

Elbow Partnership News

Elbow River Watershed Partnership (ERWP) Newsletter
Issue No.21

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Next Meeting ERWP Stakeholder Committee Thursday, February 17th, 2005 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Please contact ERWP Coordinator if you would like to host this meeting or a future meeting.

Coordinating Committee Meeting Thursday, January 13th, 2005 *Contact Coordinator for details*

Tsuu T'ina is Open for Business

Tsuu T'ina Nation hosted our most recent ERWP meeting and told us of their business proposal that includes developing the land formerly used by National Defense. Recognizing that the City is growing around them, the plan includes development of a business park and retail stores around the periphery of the Nation's land with most of the other areas remaining rural. At least a third of the proposed development area will be designated as green space. The plan, which will involve several partners, includes building a portion of the City ring road and associated bridge across the Elbow River, with possible City pathway connections from Weaselhead and New Discovery. It also includes upgraded sewage treatment that would serve the Nation and Redwood Meadows. The intention of Tsuu T'ina is to create a world class business park and an ecotourism destination that demonstrates the Nation's commitment to good land stewardship.

Construction of the business park will begin late 2006 with completion late 2009. The first phase is a Casino to be opened in fall 2005 as an income earning opportunity to help pay for the new road.

School Field Trip Program

The Elbow River Field Trip program is in the ERWP news again. It proved itself a valuable learning experience for grade 11 biology students at Springbank High, and now many other students will be able to participate as the program expands to other local schools. The program allows students to explore biodiversity

and test water quality in the protected parks area of Kananaskis Country and at sites along the river toward Calgary while observing changes of increasing land uses. Ultimately the students learn how we are connected to our drinking water source and how they can protect the river.

Partnering with ERWP on this program are Friends of Kananaskis Country and Alberta Community Development, Parks and Protected Areas. The program includes field study and classroom work to coincide with the Alberta curriculum and it will be tied in to the Junior Naturalist Summer Camp. Some fundraising is still needed to bring the program to fruition but we are expecting the first grade 8 & 9 classes to visit the watershed in May.

Elbow River in Calgary Stewards

Residents and business owners along the **Elbow River in Calgary (ERIC)** meet regularly to share information on river water quality and related issues. This initiative began last summer as an attempt to focus on the issues of the lower Elbow River downstream of the Glenmore Dam. The group is chaired by Maureen Bell. Maureen is a resident of the lower Elbow River and is very familiar with the important issues of water quality and quantity. Her work as a practicing lawyer involves water-related issues and she is a member of the Board of the Bow River Basin Council. **ERIC** will meet again in February or March at the Stampede Grounds.

Bow River Basin News *as presented at the Dec. 8th Forum*

Big Splash Fundraising Gala will take place on April 29th at the Westin Hotel. The goal is to raise \$50,000 through ticket sales, sponsorship and auction. Tickets are \$125 each or a table of 8 for \$1000. There is plenty of opportunity to apply your talents to this inaugural fundraising event. Contact Edie Smith if your organization would like to reserve a table or to volunteer to help plan the event (edie.smith@brbc.ab.ca).

State of the Bow Basin Report – this comprehensive report on the entire Bow River Basin is due out early in 2005. It will be distributed extensively throughout the Basin to Bow River Basin Council members, interest groups and schools.

Water in the Bow River

If you think most of the water in the Bow River comes from the Bow Glacier or land surface runoff of rain and snow, you may be surprised by this research: According to Dr. Stephen Grasby of the Geological Survey of Canada, most of the water coming into the river is from groundwater flow. His research shows that the chemistry in the Bow River is naturally influenced by chemical reactions in the soil and surrounding rock formations, and that the river is, in fact, groundwater. Look for more discussion about Dr. Grasby's research findings at future BRBC Forums and possibly a follow up presentation.

Shell and Husky Dialogue with Bragg Creek

The Bragg Creek Environmental Coalition (BCEC) has a reputation for stirring the pot to make sure we are all accountable for protecting the environment. In 1994 they tried to halt drilling operations by Husky Energy at Moose Mountain. Although unsuccessful, BCEC continued to challenge local operations by Husky and Shell and, after years of dialogue, they now sit at the same table in discussion about the best management practices for low impact operations. The outcomes are increased water quality protection and no net loss of habitat. It is a great success story told by all three parties after a lot of work and time. The benefits of this dialogue: BCEC went from opposing development to *influencing development* and Shell and Husky went from working for shareholders to *working with stakeholders*. A copy of the Dec. 8th Forum presentation by Eric Lloyd (BCEC), Ron Moggert (Shell) and Murray Pow (Husky) is on the ERWP website under *Projects*.

Watershed Database is Available

The Elbow River watershed is digitally mapped and available on CD to stakeholders of the watershed and members of the ERWP. Allen Fuller of The City of Calgary Information Technology displayed the database to several ERWP members in a computer lab provided by the University of Calgary, and generated a lot of interest in the potential uses. The database comes from many data sources and is comprised of 35 layers of datasets such as topography, roads, streams and water wells in a GIS capable format. **Geographic Information System (GIS)** is a computer program that stores, displays, and analyzes data that has a geographic dimension. Each data layer can be placed on top of another to provide unique information for the entire watershed such as possible correlations. The capability also exists to manipulate the data to do

“what if...” scenarios and detect spatial trends. Viewing the data will be relatively easy for most computer users with free reader-type software. If you would like to perform GIS queries, the proper software will be required. The database continues to be upgraded to ensure accuracy. It will be available to members once the ERWP has signed the important legal agreement.

Eric Lloyd, Past Chair, ERWP



He gives endless hours of his free time to forward the mission of the Elbow River Watershed Partnership. He always said, if there is pollution on the land, it will show up in the water, and so, he set out to promote the best land use practices to protect water quality. His work in the environment spans three decades across the country and for the past four years he has been working on building a stewardship group out of the people who work and live around him. Thank you Eric for your dedication as ERWP Chair, your endless energy and all your “great ideas for the day”.

Introducing...

Gloria Wilkinson, Acting Chair



Eric hands the ERWP torch over to the ever-qualified Gloria Wilkinson, a member of the Springbank Community for decades and a very capable and experienced Chair. Gloria has valuable skills as a former MD of Rocky View Council and she is a very active member of the Bow River Basin Council. This has been a smooth transition for the ERWP and we look forward to having Gloria at the reigns to lead us into more of the on-the-ground watershed restoration and protection projects.

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