

REACH OUT

Volume 5, Issue 2

A Publication of Red Deer River Watershed Alliance

March 2011

Spring Edition

Annual Meeting of The Red Deer River Watershed Stewardship Groups

On February 16, 2011, 30 people came together for the Annual Meeting of the Red Deer River Watershed Stewardship Groups (WSGs). At previous workshops the BMP (Beneficial Management Practices)/Stewardship Committee had asked WSG members to let them know their needs. Many of these needs have been met over the past



year but one was outstanding. That was the need to get some tips on dealing with volunteer

burnout. The workshop's morning session was an interactive one on Volunteer Motivation and Burnout Prevention. It was led jointly by Shari Hanson from Alberta Culture and Community Spirit and Kathleen Raines from Volunteer Red Deer.

In the afternoon we heard from four volunteers or volunteer leaders on projects they were undertaking in their areas: Ken Lewis on the Off-the-Creek program undertaken by landowners in Red Deer County, Dale Christian representing the Medicine Flats Aquifer

Committee talking about Alluvial Aquifers in their area, Gary Lewis talking about the name change From Rocky Riparian Group to Clear Water Landcare: What's in a Name, and Larry Howard and Rob Swartz from the Alberta Land Surface Rights Group presenting local data on Groundwater and Surface Water Connectivity.

The presentations were followed by a wrap up session led by Christine Sweet from Alberta Environment. She outlined what we had learned throughout the day and opened the floor for discussion. The RDRWA is looking forward to providing more of these opportunities to bring stewardship groups from the watershed together with RDRWA staff and Board members to network, learn from each other, and to celebrate successes.



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The RDRWA is now using Social Media Tools.

Please find us on Facebook and become our friend;



We have also have a Twitter Account. Please become one of our followers:



<http://twitter.com/RDRWA>



IWMP Community Workshops on Watershed Planning

A total of 130 participants attended a series of workshops in January to talk about problems and issues in the Red Deer River watershed. Another set of workshops is planned for April 26-28, 2011.

In January, public and stakeholders heard two presentations, the first by RDRWA's Marilou Montemayor on the relationship of the integrated watershed management planning process to the State of the Watershed Report (not given in Sundre) and a second by facilitator Alan Dolan of Grandview Consulting on the consultation process.

Attendees brainstormed their issues and concerns and then used a "dotmocracy" exercise (not Oyen) to determine the key watershed problems. Small, facilitated "issue tables" were established to discuss the priority issues in more detail.



Each group reported out at a plenary session, followed by a discussion of where the process was going next, and an evaluation of the day.

In **Sundre**, four issue tables were established, based on the group's priorities:

- Industry – forestry, oil and gas, gravel mining
- Agriculture – riparian zone and wetland loss, livestock watering, fertilizers and pesticides
- Recreation – development, off-road vehicles
- Policy and development / municipal – compliance and enforcement of regulations, education needs.

In **Red Deer**, there were six issue tables:

1. Recreational use and development – boating, lakefront properties, planning
2. Agriculture, forestry, oil and gas and industrial development
3. Urban and rural development – sewers and septic, storm water, groundwater
4. Wetland riparian and habitat – destruction and frag-

mentation, inventory, monitoring

5. Flow management water rights / water quantity – storage, efficient use, conservation

6. Water quality – drinking water, groundwater, monitoring

In **Oyen**, the small group met together. Key issues were:

- Drinking water – well problems, ground water contamination
- Oil and gas industry – Hydraulic Fracturing (fracking), well contamination, groundwater
- Sewage – municipal, household, industrial
- Riparian zones – loss of vegetation, wetland destruction

Water quantity – livestock watering, grasshopper control, other uses

Three over-arching issues emerged from all the workshops:

- Need for improved monitoring and more data and information
- Lack of understanding and awareness – need to better understand water and water processes
- Concern that nothing is going to happen with all this watershed planning

A diversity of participants from many different sectors attended the workshops. Written evaluations indicated that a large majority of participants found the workshops useful and felt their particular areas of concern had been addressed.

To learn more about the workshops including notes, presentations & photographs, go to:

<http://rdrwa.ca/workshops.php>



Upcoming IWMP Workshops



April workshops

Please plan to attend the Community Workshops later in April to talk about solutions to the problems in the watershed:

Sundre

Tuesday, April 26

10 am – 3 pm

West Country Seniors Centre, Quality Inn (North Hill)

#4, 102 - 2nd Ave NW

Red Deer

Wed, April 27

10am—3pm

Quality Inn (North Hill)

7150,50th Ave

Oyen

Thursday, April 28

10 am – 3 pm

Oyen Seniors Centre,

219 2nd Street West

Everyone is welcome, but please register. Go to the website and follow the links: www.rdrwa.ca

Lunch Will Be Provided



Welcome To Our New Executive Director Gerard Aldridge

Gerard joined the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance (RDRWA) as Executive Director in January 2011. Gerard has served with non-profit boards in western Canada over the years in advisory, executive and administrative capacities. Included in these experiences are as a Canadian Special Crops Association Trade Advisor to the Saskatchewan Pulse Crop Development Board during its formative years in the early 1980's. Gerard also served as Chair of the Public Accounts Committee for the Province of Saskatchewan in the 1990's.

Recently Gerard served as Executive Director of a

federally incorporated non-profit organization; the Northwest Corridor Development Corporation (NCDC); an organization with federal, provincial and municipal, in



addition to private membership participation, spanning the western provinces and territories.

Prior to his work with NCDC, Gerard worked as a Rural Extension Specialist in the Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (AESAs) program. There he promoted beneficial management and stewardship practices and environmental farm planning on behalf of a tri-municipal partnership of districts and countries in the Peace Country of northwest Alberta. He chalks his interest in watersheds up to the years he spent delivering AESA programming.

Born and raised in rural Saskatchewan, Gerard has a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture from the University of Saskatchewan. He is a current member of the Alberta Institute of Agrologists.

Red Deer's Grandview Elementary School Visit

Tracey Oake (Executive Assistant), was asked to give a presentation to Mrs. Morton's split grade 2/3 class at Grandview Elementary School in Red Deer. The students were learning about pollution and the importance of water to their health.

Tracey took the newly acquired Interactive Watershed Model with her which demonstrates source-point and non-source point pollution that can occur in every day events in the Red Deer River Watershed.

The presentation lasted for half an hour and during it the students asked many questions regarding pollution within our watershed and what could be done to try to help cut down on the amount of pollution that occurs. Tracey also included a quiz which tested the students on what they had heard.

School visits are just one way that the RDRWA reach out to the youth in the watershed and we are hoping to attend many more schools throughout the watershed this year and coming years.

If you would like further information, or would like to book our Summer Student to come to your school, please contact the office at 403-340.7379. Ask for Marilou Montemayor.



Upcoming Events

- **ALIDP & CWRA—Conference: Land & Water: Reducing our Impacts—April 10-April 12, 2011.** Call for Abstracts. Please go to the ALIDP website for further information at: www.alidp.org.
- **RDRWA—General Meeting : April 7th—Town of Hanna.** We are holding our Spring GM in Hanna. The theme is “Back to The Basics”, and this will include an array of speakers/topics. Please call Tracey at 403-340-7379 to register or email info@rdrwa.ca.
- **RDRWA—IWMP Community Workshops.** Please join us at the community workshops where we will be discussing Solutions to Watershed Health Problems in the Red Deer River Watershed. April 26-28 in Sundre, Red Deer & Oyen respectively. Please go to www.rdrwa.ca and follow the links to register.
- **Lakes—The Naked Truth 2: Edmonton Outdoor Show—March 31—April 3.** Location: Mayfield Inn & Suites Hotel West Edmonton 16615 - 109th Avenue Edmonton, AB . Contact: Candace.flynn@gov.ab.ca.

Do You Have What It Takes To Be an RDRWA Director?

There will be elections held at our AGM on June 23rd 2011

If you would like to be on the Board of Directors and Want to Make a Difference

Please contact the office at 403-340-7379

Or email info@rdrwa.ca for further information.

