:30 p.m., Wed, April 4, Lethbridge Lodge

A public workshop hosted by Alberta Environment will provide opportunity for input into Alberta's plan for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. An information package, which includes a workbook questionnaire and a fact book about climate change will be provided and discussed. Everyone welcome. There is no need to register. For more information visit www.alberta.ca or call 310-4455.

Provincial Oil Sands Consultations: Phase II Information Sharing Session

10 a.m. – 9 p.m., Apr 23-24,

Telus Convention Centre, Calgary

The Oil Sands Multistakeholder Committee is leading a consultation on development of Alberta's oil sands. A Phase I Interim Report recommends a vision and principles to guide development as well as a Strategy and Actions Option Paper. Phase II includes information sharing sessions to hear public comments. To register for a verbal presentation or send a written submission visit www.oilsandsconsultations.gov.ab.ca

Forest Management in the Oldman Headwaters

Dianne Pachal, Sierra Club of Canada

Noon, Thursday, 10 May 2007, Ericksen's

This session of Southern Alberta Council on Public Affairs will provide a critical analysis of the proposed C5 Forest Management Plan for the southern Eastern Slopes. An update on progress towards protected areas designation for the Castle Wildland will also be provided. Mark the date on your calendar. Cost \$8 including lunch.

Trails to Sustainability: A national environmental education conference

Thursday 24 May to Sunday 27 May, 2007

Delta Lodge at Kananaskis, Alberta

Visit www.trailstosustainability.ca.

SAGE News

New SAGE Board – SAGE's new Board determined at the 1 March annual general meeting is as follows:

President – Kelsey Prenevost
Vice-President – Edith Olson
Past-President – Sylvia Campbell
Secretary – Faisal Shaffi
Treasurer – vacant
Director – Braum Barber (new)
Director – Paul Bohnert (new)
Director – Deb Jarvie (new)
Director – Mary Eileen MacEachern
Director – Nicola Miller

Much appreciation goes to outgoing Board members Cheryl Fujikawa and Diana Williams. Cheryl has guided SAGE for several years as a Director and will continue to serve as our representative on the Oldman Watershed Council. Her knowledge of environmental biology, her education skills, and her networking are a great asset to the organization. Diana Williams has been Treasurer for more years than we can remember. Our confidence that SAGE's finances were secure in her hands has never wavered. Diana also fed us, providing delicious cookies and refreshments at meetings. Thank you both Cheryl and Diana for your wonderful contributions.

Ken Revak will continue as newsletter distributor. Cheryl Bradley will remain as newsletter editor, but welcomes offers from others to take on the role. She took over the job from Edith Olson in January 1993 and is definitely planning to retire in January 2008 after 15 years.

Volunteer Needed for SAGE Treasurer – SAGE is looking for a Treasurer. Responsibilities include handling the Society's monies, preparing regular

reports of receipts and expenditures, and presenting an audited financial statement at the Annual General Meeting. Time commitment is a few hours each month. Please contact Kelsey if you are interested in volunteering, by email kelsey@kyotofuels.com.

Big Thanks to Volunteers for Home & Garden Show

– Several SAGE members volunteered for shifts at the environmental booth at the 2007 Lethbridge and District Home and Garden Show on March 23 – 26. The booth was manned jointly by members of SAGE, the Urban Team of the Oldman Watershed Council and the Lethbridge Environment Week Committee. It provided a display and handouts on the stormwater system and lawn and garden practices which conserve water and minimize risk of contamination of stormwater. There was opportunity to communicate messages to several hundred visitors in a very direct and meaningful way.

A big thank-you to Paul Bohnert, Bill Brown, Ted Buchanan, Sylvia Campbell, Reg Ernst, Cheryl Fujikawa, Edith Olson, Faisal Shaffi and Cecily Smith. Cheryl Bradley organized volunteers. Staff of Alberta Environment, Alberta Ingenuity Centre for Water Research, Chinook Health, City of Lethbridge, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Oldman Watershed Council also participated. A biology student from the University of Lethbridge also helped. Irene Friesen of GardenWare Canada Ltd. donated an attractive Oasis rain barrel for a draw.

Issues and Updates

Reflections on Flying and Carbon Credits (by Klaus Jericho from *Nature*, 28 Dec, 2006 pg 976-977) - Can we really counter climate changes by paying for carbon-saving projects elsewhere?

The first problem is simply calculating the amount of carbon that needs to be offset. For example, the British Carbon Neutral Company calculates a return flight from London to Bangkok, Thailand, at 2.1 tonnes of carbon dioxide per passenger, which it charges around 30 Euros to offset. Swiss-based Myclimate arrives at 3.6 tonnes and 86 Euros for the same flight, and the German Atmosfair reckons 6.9 tonnes and 139 Euros.

The figures differ because the Carbon Neutral Company calculates only the extra carbon dioxide emitted per passenger on a given route. Other providers multiply that impact by a factor of 2-3. This is because aircraft emissions, including nitric oxide, nitrogen dioxide and planes' vapor trails, have a more complex effect on clouds, ozone and climate than do those from earthbound polluters.

Edenhofer (economist at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Research in Germany) estimates that including aviation in EU emission-trading schemes would make flights 50-80% more expensive. Only such a move would force people to reconsider flying, he says: Carbon dioxide must have a price - full stop."

Five million barrels of petroleum are used per day for transport of people and freight by air, and 10 times more is used for such transport by land.

SAGE Expresses Views on EnCana's Proposal to Drill in the Suffield National Wildlife Area - SAGE has written a letter to federal Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor and Environment Minister John Baird requesting they issue a ministerial order or regulations that would prohibit new oil and gas development in the Suffield National Wildlife Area. EnCana is proposing to drill up to 1,275 new shallow gas wells over three years and bring well density to 16 wells per section within the National Wildlife Area. A hearing before a joint panel of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency and the Energy Utilities Board is planned to occur this fall.

SAGE has also partnered with other conservation organizations in the preparation of three news releases based on review of hundreds of documents received under the *Access to Information Act*. There is ample evidence that oil and gas operations to date in CFB Suffield, outside of the National Wildlife Area have resulted in environmental degradation and non-compliance with industry guidelines for acceptable practice. There is no evidence in prairie Alberta or elsewhere that a developed gas field can be constructed without significant environmental impact or that it can be restored to native condition.

The 458 km² Suffield National Wildlife Area is an internationally significant grassland encompassing fragile sand dunes and sand plains. It provides secure habitat for more than 1,100 native prairie species, including 13 federal Species at Risk and 78 provincially listed "at risk" species. All this is put at further risk with EnCana's proposal.

Oldman Watershed Logging Plan Deferred – Sustainable Resource Development Minister Ted Morton has decided to delay a decision on the C5 logging plan for forests stretching from Waterton to Longview. The decision was made after watershed conservation interests, including the Oldman Watershed Council, expressed concern about the implications of the proposed plan for water supplies.

Much of the water in the Oldman River originates in the southern Eastern Slopes. Recent research is showing supply is dwindling. Other pressures in the upper watershed include energy development, livestock production, rural subdivision, increasing off-road vehicle use and recreational facility development.

Organizations involved in the Southern Foothills Study are asking for a pause until the cumulative impact of all this activity can be assessed and plans developed for environmental sustainability. Morton has taken an important step to support that direction.

Canadian Environmental Network (CEN) Paper on Agriculture – SAGE is participating in a review and sign-on to a paper by CEN member groups regarding the environmental problems and potential solutions for agriculture in Canada. The paper maintains that large-scale industrial agriculture harms soil, water, air and biodiversity. It proposes that governments at every level focus on reforming and re-localizing our food system to benefit small and medium-sized farms and the environment. The paper will be submitted with a longer "Green Paper" to the public consultations on the "Next Generation of Agriculture and Agri-Food Policy".