

The River Current

Fall 2007



We are All Upstream Conference *Victoria Inn and Conference Center, Winnipeg MB* *November 5-7, 2007*

We are all upstream of somebody else. The Red, Saskatchewan, and Winnipeg Rivers all contribute to Lake Winnipeg. Scientific evidence accumulated over the last 70 years now reveals that Lake Winnipeg is approaching a state of deterioration that may affect ecosystem sustainability. We can all do our part! Come help us determine what can be done and how it can be accomplished!



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

Registration Deadline Extended
October 26, 2007

Register at www.saskriverbasin.ca

Conference Overview

Day 1

- Understanding Lake Winnipeg
- Saskatchewan River Basin
- Interesting and 'outside of the box' stewardship activities
- Discussion Session
 - Identifying indicators of integrated resource management
 - What makes planning successful in your area?

Day 2

- The players, organizations and their activities
 - Assiniboine, Red River, and Lake of the Woods/Rainy River Basins
 - First Nations views and fisheries on Lake Winnipeg
- Discussion Session
 - What can we do to help improve the water quality in Lake Winnipeg?
 - How do we apply this back home in our own watersheds?
 - How can we engage First Nations people?



For further details on the "We are All Upstream" conference, please visit www.saskriverbasin.ca. This conference is being hosted by the Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin and the Red River Basin Commission.



The South Saskatchewan River Eco-Canoe Guide is now available on line. This informative and useful series of 14 full colour maps details the river from the Gardner Dam to the Forks of the North and South Saskatchewan Rivers. Accessing these maps will assist the canoeist, both experienced and amateur, in determining river formations, possible launch points, and historical points of interest and locations of emergency services. These maps can be accessed at www.meewasin.com/common/pdfs/facilities/trail. Please note, these were produced in 1998 and may contain inaccurate information.

Cumulative Effects Management Framework

Alberta Government, 2007

On October 2, 2007, the Alberta government announced a broad new approach to address cumulative effects on the environment. Currently, environmental impacts are assessed on a project-by-project basis. The cumulative effects framework will consider the environmental implications of development for an entire region. Because every landscape is different, and requires setting different outcomes to protect the environment, the new cumulative effects management framework will consider environmental effects of development on a regional basis.

Under this approach, the Alberta government will adopt new methods - such as setting regional limits, building external partnerships and developing long-term shared outcomes. This new approach will ensure that cumulative effects of developments are considered as part of regular business.

The policy paper, *Towards Environmental Sustainability: Proposed Regulatory Framework for Managing Environmental Cumulative Effects*, outlines an approach that addresses ways to deal with the cumulative effects of development that protects air, land and water. This policy paper is intended to stimulate discussion on the proposed framework.

Consultation with key stakeholders about the approach used in the cumulative effects management framework will occur over the coming months. All Albertans are also invited to submit comments about the framework. Deadline for submission of comments is November 30, 2007.

For more information, including a copy of the policy paper, please visit <http://environment.gov.ab.ca/cem/index.html>.

Urban Land Stewardship

A summary of "Conscious Cities, International Examples of Urban Land Stewardship, August 2007)

by Lis Mack

Often, cities are viewed as contributing to the decline of environmental quality and the depletion of natural resources. This is primarily because of the demands for energy and material goods commonly associated with cities. Research conducted by Catherine Cone for the CanadaWest Foundation (*Conscious Cities, International Examples of Urban Land Stewardship, August 2007*) indicates that a number of communities around the world are acting as stewards for land outside of their physical boundaries. While the majority of the communities referred to in this document were international, two communities were from Canada (Toronto and Moncton) and five from the United States.

The report provides an overview of the actions taken by cities in the area of land stewardship. Both positive and negative lessons have been drawn from the case studies. These lessons can provide local governments in Canada the knowledge to ensure project success. An interdisciplinary approach that involves the public, scientists, and all the levels of government, having clear goals and guidelines, and a stabilized institutional capacity, are critical to affecting the successful completion of urban land stewardship projects that extend beyond city limits.

Research has indicated public involvement in land stewardship projects is vital for a long term successful project. An example of public support can include additional taxes to purchase land and to contribute to the upkeep of these public lands. Continued community involvement in the form of public ownership is necessary to deter misuse of the area whether through vandalism or over-use.

The use of partnerships is important to achieve land stewardship goals, especially for projects that operate outside city boundaries. Partnerships with national and regional organizations have allowed municipalities to access larger resource banks and as a result, projects have flourished, particularly when there are partnerships between local governments and local landowners.



Cities need to place a priority on land stewardship projects, particularly those concerning areas adjacent to metropolitan lands. The relationship between urban and rural landscapes requires additional research in Canada as there is less information on the effects that city environments have on the surrounding natural environments and vice versa. Currently, the little research conducted in this area has focused on social and economic systems and processes. For additional information, please access the entire document (*Conscious Cities, International Examples of Urban Land Stewardship, August 2007* by Catherine Cone for the CanadaWest Foundation).

Edmonton Teachers - Treat it Right!

by Janice Dewar, Drainage Services, City of Edmonton

Drainage Services, City of Edmonton has just released two programs for elementary school teachers to help teach students about the storm water and wastewater drainage systems.

Entitled, Treat it Right! the programs have been designed to link to the Alberta Education programs and focus on science. Each program provides four lessons and a selection of exercises, readings, and activities that provide connections to language arts, social studies, and mathematics as appropriate to the content and grade level.

Treat it Right! Wastewater (Grade 4) links to the personal action concepts of Grade 4 Science - Waste and our World. The program develops the idea of biodegradability with respect to what ends up in the wastewater. It discusses how wastewater is managed and treated in Edmonton and the kinds of actions students and their families can take to minimize their impact on the wastewater. Integrating science, language arts, and social studies, Treat it Right! Wastewater includes a teacher's guide complete with duplicating masters. It also includes a game that can be used for assessment and as a culminating activity.

A second program for Grade 5, Treat it Right! Storm Water links to the human action concepts of the Wetlands Science topic. It also includes some information on Weather and reviews some Chemistry activities as well. The program develops the concept of how natural drainage from precipitation is altered within a city and how it is managed in the City of Edmonton. Students will learn about the kinds of wastes that end up in the storm water system and how that can have a negative effect on wetlands and the environment. Students will work with their families to assess what is done at home and what kinds of actions they can all take to treat storm water right.



Through the Chemistry activities, students will perform basic tests to help them understand that storm water is monitored and tested for contaminants by the City of Edmonton. They will also learn about the kinds of jobs that are done to manage the storm water system in the City.

Integrating science; language arts; social studies (Canada: Its Geography and People); and mathematics, Treat it Right! Storm Water provides a teacher's guide complete with duplicating masters.

Both programs include a flow chart for either storm water or wastewater. An evaluation is part of each program and teachers are encouraged to provide their feedback.

The programs are available at www.edmonton.ca/drainage/education. For more information, contact the project manager Janice Dewar at (780) 442-4364 (janice.dewar@edmonton.ca)



Call for Abstracts - Saskatchewan River Delta Symposium

April 2-3, Saskatoon Inn, Saskatoon SK

The Saskatchewan River Delta (SRD) is one of the largest inland river deltas in North America, totaling approximately 9,500 km². The Saskatchewan River Delta Task Force is organizing a Symposium on the Saskatchewan River Delta. The purpose of this symposium is to bring researchers, natural resource managers, policy makers and local stakeholders together to heighten awareness and share information on the SRD. The symposium will cover current and historical research and knowledge of the delta including:

- Water resources and dynamics
- Ecosystems and changes
- Human activities
- Social and economic aspects
- Land use

If you have conducted research on, or have other knowledge of the Saskatchewan River Delta, we invite your participation in this symposium with either a poster or a presentation targeted for a broad interdisciplinary audience. A short abstract or summary of your presentation should be mailed, faxed, or emailed by **November 15, 2007** to:

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Pouring Lake Winnipeg - Riverfront Children's Water Play Feature

by Lis Mack

Saskatoon's Riverfront at River Landing is a dynamic and interactive addition to the South Saskatchewan River bank. Prior to construction, this 2.1 ha landfill was narrow, hostile, denuded and eroded. After the establishment of a new shoreline, using local products to construct shore walls, fish habitat increased by 386 square metres of 66% "critical" habitat from 77% "marginal." The return of cormorants and mink to the site after a 50 year absence immediately heralded success.

Included within the Riverfront project is a major educational and environmental interpretive feature, referred to as the "River Basin Play Feature". This feature is a representation of the Saskatchewan River Basin and will highlight Saskatoon in the broader watershed setting of the North and South Saskatchewan River Basins. Interpretation of the river punctuated by water play and whimsy are key characteristics of this feature.

The River Basin Play Feature, opening summer 2008, will be an exciting development for all children and the "young at heart". The educational and interpretive value is immense, teaching children about our environment as it relates to the river system, nature, habitat, and geography, both physical and political. The design of the feature starts in the Rocky Mountains and continues to Hudson Bay, including references to the Precambrian Shield, all Prairie Provinces, major rivers, lakes, and some major sites – present and archaeological. The area is fully-accessible, acting as a year-round artistic feature, a children's play area for 8 months of the year and a children's water play park for the summer months. A bioswale has been constructed to treat runoff water from the play area using phyto-remediation.

The Meewasin Valley Authority and the Cameco Riverfront Campaign is currently raising funds to complete construction of the Riverfront. For more information or to donate, please contact Meewasin at 306-665-6887 or www.meewasin.com.



Pouring Lake Winnipeg - Summer 2008



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Conference and Events Listings

Innovative Stormwater Management Workshop

October 30-31, 2007 iwm-course@rmes.ubc.ca

Calgary, AB

We are All Upstream!

November 5-7, 2007 <http://www.saskriverbasin.ca>

Winnipeg, MB

Managing the Health of Canada's Lakes and Rivers - 2008 CWRA National Conference

June 16-19, 2008 <http://www.conference.cwra.org>

Gimli, MB

If you have an event you would like to include under our listings, please email us at partners@saskriverbasin.ca

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