

Elbow Partnership News

Elbow River Watershed Partnership (ERWP) Newsletter
Issue No.23

www.erwp.org
April/May 2005

ERWP 1st Annual General Meeting June 16th, 2005 (Evening)

This AGM will be a short part of our regular Stakeholder Committee meeting, held approximately quarterly. It will be an important meeting to begin discussions about a **water management plan** for the Elbow River; not the least of which would be a discussion to define it and understand how it differs from a **watershed** management plan. Please plan on attending.

Location details will follow by email.

A Management Plan for the Elbow?

The ERWP was approached in February with the idea of preparing a water management plan for the Elbow River watershed. We supported the need for a plan, but water management planning is the responsibility of the Bow River Basin Council (BRBC). The BRBC has since agreed to support the idea and now we are in the early stages of gaining the support of the governments represented in the watershed.

The ERWP Acting Chair, Gloria Wilkinson has been meeting with the politicians who represent regions of the watershed to gain approval in principle for a water management plan. To date, the response is positive from the Alberta government, the Municipal District of Rocky View and the Calgary Regional Partnership. Meetings are being set up with the City of Calgary and Tsuu T'ina Nation. Once the agreement of land managers has been obtained, a terms of reference will be prepared and all stakeholders will be encouraged to participate in the process.

You can obtain a copy of the proposal that was presented to the ERWP by contacting Monique Dietrich at: coordinator@erwp.org. Please watch for future updates and opportunities to participate.

Our AGM will provide an opportunity to begin information gathering and assemble a steering committee to move the process of water management planning forward.

Calgary Pathway & River Cleanup

Sunday, May 15th 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

A team from ERWP will set out to Griffith Woods for trash picking along the Elbow River and the City Pathway. Please register for this event by contacting ERWP Coordinator.

FREE Breakfast for volunteers at 8:30 am

McLean Creek Volunteer Days

It is an annual tradition for **Alberta United Recreationists Society (AURS)** to gather by the hundreds in McLean Creek in a volunteer workday to repair some of the damage caused by recreation. Last year, several bridges were built to protect streams that had been forded too many times by heavy vehicles. This year, the volunteer effort in Mclean Creek is going to follow a more coordinated plan to get the best out of volunteer hours. **Alberta Sustainable Resource Development** is working with the AURS to organize projects for their annual volunteer day that will be held Saturday, June 18, 2005. They are also working together to develop a long term strategy to deal with ongoing maintenance issues in the McLean Creek Forest Land Use Zone by working with volunteer organizations, clubs, ranchers, oil and gas, forestry and other users of the area. **Alberta Conservation Association** has a detailed study of damaged crossings and riparian areas each ranked in order of priority to be restored. Expertise and potential funding will be provided by Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

AURS members are committed to the ongoing representation and education of backcountry users and stakeholders on respectful and responsible use, stewardship, maintenance and preservation of outdoor recreation areas throughout Alberta. See their website at <http://www.aurs.org/index.shtml>.

ERWP Watershed Coordinator:
Monique Dietrich

Email: coordinator@erwp.org

Phone: (403) 685-5580

Signage as part of Adopt-a-Stream

The final stages...This is phase 4 of Adopt a Stream project, which was initiated in Spring 2004 and funded under DFO *Stewardship-in-Action Initiative*. You can see a template of the sign at our website under Projects. Ten signs will be placed this spring by the Glencoe Golf & Country Club and the Bragg Creek Environmental Coalition. Sign locations will be along the Elbow River at Twin Bridges, just west of the City limits; at Highway 22 and; in and around Bragg Creek.

School Field Trips

Several schools have signed on to participate in the Elbow River field trip program. Grade 8 and grade 9 classes from several schools will begin their exploration of the watershed the day after the Kananaskis gate opens for the season. The students travel to Cobble Flats, the first stop of the field trip near the headwaters of the Elbow River. They will observe the natural environment around them, take water quality samples and search for aquatic invertebrates. They will learn that the water quality in this part of the watershed is very good. They will also stop at other locations on their downstream journey back to the City of Calgary and make the same observations and measurements. They begin to see a difference in water quality and a corresponding increase in land use. The field trip is a curriculum connected study of the Elbow River with multidisciplinary preparatory and post activity support. Alberta Community Development Environmental Educator Andrea Barnes is providing the curriculum expertise for this collaborative project with the ERWP. Funding partners are many, including Alberta Environment, City of Calgary, Bow River Basin Council and Friends of Kananaskis Country.



Students measure water quality to find clues about the state of the river.

Stewardship Summer Camp

The **Junior Naturalists Water Watchdogs Summer Day Camp** will be offered again this summer in two sessions - **July 11th - 15th** and **August 8th - 12th**. Children from ages 9 to 12 yrs are invited to spend 5 days exploring the Elbow River, learning about water quality, fish, and all the living creatures in the watershed. It is a fun filled week of games, activities, observation and an interpretive program to be performed at the Elbow Valley Campground on the last evening of the camp. It is all about water and our connection to it. Children leave this camp knowing that everyone in our community shares the same water. This is a joint project between the ERWP, Friends of Kananaskis Country, and Alberta Parks and Protected Areas. Funding support is provided in part by the MD of Rocky View Family and Community Social Services Grant.



Taking time to sketch at summer camp improves observation skills.

Bragg Creek Stream Samplers

There is a keen group of volunteers in Bragg Creek all set with water quality sampling equipment and a plan to monitor the lower portion of Bragg Creek – the stream – from Kananaskis Country to its confluence with the Elbow River. About 20 local residents showed up at the first two meetings to learn about the program that will collect water quality measurements including nitrate, phosphate, chloride, temperature, pH, turbidity and stream discharge. Their goal is to collect baseline characteristics of the stream each year. Many of the volunteers are trained professional scientists in one field or another – a quality that is already benefiting the integrity of the program. Bragg Creek watershed is about 50km², a mere fraction of the Elbow watershed but, it is a very busy area with many visitors, residents, livestock and wildlife. The volunteers will take monthly measurements and observations for as long as possible until winter freeze-up. Water quality results will be posted on www.erwp.org website. *This is another part of Bragg Creek Adopt-a-Stream Project.*