



Stewardship Newsletter

Caring for Sylvan Lake

January 2005

Directors and Officers for 2004/2005

At the Sylvan Lake Watershed Stewardship Society's (SLWSS) Annual General Meeting in July the following persons agreed to sit on the Board for the 2004 / 2005 term:

For the first year of a two-year term: (new to the Board): Barbara Lane & Barry Virtue.

Serving the first year of a second two-year term: Barry Hillman, Steven Johnson, David Larsen, Kent Lyle, Doug Norris, and Lorna White.

For the second year of a two-year term: Ron Barry, Kim Schmitt, Mike Williamson and Kent Williamson.

Ron Barry has since resigned.

Executive Officers

The following Directors were selected as Officers for the 2004/2005 year.

SECRETARY:	Barbara Lane (two year term)
TREASURER:	Doug Norris (two year term)
PRESIDENT:	Kent Lyle (one year term)
VICE PRESIDENT:	Mike Williamson is commencing the second year of a two-year term.

Lake Developments

Last fall, The Summer Village of Sunbreaker Cove filed a notice invoking a dispute resolution process contained in the Sylvan Lake Management Plan (SLMP). The Summer Village asked Lacombe County to delay passing third reading of all relevant rezoning by-laws until the results of the Cumulative Effects Assessment (CEA) is submitted to the SLMP Committee (SLMPC) and the lake's municipalities.

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

The Stewardship Society also has written Lacombe County Council asking that all further approvals on Sylvan Lake developments be delayed until the CEA is submitted and reviewed.

At the SLMPC meeting held in camera on Thursday October 7, 2004, the Summer Village's motion to recommend a delay to developments pending the CEA was defeated. The six Municipalities supporting the motion were all five of the Summer Villages and the Town of Sylvan Lake. Those opposed were Lacombe County and Red Deer County. (The voting formulae agreed to in the SLMP requires, for a motion to pass, any three of the five Summer Villages and any two of Lacombe County, Red Deer County and the Town of Sylvan Lake. In this vote they only got one of the big three).

In the meantime, however, Lacombe County asked the Minister of Municipal Affairs to allow the County a four month extension to the prescribed requirement that the third reading of a motion to rezone property has to be held before the expiry of two years from the date of the first reading which was about December 3rd, 2002 for five of the six proposed developments at the north west end of the lake. On November 24, 2004 the Municipal Affairs Minister signed a ministerial order granting an extension to the amount of time for third reading of the rezoning bylaws for about 230 lots planned in the five developments. Such an extension will allow Lacombe County more time to wait for and study the CEA's recommendations before dealing with the third readings. The Society also wrote the Minister to support Lacombe County's request.

At the time of writing there are five of six proposed lake-side developments on hold in Lacombe County.

The sixth proposal, the Layton proposal (22 lots), does not face the two year rezoning time limit until August 2005.

If you have concerns phone your Council representative or Mayor/Reeve

Sylvan Lake Cumulative Effects Study (CEA)

The eight municipalities bordering Sylvan Lake all approved participation in a redefined cumulative effects assessment study. (CEA) The plan approved by the eight municipalities consists of two tasks. Task 1 is designed to provide a report that summarizes the ecological state of the lake, the cumulative nutrient input into the lake and the lake's capacity to accommodate additional input without jeopardizing its current water quality conditions. Task 2 will attempt to link nutrient sources to discrete land use practices to allow the effects of additional development on lake health to be predicted. In doing so, the work plan will provide a tool that will assist municipalities in responsible watershed planning and development based on water quality parameters only.

AXYS Environmental Consulting Ltd. has won the contract for the study. A draft of the CEA report is expected early in 2005.

Marina Expansion and Breakwater

The SLWSS encouraged a number of the Society's members to respond to the PUBLIC NOTICE in the Sylvan Lake News dated April 28, 2004 regarding an application filed under the WATER ACT. The application was for an approval to construct a breakwater in Sylvan Lake to allow for the Marina to expand into the lake.

Generally concerns revolve around the following issues.

- Environmental due diligence
- Sylvan Lake Management Plan: Update 2000
- Cumulative Effects Study (CEA)
- Fish habitat
- Aquatic wildlife
- Recreation and Boating Carrying Capacity of Sylvan Lake

As recommended in the *Sylvan Lake Public Access Study*, it is important for the community to implement a lake capacity/recreation management program before any further boat launches/marinas/expansions are considered.

Should this expansion be allowed, the number of boats using the lake will increase and will, therefore, impact on the carrying capacity. The boating carrying capacity is important for the following reasons:

- Safety:
- Environmental
- Enforcement

We are of the view that the current boat accesses to the lake, which perhaps are inconvenient, are probably sufficient considering safety, the lake-environment and limits to the carrying capacity of the lake. The current boat launch facilities are, in effect, a self-regulating mechanism and the Society is, therefore, opposed to any further expansion of the Sylvan Lake Marina especially if it involves works into the lake.

The marina expansion also has the potential to threaten the long term viability of the lake. If this expansion negatively impacts fish habitat, aquatic wildlife and results in significantly more boats on the lake, the governments should not approve it. The environmental health of the lake is too important to allow potentially environmentally damaging developments to occur. The Society will therefore continue to press for due diligence with respect to any marina expansion.

Development activities at Sylvan Creek outlet

The SLWSS wishes to express concern with respect to the above noted activities.

The lake outlet at Sylvan Creek was once surrounded by extensive wet lands. No doubt you will also know that when Sylvan Creek has been flowing with a significant quantity of water, the adjacent shorelines and the creek itself were prime fish habitat.

Over the past few years this has all changed dramatically. The wet lands have been subjected to tons of fill, the lake level has dropped and the water has ceased to flow in the creek. Trucks seem to be driving over the creek bed at will.

The Stewardship Society Directors understand that the land at the creek outlet is privately owned, which presents challenges to

all governments in protecting wetlands, water resources, habitat and wildlife.

However, it does appear that one or more levels of government are responsible for monitoring and enforcing their Acts and Bylaws relative to this kind of degradation. Fundamental to the Water Act and the Fisheries Act is the recognition that the protection of the aquatic environment is essential to sustainable water management and fish habitat.

The Society, in separate letters sent on November 26, 2004, has urged all relevant governments, Federal, Provincial and Municipal, even at this late date, to take whatever action is practical to protect the environmental elements including fish habitat at the creek outlet.

On December 2, 2004-only 6 days later- there was a meeting of 11 people on the site with representatives from all three levels of government, the owner, the municipal planner, the SLWSS and a consultant for the owner. As a result of that meeting a number of decisions were agreed to which mostly involved the owner and the municipality (SV of Jarvis Bay) including:

- Barricade the road through the creek
- Place silt barriers on the fill already in place
- Any further fill may require a development permit from the Summer Village and will require evidence of silt control measures
- Any further mechanized filling and grading of site preparation as well as a subdivision application will require:
 1. Survey of shoreline and creek
 2. New contours of 0.25 meters intervals
 3. Extent of 'old' fill and 'new' fill
 4. Full extent of fill and final elevations
 5. Silt control locations
 6. access control and locations

The Society would also expect that if and when the area is subject to rezoning, the Summer Village of Jarvis Bay would ensure the lowest density zoning and the most stringent development agreement would be put in place to attempt to minimize risk and to save and restore some of the ecosystem and riparian habitat along the creek and lakeshore. The City of

Calgary's Council has made the development of an 'effective, proactive wetland strategy' one of City Council's priorities and adopted the 'Calgary Wetland Conservation Plan' in 2004. www.calgary.ca/parks (Click on the 'Parks Planning' link.)

The residents around Sylvan Lake expect a great deal from their Federal, Provincial and Municipal Governments with respect to protecting the lake. With such a valuable resource in our community, we are very supportive of the responsibilities and efforts of all government agencies regarding the protection of the aquatic environment and riparian ecosystems.

Groundwater at Sylvan Lake-U of C Study

The Stewardship Society is supporting Jennette Baker's second study of groundwater around Sylvan Lake and is in the process of assisting with sourcing some funding for her Masters thesis.

As part of her Master's thesis Jennette Baker, an MSc student in the Department of Geology and Geophysics at the University of Calgary, is undertaking to determine how much ground water is flushing through Sylvan Lake and where it is coming from. It is part of a larger study on the Paskapoo aquifer which probably supplies most water wells around Sylvan Lake and perhaps the Lake itself. A better understanding of the ground water system in the Sylvan Lake area will help all stakeholders to develop responsible water practices and policies and the eight Sylvan Lake municipalities to develop responsible land-use bylaws.

The Stewardship Society supported Jennette by coordinating the funding of her first study of the ground water in Sylvan Lake; an undergraduate thesis which was supervised by Dr. Cathy Ryan of the U of C. The Society has a copy of her first Study "Sylvan Lake-Groundwater Interaction" (2003). It is available for your review. Jennette found evidence to suggest there is significant groundwater through-flow in Sylvan Lake. There is evidence groundwater discharges into Sylvan Lake from the northwest and the Lake recharges groundwater on the east and southeast sides. These findings suggest that any developments at the northwest end of the Lake could be very important to the long-term health of the Lake if they are not planned and developed responsibly. In a presentation to the Society, Dr. Cathy Ryan and her student, Jennette Baker, in a PowerPoint presentation (see slide 40) made the point "**Land use activities in these**

areas can directly affect the lake water quality” See Dr. Ryan’s web site: <http://www.geo.ucalgary.ca/ryan.htm>
The paper is titled: *Groundwater: Sylvan Lake’s Silent Partner*.
(PowerPoint)

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE-ONE MORE MEMBER

It is very important for the SLWSS to improve its membership base. At the time of writing it is about 180. Our goal is to bring it up to over 200 as soon as possible. A strong base results in the following advantages:

- More community strength when responding to issues including Public Hearings and Public Notices
- More funds to finance the Society’s activities
- More ideas, energy and resources
- A bigger pool from which to attract Directors and committee members

If each of our current members can generate just one more member, we will easily exceed our goal. An application form is included for your convenience. Your source of one more member could be:

- An immediate family member or relative
- A neighbour
- A visitor who is fond of the lake and its aquatic environment
- Another Sylvan Laker-perhaps in the sailing club, a water skier or boarder, a supplier, a Councillor.

Use the attached application form for your one more member and copy it to renew your membership too! (See over) If a new member joins after November 30, it is good for the balance of this membership year (March 31) and all of the next membership year for the same \$20 membership fee. Thank you for your help with finding one more member.

Newsletter Editor and President- Kent Lyle
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SYLVAN LAKE WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP SOCIETY

Note:

As a new policy, any new membership purchased after November 30th of any membership year will include the remainder of that membership year and the full following membership year. If purchased, for example, on January 1st, a membership will last for 15 months. Our membership year is April 1 to March 31. Copy this form should you require extras.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION (April 1 to March 31)

[Please print clearly]

Name _____

Mailing Address _____ Home (____) _____

_____ Work (____) _____

Municipality _____ Lake (____) _____

Postal Code _____ E-mail _____

Your e-mail address will greatly help the Society communicate with you on important issues.

Sylvan Lake Address _____

Postal Code _____ County / Town / Village _____

Annual Dues: Individual _____ Business/Camp/Municipality _____ Student _____
 [\$20.00] [\$40.00] [\$10.00]

(Please make cheque payable to: Sylvan Lake Watershed Stewardship Society)

Any additional donation is greatly appreciated.

I will assist the Society: any way I can ___ with membership dues only ___ with a donation ___

Mailing Address: Sylvan Lake Watershed Stewardship Society
Box 9012, Sylvan Lake, AB. T4S 1S6

Thank You!

(Copy this form should you require extras.)

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