

Fall 2011

"News You Can Use"

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Meetings
2nd Wednesday of each
month. Contact WWMC
for venue.
6:30 p.m.

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Lakescape

newsletter of the



WABAMUN WATERSHED MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

AGM a Success!

The Annual General Meeting of the Wabamun Watershed Management Council was held last October 19 at the Wabamun & District Senior Centre. In attendance were over 50 members and 16 guests. A lot of WWMC business was conducted, including the passing of an amendment to the bylaws to allow corporate members each one vote at general and special meetings, and the election of directors to the Board for the 2011/12 year. Thank you to all who attended.

Controlling Algae

As part of the AGM, Dr. David Schindler delivered the keynote address on *Preventing Algal Blooms in Alberta's Lakes*. Dr. Schindler illustrated how he brings several decades of experience to the discussion. It was his team that demonstrated the effect of phosphorous and nitrogen on water quality. The following are just some of the points that Dr. Schindler made in his well received address, using examples from across Canada:

- Algae directly affects fish production: the more algae, the less fish.
- Algal blooms are worse when water flow is low—which is the case for many recreation lakes in Alberta.
- Controlling the amount of phosphorous entering a lake, controls the amount of algae.
- Increased nutrient loading comes from increased land development around the lake. In a natural ecosystem, phosphorous and other nutrients in runoff get absorbed in the soil and taken up in the vegetation. Development disturbs the soil and vegetation, releasing phosphorous into the runoff.
- Increased phosphorous (and other nutrients) in the lake water provides ideal growing conditions for algae, especially blue-green algae.
- Blue-green algae produce toxins that kill fish and other animals that come to the lake to drink.
- Urban and agricultural development in a watershed accelerates nutrient loading.
- Natural vegetation and drainage systems around the lake reduce nutrient loading.

Dr. Schindler commended the WWMC for its activities in education about nutrient loading and its proposal to begin a program to measure the turbidity of the lake.

Measuring Water Quality

Philip Sutton

One way to measure the gross water quality of a lake or other body of water is to measure the turbidity of the water, or the amount of small particles suspended in the water column. Those particles could be anything from soil particles to bacteria or algae. Generally, the more turbid the water the poorer the water quality.

On October 19th of this year as part of the AGM for the Wabamun Watershed Management Council, I submitted a proposal to the council for a citizen-operated "Secchi Disk" measurement program to be run by volunteer boaters on Wabamun Lake as well as the eight other Central Alberta Recreational Lakes (CARL) and beyond. The proposal was warmly received and supported by Dr. David Schindler in his talk which followed mine. As well, I subsequently presented the program at the annual CARL meeting where it was also well received by watershed management groups from the other lakes.

What is a Secchi Disk? you ask. It is a plastic disk 20 cm (8 in.) in diameter divided into quarters which are painted alternately black and white. The disk is lowered into the water and the depth at which it disappears from view is recorded. It was developed by a priest in 1865 to measure the turbidity of the Mediterranean and has become an international standard for measuring water turbidity as well as water quality.



It is very simple to use and the council will be giving classes in its use over the winter. All you need to do is commit yourself to half an hour either weekly, bi-weekly or monthly to get involved. Alberta is the only area in North America not doing this program. Elsewhere, the program has been highly successful in helping turn declining water bodies around by shedding light on the problems of water quality and what should be done to improve it.



If you have a small boat—anything from a canoe on up, but built close to the water (so you don't tip it over when making measurements)—and can devote a little time to making Alberta a better place, PLEASE contact me, PHIL SUTTON, stone44@ocii.com, 780-450-1277 or Glen Gustafson, glenn.gustafson@gov.ab.ca, 780-960-8631 to signify your interest.

There will be a small investment in time for training and doing the measurement as well as the equipment which should not cost \$50.00 in total and even less if we buy in bulk.

Boats could be anything from a canoe to small fishing boats, runabouts and bow riders. Pontoon boats, large sail boats and cabin cruisers will not work as you have to get right down to water level.

Board of Directors

Chair: Kelly Aldridge, Seba Beach

Vice Chair: Phil Sutton, boating community

Secretary: Tracey Melnyk, Parkland County

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Stan Kobytko, Camp Oselia

Jack Latham, Whitewood Sands

Tom Slater, Alberta

Environment

Reg Wood, Betula Beach

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Editor: Don Meredith
(wwwmc@donmeredith.ca)

Submissions

Lakescape welcomes contributions from WWMC members and others who wish to inform members about issues or events in the Wabamun area. Please keep submissions brief and to the point. All submissions are subject to editing for length and clarity. For more information, contact the editor: Don Meredith
wwwmc@donmeredith.ca

Deadline for the winter edition is January 15, 2012.

Special Meeting

As we notified you earlier, we are holding a Special Meeting of the WWMC on Wednesday, December 14 at 6:30 p.m. at the Spruce Grove Alberta Environment office (250 Diamond Ave.). The meeting will consider four proposed bylaw amendments that would 1) allow the Board to appoint interim board members, 2) change the method of electing officers, 3) change the method of filling executive vacancies, and 4) specify the minimum number of board members.

As a special incentive to attend, Curtis Brock, Limnologist (studies the biology of freshwater bodies) for Alberta Environment, will present an update on *Wabamun Lake 101*. During the founding days of the council, Curtis made the presentation to the council so that we understood what is happening in the lake in hope of making informed decisions. If you are concerned about the biology of Wabamun Lake, you should hear his presentation.

Please plan to attend!

Corporate Members

The following businesses and organizations have partnered with the WWMC as corporate members:



Camp Oselia Society

Shoreside Management Ltd.

Wabamun Lakeside Liquor



Derby's Lakeview General Store

Kokanee Springs RV Park

Seba Beach Ice Cream Stop

Summer Village of Lakeview

Summer Village of Seba Beach

The Fortunate Loonie

Wabamun & District Seniors Centre

If you own or represent a business or organization that is concerned about Wabamun Lake and would be willing to help maintain its health, become a corporate member of the WWMC for just \$100 a year. Corporate members will be acknowledged at WWMC functions, in each newsletter and elsewhere. For more information contact Kelly Aldridge by e-mail, ktammaa@hotmail.com or telephone, (780) 953-2695.

If you are already a corporate member and would like to see your logo here, please send a digital copy to me at wwmc@donmeredith.ca

