



Sylvan Lake Watershed Stewardship Society
P.O. Box 9012 Sylvan Lake
Alberta, T4S 1S6

Annual General Meeting July 29, 2006

President's Report

I am pleased to report to the membership that during this past year the Society has made progress in five main areas of activity: we have focused on the Governance of the organization with the bylaw changes you have approved today. We have worked to maintain and expand upon the depth and reach of our membership, although this has been and will likely continue to be an ongoing restraint to the scope and content of our stewardship activities. The Board of Directors also felt it necessary to develop a Strategic Plan; a plan that would identify and facilitate a more concerted focus on where best to invest our scarce resources - given the many critical watershed issues before us and our limited capacity to deal with them.

In the area of Communications, we have produced a winter newsletter, attended outside conferences, planning sessions, open houses and public meetings. During the year, we made written submissions to Alberta Environment and the eight municipal councils having jurisdiction within the watershed. In February, the Municipal Government Board recognized us with intervener status in a sub-division appeal held in Edmonton. We appeared at the MGB hearing and made submissions in support of Lacombe County and the Summer Villages for the implementation of 30-meter environmental buffer zones around all watercourses, shorelines and wetlands associated with the lake. Also this year, we have received grant funding for several significant "on the ground" projects one of which is The Community Watershed Monitoring Project; and of course we continue with on-going committee work.

Board of Directors

Your Board of Directors consists of a dedicated group of volunteers who bring passion and enthusiasm to the task of protecting Sylvan Lake and its watershed. We operated this year with a 12 member Board and held 9 regular meetings over the course of the year. We achieved a quorum for all but one. Our Bylaws impose a three-term limit on Directorships and as a result, we will be seeing the retirement of some long-term board members who have made significant contributions to the organization.

Recognition - Retiring Directors

- Doug Norris has served our Society with distinction. For as far back as I have been associated with this group, Doug has kept the books and membership records. He has acted as Treasurer and chaired the Finance Committee. His contribution in this area leaves us well organized in our record-keeping, accounting and administrative functions. Doug also served on the Strategic Plan Committee, helping to ensure that the plan was well constructed, completed and implemented. His work as Chairman of the Organizational Administration Committee was invaluable, as he was responsible for maintaining and revising the Bylaws of the Society and filing with Provincial authorities to ensure that the Society complies with all statutory regulations. We are most thankful to Doug for his contribution over the years.
- Barry Virtue, a founding member of the Society, has been on the Board for the past two years, most recently serving on the Community Partnerships Committee. In another arena, Barry has represented our lake community by sitting with the CEA Steering Committee – a group formed to set the terms of reference for what eventually became the AXYS study. Barry brought to the board his considerable experience and knowledge and was someone I could always rely upon, gratefully, to add diplomacy to the language in some of my letters.
- Lorna White has also been involved with the Society from its inception. She has contributed to the Board with committee work, background organization of Society events, standing in as Secretary to meetings when needed, and she has been a valued and active participant with the Community Watershed Monitoring Committee.
- Kent Lyle has just completed his term as Immediate Past President, and has been one of the key driving forces behind this organization. During his tenure of two terms as President, he took on an enormous amount of work preparing and presenting the Society's position at not less than

11 public hearings. In his unwavering commitment to Sylvan Lake, he demonstrated his considerable talents and depth of experience as both manager and politician. He is articulate and passionate as both a writer and speaker. During this year, Kent has been an invaluable resource for our group, and more specifically he has been an immense help to me as current President. I have relied heavily upon his extensive experience, his excellent organizational skills, and most notably, his patience. Kent served this past year as Chair for the Strategic Planning Committee, the Community Partnerships Committee and the Noise Pollution Committee. He attended numerous conferences, planning sessions, open houses, public input and vision building sessions. He has been most generous with his time and effort while promoting the vision of the Society. It is truly heartfelt when I say Thank You!

The Board members who have agreed to stand for re-nomination also deserve recognition for their devotion to lake-protection. Some of them are, in fact, founding Directors. All have worked diligently to achieve the mission of the Society.

Barry Hilman
David Larsen (founding Director)
Steven Johnson (founding Director)
Barbara Lane

Lenore Berkeley will be serving her second year of a two-year term.

We also welcome three new members to our Board: **James MacSween**, **Robert Wilson**, and **Wayne Carey**.

The New 2006-2007 Board of Directors (by acclamation):

Kent Williamson
Kim Schmitt
Lenore Berkeley
Barry Hilman
Barbara Lane
David Larsen
Steven Johnson
James MacSween, Q.C.
Robert Wilson
Wayne Carey

I am grateful to all of these members, for helping to shoulder the work of the Society by letting their name stand as Director.

Membership

At time of writing, our membership stands at 98, though that number generally increases during this time of year as further renewals come in. Sadly, this year we have only attracted 16 new members – the balance of our list have renewed from previous years. I cannot stress how important it is, not only to retain members from year to year, but also to attract new ones.

We draw virtually all of our manpower resources from the membership, the Directors who sit on the Board and the volunteers who perform the work necessary to complete projects. The accomplishments of the Society to date are the result of the combined efforts of a limited number of people – primarily those who work on the Board. I am calling upon all our members today to assume personal responsibility to solicit new members to the organization. We have accomplished much to date with so few – imagine what could be accomplished with more than twice our number!

A special mention must be made for a group of our youngest members. This past week, a number of them organized a drama production for the entertainment pleasure of the Blissful Beach community. Proceeds from the event - a total of \$207 - have been donated to the Society.

Apart from manpower, membership provides a modest source of revenue. We recognize that the amounts collected from our individual members each year are hardly sufficient to carry forward the work of the Society. The Board of Directors will be setting new membership categories this year for the purpose of accommodating sustaining corporate membership fees. In the year ahead, we are planning a campaign to solicit businesses operating within the watershed as well as companies owned by individuals from our membership. If you can assist in any way, please let us know.

Strategic Plan

In the fall of last year, the Board of Directors found itself struggling with an impossibly crowded agenda of urgent items. Critical issues far out-weighted our capacity to deal with them. In order to prepare for the year, a Strategic Plan was developed. Facilitated by Ken Penney of Planned Environmental Associates, the Directors met in seclusion to narrow down and refine the scope of work that we would take on, considering our capacity limitations. We restricted ourselves to seven goals and then worked through each one to identify at most three supporting action items. The initial plan was then given to the Strategic Planning Committee for review and refinement. After several revisions, the plan was approved and adopted by the Board.

Communications

slwss.org:

The Society has dedicated resources to the development of our web site. Though it has been online for all of the past year, we have not made significant changes to its content. During the coming year, we will be completing work that remains unfinished and updating the content with messages derived from our Strategic Plan. We believe that this method of communicating will raise our profile and enhance our image with the public at large, especially our younger audience.

Stewardship Newsletter:

In January this year, the Board undertook a collaborative approach to producing the Winter Newsletter. It was delivered primarily by email though some were sent by regular post. With the flood of SPAM being delivered to everyone's inbox, it is uncertain how many newsletters fell foul to filtering. This will be a learning process and work will continue in this arena as we move forward.

Conferences & Workshops:

During the year, directors attended conferences, workshops, public hearings and vision building sessions. This activity takes a great deal of time from the volunteer group who forms your Board. Attendance at such functions demonstrates the commitment of our organization and serves to build and reinforce the positive image that we are constructive, credible, knowledgeable and trustworthy.

Stewardship Projects

Community Watershed Monitoring Program:

In December, we applied for and were selected to participate in a pilot program sponsored by Alberta Environment, Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Matching grants have been received from Lacombe and Red Deer counties, the Town of Sylvan Lake, and the five Summer Villages.

The program is a two-year commitment to conduct field sampling at seven of the streams that flow into Sylvan Lake (Northwest Creek, Lambe Creek, Birchcliff Creek, Jarvis Creek, Golf Course Creek, and Honeymoon Creeks). To execute the project, a committee was formed by the Board and chaired by

myself. Volunteers were solicited and field training took place on April 8th. With assistance from Alberta Environment staff we collected the first samples at all locations except the outflow creek, which was and remains today, a dry streambed.

I would like to acknowledge the volunteers who took training and assisted in the sampling this spring: Lenore Berkeley, Lorna White, and Mike Williamson all played important roles.

On four separate occasions, samples were collected at various stream locations and, in compliance with scientific protocol, were delivered within 24 hours of collection to the laboratory located in Edmonton. By the third week of June, flow at all streams had ceased and no sampling has been achieved since that time. The crew awaits a storm event for runoff collection – if any. The project is presently under-budget since the largest cost is lab analysis and therefore affected by the number of samples submitted to Edmonton.

GIS Watershed Plan Mapping:

The society has successfully captured funding to support increased awareness and knowledge in the watershed. The Alberta Stewardship Network (ASN) "Watershed Stewardship Grant Program - 2006" in conjunction with the Shell Environmental Fund have granted the society \$10,000 that will be used to deliver the project.

The objective is to develop a map based extension tool, and supporting key messages. There are 8 tasks, all focused on compiling existing data and information into a GIS based mapping product with supporting messages.

The intended outcomes from the project include a GIS map data layer that highlights significant ecological features and sensitive environmental areas within the watershed; a report identifying gaps in existing biophysical data; and the development and publication of key watershed stewardship messages. On completion of the project, a graphical display of the map will be made available from our updated web site. Yet another outcome will be the development of tabletop display panels depicting the new map product.

This work is scheduled for completion by Dec 31, 2006. A contractor is presently working on project deliverables and work contracts to allocate the budget and secure the human and technical resources required to complete the project.

Completed Projects

Shoreline Awareness Program

In July last year, the Society undertook to deliver the Alberta Edition of "On the Living Edge: Your Guide to Waterfront Living" to residents in the lake community. More than 1100 copies were delivered; hundreds by hand. The final report was written by Program Chairman Kent Lyle and provided to the Alberta Real Estate Foundation in conclusion to the project. Many thanks again to Kent Lyle and his committee for organizing and executing this very successful and worthwhile project

Committees

Municipal Plans Committee

The Municipal Plans Committee monitors for and provides input to land and water planning initiatives within the watershed by preparing submissions for public hearings. The focus of our group is watershed-based so this includes the complete 64 square mile area of the Sylvan Lake watershed. It is anticipated that independent critical analysis of planning initiatives will provide the various municipal authorities with a much-needed watershed planning perspective.

Noise Pollution Committee

Increasingly, larger and more powerful boating equipment is being operated on the lake. There is a disturbing trend for the modification of exhaust systems to bypass noise abatement equipment at the touch of a switch. The authority for enforcement of Canadian Coast Guard Regulations on the lake falls to the local RCMP detachment. Faced with staffing and budget constraints, the RCMP can do little more than operate patrols during times of peak activity. The Noise Pollution Committee is preparing a report for the Board to set the terms of reference for involvement in this issue by the Society. Presently, several Committee members are taking the time when possible, to identify potential offenders and forward licensing information from boats, trailers or tow vehicles to the authorities.

Community Monitoring Subcommittee – Lake Watch

The Community Monitoring Subcommittee was formed to actively monitor for, or receive reports on threats to the lake. This is an on-going process and all potential threats are discussed by the Board to determine if action is required.

Concluding Remarks

The Society has enjoyed great success this year. We have developed a Strategic Plan; we applied for, and received significant grant funding for several scientific projects that will advance our knowledge and understanding of the Sylvan Lake Watershed. We have been successful in raising the awareness to the critical factors that must be considered when planning for sustainable development.

The year ahead will be quickly consumed by the continuation of this important work. There is much happening with respect to planning initiatives from county and town councils that will affect the Sylvan Lake Watershed. Lacombe County is in the process of updating its Municipal Development Plan; the Town of Sylvan Lake has reviewed and granted third reading to its Waterfront Area Redevelopment Plan; Red Deer and Lacombe Counties carry on work with a joint West Sylvan Lake Area Structure Plan; Alberta Infrastructure has revealed the routing, cost estimates and general plans for a regional wastewater system that will eventually surround the lake; work on the twinning of Highway 11 to Eckville continues; Lacombe County will return this year to explore opportunities for increasing public access to the lake - allocating more than \$260,000 in its budget for enhancements to the boat launch at Sunbreaker Cove. There appears, however, to be no appetite in any political arena for the development of a Lake Recreational Capacity Plan – a step that will be necessary if municipalities wish to manage the ever-increasing size and number of watercraft that the lake will be required to absorb.

On virtually all fronts, there is evidence of a coordinated preparation for tremendous growth. Only time will tell, if the natural assets and ecological integrity of Sylvan Lake and its watershed can be sustained for Alberta's future generations.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I thank you for attending this Annual General Meeting and for your support of the Sylvan Lake Watershed Stewardship Society.

Respectfully submitted,



Kent Williamson
President,

Sylvan Lake Watershed Stewardship Society, 2005/2006
Seventh Annual General Meeting July 29, 2006