

Partnering For Our Future!

NEWSLETTER

March, 2001

Winners of First "Partnering For Our Future" Award Selected

The first ever "Partnering For Our Future" Award was held over the past year by the Oldman River Basin Water Quality Initiative. A call for nominations was sent out late last year and from the nominations received two winners were selected.

Fred Gould of Chinook Feeders of Nanton received the Award of Merit and John Vander Heyden of Picture Butte received an Honourable Mention. Both men were nominated in the rural category.

Mr. Gould was nominated for his work on controlling run off from his feedlot operation. In 2000, Chinook Feeders, Ltd. constructed a 2ha. wetland to remove nutrients and bacteria, and to reduce solids from run-off. From the wetland, the treated water flows through a grass filter strip and into a clean water holding pond before it is used for irrigation.

This is the first constructed wetland in Alberta to treat run-off from a large, custom feedlot operation.

In co-operation with PFRA, Chinook Feeders has hosted a number of tours of this project and more organized tours are being planned for 2001.

Winner of the Honourable Mention Award, John Vander Heyden was recognized for his contribution to riparian zone management. Mr. Vander Heyden, in co-operation with the County of Lethbridge, has established a riparian zone management project on his pastureland adjacent to the Oldman River.

A riparian area of approximately one hundred by three hundred feet was fenced off. A solar pump is now used to provide water to Mr. Vander Heyden's cattle.

Mr. Vander Heyden's site has also been used in tours to show how riparian management can help to improve water quality and improve the overall health of the environment.

Both winners were recognized at the Oldman River Basin Water Quality Initiative Fourth Annual Workshop. Each winner received a framed certificate of recognition in addition

to a framed print by a local artist. Mr. Gould received a copy of a D.C. Lund work while Mr. Vander Heyden was the recipient of a Catherine Ann Abel work.

The Oldman River Basin Water Quality Initiative would like to thank Sandy Riemersma for nominating Fred Gould of Chinook Feeders, Ltd. and The County of Lethbridge for nominating John Vander Heyden. The Initiative is looking forward to another year of nominations

Fourth Annual Workshop Well Attended

On February 13, 2001 the Oldman River Basin Water Quality Initiative held its Fourth Annual Workshop. This workshop was open to the public and informed participants of the activities of the Oldman River Basin Water Quality Initiative over the past year.

200 people attended this year's workshop. The workshop commenced with reports from Initiative team leaders on activities and results of the past year. This year the workshop also included reports from organizations outside of the Initiative.

The second session of the day focused on related research into the relationship between agriculture and water quality and included reports from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, as well as a presentation from the University of Lethbridge on their water initiative proposal.

The third session of the day was geared toward health and water quality and included presentations from Alberta Environment, Chinook Health Region and Alberta Health and Wellness.

During the lunch break the "Partnering For Our Future" Awards were presented by Lethbridge West MLA, Clint Dunford, with Fred Gould taking home the Award of Merit and John Vander Heyden receiving an Honourable Mention. There were also several posters from various groups and agencies available for viewing during the breaks.

Evaluations completed by those in attendance indicated that the information presented was considered to be useful and many participants look forward to attending next year's workshop. The Initiative would like to thank the speakers and those who attended for making the fourth annual workshop a successful event.

Rural Water Quality Workshop Successful

The Rural BMP team sponsored a Rural Water Quality Workshop in Magrath on February 26, 2001.

More than 30 people attended this event, travelling from as far as Glenwood, Taber and Cardston. Topics covered included surface and ground water quality in southwestern Alberta, water and health, water treatment options, BMPs to protect water quality, and producer activities in southern Alberta.

Thank You!
The Oldman River Basin Water Quality Initiative would like to thank everyone who attended the Fourth Annual Workshop. We look forward to seeing you at future events!

The event also featured displays from PFRA, Cows and Fish, Chinook Health Region and Alberta Agriculture Food and Rural Development. The workshop was very informative and well received by all. Thanks to all who participated in making this a great event!

Pesticides Panel Discussion Held

On March 13 the Oldman River Basin Water Quality Initiative held a panel discussion on pesticides and water quality in the Lethbridge Public Library Theatre Gallery. This event had 45 interested individuals in attendance.

Speakers for this event were: Karen Saffran of Alberta Environment and The Oldman River Basin Water Quality Initiative, Rob Burland and Janet McLean both of Alberta Environment, David Swann of The University of Calgary, Bernie Hill of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Bill Hammond of Monsanto Canada. Each speaker gave a ten-minute presentation on pesticides and water quality followed by a question and answer period and discussion.

Thank you to the speakers and those who attended for making this event a success. If you were unable to attend but would like more information on the presentations please contact Casey Arnestad at 382-4239.

Storm Drain Study 2000

In the summer of 2000 The Oldman River Basin Water Quality Initiative began a study of water quality in the City of Lethbridge storm drains. The intent of the study was to assess the quality of water entering the Oldman River from the city's storm drain system. Eight storm drains were selected to represent different areas and land-uses within the city.

While the study was intended to monitor storm events, the weather proved to be uncooperative and there was only one storm event measured (end of August). As a result the samples taken in June, July, early August and September represent runoff from human activities such as lawn watering and car washing.

In the eight drains that were monitored 13 different pesticides were detected. Between six and ten different compounds were detected at each test site. Maximum concentrations for five of the pesticides occurred in June, the maximum concentration for five others occurred during the August storm event and one compound reached maximum concentration in July.

The three most commonly detected compounds in the storm drain samples were 2,4-D (92% of 39 samples), MCPP (mecoprop) (85% of 39 samples), and dicamba (82% of 39 samples). During the August storm event at one test site the compound that was highest in concentration was MCPP with the second highest being 2, 4-D. While there have been no guidelines set for MCPP the concentration of 2, 4-D was more than 10 times the guideline set for the protection of aquatic life.

Eleven of the 13 compounds detected have established guidelines. The compounds that did not meet irrigation guidelines were dicamba (31 times), MCPA (12), and bromoxynil (1). Those not meeting the guidelines for the protection of aquatic life were MCPA (1), lindane (3), 2-4,D (2), atrazine (1) and malathion (1).

These are only preliminary data but in response to the presence of pesticides in storm drains that empty directly into the Oldman River the Oldman River Basin Water Quality Initiative urges all urban residents to handle and use pesticides responsibly. This means following label directions, disposing of unused chemicals in a safe and responsible manner and avoiding over-watering lawns and watering the sidewalk. Dispose of unwanted chemicals through residential toxic round-ups not down sink or storm drains. The City of Lethbridge holds monthly round-ups, for more information call 329-7367.

If you would like to read more about the 2000 storm drain study please visit our website at www.oldmanbasin.org.

Partners:

Agriculture and Agri-food Canada Research Branch ~ Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) ~ Alberta Agriculture Food and Rural Development ~ Alberta Cattle Commission ~ Alberta Cattle Feeders Association ~ Alberta Environment ~ Alberta Health & Wellness ~ Alberta Irrigation Projects Association ~ Alberta Livestock Council ~ Alberta Pork Producers ~ Canbra Foods ~ Chinook Health Region ~ City of Lethbridge ~ County of Lethbridge ~ Health Canada ~ Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce ~ Lethbridge Northern Irrigation District ~ Oldman River Intermunicipal Service Agency ~ Southern Alberta Environmental Group ~ Town of Picture Butte ~ Town of Coaldale ~ Town of Coalhurst ~ University of Lethbridge