

Foothills Edition — Dickson Dam to City of Red Deer

RDRWA - IWMP Start-up Workshops

The Public Consultation workshops for the Integrated Watershed Management Plan start-up process were well attended over the 3 days (March 26th-28th). Day 1 was for Watershed Stewardship Groups and Environmental Non-Government organizations. Day 2 was for First Nations and Municipalities and the final day was held for Industry.

The main focus of these workshops was the draft scope and objectives of the IWMP.



During the workshops attendees were asked to participate in 2 breakout sessions. The first session was asking for feedback regarding any possible changes to the draft scope and objectives, and how people saw their group using the recommendations. The second session asked for feedback on how we ensure that the public are engaged in the consultation process regarding the IWMP, and who needs to be involved.

There was great feedback from all 3 days regarding what is included and what is not, and how best to engage the public in the consulta-



tion process. All ideas were recorded and the feedback will be presented at the next RDRWA General Meeting on April 20th (see announcement on page 2). The feedback results will also be posted onto the RDRWA website.

The overall feeling is that, when completed the IWMP should be an interactive tool, that guides implementation of recommendations for a healthy watershed.

Feedback collected at the workshops will be sent out at a later date.



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Definition:

“reach” verb

1. to stretch out or put forth; extend; reached out an arm
2. to succeed in getting in contact with or communicating with people

“reach” noun

1. the stretch of water visible between bends in a river or channel
2. range of scope or influence



Storm Drains—Did YOU Know This?

Sometimes our Water source is contaminated by individuals who just are **not aware of their actions**. For Instance, many residents are unaware that the storm drain outside their front door is **NOT** connected with their city's or town's Wastewater Plant. Often, it is assumed by residents that this water flows through a pipe (storm drain) and its destination is to a treatment plant.

What happens when you pour something down a storm drain?

In most cities, storm drains connect directly to the local water body **untreated**. Anything that runs off lawns, driveways, sidewalks and roads can end up in the local water body, like litter, salt, soap and fertilizer.

These wastes have a negative impact on the aquatic ecosystem. Not only by harming fish and wildlife, but reducing drinking water quality for humans.



What Sorts of Waste are harmful to the Fish?



Almost anything other than clean rainwater will be harmful to the fish. This includes soap used to wash cars (that is not biodegradable), excess fertilizer on the lawn, dirt and oil from road-

ways, and construction materials to name but a few. Pollution not only affects fish, but plants, bugs and other wildlife using the water.

Why has pollution in Storm Drains become a problem?

People do not often realize that storm drains flow untreated to the local water body, not the sewage treatment plant. Many residents also do not realize how simple activities such as allowing soapy water to enter the drains is harmful to aquatic life. People may also be unaware of alternatives, such as pouring soapy water down their house drains to be filtered before entering the local river or stream or using biodegradable cleaning products. With growing cities, even small amounts of pollution from each citizen can add up in the local water body.



The picture here shows contaminated water and debris entering the storm drain. Picture the grime of the city streets, oil, grease, and soot from

cars and trucks; pet waste; garbage and litter; sediment and debris from construction sites; and a mix of toxic chemicals.....Where do these contaminants go? They have been swept through street drains and underground pipes then washed directly into the nearby river or other water body.

What happens to people who pour harmful materials down the drains?

Most municipalities have bylaws stating that only clean water is allowed to enter storm drains. Depending on the municipality, violators of a Stormwater bylaw can be fined a dollar amount or be imprisoned or both.

10 Things You Can Do To Prevent Stormwater Pollution

- 1: Use lawn and garden chemicals sparingly or use organic alternatives.
- 2: Choose low-maintenance, native plants that require fewer chemicals and less watering.
- 3: Do not put ANYTHING in the storm drains.
- 4: Wash your car on the lawn or gravel, which filter dirt and soap out of the water. Or go to a carwash that recycles wash water.
- 5: Fix that oil leak on your vehicle, & recycle oil & other car fluids.
- 6: Clean up after your pets.
- 7: Drive less. Walk, cycle, take the bus or share a ride.
- 8: Keep your septic system maintained to prevent leaks.
- 9: Sweep driveways/sidewalks instead of hosing them off.
- 10: Reduce impervious surfaces around your home.

Red Deer County - Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs)

Article Provided By Ken Lewis—Red Deer County

Red Deer County Looking at Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) within the County

Red Deer County is currently working with Golder Associates Ltd. And Matrix Planning on a project to update the County's inventory of Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) as well as recommend strategies for managing them. ESAs are natural areas that have been identified as having important ecological value in Red Deer County, providing benefits such as clean water, healthy soils, fish and wildlife habitat, or unique environmental conditions.

The technical report by the consultants to the public in February included an assessment of the current conditions, the ecological values, and potential threats for each ESA. In the final report, the consultants will be recommending strategies for ongoing management of these ESAs over time. The recommendations will be based on inputs received from landowners and the general public meetings, as well as other scientifically proven methods of managing ESAs.

Fieldwork occurred in the summer of 2009. Golder Associates identified unique species, plant and animal habitats, as well as water and soil features in the ESAs. They also identified possible risks to the ESAs.

"The preservation and management of our county is one of the County's responsibilities", says Ken Lewis. As such, the conservation of ESAs is one of the strategies for achieving this goal. This project will look at tools available to the County and to landowners, for protecting ESAs in the context of development. Some tools that have been successfully used elsewhere in Alberta include development setbacks, dedication of environmental reserve, and conservation easements. One of the outcomes of this project is that it will recommend ideas to the County about tools that can be used to achieve this goal".



The Medicine River (Photo by Red Deer County)



Red Deer County promotes the sustainable use of ESAs by supporting voluntary actions and delivering a variety of extension programs. The County encourages landowner participation in the ESA project. As such, another possible outcome of this project may be to make recommendations to the County, for additional voluntary ESA conservation programs. In February 2010 Golder Associates in conjunction with the County held a series of Open Houses for Landowners and the general public to discuss the initial ESA inventory report, and obtain input regarding applicable conservation tools for the County. These inputs are being analyzed ahead of a second series of meetings with landowners and stakeholders to determine the best approach for managing these valuable assets of our County.

For more information on the ESA process, please consult the Red Deer County News paper or visit www.reddeercountry.ab.ca

Rocky Riparian Group becomes Clear Water Landcare

In a move intended to strengthen its work in the rural community, the Rocky Riparian Group has chosen to re-brand itself **Clear Water Landcare**. The work of the Rocky Riparian Group was first inspired by thinking about the water's edge but the work has become much broader. It reflects the importance of working in the uplands and lowlands of the local reaches of the North Saskatchewan and Red Deer River Watersheds.

Clear Water Landcare hopes to build on the foundation of its predecessor. Clear Water Landcare will continue with its flagship event, an annual seminar and trade show in the spring, (21st April in Caroline, Alberta) which is now renamed "Cows, Creeks and Communities." The event will bring together the rural community to learn of Landcare efforts within the region.

Clear Water Landcare will also continue with its free newsletter "The Ripple".

In some ways it is business as usual but in others it is new ventures.

For more information about Clear Water Landcare or the annual seminar please contact Gary Lewis by phone at 403-845-4444 or email him: glewis@county.clearwater.ab.ca

Caring For Our Watersheds Program

Turning ideas into environmental solutions.

The **CARING FOR OUR WATERSHEDS** program is sponsored by [Agrium](#). Students are asked to think about their watersheds and how they can protect this most essential asset. Finding solutions is critical. And helping to lead the effort is everyone's obligation.

CARING FOR OUR WATERSHEDS: Central Alberta is open to students who live in the Alberta borders north of and including the City of Red Deer. Students who live south of Red Deer are asked to enter [CARING FOR OUR WATERSHEDS: Southern Alberta](#).

Students within **Central Alberta** are invited to submit proposals that answer the question...

“What can you do to improve your watershed?”

- [Students will compete for \\$6,500 in rewards](#)
- [Participating schools are eligible for \\$11,500 in rewards](#)

[Students who implement their ideas are eligible for additional funding](#)

Students can enter one of two categories: **Grades 7-9** or **Grades 10-12** - [Contest Entry Deadline May 12th 2010](#)

Independently, or as a team of no more than four, students identify an environmental concern that impacts the watershed in their area. They must **come up with an idea to address the concern** and can discuss their idea with their parents, teachers, friends and local experts

Students research their idea and explain it in approximately 1,000 word proposal. They are encouraged to use graphics, models, pictures or videos to supplement their proposal

Entries are judged on the following criteria: Innovation, Environmental Impact, Comprehensive Scope & Budget, Research, Realistic Solution, Written Presentation & Visuals.

For Further Information Please visit www.CaringForOurWatersheds.com OR Contact info@rdrwa.ca

Upcoming Events

March 25th—9am-4pm Rozsa Centre, University of Calgary Water for Life 2010 Conference. “Managing & Protecting Water Reserves for future generations”. For more information see: www.haskayne.ucalgary.ca/faculty/centres/cpia/water_for_life_2010

March 28-30th—Coast Edmonton Plaza Hotel Canadian Water Resources Association, Alberta Branch Annual Conference. The theme is “Innovation—Adding Science to Water”. For more information please visit: www.cwra.org/branches/alberta/conference

April 20th—Trochu Community Centre—RDRWA General Meeting. 10:00am—3:00pm. For More Information please contact info@rdrwa.ca or call the office at 403-340-7379.

June 3rd—Sylvan Lake Legion—Stewards in Motion 8: Watershed Stewardship—Science to Solutions. Keynote speaker will be Bob Sandford, Canadian Chair of the United Nations International Decade “Water For Life”. The AGM for Alberta Stewardship Network will also take place this day. For more information please visit www.ab.stewardshipcanada.ca or call the ASN 1-877-727-5276.

May 30th-June 5th Environment Week. For more info visit www.env.education@gov.ab.ca

June 21st— National Aboriginal Day. For more information visit: www.ainc.inac.gc.ca or www.gov.ab.ca