



There are no passengers on Spaceship Earth. We are all crew.

~ Marshall McLuhan (1964)

May 2010

Special points of interest:

- * Spray Lake Sawmills target Castle Special Places for clear-cutting.
- * Suffield Coalition requests Federal Minister of Environment to restrict oil & gas development in CFB Suffield National Wildlife Area.
- * Lethbridge Integrated Community Sustainability Plan to be presented to City Council.

Oldman Headwaters at Risk

The Castle Special Place is an area of wilderness located south of the Crowsnest Pass along the east slope of the Rockies. The area has been identified by the Alberta Government as part of the province's protected areas network to preserve Alberta's natural heritage for future generations.

The designated area has been targeted by Spray Lake Sawmills for clear-cutting beginning in the winter of 2010. An estimated 5000 truckloads of timber will be removed.

The Castle Special Place provides roughly one-third of the

water flow for the Oldman River Basin. Intact forests provide not only the necessary habitat for wildlife, they provide higher quality water, a more natural flow regime for aquatic life, and healthier aquatic ecosystems.

Clear-cutting a forest accelerates the rate of runoff from the land to the rivers, which may result in more severe flooding events. The runoff increases soil erosion and reduces the quality of water, which may increase the costs of treatment and affect recreational enjoyment. Since spring runoff and precipita-

tion is not absorbed and released slowly into the river, late summer water flows may be drastically reduced, further affecting the health of the ecosystem and agricultural users.

The value of ecosystem services provided by healthy and intact headwaters should not be underestimated.

For further information visit the Castle Crown Wilderness Coalition (<http://www.cwc.ab.ca/>) or the Castle Special Place Citizens' Initiative (<http://www.castlespecialplace.ca/>)

Awaiting Decision on CFB Suffield National Wildlife Area

The Suffield Coalition has requested that the federal government complete the process of conserving one of the most important areas of native grasslands in North America.

Threatened by the drilling of shallow natural gas wells by Encana Corporation, a Joint Review Panel concluded that exploitation would negatively impact species at risk and interfere with the conserva-

tion of wildlife.

In this International Year of Biodiversity, the protection of the ecological integrity of this area is paramount.

City of Lethbridge Completes Integrated Community Sustainability Plan

The City of Lethbridge contracted AECOM to manage the development of a Municipal Development Plan / Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (MDP/ICSP) to provide a vision for Lethbridge to 2050. The fourteen-month process will be presented to City Council in June.

The process involved a lengthy public consultation beginning with an interactive forum open to anyone. Interestingly, 89% of participants wanted more or much more management of energy, air quality, GHG, waste and water. This was translated into the Vision directing the City to become a 'leader in environmental stewardship'.

The resulting policy directions that emerged from the process are available on the City's website.

Policy Examples

Water Policies

Develop programs and practices that encourage the conservation of water.

Require new development to demonstrate the incorporation of ecological design ... to reduce stormwater runoff.

Air Quality Policies

Reduce the generation of greenhouse gases.

Energy Policies

Pursue an energy strategy that reduces reliance on carbon-based energy resources.

Design in built environment to optimize opportunities for alternative energy and energy conservation.

Responding to questions regarding environmental leadership, the City administration has suggested that their 'distributed model' is adequate. To date, they have rejected suggestions for a centralized model that has been successfully employed

in the cities of Red Deer and Medicine Hat.

Without policy measures or clear accountability, it will be important for active participation and advocacy by environmental and conservation groups in the region.

Every day is
Earth Day.

Coming Events:

Environment Week: May 30 to Jun 5, 2010
See the Green Stop initiative at <http://www.environment.gov.ab.ca/edu/eweek/>

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:

info@sage-environment.org