



From The Shoreline is the official newsletter of the Alberta Lake Management Society (ALMS), providing a forum for the communication and exchange of information and experiences relating to the management of lakes and their watersheds.

If you have any comments or questions, or if there are any topics you would like brought up at our Board meetings, you can contact us at:

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Low Water in Canada's Great Lakes - Sound Familiar?

Several massive vessels have run aground on Michigan's Saginaw River this shipping season, caught in shallow waters a few miles from Lake Huron.

The river port is as shallow as 13 feet (4 metres) in a passage that is supposed to be 22 feet (7 metres) deep, a sign of low water levels in North America's five Great Lakes — Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario. Water levels declined in 1998 and have remained low, forcing ships to take on lighter loads and sparking concern about shorelines and wetlands in the Great Lakes, the world's largest supply of fresh water and a major commercial shipping route for Canada and the United States. "It's a pretty different mindset to come off 30 years of above-average water levels and to suddenly, since the late 1990s, have below-average levels," said Scott Thieme, chief of the US Army Corps of Engineers' Great Lakes Hydraulics and Hydrology Office in Detroit. Lakes Huron and Michigan, where water levels have declined the most, are down about 3 feet (one metre) from 1997 and about 20 inches (50 cm) from their 140-year average, according to the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory.

Water levels in the Great Lakes have always fluctuated, but experts point to climate change, dredging, private shoreline alterations and even lingering effects of glaciers to explain the latest changes — the decline of Lake Huron and slightly higher water levels in Lake Erie, into which Huron flows.

The 1930s Dust Bowl drought coincided with then-record low levels in the Great Lakes. And the most recent decline was in 1997, when a strong El Nino brought warm, dry temperatures to North America, Sellinger said. In addition, above-average temperatures since 1998 mean less ice forms on the Great Lakes and the rivers that flow into it, and more water evaporates away, Sellinger said.

And then there is something called post-glacial rebound, or the slow rise of the earth's crust, that could partly explain declining water levels in Lakes Huron and Michigan. "The area around Georgian Bay (Lake Huron) is rising faster than the area around Lake Erie so it may be that the land has just tilted and more water is flowing out," Sellinger said.

For every inch water levels go down, ships bound for destinations outside North America forfeit about US\$8,400 in freight revenue, said Dennis Mahoney, president of the United States Great Lakes Shipping Association. Saginaw and other ports have done emergency dredging to accommodate ships and barges that can be hundreds of yards long. But Lake Superior's largest American ships carried 3,000 fewer short tons of cargo last year than in 1997, when water levels were 12 inches (30 cm) higher, according to the Lake Carriers' Association. "Obviously water levels are crucially important to this industry, and we have been in a period of decline," said Glen Nekvasil, vice president of corporate communications for the association. "When you're not utilising your full vessel capacity you can't give your customer the best freight rate."

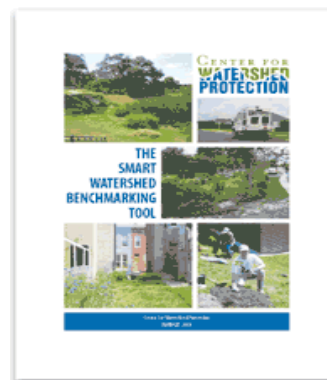
Story by Jonathan Spicer, Reuters

Smart Watershed Benchmarking Tools Released by the Center for Watershed Protection, Maryland

Using lessons learned from around the United States, this self-assessment tool helps local program managers make better decisions on watershed restoration priorities to maximize the performance of staff and financial resources. Local watershed groups can also use this tool by determining how their community compares to others and work with their local governments to encourage adoption of practices that would improve scores. It includes:

- an overview of smart watershed programs, its benefits and applications for local communities;
- step-by-step guidance on how to complete the tool and interpret community scores;
- case studies and tips for implementing the programs;
- and further details on restoration budgeting.

See <http://www.cwp.org/> for more details.



ALMS 2006 Workshop - October 20 to 21, Lethbridge



For over a decade, ALMS has brought together lake users, stewardship groups, and scientific experts to deal with real watershed and lake management issues. Our "traveling workshops" have been to Moose Lake, Pigeon Lake, Pine Lake, and most recently, Lesser Slave Lake.

This year, we are pleased to announce our workshop will occur from October 20 to 21, in the Lethbridge Center, City of Lethbridge. The Workshop will focus on balancing the multiple uses of reservoirs, such as irrigation, water consumption, and recreation. This is a timely issue, considering the scarcity of water in the south, especially in recent years.

This year's workshop will feature several experts on Reservoir Management including:

- Dr. Dave Sauchyn - Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative, University of Regina
- Mr. Robert Harrison - Manager: Partners and Strategies Section, Alberta Environment
- Mr. Allan Locke - Instream Flow Needs Expert, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development

The programme will also feature a tour of the St. Marys Reservoir system and a sumptuous banquet and will include a slide show presented by Mr. Lorne Fitch, local riparian expert, photographer and motivational speaker.

The workshop is open to anyone interested in reservoir operations, including irrigators, cottagers, resource planners and recreational users. The workshop will provide an excellent forum to meet and network with experts at the pre-workshop wine and cheese to be held on October 19th.

Last year was a tremendous success. Don't miss out on this year's workshop and a great opportunity to network! To register, or for more information visit the ALMS website at: www.alms.ca or contact the workshop chair, Mr. Jean-Francois Bouffard at 780-901-9688.

2005 Workshop Feedback

*"I thoroughly enjoyed the whole event."
 "Good mix of scientific and practical information."
 "The workshop exceeded my expectations."
 "Good networking opportunity."
 "I'll be back next year!"*

ALMS Membership Renewal - Act Now!

It's that time of the year again - time to renew your ALMS membership! If you attend the ALMS workshop, don't worry, your membership is included in the registration fee. If you do not attend the workshop, your membership is likely about to expire.

Your membership is crucial for ALMS as the proceeds are used for activities that are necessary for an organization (i.e., office and general expenditures of the organization) but are also not eligible under most available grants. Please take the time to fill out the attached membership form. Keep the ALMS organization going and enjoy our benefits, such as the enclosed issue of LakeLine magazine. If you have any questions about your membership status, please call Jay White, at (780) 433-9414.

ALMS 2006 Fall Newsletter

ALMS Strategic Plan, Proposed Changes to Bylaws, and Members Meeting to Review Changes to Bylaws.

In October 2005, the ALMS Board of Directors got together at Pigeon Lake to discuss approaches at managing ALMS into the future. The following were derived:

Purpose

Building understanding and awareness among Albertans for responsible management of lakes, reservoirs and watersheds through programs and information sharing.

Vision

Engage Albertans to achieve high quality lake environments.

Goals

- Increase partnerships and fundraising to improve program delivery.
- Review and refine existing programs and develop new initiatives and programs.
- Build capacity of board to deliver program options.
- Increase the Alberta Lake Management Society's visibility.

Tasks to achieve these goals:

- Create a Fundraising Plan.
- Create a Marketing Plan.
- Formalize three working groups (Programs & Education Initiatives, Membership, Public Relations & Fundraising, and Annual Workshop), which can include Board Members, as well as other members and volunteers. The Working Groups would set their own budgets and workplans that will be approved by the Board. Note that all working groups should be chaired or co-chaired by a Board Member to ensure accountability.
- Define Executive Committee decision-making powers.
- Change the date of the AGM to co-incide with the Workshop.

These actions should reduce the Board meetings and Board member burn-out and enable the Working Groups to focus on specific tasks.

Changes to bylaws are proposed, in accordance with the outcomes of the strategic plan. These changes are highlighted in the attached documentation. These changes shall be voted upon at a **special meeting**, which will be held on the second Day of the ALMS

Workshop, **October 21, 2006, from 8 to 9 am, in the Lethbridge Center.** If you can't make it to the Workshop, you can vote by proxy, using the enclosed form. Please give Theo Charette a call, if you have any questions, at (780) 427-0903.



Volunteer Board Development Program

The ALMS strategic planning was made possible through the wonderful facilitation skills of Robert Hagg of the Alberta Community Development (ACD). For more information on ACD's Volunteer Board Development Program, see http://www.cd.gov.ab.ca/building_communities/volunteer_community/programs/bdp/index.asp

Alberta Water Quality Awareness Day

Organizers are calling this year's Alberta Water Quality Awareness (AWQA) Day a resounding success. This past June, close to 2,800 Albertans from Milk River and Pincher Creek to Peace River and Fort McMurray journeyed to the banks of major rivers, recreational lakes and neighbourhood ponds to test four basic parameters of water quality: pH, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, and, water temperature.

This year's AWQA Day kicked off Alberta's contribution to Canadian Environment Week, which began June 5, 2006. "However, volunteer water testers across the province were given an entire month to collect and test the waters of any lake, stream, river or pond and then share their findings by July 15," says Christina Hiebert, water quality program coordinator. "Because our goal is awareness, we wanted to give as many people as we could the time they needed to get out there and test their local waterbodies. It's clear from the growing number of participants that many Albertans care about protecting our waterways and want to know more about what they can do to keep them clean."

"Most people submitted their test kit results on-line, and gave us a lot of great feedback about what they got out of the experience," says Hiebert. "People know we're not collecting the data for scientific study. But the process of going out and testing local water sources leads to conversations about water quality issues ranging from recreational use to industrial pollution and, perhaps most importantly, stewardship."

"The kids really enjoyed it because it was a hands-on learning experience," says Susann McGowan, manager, marketing and special projects, 4-H Foundation of Alberta. "We'll definitely do this one again. It's a really good fit with the environmental programs we offer." Parent Dana Charlton of Calgary says she and her daughter Honor, 9, tested the water in an urban wetland near their home in northwest Calgary. "My daughter really liked it," says Charlton. "And I liked the way she could figure out the results on her own. It was a very good introduction to science." Mother and daughter are already talking about doing the same tests next year, and even including their friends.

"The activity is a good one for adults, too," says John Reichert, who is a member of a watershed stewardship group at Wizard Lake, south of Edmonton. He, his wife, and another local couple spent a day sampling water from the lake. "This lake is used by boaters, fishing enthusiasts and birders, and is becoming increasingly popular. Even though we live right here, the simple act of going out to sample the water gave us a good reason to talk about its long-term health."

Plans are already underway for next year's Alberta Water Quality Awareness Day. As in the past, people will be able to get more information about the program, or register for the water testing kits via the website at www.awqa.ca.

Funding and support for the 2006 program was provided by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Alberta Environment, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Shell Environmental Fund, the Alberta Lake Management Society and the Alberta Stewardship Network.

For more information, visit www.awqa.ca or email: info@awqa.ca.

Media Release

With funding from Shell Environmental Fund (SEF), Canadians from Vancouver Island to Newfoundland continue to take personal action in support of the environment. The Alberta Lake Management Society (ALMS) has received \$5,000 from SEF to support the Alberta Water Quality Awareness Day program, according to Theo Charette, ALMS President.

Created in 1990, the Shell Environmental Fund is a national program, intended to make a local difference. A total of over \$1 million has been granted to more than 4000 environmental projects across the country. These projects included habitat restoration, beach and road clean-ups, waste reduction and recycling programs, educational initiatives and other innovative environmental projects.

Individuals, schools, community associations, service clubs and environmental groups have used the grants, of up to \$5,000 per project, to improve and protect their environment.

The Shell Environmental Fund accepts applications for projects that are action-oriented, innovative, and community-based. If there is a project you would like to undertake in your community, visit the SEF website at www.shell.ca/sef or call the SEF Administrator at (403) 691-2071 for more information.

LakeWatch: Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program

Lakewatch is a monitoring program for stewardship groups to track the progress of their lake and is a fun way to increase awareness and community participation. In this program, volunteers provide their time and a boat and ALMS provides the equipment and professional guidance and training. Since Lakewatch was started in 1996, over 50 lakes have been sampled. Past Lakewatch reports are available on our website (www.alms.ca).

The 2006 volunteer lake monitoring season is shaping up to be one of our best. We are proud to announce a new long-term partnership with

Alberta Environment and Alberta Community Development to sample lakes with a park. With this new partnership, we have the opportunity to outreach to lake and park users and actively promote responsible recreation to lake visitors. Lakes sampled as part of this new partnership include Dillberry, Elkwater, Gregg, Gregoire, Jarvis, Long, Miquelon, Steele, Upper Kananaskis, and Lower Kananaskis. These lakes will be sampled in alternate years with 10 other lakes being sampled next year.

Continuing partnerships include those with the Lakeland Industry and Community Association (LICA), the Pine Lake Restoration Society, and the Baptiste, Island, and Skeleton Lakes Society (BISL). Lakes sampled with LICA include: Beartrap, Crane, Fishing, Frog, Hilda, Moose, Muriel, and Wolf. Other lakes in the 2006 program include Big, Clear (M.D. of Wainright), Cooking, Gull, Lac Sante, Mons, Pine, Sandy, Skeleton N & S, Sylvan, and Wizard.

The Lakewatch Program is made possible by the numerous volunteers and our two summer coordinators Megan McLean and Amanda Krowski.

NALMS 2006 Symposium

Making Connections - People, Lakes, Watersheds **26th International Symposium of North American Lake Management Society**

Indiana has a long and rich history in limnology and lakes. The last glaciers, some 10,000 years ago, covered the northern third of the state with natural lakes. There are virtually no natural lakes in the southern two-thirds of the state but there are plenty of impoundments. Indiana's 1400 lakes over 5 acres in size include 8 Corps of Engineers projects (10,700-acre Monroe Reservoir is the largest in the state) and Lake Wawasee, at 2,600 acres, the largest natural lake in the state.

It is in recognition of this rich history that the theme of the 2006 NALMS International Symposium is "Making Connections – People, Watersheds, Lakes." This Symposium will emphasize connections between the past and the present; between natural lakes and reservoirs; between watersheds and lakes; and, of course, between people and lakes.

Visit: <http://www.nalms.org/> for more details.

Cochrane Low Impact Development Conference - Innovations in Urban Development October 18-20, 2006.

Through workshops, breakout sessions and presentations participants will gain a greater understanding of LID and real life applications. On October 21, participants may view low impact initiatives in the Cochrane - Calgary area or take an interpretive tour of the Natural West in and around Cochrane. To register or for more information go to <http://www.lidconference.ca>.