

# **Sylvan Lake Watershed Stewardship Society**

## **President's Report**

9<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting September 20, 2008  
Sylvan Lake Municipal Library

Welcome to the Annual General Meeting of the Sylvan Lake Watershed Stewardship Society. Thank you for taking the time to attend our 9<sup>th</sup> AGM today. As our brochure states our mission is "to encourage community-based stewardship of the Sylvan Lake Watershed"

### **The Year Past**

The Society has been ran by a team of 10 dedicated people who sit on the Board of Directors. At our first board meeting a year ago we agreed to downsize our "to-do" list, to do it well and to reduce the number of meetings. This was to accommodate the busy lives of our volunteer board and to avoid 'burn-out' often experienced by non-profit organizations.

We met six times (approximately every two months) and were able to achieve considerable success in our three goals.

- 1.** Continue and enhance our water monitoring project
- 2.** Promote outreach/education initiatives to inform the public about our small environmentally challenged watershed
- 3.** Increase membership to speak with a stronger voice for a healthy lake and to gain a greater capacity for ideas, energy and resources.

**Water monitoring** project was funded with a successful application to the Alberta Stewardship Network and the work was contracted out to our very capable member - Ken Penney of Planned Environmental Associates.

Alberta Environment representative Chris Teichreb Limnologist/Water Quality Specialist (later replaced by Craig Emmerton) attended some board meetings to provide input on water quality sampling for a nutrient management strategy.

Spring sampling after a storm event showed sediment entering into the NW corner of the lake from road construction. A letter was sent to Lacombe County and silt fences were installed. A letter was sent to Red Deer County regards a similar situation.

**Outreach initiatives** included utilizing our display panels at several events - Sylvan Lake Trade Show, Red Deer Sportsman Show, Marina Bay Home Owners meeting, Summer Village Annual Meetings, Red Deer County "County Fair". In addition the Credit Union, Town Office, Town Library and Town Recreation Centre hosted the information panels for several days each.

A power point presentation of the two year water quality study was shown to the Sylvan Lake Management Plan Committee March 2008.

Designed and published our first membership brochure to inform the public about our society and to make it easy to join up.

Environmental awareness signs were installed at 21 public access points around Sylvan Lake. This well received project was funded by Birchcliff and two other Summer Villages and was mentioned in a Sylvan Lake news item. Donated time and resources by Kent Williamson and myself resulted in approximately \$1500 for the Society.

Newspaper articles provided by members and Directors also provided watershed education and exposure for the Society.

Board members personally attended Sylvan Lake Management Plan Committee meetings, AB Environment Blue/Green Algae presentation, RDRWA meeting, Red Deer County meeting, Open House presentations for Castle Cove Marina, CFR Chemicals, Skyy Country Golf & RV Park.

Letters were sent to both Counties on development issues.

**Membership** numbers have grown dramatically, due largely to a change in our constitution last year, which allows you to be counted as a member unless a written request is sent to the secretary to be removed from the membership roll.

However, an active or member in good standing (voting privileges) means you have paid the annual dues of \$20.

Our "Drive for Five" (500 members) encompassed a mail/email campaign to selected Sylvan Lake postal routes and to former '*Friends of Sylvan Lake*'. This resulted in more members but perhaps more importantly in several generous donations. Thank you letters are sent to donators and to new members. A Spring newsletter was also distributed to members.

## **Board of Directors**

The constitution allows the President to make appointments to the Board, which must have a minimum of eight and a maximum of sixteen members.

I was pleased to have two nominees - Craig Martin & Graeme Strathdee - ratified by the board to fill vacancies that developed. With a Board of ten and five standing committees, the workload can be shared and business can be carried on, as 50% of Directors constitute a quorum.

I would like to congratulate and thank the entire Board for being such dedicated 'watershed warriors' and for volunteering their valuable time to be a voice for the natural capital that is the Sylvan Lake watershed. It is because of you that I accepted the President's role last year.

## **Conclusion**

We met, flew, pounded signs, pitched membership, wrote letters, donated time, donated money, asked for money, spent money and tried to make a difference!

The Society is in good shape, good finances and in good hands but the year ahead will continue to challenge us. Pressure to urbanize the watershed does not appear to be abating. A Watershed Protection Plan to coincide with our theme of No New Pollution, Reduce Existing should remain a priority.

I'd like to repeat a quote that was sent to me recently.

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has".*

.... Margaret Mead

On behalf of the Board of Directors thank you again for attending this meeting and for your support of the Watershed Society.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Johnson  
President 2007/2008  
Sylvan Lake Watershed Stewardship Society