

# The River Current

Spring 2002



**Our Mission:**  
Promoting watershed  
sustainability through awareness,  
linkages and stewardship.

**Partners FOR the  
Saskatchewan River Basin  
&  
Saskatchewan Legal Education  
Society Inc.  
presents:  
"Just Add Water"  
October 3rd & 4th, 2002  
Sheraton Cavalier  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan**

Plan to attend this conference to learn more about the challenges of managing water and land resources.

Will our existing policy frameworks sustain the river system and our surface and ground water resources for the next generation?

Speakers from the various levels of government, the scientific and research community, the legal profession, as well as those involved in working with community stakeholders will present their perspectives on these issues.

Our Keynote Speaker is Dr. David Schindler, Killam Memorial Professor of Ecology at the University of Alberta, Edmonton.

Watch for more details in our next newsletter.

## ***Prairie Provinces Water Board: Sharing a Prairie Resource***

Runoff from snowpack on the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains is the major source of water for the larger southern rivers of the prairie provinces, flowing eastward across Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba to empty into Hudson Bay. Some streams originate off the prairies and from heights of land, such as the Cypress Hills. These streams may also flow east across provincial boundaries before joining the larger rivers or forming land-locked lakes. The ownership of the waters of a river system flowing through two or more jurisdictions can give rise to many administrative and water use problems.



On July 28, 1948, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Canada agreed to establish the Prairie Provinces Water Board to recommend the best use to be made of interprovincial waters in relation to associated resources in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta and to recommend the allocation of water between each province for streams flowing from one province into another province.

On October 30, 1969, the Master Agreement on Apportionment was signed to provide an apportionment formula for eastward flowing interprovincial streams, give recognition to the problem of water quality and to reconstitute the Prairie Provinces Water Board to administer the Agreement.

The Master Agreement is based on the principle of equitable sharing of available water in the prairies. The formula generally states that each province may use one half of the natural flow of water originating within its boundaries and one half of any flow entering the province. Natural flow is broadly defined as the volume of flow that would occur if a stream or river had not been affected by human activity. The Agreement also ensures that water quality at interprovincial boundaries is at acceptable levels, and facilitates a cooperative approach for the integrated development and management of interprovincial streams and aquifers to ensure their sustainability for the benefit of the people of the prairie provinces.

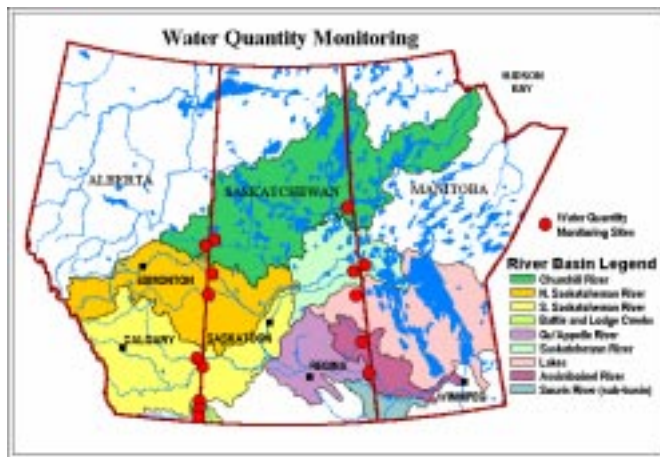


Photo: The Bow River near Banff, Alberta

The day-to-day work of the Board is performed by the PPWB Secretariat, with its office in Regina, Saskatchewan. The Secretariat reviews and analyzes monitoring data; calculates natural flow at the boundaries; determines conformity with water

- Continued -

quality objectives; and reports on apportionment and water quality at the interprovincial boundaries. The PPWB has three permanent committees on water quantity, water quality and ground water to assist in technical work and provide advice to the Board.



Environment Canada fulfills the monitoring requirements described under the Master Agreement and provides information from 75 long term water quantity monitoring stations, 16 meteorological stations and 12 water quality monitoring sites. Other agencies provide information from an additional 13 water quantity monitoring stations. This information is used to calculate natural flows and analyze water quality.

The values calculated for 14 water quantity and 12 water quality monitoring sites along the Alberta-Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan-Manitoba borders are used to advise the PPWB whether requirements of the Agreement are being met. Although the Agreement applies to all eastward flowing interprovincial streams, formal apportionment calculations are only done for streams with significant water use.

The Master Agreement on Apportionment allows the equitable sharing and protection of interprovincial streams while developing a consensus approach to preventing interprovincial surface and groundwater problems. Since the PPWB has always sought a consensus of its members, provincial governments, the primary regulator of water supplies, have always complied with the Agreement. Therefore, the Master Agreement could be referred to as a model for dealing with interjurisdictional issues.

For further information, please contact:  
Prairie Provinces Water Board  
Room 300, Park Plaza  
2365 Albert Street  
Regina, Sask. S4P 4K1  
Tel: (306) 780-7004 Fax: (306) 780-6810  
[www.mb.ec.gc.ca/water/boards/fa01/index.en.html](http://www.mb.ec.gc.ca/water/boards/fa01/index.en.html)

## Fred Heal Conservation Award Call for Nominations

Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin is now accepting nominations for the Fred Heal Conservation Award. The award was established in memory of Fred Heal, the former Executive Director of the Meewasin Valley Authority and the driving force behind the establishment of PFSRB.

The Fred Heal Conservation Award will recognize a for-profit organization that has taken direct initiative in preserving and/or enhancing the health of the Saskatchewan River Basin.

The award will be presented at the Conference & Annual General Meeting in October 2002.

Please visit the awards section of our website for an on-line nomination form at [www.saskriverbasin.ca/Awards/awards.html](http://www.saskriverbasin.ca/Awards/awards.html)

## Water Watchdog Media Launch

With the assistance of six students from Sister O'Brien School, PFSRB formally launched the Water Watchdog project at the Vimy Memorial Bandshell in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Brief presentations by PFSRB's Chair Dr. Ray Fast, Project Manager Jo-Anne Richter, and Technical Committee member Tim Haughian were followed by a demonstration of the project along the riverbank. To see our Water Watchdogs in action visit our web site at: [www.saskriverbasin.ca](http://www.saskriverbasin.ca)

Other groups throughout the Prairies helped launch the Water Watchdog project including: Junior Forest Rangers in Stony Plain, AB, Students in Sherwood Park, AB and Scouts in Nipawin, SK.

Water Watchdog kits are now available for \$10 per kit (provides materials for one leader & five children) or \$45 for a class kit. Visit our web site to print an order form for your kit or for a list of locations where kits are available for purchase.



Photo: Heidi Juul demonstrates the Water Watchdog program on the bank of the South Saskatchewan river with a group of students from Sister O'Brien school in Saskatoon.

## *Partnerships Key to Success of Manitoba Conservation Districts*

For many of us, fish ladders and grassed runways bring to mind images in a Dr. Suess book, but to the Manitoba Conservation Districts they are ways of dealing with some of the challenges involved in sustainable resource management.

Modelled after conservation districts in Ontario, the Manitoba Conservation Districts use a watershed perspective to address soil and water conservation. Since its inception in 1972, the program has grown to include 16 districts covering about 60% of the agricultural land in the province.

The success of the Manitoba Conservation Districts can be attributed to its partnerships with local people and its programs. Member municipalities of each district appoint a blend of councillors and ratepayers who, in turn, elect a board to manage the affairs of the district. Its' programs are flexible allowing the specific needs of the individual districts to be met. These programs may include financial or technical assistance in the areas of grazing management, water management, soil conservation, drainage, and historical projects among others.

“CD’s encourage and promote good land and water stewardship through incentives,” says Wayne Hildebrand, Manager of the Conservation Districts Program, referring to projects in which a conservation district partners with a local landowner to cost-share in a project. Funding for the districts is provided by the Provincial and municipal governments, landowners, other conservation programs and partnerships with conservation groups and agencies. Since the inception of the conservation districts over \$55 million has been spent in rural Manitoba. Spin-off benefits are estimated to be \$8-10 million annually.

Board members and staff of Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin recently toured the Little Saskatchewan River Conservation District and the Whitemud Conservation District.

Our first stop at the Minnedosa dam and reservoir illustrates the importance of upstream watershed management. Located next to the dam is a fish ladder with a series of pools arranged like steps enabling fish to pass over the dam. The reservoir, better known as Lake Minnedosa, is used for water supply and recreation. In 1997, the lake was dredged in preparation for rowing events of the 1997 Canada Games. The conservation district is currently watching this area to see if there will be a decrease in sedimentation due to new zero till practices in the upper reaches of the watershed.

A grassed runway located in a farmer’s field serves as a good example of the downstream impacts of land clearing and drainage. Water from the Riding Mountain area trenched the land so intensely that it was washing out the culvert and eroding the field. The conservation district and the landowner contributed to the costs of having the land leveled and a grassed runway installed as an effective water erosion control program.



Photo: Stoney Creek, courtesy of WWCD

The oldest and one of the largest districts is the Whitemud Watershed Conservation District (WWCD), a self-contained watershed whose waters flow east into Lake Manitoba. Within this district is a significant waterway called Stoney Creek. This spring fed creek is one of the few waterways in southwest Manitoba where Brook trout survive year round. Thanks in part to projects including fenced off riparian areas, off-site watering and rotational grazing. Hundreds of miles of manmade channels and drains exist in this district which means that a large portion of their budget is spent on infrastructure. “Agricultural drainage is important but it can have many negative impacts on the system. Therefore districts are involved with drainage licenses and water allocation issues,” says Rick Baker, Manager of WWCD.

The Rosedale Farm is a 480-acre parcel of land operated by the WWCD. In 1967, following years of problems with erosion, flooding and siltation of drains, the RM of Rosedale and other councils in the area requested assistance from the Provincial Government. The Province began purchasing the land and implementing soil conservation programs. In 1977, it turned the land over to the WWCD Board to use as a demonstration project. The Rosedale Farm shows what can be accomplished through the proper management of soil and water on escarpment lands. It is now “a living example of conservation,” says Baker.

Although the programs of each district are tailored to meet their specific needs, all districts consider awareness and education on sustainable development issues a high priority. Their involvement in school programs and activities aimed at Manitoba’s youth will help to ensure the long-term success of district programs and projects and the future expansion of the Manitoba Conservation Districts.

For more information about the program, contact:  
Wayne Hildebrand, Manager, Conservation Districts Program  
Gladstone, MB Ph: (204) 385-6622 E-mail: whildebran@gov.mb.ca

## *River Ripples*

### **Bow River Basin: Guidebook To Water Management Now Available**

Access to reliable and useful information is a cornerstone to sustainable water management. The Guidebook to Water Management serves to meet this need. The Guidebook is an inventory of the organizations, policies, legislations, programs, and projects in the Bow River Basin. It has been written in an easy to understand manner making it accessible to not just experts, but anyone with an interest in water issues. Completed in March 2002, the Guidebook is available from the Bow River Basin Council, tel: (403) 254-3419; email: shamza@earthtech.ca. It can also be accessed on-line at the following URL: <http://www.brbc.ab.ca/pages/publicat.html>

### **Call For Papers - 56th CWRA Annual Conference Vancouver, B.C., June 11-13, 2003**

The conference will provide a forum for exchange of knowledge and discussion of important issues pertaining to the usage of our water resources. The conference theme has been selected to reflect the current challenges, issues and questions faced by professionals today.

Water Stewardship - How are We Managing?  
Abstracts related to the conference theme (a maximum of 500 words) are invited in the following areas:

- Transboundary issues
- Aquatic habitat
- Source protection
- Floodplain management
- Monitoring
- Groundwater
- Watershed management
- Stormwater management
- Legislation, liability and policy
- Water supply

Abstracts must be received by July 31st, 2002. Send abstracts by e-mail to Paul Donahue, Vancouver 2003 Program Director, e-mail: [pdonahue@dillon.ca](mailto:pdonahue@dillon.ca)

### **EECOM 2002**

#### **Communitée and its Challenge: Culture-Solidarity-Action, Montréal, PQ, August 12-15, 2002.**

The EECOM 2002 Conference is co-hosted by EECOM (The Canadian Network for Environmental Education and Communication) and by AQPERE (l'Association québécoise pour la promotion de l'éducation relative à l'environnement). It is sponsored by the Biosphere of Environment Canada.

How can education help create, within our communities and building upon the heritage of cultural diversity, the solidarities needed to change how we relate to the environment? The themes of the conference invites participants to share experiences, lessons learned, challenges and possible paths for educational practices focusing on the community as a key locus for environmental education.

For information contact: AQPERE, 6400, 16th Avenue, Montreal, PQ H1X 2S9

Ph.: 514-376-1065; Fax : 514-376-1905; E-mail : [aqpere@crosemon.qc.ca](mailto:aqpere@crosemon.qc.ca) or [www.aqpere.qc.ca](http://www.aqpere.qc.ca) or [www.eecom.org](http://www.eecom.org)

### **10th Annual Workshop of the Alberta Lake Management Society (ALMS) "Caring for Your Lake: Successful Management Through Community Stewardship"**

The workshop will be held September 27&28, 2002 at the Hub Community Centre in Pine Lake, Alberta. The purpose of the workshop is to bring together lake users, scientists, government and industry representatives, special interest groups and the general public to explore and discuss problems facing Alberta lakes and watersheds, and the technologies and management strategies available to restore and enhance them.

Register early as space is limited.

Early registration deadline is September 1, 2002. Full registration details, the preliminary program, and the latest workshop news are available on the ALMS website <http://www.alms.ca>

The River Current is published quarterly by Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin. Articles and news items will be considered for publication. For further information about Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin Project, or to submit items, please contact:

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<http://www.saskriverbasin.ca>

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