



Newsletter

Spring
2008

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."

Chairman's Message

Lots has happened since LEPA, Alberta Environment and Waters Edge Resource Group brought the community together to form the **Lac La Nonne Watershed Stewardship Society ("LWSS")** over five years ago. The board is composed of representatives throughout the watershed/community and membership is considered all residents full or part time within the watershed.

LWSS has strategically positioned its efforts in two distinct directions within the emerging legal/planning stewardship structure of the Alberta Government's "Water for Life" legislation and on the ground grassroots projects.

Recent accomplishments have not gone unnoticed by both the Alberta and Federal Government departments. A LWSS Director participated in the grant review for the Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) this year and we were a requested presenter to speak at both the Alberta Environment Conference and the Athabasca WPAC workshop. We also received a 2007 "Countryside Canada" award for Stewardship. We will also be presenting our story at the North American Lake Management (NALMS) 28th International Symposium in Lake Louise this Nov. In addition, we have been chosen to host the Alberta Stewardship Network's AGM and "Stewards in Motion 6" Workshop. (See announcements – flip side.)

The LWSS has commenced and completed many substantial initiatives that have resulted in the Society becoming involved in further planning and focus groups including the formation of the "Athabasca Watershed Planning and Advisory Council".

It is hoped that we may be able to coordinate/ lobby with the respective Councils to work together for a Watershed Management Plan.

We are a busy group, but the rewards have been most gratifying. I hope you will continue to support the LWSS in future endeavours and **do** plan on attending the Alberta Stewardship Network's AGM. (See flip side re: details.) Jeff McCammon

Land Use Issues Squeeze Alberta Producers

Agricultural producers need two important natural elements to succeed: sufficient land and safe water. In Alberta's ever-shrinking agricultural land base, however, producers are finding themselves squeezed on all sides by urban encroachment, country residential and acreage developments, the oil and gas industry exercising their mineral rights, and even by the forestry industry using private lands to grow timber. Ultimately, each of these different pressures can result in precious agricultural land and water resources being lost to beef producers, possibly forever.

In recent years, ranchers have been increasingly proactive in working to resolve some of these conflicts. Industry input was an important part of the most recent changes to the Agricultural Operation Practices Act (AOPA), bringing regulations in line with balancing protection of the environment and natural resources with the needs of the industry. The intent of the latest changes is to lay a foundation for long-term environmental, social and economic sustainability for the province's livestock sector, and to clearly outline the specific environmental responsibilities of producers.

What is needed say landowner groups and some consultants, is an over-arching land use policy for the province, rather than numerous land use plans. Alberta's increasing land use concerns are causing many agencies to search for better options. One key initiative is the Alberta Government's plan to create a provincial land use framework through a major public consultation process.

According to Rich Smith, environmental manager for Alberta Beef Producers, "as an industry, we recognize good stewardship will give us the right to continue to have access to the land and water. If we are to continue to be successful...our weapon will be stewardship."

Courtesy of FARMING FOR TOMORROW. Kate Rowland and Carolyn King.



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INITIATIVES

Watershed Youth Education: This spring the LWSS will be hosting its first annual Wetland Education and Watershed Awareness Day at Lac La Nonne. Grade 5 students from Rich Valley and Dunstable schools will make their way through four stations intended to meet various objectives of the Grade 5 science curriculum (Wetland Ecology) and promote general watershed awareness and appreciation. The LWSS will be working in partnership with Cows and Fish, AENV and PFRA to host the event.

Paleolimnology Project – U of A: Dr. Andrew Wolf. Funding provided by Alberta Stewardship Net Work.

Riparian Health Inventory –see below.

Community Based Social Marketing/Capacity Building – ASN Grant spring 2008

Calendar Photo Contest – Deadline June 30/08

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Alberta Stewardship Network AGM– June 11, 2008
Rich Valley Agriplex 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
2. Community Awards Night – August 16, 2008 Watch for notices.
3. 28th International Symposium of the North American Lake Management Society – Nov. 11-14, 2008, Lake Louise Alberta. LWSS will be doing a presentation.

Lac La Nonne Stream Water Quality Study: Comparison between 2005 and 2007.

In the spring of 2004, the Lac La Nonne Enhancement and Protection Association (LEPA) in partnership with Aquality Environmental Consulting Ltd. implemented a Stream Water Quality Monitoring Program. This year (2007) is the fourth year of the monitoring program. Volunteers from the Lac La Nonne Watershed Stewardship Society (LWSS) and LEPA collected samples from tributaries flowing from the Lac La Nonne Watershed Stewardship Society (LWSS) and LEPA collected into Lac La Nonne, Majeau Lake and Lake Nakumun. Sites were sampled for nutrients, bacteria and other water chemistry parameters. The effectiveness of best management practices can be monitored by comparisons with baseline data collected in 2004/2005. The spring averages for 2005 and 2007 were calculated and compared. All nutrient values, except for nitrate-nitrite were lower at all sites in 2007 compared to 2005. However, total phosphorus (TP) and total kjeldahl nitrogen (TKN) were still well above the Alberta Water Quality Guidelines for the Protection of Aquatic Life at all eight sites. *E.coli* count in 2007 were considerably lower than those of 2005. Total suspended solids (TSS) were also lower in 2007, but total dissolved solids were higher compared to 2005. In 2007 potassium (K) was lower, while calcium (CA), Sodium (Ns) and magnesium (Mg) were higher. Chloride (Cl) was lower at six of eight sites. Sulfates were considerably higher (at least double) at all the sites in 2007 compared to values measured in 2005. Hardness, electrical conductivity (EC) and bicarbonates were all higher in 2007 compared to 2005. Funding was provided by LEPA and LWSS.

Report prepared by Michelle Gray, B.Sc. Aquality Environmental Consulting Ltd.

Riparian Health Inventory – Cows and Fish **Riparian Health Inventory – Cows and Fish**

The benefits of a healthy riparian area, the area of lush vegetation bordering lakes, streams and watersheds, are many. Sediment, trapped in its vegetation, filters water and keeps fish, livestock and humans healthier, and builds soil and shorelines, reducing the risk of erosion. Water stored in underground aquifers benefits everyone, and thriving plants support fish and wildlife populations.

On the other hand, unhealthy riparian areas, lakes with raw, eroding shorelines and low fish populations, wetlands with no willows or cattails, and creeks that no longer flow year-round are sure signs that a problem exists.

‘Riparian health’ is about recognizing and measuring the condition of a riparian area. When the measuring, or check-up, is done and a score, or diagnosis, is established, it can be determined if the system is in good working order.

This summer Cows and Fish has been invited to conduct an inventory of our lakeshore riparian areas to get a baseline of their condition so we learn more about what role riparian health may play in some of the issues we face.

Cows and Fish is a voluntary stewardship program, promoting riparian awareness and health.

Riparian Health Inventory (continued)

WHERE is it being done in our area?

☞ Lac La Nonne, Nakamun Lake, Lake Majeau

WHEN will it happen?

☞ Summer 2008

HOW will it be done?

☞ Watch for public meetings to learn more and for your opportunity to participate. You may receive a phone call throughout the summer and Cows and Fish staff will do the inventory of the lakeshore/riparian area.

WHAT will it cost?

☞ No financial cost to the individual.

☞ Total project will be ~\$55,000. Funds are being provided by Alberta Conservation Association Grant Eligible Fund, Alberta Lottery Fund, Community Initiative Program (pending), Summer Village of Nakamun Park, and LEPA

HOW can you be a part of it?

☞ Attend public meetings. - Ask questions.

☞ Volunteer your property. - Participate if you are asked.

For more information Contact Kerri (Cows and Fish) 780-427-7940 or Jeff- 780-436-8280 or Dwavne-458-8926

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