

The River Current

March, 2004



Promoting watershed sustainability through awareness, linkages and stewardship.

A Global Forum: Banff Mountain Summit

Mountains as Water Towers conference in Banff from November 23-26, 2003. The event was associated with PFBRB Annual General Meeting.

Banff Mountain Summit: Mountains as Water Towers was a forum to generate solutions, share best practices and discuss issues surrounding the great storage houses of fresh water in the mountain regions of the worlds. The vast majority of downstream water volumes originate in mountain water towers. As demand increases for this resource, the potential for conflict over the ownership and use of that water increases. As global warming and air pollution increases, the quality and quantity of the water available downstream becomes compromised. The health of the Saskatchewan River Basin is dependent on Rocky Mountain water.

The conference held at the Banff Centre was an opportunity for many diverse stakeholders to contribute their experience and perspectives. Organized by the Mountain Culture Staff, the conference hosted 318 participants representing organizations and industries from 18 countries throughout 5 continents. The variety of presentations gave participants a world perspective on water issues.

Presenters shared many facts illustrating the challenges we face worldwide. The present Chair of the Global Water Partnership and the Water Resources Advisory Committee for Suez/Lyonnaise of Paris, gave insight into the global case. According to Margaret Catley-Carlson, deltas and wetlands continue to disappear, water tables are declining and many rivers are not reaching the sea. Increasing urbanization worldwide has resulted in increased water consumption.

David Schindler, Killam Memorial Professor of Ecology at the University of Alberta, took a local perspective. Discussing the impact of climate change on mountain water in Western Canada, Schindler predicted a drought in Alberta will be promoted by climate change and population growth. He proposed several solutions:

- Use water more efficiently
- Develop a national water policy with enforceable standards
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Develop enforceable standards for riparian zones
- Rejuvenate science in government agencies
- Develop strong educational programs
- De-politicize science information

Overall, this conference provided critical information and scientific evidence that is of particular importance for us to consider in the Saskatchewan River Basin. First, there is an increasing demand for and consumption of water resources in the watershed. Second, drought conditions are continuing. Third, there is evidence that climate change is occurring. It is time to discuss the need for a coordinated master plan for the entire basin. Within the Saskatchewan River Basin we need enhanced jurisdictional coordination to manage water resources.... **Max Abraham, Manager, PFSRB.**

PFSRB Annual Basin Conference

From the Mountains to the Sea: Communicating Across Watersheds

will be held at the
Sheraton Cavalier Hotel
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
October 7 & 8, 2004

lectures
displays
breakout groups
networking
banquet

DETAILS COMING SOON

TOWN OF BANFF

2003 WINNER OF THE FRED HEAL CONSERVATION AWARD



Dr. Ray Fast presenting the award to Banff Councillor Chip Olver

This year Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin recognized the Town of Banff with the Fred Heal Conservation Award.

Banff's commitment toward environmental sustainability and stewardship has been demonstrated by an upgrade to their wastewater treatment plant. The Town of Banff and Parks Canada worked together to set their own effluent discharge criteria. Much stricter than the existing requirements, the Town of Banff Wastewater Treatment Plant now produces the highest quality effluent in Alberta.

At the 2003 awards ceremony, the Chair of PFSRB Board of Directors, Ray Fast stated, "It is hoped this project will encourage the wider application of environmentally responsible treatment technologies and a greater appreciation of caring for the rivers of the Saskatchewan River Basin and beyond."

The Fred Heal Conservation Award recognizes a community organization or business that has taken a direct initiative in preserving and/or enhancing the health of the Saskatchewan River Basin.

Changing Faces at Partners

In September 2003, Max Abraham became the new manager at Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin. Max joined our team after a 30 year career with the Saskatoon Public School Division as a teacher and principal. Max has a special interest in environmental education and brings valuable experience to our organization.

The Communications Coordinator at PFSRB for over 5 years, Heather Dawes, has recently moved on to further pursue her career in the field of communications. Her knowledge of watershed issues and communications skills will be missed and we wish her all the best in the future.

We also wish to thank Myles Heidt who is leaving our Board of Directors after serving for three years. We welcome Donna Birkmeir to the Board. Donna is presently a Saskatoon Alderman.

Watersheds of the World

This high-quality interactive mapping project presents 20 indicators ranging from the degree of river fragmentation to the biodiversity of the 154 basins and sub-basins worldwide.

This is the first product of the *Water Resources eAtlas* project, a collaboration between the World Conservation Union, the International Water Management Institute, the Ramsar Convention Bureau and the World Resources Institute.

The goal is to make reliable and accurate freshwater information available so that managers, policy maker and NGOs can participate in water resource management and allocation decision making.

Navigate to
Watersheds of the World
by visiting:
www.waterandnature.org



Conference Listings

April 3-6, 2004 Calgary, AB

11th National Conference on Drinking Water

The goal of the Canadian Water and Wastewater Association is to present recent information on drinking water issues. Register online www.cwwa.ca or contact (613) 747-0524

May 11-13, 2004 Saskatoon, SK

People For Watersheds - The Power of Partnerships

A workshop hosted by Saskatchewan Network of Watershed Stewards and Canadian Water Resources Association. Register online at www.cwra.org or phone (306) 975-4683

June 16-18, 2004 Montreal, QB

57th CWRA Annual Conference

This years theme is "Water and Climate Change: Knowledge for Better Adaptation" Register online at www.cwra.org or phone 519-622-4764

June 22-25, 2004 Edmonton, AB

International Instrumented Watersheds Symposium

The Oil Sands Environmental Research Network at the University of Alberta is presenting this symposium focusing on natural, reclaimed and constructed watersheds. Register online at www.rr2.ualberta.ca/Oilsands or contact (780) 492-5156

July 19- 22, 2004 Waterloo, ON

Groundwater Quality 2004: 4th International Conference

Advances in groundwater quality research at the watershed scale is the theme of this event at the University of Waterloo. Register online at www.science.uwaterloo.ca/earth/conference2004/gwrc or contact (780) 492-5156

Conference In Focus:

People For Watersheds the Power of Partnerships

Partners are the building blocks of synergy. Building understanding and working in partnerships are key components of successful watershed stewardship.

An upcoming workshop, hosted by the Saskatchewan Network of Watershed Stewards (SNOWS) and the Canadian Water Resources Association (CWRA), will provide a forum for creating and expanding partnerships. The workshop objectives are to:

- Provide training for watershed stewards
- Recognize individuals/groups undertaking stewardship projects and celebrate successes
- Address topics from previous workshops such as ILOs, watershed planning processes and volunteer monitoring
- Create opportunities to network and develop new partnerships

Being held in Saskatoon from May 11 to 13, this workshop boasts a low registration fee to ensure that the event is accessible to all. For individuals the fee is \$30.00, while organizations pay \$80.00. For registration information contact Rhonda Murray at (306) 975-6410 or to inquire about sponsorship opportunities or exhibit space contact Gord Bell at (306) 975-6410.



Earth Day April 22, 2004

Earth Day 2004 is quickly approaching! It is time to begin planning for this day. Become a change agent and organize an activity, project or event where you live.

Community events that have already been planned for Earth Day include: tree plantings, waste reduction projects, community clean-ups, environmental festivals and workshops.

You can register your event online, order promotional materials and check out what other communities are doing at www.earthday.com.

Recently Released:

Whose Water is It?: The Unquenchable Thirst of a Water-Hungry World

Edited by Bernadette McDonald & Douglas Jehl; Published by National Geographic Society, 2003.

"Whose Water is It" is an anthology of evocative and provocative essays by scientists, authors, advocates and water managers whose work has impacted scientific research and action surrounding water in the 21st century. This book highlights the current state of water and looks to the future.

Taking a global focus, this edition takes the reader to the drought-stricken regions of the Middle East to the Polar icefields to the Rocky Mountains. Organized into the four sections of Ownership, Scarcity, Conflict and Prospects, the writers address various topics. For instance, Maude Barlow raises the question whether water is a basic human right or a corporate good; Lester R. Brown speaks to water scarcity as he discusses the effects of global water shortages on the world's food; and Peter Gleik looks at future prospects as he writes about easing conflicts over water resources. This book presents, not just the science surrounding the key issues facing the global water supply, but also includes the human account of those facing challenges.

"Whose Water is It?" was developed in cooperation with Mountain Culture at The Banff Centre and was released in celebration of the International Year of Freshwater. It is widely available in bookstores and libraries.

River Ripples

Water for Life:

Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability

Released in November 2003, this report is the Government of Alberta's response to develop a new water management approach and outline specific strategies and actions. The *Water For Life* strategy is based on three key outcomes: a safe, secure drinking water supply, healthy aquatic ecosystems and reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy.

Visit www.waterforlife.gov.ab.ca or call (780) 427-6310

Who's Polluting in Canada?

The National Pollutant Release Inventory (NPRI) is a database of the annual release of pollutants into air, water, and land, and off-site transfers for disposal or recycling. Based on the right-to know principle, the reported information of polluting facilities can be retrieved by substance or location. The data for all of Canada is available for the years 1995-2002.

Data is available online at www.ec.gc.ca/npri

Water Pathogens Data

The new Pathogens 1 Database, developed by GEMS Water, has the most information on waterborne pathogens in one place. It provides a baseline dataset of over 74 known factors that are transmitted in water and can cause disease and death. Compare this with local data as a "yardstick" for drinking water treatment facilities. This means that communities can learn how clean their water is. The data on pathogenic organisms and organics in both water sources and treated water was obtained from the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

Available in spreadsheet format at www.gemswater.org

Interactive Map: Swift Current Creek Watershed

The Swift Current Creek Watershed Stewards have developed an online mapping project that highlights sixteen significant places within the watershed. The project was officially launched on February 4, 2004.

Visit www.sccws.com

The River Current is published quarterly by Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin. Articles and news 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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