



NEWSLETTER

June 2007

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A leading voice for a healthy and environmentally sustainable community.

Announcements

SAGE June Meeting

7:30 p.m., Thursday, June 7, 2007

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

Included on the agenda will be discussions about energy projects, conservation and alternatives, managing growth, approach to vegetation management in Lethbridge green spaces and highlights of the recent Canadian Water Resources Association Conference. Everyone welcome. Refreshments are provided.

Environment Week, June 2-9, 2007

EcoHealthy Water Ways, Your Action Counts

The Lethbridge Environment Week Committee has planned an excellent series of events, including:

- The Making of a Constructed Wetland
Sat, Jun 2, 1:00-3:00 pm, Sunridge Subdivision
- Nature Walk at Elizabeth Hall Wetlands
Mon, Jun 4, 7:00-8:00 pm, parking lot on Bridge Road
- Clean Air Day, free bus transit throughout Lethbridge
Tue, Jun 5, all day
- Environment 101, What Makes Nature Tick?
Tue, Jun 5, 7:00-9:00 pm, Lethbridge Public Library
- Alberta Water Quality Awareness Day (AWQA) Fish in Schools (FinS) Release
Wed, Jun 6, Lake McQuillan
- Learn about the River Valley, a nature walk
Thu, Jun 7, TBA
- Lethbridge Urban Stewardship Lab, films on urban farming, organic gardening and sustainability
Fri, Jun 8, 6:30-9:30 pm, City Hall
- Inspired by Nature Festival, celebrating 25 years of the Helen Schuler Coulee Centre
Sat, Jun 9, 1:00-4:00 pm, Helen Schuler Coulee Centre

Global Warming Action Camp

June 3-8, 2007, Edmonton Area

Sessions will include non violence training, media skills, legal strategies, direct action, campaign tactics and grass roots organizing. If interested, contact jmsroof@yahoo.com.

SAGE News

SAGE Website is Live! - SAGE's website went live on May 1st. The address is www.sage-environment.org. The website provides information about SAGE, its mission, goals and activities. A membership form can be downloaded. Upcoming environmental events are posted as are SAGE newsletters from 2004 to present. There are general overviews of environmental issues and topics of interest regarding water, agriculture, biodiversity, climate change and ecosystems. Links are provided to websites with shared interests.

Roundstreet Media (Bill Ponech and Karen Meaker) developed the website guided by a committee comprised of Kelsey Prenevost, Faisal Shaffi and Nicola Miller. Overviews of environmental topics were provided by Ann Baran (Agriculture), Cheryl Bradley (Biodiversity), Klaus Jericho (Climate Change), Kelsey Prenevost (Ecosystems) and Deb Jarvie (Water).

We welcome comments or ideas about the website.

Ecotrust Funds Sixteen Projects (*submitted by Klaus Jericho*) – On May 16th, the Ecotrust review committee composed of representatives from corporations and environment groups (including SAGE) considered 24 Community Grant applications (maximum \$7,500) and six Major Grant applications (maximum \$30,000). Twelve community grants and four major grants were funded to a total of \$185,775. Two community grants addressed the concept of sustainable communities. Major Grant titles included: "Smart Growth for Calgary"; "Environmental Improvements for Alberta's Rocky Mountain Ski Areas" and "Implementing Beneficial Management Practices for Species at Risk in the Prairie Region".

Milk River Fish SARs Recovery Team Update (*from information submitted by Lori Goater*) – The Milk River Fish Species at Risk (SAR) Recovery Team met regularly through 2004-2005 to develop a management approach for western silvery minnow, stonecat and St. Mary sculpin. More recently public input was sought on the recovery strategy for western silvery minnow, a federally listed species, including a March 2007 public meeting in Milk River. That input will be reviewed when finalizing the plan.

CASA CFO Emissions Project Update (*from information submitted by Ann Baran*) – Progress in slow. I am representing SAGE on the Emissions Inventory Subgroup and the Management Mechanisms Subgroup. We are currently reviewing a draft of the report on an inventory of emissions from confined feeding operations (CFOs) and also evaluating a long list of various measures and practices that will help to reduce emissions from CFOs. There will be some key decisions made at a Clean Air Strategic Alliance (CASA) board meeting in mid-June based on the reports we provide.

I am concerned that a Policy Advisory Group set up by Alberta Agriculture and Food may undercut some of the CASA work. The livestock industry is using that as a forum to strongly lobby for reducing regulations and eliminating minimum distance separation.

Issues and Updates

SAYEE Water Project Launched (*submitted by Paul Bohnert*) - The Water Project of the Southern Alberta Community of Environmental Educators (SAYEE) is officially launched. Any resident of southern Alberta can email statements of their personal appreciation of water and what water means to them and have it posted on the SAYEE website www.sayee.ca (click on "Water Project"). Interesting information and facts about southern Alberta water and ideas for caring for and conserving water also will be posted.

Kairos Contributes to Water Quality Awareness (*submitted by Mary McEachern*) - The local Kairos group is participating in a province-wide program of hands-on water quality testing (AWQA). Volunteers access an on-line field guide and data sheets. They receive by mail a test kit containing a thermometer, oxygen test tube, testing tablets, pH test tube and tablets, turbidity testing sticker, comparative testing chart, safety tips and a complimentary Alberta Lake Management Society magnet. While contributing to a provincial water-quality map, they are becoming more informed and responsible users and protectors of our water. For more information, please contact Debora Lebeau by email deblebeau@shaw.ca.

Lethbridge College Project Builds Green (*submitted by Braum Barber*) – I am working on a project (with Mark Bohnert) for Lethbridge College to design a low-environmental-impact residential home for the Sunridge sub-division in Lethbridge. It is in collaboration with the City of Lethbridge and will use the BuiltGreen and the draft LEED design & rating systems as guidelines. The goal is to use the home design and construction as an educational tool to illustrate the concepts of green building, life-cycle analysis, and how design decisions are interlinked. In general, it will be a holistic approach to minimizing embodied energy and embodied pollution, as well as minimizing operation energy and improve durability over the useful life of the home. We will then have the opportunity to measure the important operating parameters to see if the house meets the design

expectations. The project will also include opportunities for College learners and stakeholders to explore xeriscaping, waste-water retention and use, triple-bottom-line accounting, health affects of embodied pollution, smart control systems, and interior design approaches for a healthy home environment.

The project is just being initiated and we hope to have an interactive website developed over the next month to which we will invite any interested individual or group to comment or critique the design strategies and results. It is a project I hope environmental groups will take an interest in, as they have a lot to offer. Though the house must remain conventional (in that it has to meet building code and be marketable) there are some opportunities to try new things and evaluate them for effectiveness.

Appeal of NEB Decision re MATL and Call for a Public Inquiry (*from information submitted by Marg Lewis*) – An appeal was filed at the Federal Appeals Court on May 4th by interveners opposed to approval by the National Energy Board (NEB) of a merchant power line – the Montana Alberta Tie Line (MATL) – between Lethbridge and Great Falls Montana. The appeal is based on errors in law and scoping.

MATL still needs approval from Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (AEUB) before it can proceed with the project. Its application to AEUB is not yet complete.

Several environmental and landowner organizations are entertaining a motion to AEUB for a Public Inquiry about the manner in which approvals for power lines and power plants are occurring in Alberta. To determine if these projects are in the public interest, advocates argue that there must be full assessment of need and full assessment of cumulative environmental effects including consideration of sources of energy and destination. There is also concern about lack of open and fair public process.

For more information and to support the appeal, please contact Margaret Lewis, m.lewis@uleth.ca.

EnCana EIS for Project in Suffield National Wildlife Area Under Review – On May 28th, the Joint Panel reviewing the proposed EnCana shallow gas infill development project in the Suffield National Wildlife Area, announced the beginning of the public comment period on the adequacy of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) filed by the proponent. EnCana wants to drill 1275 new shallow gas wells within the protected area. Written comment received by July 27 will be considered by the Panel.

A coalition of organizations including Alberta Wilderness Association, Federation of Alberta Naturalists, Grasslands Naturalists, Nature Canada, Southern Alberta Group for Environment and World Wildlife Fund have retained experts to review various aspects of the EIS, including effects on Species at Risk, cumulative environmental effects, reclamation and restoration potential, need, cost-benefit analysis and implications for protected areas policy and regulation.

Any interested party can comment. The EIS is available at www.SuffieldReview.ca.