
From The **SHORELINE**

Summer 2000 www.biology.ualberta.ca/alms/home.htm

ALBERTA LAKE MANAGEMENT SOCIETY

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This will be my last message to our readers as President. My term will end at the next AGM in March. Taking on a leadership role such as this seemed a little daunting at first, considering the shoes one had to fill and the good work and leadership of those who preceded you. However, it has been a very rewarding experience and I encourage everyone to do the same and get involved.

1999/2000 has been a formative year in the life of the new *Water Act*. Now one year in existence, this new law is just beginning to exert its influence on Albertans who live next to water bodies.

Approvals are still required for modifying shorelines and creating developments that encroach into a lake. A number of activities are exempted from requiring approvals including the placement of a temporary pier onto the bed of a lake.

The tolerance level for unauthorized shoreline developments is decreasing as fisheries and fish habitat declines become increasingly pronounced. In

the new Act, enforcement powers have been strengthened and Conservation Officers throughout Alberta now have better tools for enforcing shoreline offences. Administrative fines can also now be levied under the Act for offences.

On a more positive note, the Act has provisions for Water Management Planning initiatives. For those with an interest in lake and watershed management, opportunities will exist to provide public input into the development of such plans.

On the federal side of things, the federal Government in Ottawa began the "Great Canadian Water Debate" turning the concept of bulk water exports into a national issue. The feds are fearful of seeing continental fresh water resources become a tradable commodity and thus exportable under NAFTA. They announced a strategy to prohibit the bulk removal of water — including water for export — from Canadian watersheds. The new strategy includes:

- C Amendments to the International Boundary Waters Treaty Act (IBWTA) to give the federal government regulatory power to prohibit bulk removals from boundary waters, principally the Great Lakes.
- C A proposal to develop, in co-operation with the provinces and territories, a Canada-wide accord on bulk water removals to protect Canadian watersheds. The ministers called on those provinces and territories that have not already done so to adopt moratoriums on bulk

water removal while the accord is being developed.

The Alberta Government's response was typical in suggesting there was no need for them to sign such a strategy because the Province already had sufficient legislation in place through its *Water Act* to prevent licenses being issued to transfer water outside of Canada. It should be noted however, that such transfers could potentially be allowed by a special Act of the Legislature after a public consultation process. One's view on how likely this may occur depends on how much faith one has in the arena of politics!

There have also been rumours that 40+ federal fisheries employees will be moving into Alberta with the responsibility for assessing fish habitat impacts (Harmful Alteration, Disruption and Destruction, aka HADD) pursuant to the federal *Fisheries Act*. It is unknown how this will affect regulatory approval mechanisms for shoreline alterations and developments.

On a more personal note, for me it was also a year of many mile-stones. I got married and am in the process of buying my first house. I also travelled for an extended time in SE Asia, getting a very different view of riverine and riparian areas in the states of Sarawak and Sabah on the island of Borneo, Malaysia. As the role of leadership is passed on, I look forward to new opportunities and will continue working with ALMS and its members in a new capacity.

Finally, I would like to announce that ALMS will be holding this year's Fall

Workshop at Gull Lake on September 22 - 23, 2000. I hope to see you all there.

Steve Smart

ALMS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

ALMS will be holding the 2000 Annual General Meeting on March 24, 2000 in Edmonton. Once again, the AGM will feature a speaker and light refreshments.

The evening will begin with a speaker

on a lake management related topic. After a short break Gerry Haekel, our outgoing President, will present a brief summary of the year in review. This will then be followed by the election for new board members.

We invite all interested and motivated individuals to seek a position on the board (see description of Director roles). There is so much we can do as an organization, but we need your enthusiasm and help to do it.

Please join us in Edmonton at 7:00 PM at the Riverbend Community Centre located at 258 Rhatigan Rd. East. See the insert for directions and a map.

NEWS RELEASE - ALBERTA ENVIRONMENT

Government of Alberta News Release
No. 00-054
Saturday, July 1, 2000

"Though it is tempting to try to alter or enhance what nature has already provided us, Albertans must not take any action to disturb a water body without an approval."

Halvar C. Jonson, Minister of
Environment

Altering a water body may get you in over your head!

Edmonton - So you're tired of looking out your acreage window at that unsightly slough at the edge of your property. Or maybe you are planning a new subdivision and intend on filling those "nuisance wetlands." Perhaps you'd just like to add a few yards of beach to your lakefront cottage. How about digging a small side channel from that creek that meanders past your back yard to supply the landscaping project you've been planning?

As we move further into the landscaping and outdoor season, Alberta Environment would like to remind all landowners that they must apply for, and receive, an approval under Alberta's *Water Act* before

making any alterations to a water body. And there are some very good reasons that approvals are required.

That "unsightly wetland" may be home to a variety of plants and wildlife. The weedy or rocky shoreline that would look "so much better with a load of sand" is important spawning habitat for fish species and provides shelter for smaller fish and insects and hunting grounds for birds and other wildlife. And the creek that could supply your backyard pond probably took centuries to develop and move to its current location for a very good reason.

For all of these reasons and more, land developers, landscape architects, engineering consultants, municipal governments and any other landowners or individuals who are involved in rural or urban land development or landscaping should contact their nearest Alberta Environment office before undertaking any works which alter a water body. For phone numbers, look in the blue pages of your local telephone book or dial 310-0000 toll-free for assistance.

In accordance with provincial legislation, construction activities or other disturbances to any water body are subject to review and approval under the *Water Act*. This includes activities on private lands resulting in the filling, drainage or shoreline alteration of permanent or intermittent sloughs, lakes, wetland areas or watercourses. The temporary or permanent diversion of water from any water body for purposes other than household or traditional agricultural use also requires authorization. Other provincial legislation including the *Public Lands Act* and the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* may also apply.

Failure to comply with these acts may result in enforcement action by Alberta Environment. The wilful destruction of migratory bird nests or destruction of fisheries habitat is a federal offence.

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Editor: Gerry Haekel

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