

The River Current

Spring 2003



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Promoting watershed
sustainability through awareness,
linkages and stewardship.

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Canada West Research Initiative Focuses on Urban Water Management

*By Susan McFarlane, Senior Policy Analyst, Canada West
Foundation*

In order to identify positive solutions to urban water management challenges and to increase awareness of urban water management issues, Canada West Foundation has recently begun work on the *Urban Water Management Initiative*. The initiative will explore growing concerns about the demand for and quality of urban water, and public policy approaches to urban water management.

The *Urban Water Management Initiative* will research, publish and publicly release three research studies: Key issues in Canadian Water Policy; Managing Urban Water Quality; and Urban Water Demand Management. All three will be publicly available at www.cwf.ca.

Key Issues in Canadian Water Policy: This discussion paper will provide an overview of water management issues in Canada and will put urban water management issues into context with other water policy issues in Canada. This overview will map out current public policy issues surrounding water supply and demand in Canada; discuss the role of water pricing and the complexities of water allocation; identify key concerns in water quality in Canada; and assess which water policy issue presents the greatest challenge to Canada. Anticipated release: June 2003.

Managing Urban Water Quality: This research study will examine intergovernmental water management issues relating to water quality in western Canada's large urban areas – Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Regina and Saskatoon, and Vancouver. Canada West will explore how large cities work with metro-adjacent communities to manage urban water quality, specifically drinking water, wastewater and recreational water. The report will clarify how large western Canadian cities manage water quality in a regional context, and examine how these regional models are working, identify key pressures for and barriers to expanding regional approaches, and examine the extent to which provincial and federal water quality policies facilitate or constrain regional water quality management. Anticipated release: September 2003.

Urban Water Demand Management: This research study will examine the status of water demand management policies in western Canada's large urban areas. The report will outline the current demand management policies for water in the city-regions, paying particular attention to changes in demand management over the last five years. As well, the report will discuss how municipal governments evaluate these policies and the extent that these policies are successful, with an additional focus on differences between the city-regions. Finally, the report will identify promising practices in water demand management, as well as barriers to the implementation of these tools. Anticipated release: January 2004.

The Canada West Foundation is conducting a number of projects that will also inform and compliment the Urban Water Management Initiative. Canada West has

-Continued on next page-

established expertise in the area of urban policy, including inter-governmental and inter-jurisdictional approaches to urban policy through its *Western Cities Project* research program. Through the *Building the New West Project*, which focuses on the determinants of regional prosperity, Canada West has developed expertise in the areas of inter-governmental cooperation and rural land use. Finally, Canada West has recently launched research on environmental issues through its *Natural Capital Project*.



About Canada West Foundation

Since 1971, the Canada West Foundation has provided citizens and policymakers with non-partisan, non-ideological research on a wide range of issues of critical importance to western Canadians. Canada West also hosts a variety of citizen engagement initiatives, such as conferences, workshops and student programs. As an autonomous non-profit research

institute and a registered charity, the continuation of Canada West's activities depends upon governments, corporations and foundations investing in our ongoing operations. For more information, please visit our website at www.cwf.ca.

Biography

Susan McFarlane is a Senior Policy Analyst at the Canada West Foundation, working primarily on the Urban Water Management Initiative, part of the Western Cities Project. Ms. McFarlane holds a Master's degree in Geography from Queen's University where she specialized in regional identity and boundary issues. Since joining the Canada West Foundation in 1998, Susan has worked on several different topics including the non-profit sector and volunteerism, northern natural gas pipelines, regional cooperation, regional approaches to service delivery, municipal amalgamation, and local government service delivery. Ms. McFarlane's research interests include regionalism, collaborative government relationships, health policy, the non-profit and voluntary sector, and qualitative research methods.



David Suzuki's Nature Challenge



“What can I do?” is one of the most frequently asked questions the David Suzuki Foundation receives from the public. To help Canadians make environmentally sustainable decisions, the Foundation has researched the 10 most effective ways individuals can conserve nature.

To put its research into action, the foundation is inviting all Canadians to take the Nature Challenge. Read the list, commit to at least three of the 10 over the coming year, and sign up online at www.davidsuzuki.org.

“In our busy lives, most of us have forgotten that it is nature that supports everything that we do,” says David Suzuki. “By leaving nature outside of our day-to-day decision making we are seriously damaging the environment and threatening our quality of life. By taking the Nature Challenge, we can all make a difference and protect the environment for our children and grandchildren.”

Research has shown that Canadians want to conserve the environment but are unsure of what they can do. The activities listed in David Suzuki's Nature Challenge were developed through a scientific assessment of how Canadian's daily activities contribute to the country's most serious environmental problems. By joining the Nature Challenge, Canadians will learn practical ways to make a difference.

Each month the David Suzuki Foundation will send an email newsletter with tips to help those who have signed up. Suggestions such as eating food from local producers and walking to one of your

regular destinations offer easy ways of protecting farmland and natural areas, ensuring cleaner water and air, stabilizing the climate, and creating healthier communities.

Thousands of Canadians have taken the Nature Challenge since it was launched in November, 2002, including some of the country's best-known icons. Sportscaster Ron MacLean, authors Margaret Atwood and Robert Munsch, and musicians such as Nelly Furtado, Randy Bachman, Bruce Cockburn and 54-40 have all taken the Nature Challenge.

For more information, or to download our free online reports, the *Science Behind the Nature Challenge* and the *Green Guide*, visit www.davidsuzuki.org.

Canadian Rivers Day on Sunday, June 8th First Annual Celebration Raises Awareness About Our Waterways

The Minister of Canadian Heritage, the Honourable Sheila Copps, has formally proclaimed the second Sunday in June as Canadian Rivers Day. This year June 8th will be the inaugural Canadian Rivers Day. This is an opportunity for all Canadians to celebrate our rivers and join in a variety of events to profile and protect our waterways. Festivities are being planned across the country and events will range from stream cleanups and fish enhancement activities to educational programs and community riverside celebrations.



Photo: Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin

Since 1980 the Outdoor Recreation Council of BC has promoted a special day to celebrate rivers. The event has evolved to include hundreds of individuals and groups hosting more than 80 events across the province, attracting more than 40,000 participants each year. An estimated 350 participating organizations were involved in organizing BC Rivers Day events last year. Building on the successful provincial initiative, *River/Rivières Canada*, has formed to take it to the next step – promoting national awareness and appreciation of our river heritage and celebrating a Canadian Rivers Day.

River/Rivières Canada is a not-for-profit, nongovernmental organization federally incorporated to make all Canadians aware of the essential value, vastness and diversity of Canada's waterways. Currently *River/Rivières Canada* is based in Ottawa, with Elmer Savoie as the Executive Director. An interim Board of Directors has been established for the Society, with a new committee to be formed that will have representation from each province and the First Nations.

Awareness of some of the challenges confronting our waterways is an important pillar in the foundation of *River/Rivières Canada*, as well as opportunities for river stewardship. Canadian Rivers

Day will mark the beginning of an annual yearlong series of initiatives and activities, from national to community levels, that will develop better awareness and understanding of our most valuable resource, our water!

While activities will occur throughout much of Canada, one of the day's feature events for this year is being organized by *River/Rivières Canada* and will take place in Ottawa at the Canadian Museum of Civilization. This is a natural venue given that Ottawa is our nation's capital as well as the meeting place of three great rivers – the Ottawa, the Gatineau and the Rideau. For an updated listing of events, to post an activity being organized, or to find out how you can get involved in organizing an event, visit the rivers Canada website at www.rivcan.ca

For activities more related to the Saskatchewan River Basin, there is the Manitoba and Saskatchewan Shoreline Series. To raise awareness about shorelines and the *International Year of Freshwater* a series of events are being held over May and June. Clive Callaway, co-founder of the Living by Water Project and co-author of "*On the Living Edge - Your Handbook for Waterfront Living*", will be in the Winnipeg area from May 5 to 10 and Saskatoon from May 30 to June 8 to launch the Manitoba/Saskatchewan edition of the book, lead several "Living by Water" evenings and all day Shoreline Resident Workshop. Clive will also be encouraging the organizing of events to celebrate the first Canadian Rivers Day on June 8 and promoting the [Wonder of Water](http://www.wonderofwater.ca) (www.wonderofwater.ca) initiative and the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup (www.vanaqua.org).

Water Watchdogs Needed in Rural Communities!



Free Water Watchdog kits are now available for youth in rural communities across the Prairie Provinces. This hands-on project provides an interactive and fun approach to watershed stewardship! Our "Ready to go" kits are user friendly, and adaptable to fit various time constraints and age groups (7-14 years). Participants must agree to submit their findings on-line or by mail.

For more details about the Water Watchdog program please visit our website at www.saskriverbasin.ca or call Jason Tuchelt toll free at 1-800-567-8007.

River Ripples

Saskatchewan Network of Watershed Stewards in partnership with the Canadian Water Resources Association presents: **Beneficial Management Practices for Healthy Watersheds**, June 3 & 4, 2003, Saskatoon Inn, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Through presentations, activities, and discussions, the workshop will demonstrate the need for and use of a variety of beneficial management practices for agricultural and urban watersheds as a means to manage, protect and restore the quality of water resources. The workshop will focus on ways to minimize human impacts on ecosystems and to protect source waters in Saskatchewan. Benefits and opportunities that can be gained in undertaking watershed stewardship will be described through local "success stories". Register on-line at www.cwra.org or contact: Collette Gaucher at 306-975-5246 or gaucherc@agr.gc.ca

The Watershed Game is a fun, educational tool to learn more about decision making that will lead to cleaner, healthier watersheds. The interactive watershed-planning game was developed by the Bell LIVE! program at the Bell Museum of Natural History. Bell LIVE! provides science-based learning adventures for students and teacher grades 4-8 throughout the U.S. and Canada. The intermediate level of the game provides an opportunity to be in charge of your own watershed making decisions about recreation, agriculture, transportation and many more things. Play the game by visiting the website at www.bellmuseum.org/mnideals/watershed/start.html

Protecting Riparian Areas, Creative Approaches to Subdivision Development in the Bow River Basin - a guide for Municipalities, Developers, and Landowners who routinely make urban subdivision decisions on the rural landscape. On-line copies are available under the publications section on the Bow River Basin Council's website at: www.brbc.ab.ca For a hardcopy please contact Mark Bennett at (403) 254-3353.

The Saskatchewan Conservation Programs Directory is Now Available!

The Saskatchewan Conservation Programs directory was developed as part of Saskatchewan's component of the National Volunteer Sector Initiative with funding provided by Fisheries and Oceans Canada. The directory describes over 25 conservation programs offered in Saskatchewan by Federal and Provincial Government agencies and non-profit conservation organizations. The directory is available on the Internet through the Saskatchewan Network of Watershed Stewards (SNOWS) website at www.snows.sk.ca and the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority's website at www.wetland.sk.ca. Print copies of the directory are also available from the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority's Regina office by calling (306) 787-0726.

9th Annual EECOM Conference: A Watershed Approach to Environmental Education, Summerside, Prince Edward Island, September 25-28, 2003

Hosted by The Canadian Network for Environmental Education and Communication (EECOM) and the Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP). With the focus on watershed approaches to learning, the conference will explore diverse methods of educational programming, environmental research, resource management, and environmental thought and culture. It will include a comprehensive program of presentations, workshops, posters and discussions. As well, an industry trade show, social program and field trips will allow delegates additional opportunities to share information and ideas and learn from each other.

Register on-line at: www.bbema.ca/eecomacap/en/
For information contact: Bedeque Bay Environmental Management Association (BBEMA) at: phone: 902-886-3211
fax: 902-886-3277
email: admin@bbema.ca

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