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BRWA Committee - Chairs

- **Education/Communications**
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- **Policy** – Wayne Ungstad
- **Finance/Fundraising** – Barb Bosh
- **Watershed Planning** – Leonard Standing On The Road

Battle River Watershed Alliance Board Update

The Battle River Watershed Alliance (BRWA) held its Summer General Meeting at Lakedale Community Centre (Pigeon Lake) on August 15. The meeting was attended by approximately 30 people and featured an array of speakers including municipal water lawyer Judy Stewart and author Mark Anielski.

The BRWA Board of Directors met in July to discuss its ongoing watershed projects including an *aerial videography capture and riparian health & integrity assessment* being conducted this summer under which contractor George Walker flew a stretch of the watershed in a helicopter. The *Battle River Index of Biological Integrity* study (a multi-metric approach that uses fish assemblages to assess the biological condition of watersheds) is also ongoing.

BRWA is working with the Land Stewardship Centre of Canada to serve as a pilot site in the *Signs of Life* project, designed to increase signage of rivers, creeks, canals, lakes and wetlands visible from major highways in Alberta. BRWA is identifying locations for Battle River crossing/border points not yet signed and is developing a local waterbody fact and information sheet. BRWA is also working with First Nations in the watershed to mark Battle River crossings with signs in Cree syllabic and phonetic on the Montana Band Reserve and range roads.



An example of waterbody signage in the Battle River watershed.

The aim of the *Signs of Life* project is to draw attention to waterbody values through signage.

Photo: W. Ungstad

BRWA also held a *Teacher Workshop* with Battle River School Division teachers in August; the half-day workshop featured a trip down the Battle River in Augustana College voyager canoes, presentations by Cows & Fish and Ducks Unlimited & giveaway flash drives linking to watershed information to school curriculum.

For more information, contact: David Samm, BRWA Manager, Box 1926, Camrose, AB T4V 1X8
Tel: 780/781-2972. Email: david.samm@battleriverwatershed.ca

We are all stewards of the Battle River Watershed



Pigeon Lake Watershed Association Update

The Pigeon Lake Watershed Association (PLWA) held its second Annual General Meeting on August 23rd at Golden Days. The *Pigeon Lake State of the Watershed Report* was presented to more than 100 attendees at the meeting; a copy of the report is posted on the Association's website. The meeting also featured a presentation by Diana McQueen, MLA Drayton Valley-Calmar and Parliamentary Assistant, Environment.



Jay White, of Aquality Environmental Consulting, presents the Pigeon Lake State of the Watershed Report at the PLWA Annual General Meeting in August.
Photo: D. Smallwood

With membership of approximately 1,000 individuals, PLWA assists residents with shoreline healthy assessments and responsible handling of domestic sewage and fertilizer use to help control phosphorus inputs into the lake. PLWA also partners with Alberta Environment under the *Respect Our Lakes Program* to conduct education and public information activities. Join their Great Canadian Shoreline Clean Up until September 28. For more information, visit the PLWA website: www.pigeonlakewatershedassociation.com

Heritage Trees of Alberta Book To Be Published

A 9.8 metre-tall Horse chestnut and a 20 metre-tall Chinese Elm in Camrose are among 450 trees in Alberta that have been granted heritage tree designation under the *Alberta Heritage Tree Project*. A *Heritage Trees of Alberta* book to be published in September will profile the trees along with photos and stories of other significantly historical trees in the province.

The *Alberta Heritage Tree Project* grants heritage tree designation on the basis of historical or cultural significance, rarity, landmark in the community, horticultural significance, habitat provided for rare or endangered birds, and hardiness. The Heritage Trees of Alberta Foundation received hundreds of nominations since the project launch in May 2006. All trees with heritage tree designation are included in a tree registry that provides photos, stories, botanical, ecological, historical, cultural and location information. Trees may be searched by such key words as species, age, region and location.

Advance orders for the *Heritage Trees of Alberta* book will receive a 20 per cent discount off the retail price. Order forms and information are available at Heritage Tree Foundation of Canada: 403-933-3099 or www.heritagetreefoundation.com.

Alberta Soils Tour Held in July

Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development hosted an **Alberta Soils Tour** in July. Tour stops and topics included: Lacombe Research Station; Whelp Creek watershed – Best Management Practice (BMP) Evaluation Project; oil site reclamation projects & regulations; land use, forestry issues & pasture health, environmental goods & services; peat extraction & soil remediation; U of A - Breton Plots & Woodlot.



Alberta Agriculture Water Quality Specialist, Jollin Charest, discusses water monitoring equipment at the BMP Evaluation Project monitoring site at Whelp Creek headwaters. Photo: P. Boehme

Alberta Conservation Team Summer Update

By Christina Pickles
AENV Central Alberta ACT Coordinator

The Alberta Conservation Team (ACT), a new initiative from Alberta Environment, has been supporting stewardship activities in the Battle River watershed this summer. Early in June, we participated in the City of Camrose Water Festival with a watershed model to show students what a watershed is and how our actions can have an impact on the Battle River watershed. Thanks to Vicki Cole for organizing a great event!

ACT has partnered with the Federation of Alberta Naturalists and the Pigeon Lake Watershed Association (PLWA) to conduct *Living by Water* members visit lakefront homeowners and create a homesite consultations at Pigeon Lake. ACT provides personalized reports with suggestions on how the homeowner can reduce their impact on the lake. One recurring suggestion is to increase the buffer zone along the lake by planting species such as willow; this 'green zone' or riparian area along the lakeshore helps to trap such things as

sediment and nutrients before it reaches the lake, stabilizing the bank so erosion is reduced, and creating habitat for birds and wildlife. The response from both PLWA and homeowners has been positive.



ACT will compile information gathered from the summer and present PLWA with areas to focus their stewardship initiatives. *For more information, contact Christina Pickles at: christina.pickles@gov.ab.ca.*

Alberta Water Council Update

By Shaun Peters, Alberta Water Council

2007 Annual Report

The Alberta Water Council [2007 Annual Report](#) is now available. Inside you'll learn more about 2007 Council activities, as well as funding and financial information. A PDF version is posted at www.AWChome.ca Print copies can be requested through at (780) 644-7380.

Departing WPAC Member of Council

Alberta Water Council (AWC) thanks departing Director Bill Berzins, who served as the Watershed Planning & Advisory Councils (WPAC) representative with AWC since its inception in 2004. Bill was a member of the AWC Executive and a strong advocate for WPAC needs.



Wetland Policy Project

The Wetland Policy Project is nearing completion. A draft policy and implementation plan will be presented for approval at the September board meeting. The completion of this critical piece of work is a step forward in the realization of future wetlands resource management strategies.

Shared Governance and Watershed Planning Framework Project

The Shared Governance and Watershed Management Planning Framework Project Team is concluding its work of developing a Shared Governance Framework for *Water for Life (WFL)* partnerships and a Framework for Watershed Management Planning. In September, final documents will be presented to the Board for approval.

Intra-Basin Water Movement Project

In January 2007, Environment Minister Rob Renner asked the Council to "... determine if the current Gloria Wilkinson received the Individual Commitment category for her leadership and contributions in enhancing the Bow and Elbow River watersheds.

approach to decisions that involve the movement personalized report with suggestions on how the of water from one sub-basin for use in another sub-basin within the same major river basin is still valid and what, if any, changes should be made to the current approach and under what conditions." An Intra-Basin Water Movement Project Team was established to review issues and approaches in the management of intra-basin water allocation, and prepare recommendations. In June, the Board approved the report presented by the team, which discusses the principles that should apply to intra-basin water movement applications and provides recommendations to new intra-basin water movement applications or changes to existing licenses. The report has been forwarded to Minister Renner for consideration and is expected to be posted to the AWC website this fall.

Committees and Teams

In Alberta, the *Water Act (1999)* governs the allocation of water via licences. Presently, portions of the South Saskatchewan River Basin are currently closed to new applications for water licenses, except for First Nations, Water Conservation Objectives and storage projects. Other basins may face similar water allocation challenges in the future. The newly created **Water Allocation Transfer System Project Team** will develop recommendations to enhance Alberta's water allocation transfer system to contribute to WFL goals. The team plans to provide a final report and recommendations to Council in 2009.

The **Water for Life Implementation Review Committee** is reviewing the implementation progress of the WFL strategy. Review reports provide feedback and recommendations to the Government of Alberta and other stakeholders to help advance the achievement of the WFL strategy's goals. The Committee is conducting its third review and a report is expected in spring 2009.

A **Health Aquatic Ecosystems Project Team** is developing a working definition of the term *healthy aquatic ecosystems* and is reviewing progress toward the WFL strategy's goal of healthy aquatic ecosystems. The team will provide recommendations about what actions the Council and other water strategy partners can take to best advance this goal.

Alberta Stewardship Network Update

The 2008 Alberta Stewardship Network's (ASN) *Grassroots Environmental Stewardship Awards* were presented at the annual *Stewards in Motion Workshop* in Rich Valley in June. Celebrating the achievements of Alberta's environmental stewards, the awards recognize the work being done by individuals and community stewardship groups who have gone above and beyond to protect, preserve, enhance and sustain the environment.

Award recipient in the Community Group category was the *Medicine River Watershed Society*, a group that has been raising watershed awareness for seven years. Award recipient in the Stewardship Project Category was the *Lac La Biche Watershed Project*, which is improving the health of its riparian areas and increasing biodiversity through education, meetings, open houses, and presentations.



In May, ASN welcomed new Operations Manager Kevin Wirtanen, who is supporting ASN activities while on secondment from Sustainable Resource Development.

ASN offers workshops, community web-hosting and a directory of Alberta watershed stewardship groups. In partnership with Alberta Environment, ASN also administers the Watershed Stewardship Grant program, which provides watershed related projects with direct support funding. In 2008, the program awarded grants to 43 watershed stewardship groups. Check the ASN website soon for details on 2009 grant opportunities.

For more information, contact ASN at 1-877-727-5276 or visit: www.ab.stewardshipcanada.ca

Coming Events

Strathcona County is hosting the **Tree Canada Canadian Urban Forest Conference** on September 23-26. With the theme *Healthy Trees-Healthy People*, the conference features speaker David Suzuki on the topic of *Good News For A Change: Sustainable Development and The State of The Environment*. For more information, visit: <http://www.cufc8.ca> or email Sheila Flint at: flint@strathcona.ab.ca. Telephone: 780-464-8496

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is holding **Treevitalize Your Landscape** on September 24-25 in Indian Head, Saskatchewan. Focusing on improving water quality through agroforestry practices, the free workshop will feature discussion of functionality of riparian buffers in central Alberta, and an agroforestry research project field tour. To register (registration deadline is September 8), call: 306-695-2284 OR e-mail: pfratree@agr.gc.ca

Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin is **holding its Annual General Meeting on October 29** in Canmore. For more information, visit: www.saskriverbasin.ca

The 28th International Symposium of the North American Lake Management Society is **being held November 11 to 14 in Lake Louise. Lake Management in a Changing Environment will focus on lake** management during unprecedented development, water scarcity and climate change. For more information, call: 608/233-2836 or visit: www.nalms.org.

We are ALL Upstream II – Making Connections is being held in Leduc on February 10 – 12, 2009. For more information, visit: www.partners@saskriverbasin.ca

The 4th **National Stewardship and Conservation Conference** is being held in Calgary July 8-11, 2009. *Strengthening Stewardship – Investing at every step* aims to bring together a diversity of individuals, groups, industry, business, government and non-government organizations committed to stewardship. For more information, watch the website: www.stewardship2009.ca

Available Resources

Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development Info
Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development has released its fact sheet on the **Biodiversity Conservation Guide for Farmers and Ranchers in Alberta, 2007**. Other fact sheets are available on beneficial management practices for Alberta farmsteads, wintering sites, and improving pasture productivity. Most are available on-line; hard copies are available by calling 1-800-292-5697.

2007 Alberta Irrigation Information Booklet
Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, Water Resource Branch in Lethbridge has produced a 2007 Alberta Irrigation Information Booklet, which provides a statistical overview of irrigation information and data relating to the 13 irrigation districts in southern Alberta. Download the [Alberta Irrigation Information 2007](#) publication - 1760 KB - pdf

Free Design Service Available for Nonprofits
The Alberta College of Art and Design's Public Design Service pairs 4th year Visual Communications Design students with nonprofit organizations seeking top-level design with their brochures, advertising, posters, stationary, logos, newsletters, publications, signage, websites, illustration, and character design. Students are supervised by instructors to ensure quality. For more information, visit www.acadpublicdesign.org or contact Larry Riedl at 403-284-7619 or publicdesign@acad.ca.