



Newsletter

October
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Lac La Nonne Watershed Stewardship Society

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Mandate: "The Lac La Nonne Watershed Stewardship Society exists for the purpose of improving, enhancing and protecting the watershed health for all watershed inhabitants, present and future."

State of the Watershed Report

For more than two years, the LWSS has been working at developing a State of the Watershed report for the Lac La Nonne Watershed. With the assistance of a contracted consultant, the long-awaited report is now complete.

The report identifies and validates many of the issues within the watershed, and points out that much work needs to be undertaken to halt the nutrient loading of streams and lakes throughout the watershed from local land-based activities - agricultural and recreational alike. Although the naturally low water levels and the lack of inflow and outflow to the lakes are also contributing factors, land use, development, and our own daily practices are those over which we can influence some control.

The report suggests that the community embark on a watershed planning process to come up with a strategy to address the issues in the watershed. Success of such an initiative will depend on all stakeholders (lake users, watershed residents, municipal and provincial governments) becoming actively involved.

Copies of the State of the Watershed Report are available at all local municipal offices, or by contacting the Lac La Nonne Watershed Stewardship Society.

Beneficial Management Practice Projects

With the financial assistance from the Alberta Stewardship Network (ASN), the Lac La Nonne Enhancement and Protection Association (LEPA) and the Canada-Alberta Farm Stewardship Program (CAFSP) together with volunteer labour from the land owners (Stan and Cathy DeZaeyer), LEPA members and LWSS members, significant progress was made in installing another riparian improvement project near Lac La Nonne.

The project consists of a shallow well, a water delivery system (windmill, storage tank and watering trough) and fencing which will allow approximately 75 acres of lowlands to be used as riparian areas while still being able to utilize the area as a managed pasture.

Once complete, this project, together with the two previous projects completed by LEPA, will showcase a variety of options for effective management of riparian areas while still being able to use the areas for agricultural purposes.

Plans are in progress to showcase the Beneficial Management Practices (BMP) demonstration sites for the spring of 2007. Posters and details in our spring newsletter will be announcing the event.

Anyone interested in discussing BMP practices, including the three projects identified above, are invited to contact the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) offices at #204-10619-100 Ave., Westlock or phone Jim Craig at 780-349-3963.

Members Needed!

The LWSS has come a long way over the last three years and we have and will continue to see tangible results. We've seen the implementation of several BMP projects in the watershed, a strong public education campaign for the stakeholders, and the finalization of our key initiative, The State of the Watershed Report. This is just the start however, but we must ensure that we continue to have a viable and sustainable future. To this end, we need more individuals to become actively engaged as members of the LWSS to serve on the Board of Directors to assist in projects as Members at Large, but most importantly, to spread the word about the Society and the work that stands ahead of us. In spite of the technological age, "Word of Mouth" will continue to be our best tool in promoting the positive messages about the work that we have done and more that we plan to do in the future. As a stakeholder in the Watershed and an active member of the LWSS, you will gain more insight into the little things that you can do individually to ensure that we will have a collective positive impact on the future of our resources in the watershed and ensure that generations to come will benefit from the work that we have started. If you are committed to the future of the watershed and want to make a difference, we ask that you get involved in any small way that you can. Membership is free and the rewards are huge. Please fill out the enclosed form and tick the line indicating your willingness as a volunteer, give us a call, talk to some of the current members of the Board, attend an upcoming monthly meeting, *get involved!*

Lac La Nonne Watershed

Farm Water Watch Program

The LWSS is proud to partner with the Alberta Fish & Game Association (AF&GA) to deliver the much-acclaimed Farm Water Watch Program (FWW), a surface water-testing program to the Lac La Nonne Watershed.

The FWW program was developed by the AF&GA in response to Producer's questions about their impact on surface water quality. The program emphasizes a farm specific approach that gives landowners the tools and support they need to go from awareness of water quality issues to planning of beneficial management practices specific to their land.

Participants in the program have the opportunity to gather information on how their agricultural activities may be affecting surface water quality. The on-farm collecting provides a confidential and practical way for Producers to test and analyze surface water run-off from individual fields and pastures, or monitor the changes in water quality within a creek or dugout on their lands. Participants will have the opportunity to develop a watershed map and runoff supply model of the farm.

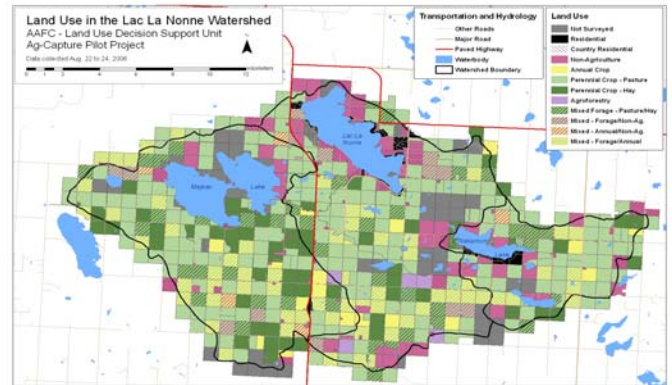
On farm consultation is provided by AF&GA to assist the Producer in identifying potential risks to surface water quality, and planning any beneficial management practices which would improve riparian habitat or mitigate impacts on water quality.

The approach is objective, minimal labour intensity, the results are confidential and the cost of participation is *free*.

If you wish to participate in this program or have further questions regarding the program for surface water testing in the spring of 2007, please contact Ed Petrie at 967-5639 or Stan DeZaeyer at 674-4040.

Ag-Capture Project

The LWSS and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada-Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) along with the Counties of Barrhead and Lac Ste Anne recently embarked on an initiative entitled Ag Capture – An Agricultural Land Use Inventory Tool: Lac La Nonne Watershed Pilot Project. The project is being developed by PFRA'S Land Use Decision Support Unit and is intended to provide local and regional land-use decision makers with a means to acquire detailed information about agricultural land use activities. Agricultural land use was assessed through a "windshield survey" while travelling public roads in late August and will be analyzed by PFRA and presented to the LWSS this winter. The resulting report is intended to include assessment of land use activities and the potential impacts to watershed health. This information should be helpful in future efforts to identify and implement appropriate management practices that reduce negative effects on surface water quality. Preliminary map showing land use data collected August 2006.



Homesite Consultation – by Nathan Ballard, Technician, Federation of Alberta Naturalists (FAN)

Homesite Consultations consist of a "driveway to dock" walk of the homeowner's property and suggestions on how to adjust to living habits and land use practices to reduce our cumulative impact on lake water quality. In short, we make suggestions, and adherence to them is voluntary.

The Living By Water Project was founded in B.C. by waterfront residents and since has become a nation wide initiative through the cooperation of several non-profit organizations like FAN who run the program in Alberta. The project offers the unique opportunity for many residents to get advice and information specific to their properties regarding their environmental impacts (septic systems or lack thereof for example) and information on the legality of practices without fear of backlash by a regulatory agency. In a sense, it is like having an environmental consultant visit your home and research your concerns for free.

The LWSS plans to sponsor this program again in 2007. Should you wish to partake of this opportunity, please contact Barbara Kleespies at 780-418-0452.

Testimonials: "As a long-time lake front cottager and nature lover, I thought that I had a good idea of desirable practices on my shoreline and cottage property in general. Indeed, I did not and I found the Homesite Consultation extremely useful in some aspects of best practices, particularly the use of vegetation as a filter for runoff, elimination of pesticides, chemicals and fertilizers. If all of us took the time and interest in having the assessment done, I am positive that we could make collective improvements on our properties and the lake over time."

"While not directly on the lake front, I found a new appreciation of how my land-use practices could ultimately contribute to the overall health and state of Nakamun Lake. The literature which was presented and the written assessment has given me ideas on things I will do differently in the future to contribute to a better watershed and lake for my grandchildren."

Water is our natural heritage – Let's strive to preserve it