



NEWSLETTER

March 2007

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A leading voice for a healthy and environmentally sustainable community.

Announcements

SAGE 2007 Annual General Meeting

Discussion on Energy Use and Carbon Allowance

7:30 p.m., Thur 1 Mar 2007

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

There will be a brief business meeting and election of officers. Please plan to attend and consider standing for a director position. Following the AGM, Klaus Jericho will lead an open discussion about how we individually use energy and how we can reduce our energy use and emissions of greenhouse gases. See Klaus' "Reflections on Carbon Allowance" article. Refreshments are provided.

Oldman Watershed Council AGM

1:00 – 8:15 pm, Thur 15 Mar 2007; Lethbridge Lodge

Unlike past years, this will be an afternoon and evening event. There will be reports on OWC's activities over the past year and election of directors to the Board. Two director-at-large positions are open for election.

Honourable Rob Renner, provincial Minister of Environment, will be the keynote speaker. Karen Emde of the Capitol Health Region will talk about watershed protection and protection of the public's health.

Registration fee is \$40 for adults and \$20 for students or members of a stewardship group. Dinner is included. To register visit www.oldmanbasin.org or call Leda at 381-5801. Those who register before 28 Feb are eligible for an early bird prize.

What Can I Do For the Environment?

Environmental Education Speaker Series

7 pm, Tues 20 Mar 2007; Lethbridge Public Library

The session will focus on personal actions at home and work that have a positive impact on environment. Topics include water use and conservation, waste reduction, decreasing energy use and consuming local goods. Learn to become a better steward for the environment. Reduce your environmental footprint at home and at work.

Southern Alberta Environment Summit #5

8:30 – 4 pm, Thur 29 Mar 2007; Galt Museum

The workshop will bring 200 southern Albertans together to discuss regional topics and to work together to create a water awareness and conservation project. The collaborative project will focus on what we are doing and what we can be doing to preserve and care for our water system. The water Pilot Project will be created and named by participants.

The Summit is free and lunch will be provided. Visit www.sayee.ca for more information. To register email summit5@sayee.ca or call Paul 393-5155.

Alberta Ecotrust: Maximizing Effectiveness 2007

Fri and Sat, 23-24 Mar 2007;

Best Western Village Park Inn, Calgary

This is an exciting training event specifically designed for staff and volunteers of environmental organizations. Sessions are planned on fund development, communications, volunteer management and governance. Registration \$50, before 15 Mar. Visit www.albertaecotrust.com for more information.

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

Call for Nominations to SAGE Board – Nominations are open for the 2007-2008 Board. SAGE Board positions include president, vice-president and six directors. A secretary and treasurer will be selected from among the six directors. Terms are two years. To volunteer or submit nominations please contact past-president Sylvia Campbell at 328-6502. Elections will occur at the annual general meeting on 1 Mar 2006.

Thank you SAGE Members – We have had a great response to our request for membership renewal! If you have not yet purchased a SAGE membership,

please consider doing so. Memberships cost \$25 (\$15 for students). Send cheques to Box 383, Lethbridge AB T1K 3Y7 or bring to the AGM.

Volunteers Needed for Home and Garden Show (Mar 23-26) – SAGE is cooperating with the Urban Team of the Oldman Watershed Council to again host a display at the 2007 Lethbridge and District Home and Garden Show. The display will encourage environmentally beneficial practices in homes and gardens. There are 15 shifts of two to three hours in duration and a need for two to three volunteers per shift. Several shifts already are full. If you are interested in helping out, please contact Cheryl by email cebradley@shaw.ca or phone 328-1245.

Volunteer for Endangered Species Planning – Waterton Lakes National Park has requested a representative from SAGE to advise on management plans for two endangered species - the half-moon hairstreak butterfly and Bolander's quillwort, an aquatic plant. If interested in volunteering, please contact Kelsey at 795-7070.

Earth Matters on CKXU (by Debby Gregorash, SAGE member) - Listen to Earth Matters, Tuesdays from 8:30 to 10 a.m. on CKXU, 88.3 FM or www.ckxu.com and click on "listen". Guests coming up: Feb 27, Tom Johnson, agricultural geography and farm-level response to climate change; March 6, maybe a taped interview with Dan Johnson; March 13, John Dormaar; March 20, Kent Peacock and benefits of women's literacy; March 27, Coreen Putnam HSCC. Program suggestions for April welcome.

SAGE Brochures at Bare Naked Ladies Concert – Dianne Pachal of the Sierra Club, Calgary, distributed SAGE brochures from her booth at the Bare Naked Ladies Concert in Lethbridge. The band had made space freely available to the environmental group.

Issues and Updates

Reflections on Carbon Allowance (by Klaus Jericho) - On September 9, 2006 we returned from a 2036 km round trip to Jackson, Wyoming in our Honda Civic. Rarely did we exceed speeds above 98 km/hour which on average burned 5.2 liters per 100 km. We used 104 liters of regular gasoline which expelled some 250 kg of carbon dioxide (Natural Resources Canada 2006 Energy Guide). Based on the annual carbon allowance proposed for each British adult by the UK environment secretary (1.25 tonnes) the carbon dioxide we discharged on our trip would represent 20 % of my allowance for this year. The proposed carbon allowance is under review (Nature, July 4, 2006).

The Tempest over the Clean Air Act - Bill C-30, an Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA), 1999, the Energy Efficiency Act (EEA) and the Motor Vehicle Fuel Consumption Standards Act (MVFCSA), received first reading in Parliament on 19 Oct 2006. The proposed "Clean Air Act" was referred to Parliamentary Committee on 14 Dec 2006 for discussion and report prior to second reading.

Under the legislation, Government would expand its powers to collect information on air pollutants and greenhouse gases and would publicly report on progress towards attaining air quality objectives. Efforts would be made to harmonize Canadian emission standards with those of the United States. Government would establish new targets for air pollutants (fixed cap approach) and greenhouse gases (emissions intensity approach) through continued consultation with the industrial sectors. Canada would renege on its commitment to the Kyoto Protocol.

The proposed legislation was lauded by industry organizations including the Canadian Chamber of Commerce because of its go slow approach to emissions reductions and its consideration of Canadian competitiveness and flexible compliance.

The Act received immediate condemnation from respected national environmental organizations. They maintain Government already has the tools and information needed to address air pollution in Canada; what Government lacks is the political will to force polluters to reduce emissions. Industry produces more than 35 percent of Canada's total greenhouse gases. Transportation is responsible for more than 27 percent.

The NDP Party has put proposed amendments to the new Act on its website. They include:

- Legislating targets for absolute greenhouse gas reductions that would require Canada to meet its Kyoto Protocol 2008-2012 target and set interim targets at five year intervals to reach a 2050 target of 80% below 1990 levels.
- Regulating the industrial sector, by 2008, and putting a cap on their greenhouse gas emissions.
- Legislating a vehicle fuel efficiency standard by the 2011 model year and establishing a transition fund.
- Legislating a cap and trade carbon market system.
- Eliminating tax incentives to the oil and gas sector.

While Bill C-30 is being discussed in committee, a Liberal Party Bill C-288 on climate change was passed by opposition parties in the House of Commons on 14 Feb 2007 and is on its way to the Senate. It would require the Minister of Environment to establish an annual Climate Change Plan within 60 days, including how Canada will meet Kyoto targets, and to make regulations respecting climate change. Federal Environment Minister John Baird has said meeting Kyoto's 2012 targets would cause "economic collapse".

Canada's international reputation is on the line. According to recent analysis of 30 industrialized countries, Canada ranks among the worst five in dealing with emissions of sulphur oxides, nitrogen oxide, volatile organic compounds, carbon monoxide and greenhouse gases.

Nicholas Stern, former chief economist for the World Bank, reports that acting now to achieve Kyoto targets will cost one percent of global GDP while failing to do so would cost 5 to 20 percent. He asserts Canada's engagement in regulation of carbon emissions, carbon taxation and international emissions trading would contribute a great deal to a low carbon path and economic growth for all.

(References: www2.parl.gc.ca www.chamber.ca www.sierraclub.ca www.davidsuzuki.org www.conservative.ca www.liberal.ca www.ndp.ca)