

BCLSS Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 3

"Furthering Lake Stewardship Through Communication and Education"

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Auditor General's Report "Protecting Drinking water Sources"

In April 1999, the Auditor General's Office released a comprehensive study that recognized the need for an integrated protection strategy for the province's drinking water sources. The report addresses a range of issues of concern including water source management in BC, the impacts of other resource uses on drinking water sources, increasing problems related to groundwater management and the recognition that small water systems are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of inadequate water source protection.

The Auditor General's report assessed the provincial government's efforts to protect drinking water sources for communities outside of the Vancouver and Victoria area, specifically including Fort St. John, Prince George, Williams Lake, Prince Rupert, Cranbrook, Kelowna, Abbotsford and Nanaimo. These communities were chosen to capture regional representation as well as to reflect the different factors that effect watershed management. It was evident from the analysis that there is a wide and varied range of threats to drinking water sources in BC as a result of competing interests in the watershed with each case reflecting a particular set of challenges unique to the specific area.

The results of the audit indicate that the majority the major drinking water sources in BC continue to provide good quality water, however there are also cases where some major and many smaller systems, have already been impacted, or are exposed to, threats from human related activities.

The Auditor General's report "concluded that the Province is not adequately protecting drinking water sources from human-related impacts, and that this could have significant cost implications in the future for the Province, for municipal and regional government, and for citizens in general." The main problem identified was the lack of an effective, integrated approach to the land-use management, which resulted in decisions being made between the protection the resource and the management of other activities within the watershed such as

forestry, recreation, cattle grazing, agriculture or transportation.

The report has identified the issues relating to the protection of drinking water sources and the requirement for inter-agency cooperation that would result in the identification of the potential sources of contamination within a watershed and the need for the adoption of an integrated approach.

What Causes Water Pollution?

The following was taken from the Environment Canada web site at www.ec.gc.ca/envpriorities/cleanwater_e.htm.

The water quality of Canada's freshwater and marine areas is affected by three important water pollution problems: toxic substances, excess nutrients, and sedimentation.

Toxic substances from industrial, agricultural and domestic use are some of the main pollutants in our water. These include trace elements, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), mercury, petroleum hydrocarbons, dioxins, furans and some pesticides. Some of these substances accumulate through the food chain rather than break down in the environment. These substances enter our water in a variety of ways, including:

- Industrial sources such as mining, steel production, the generation of electricity and chemical production;
- Accidents such as oil or chemical spills and contaminated sites such as the Sydney Tar Ponds in Nova Scotia;
- Municipal wastewater effluents;
- Atmospheric deposition from Mexico, the United States, Europe and Asia, which is deposited in Canada through rain and snow and agricultural run-off.

Excess nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous compounds come mainly from municipal sewage and farm run-off containing fertilizers and animal waste. These nutrients can cause excess growth of aquatic plants, which then die and decay, depleting water of dissolved oxygen and killing fish.

Sedimentation is an increase in the amount of solid particles in water, caused primarily by human activities such as forestry, farming and construction. When sediment settles, it can smother the feeding and spawning grounds of fish and kill aquatic organisms.

Internal Affairs

New Lake Stewardship Co-ordinator At the beginning of June BCLSS hired an Environmental Youth Team member to help with daily activities and to help lighten the load of Michelle. Sage Karras comes to us from Vernon, BC and has just recently graduated from Okanagan University College with a degree in Freshwater Science. Some of the work that she has done so far is co-ordinating most of the Secchi Disk Dip In and compiling information as it comes in, finding information for the newsletter, and sending out information to members. If you would like to contact Sage you can email her at askarras@hotmail.com or phone 250 762-5445 Loc 7523.

Project COOL

Clean Our Okanagan Lake was started in 1989 by concerned divers Robinette and Ed Lutz, who found a way to use the expertise of trained SCUBA Divers to do something for the environment and enhance the enjoyment of Central Okanagan citizens and tourism industry.

They organized the First Project C.O.O.L using volunteer divers and donated equipment and services. The project has operated that way ever since. On average 70 to 90 divers have shown up each year to participate.

Over the years more than twelve tons of debris has been pulled from Okanagan Lake during Project C.O.O.L. Items ranging from bikes, to tires and barrels, to guns, to pop and beer cans to various pieces of metal and even an antique ice box. The clean up has been mainly along Kelowna City Park and the downtown waterfront, with one clean up day at Peachland on the Westside of the lake.

53 sponsors donate air for the divers, food and beverages for all volunteers on shore and in the water, equipment to haul dive gear and garbage, music, banners, advertising, prizes and gifts for volunteers as well as the poster contest and services needed to remove the garbage. It is truly a community event with many helping a little to achieve a lot.

Project C.O.O.L. has won several environmental awards including the very prestigious PADI (Professional Association of Dive Instructors) Project AWARE Award. Each year we look to make project C.O.O.L. better and we welcome participants on all levels of volunteers, divers and sponsors.

Project C.O.O.L. is now in its tenth year of operation and will take place this year on September 17 & 18 from 9:00am to 4:00pm in Peachland and a second location that will be announced later.

If you are interested, you can find out more by phoning 250 766-1942.

Some of the sponsors that have been with Project COOL since the first year of operation include: Diving Dynamics, BFI, International Plastics, PADI Canada, Safeway, Willow Park Bakery, Winn Rentals, London Drugs, Overweity

Help and Encouragement for Waterfront Residents

"Working towards healthier human and wildlife habitat along the shorelines of Canada." Waterfront residents stand to benefit from the efforts of The Living by Water Project. Founded in British Columbia, by two waterfront residents who were frustrated with the difficulties of accessing information on how to live environment-friendly lives and protect their lake, the project is now getting off the ground in various parts of the country.

As a millennium initiative, The Living by Water Project is being developed through The Federation of B.C. Naturalists. Some of the services and products being produced include: workshops, homesite assessments, a handbook, a video, and a number of educational materials such as brochures and a shoreline quiz and activity sheet for children. Waterfront

residents throughout the province will also be invited to become Shoreline Ambassadors and participate in the Shoreline Restoration Month.

The BC Lake Stewardship Society will be participating in Shoreline Celebration & Restoration Month, September 2000 & 2001, which has been initiated by the Living by Water Project. Celebrations in communities across Canada will integrate art and science through activities such as waterfront fairs, shoreline restoration workshops, plays, art contests, and more. BCLSS invites all lake groups to pick a stretch of shoreline on their lake to plan a project for Shoreline Restoration Month. BCLSS will help develop funding submissions to Environment Canada's EcoAction 2000 Initiative.

A full colour "Waterfront Living" brochure is now available. Suggested price is \$35.00 per 100 brochures (including shipping and handling). Groups with limited budgets may make a donation instead. Please contact: Sarah Kipp and Clive Callaway Project cofounders and lead authors, BC/Yukon Project Office. Tel: (250) 832-7405 Fax: (250) 832-6874 e-mail: lbywater@jetstream.net Web site: www.livingbywater.bc.ca/

Results from the Secchi Disk Dip In By Sage Karras

I can't say the results are all in, but I can say that we have had an increase in volunteers for BC. Last year we had a total of only nine lakes 'dipped in' and this year we already have over 35 and we are still getting some results trickling in.

If you haven't sent in your info yet, please do so ASAP by e-mailing Sage at askarras@hotmail.com, faxing Michelle at 250 868-1027 or phoning our toll free number at 877 BC LAKES.

We would like to thank all of the dippers we had this year and we hope that you will participate again next year. BCLSS would especially like to thank Rick Nordin for putting all of the time and effort into making many of the disks. Thank you so much Rick, and maybe next year we won't rush you so much!

At this time we would also like to invite those who did not participate this year to participate next year so we can make our 2nd Annual Secchi Disk Dip In even larger. If you are interested, you can contact us at the above address and phone numbers and we will gladly add you to our list for next year.

ENTER OUR LAKE STORY CONTEST!

We are having a Lake Story Contest. If you have a story that you would like to share that is lake or stream related, we would like to hear it. It could be anything from a fishing or boating experience, to falling in the water, or even seeing the ogopogo.

Stories should try not to be no more than 250 words in length and should be submitted by September 31, 1999. Submissions can be e-mailed to askarras@hotmail.com or bcless@hotmail.com, faxed to 250 868 1027 or mailed to us at our mailing address on the front page of the newsletter.

Call for Stewardship Projects

If you or your organization have any ideas for projects that would help protect and restore your lake, let us know. We are willing to help you get funding for your project by helping you find sources and write proposals. Even if you have an idea and don't have an organization, we can help you form one.

If you are interested call our toll free line at 877 BC LAKES (225 2537) or e-mail Michelle at bclss@hotmail.com or Sage at <mailto:askarras@hotmail.com>

Remember, ACT NOW because many of the funding sources have deadlines that fall on October 1st, 1999.

Have you been to our Website yet?

We are trying to keep our website up to date and since Sage has been here we have made a few additions already. If you want to be informed of important dates or information, just go to our site at www.scrn.org/bclss.

You can also phone our toll free line at 877 BC LAKES if you need some information or you can e-mail us at the addresses on the left of this page.

Newsletter Sponsor

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