

## Stewards of Alberta's Protected Areas Association (SAPAA)

### **NEWSLETTER**

No. 2 March 2000

You should all have received recently a notice of the up-coming Volunteer Conference at Dinosaur Provincial Park on 5 - 7 May 2000 and I hope many of you are planning to be there. It looks to be an interesting and full program.

- **SAPAA AGM**

In addition to the events of the Conference, we will be holding our second Annual General Meeting there at 1200 hr. on Saturday - it was the only time we could fit it in! The main item of business is to discuss and if possible, ratify the enclosed draft Bylaws, so that the Association will be on a stronger footing. Also, where do we go from here?

For those of you who missed it when it was first discussed, SAPAA is supportive of, involved in, but separate from Alberta Environment's Volunteer Stewards Program. See the Objectives of the Association with the enclosed Bylaws.

If you are not able to make the AGM but have any comments about the Bylaws, please let myself (Alison Dinwoodie 780-437-7183) or John Woitenko (780-459-0475) know and we will try to take them into consideration. The Objectives of the Association were previously discussed and passed at the November General meeting, but we can still revise them if necessary.

- **RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP**

This notice is being sent to all previously notified Stewards, and we request that, if you are interested in renewing, or becoming a member of this fledgling organization, please complete the attached membership registration form and enclose the \$15 membership fee. This fee was agreed at the last general meeting in Red Deer on 6 Nov. 1999, to cover mailing and incidental costs. Payment of membership fee will entitle you to vote if you are present at the AGM. Memberships can also be paid at that time.

- **MEETING ARRANGEMENTS**

We need to know how many will be present for the SAPAA AGM, to make sure that we have a big enough room. As it will be during lunch hour, the Concession there could supply sandwiches (sorry, I don't know the price) or you could bring your own bag lunch. At any rate we have to know the approximate numbers. Details, including contacts for car-pooling if required, are on the enclosed sheet, which should be returned to:

Marilyn Shannon, 3928 - 117 St., Edmonton T6J 1T3  
no later than: **Tuesday, April 19**

- **NATURAL HERITAGE ACT**

Since the first AGM, our activities have centered around the proposed Natural Heritage Act. I believe it is supposed to be delivered this session, but no word has yet been given. I think most people are in agreement that Alberta's Protected and Recreation Areas should be consolidated under one Act, but there is still concern about some points, particularly what will be done about industry, what activities will be permitted where, and of specific interest to members of this Association, what will be done about our existing Natural Areas. This was one of the sticking

points in the previous version of the Bill and I would like to think that SAPAA has had some influence in getting this addressed.

- **MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, GARY MAR**  
After our general meeting in Red Deer, we wrote to Gary Mar, Minister of Environment, requesting a meeting with him to discuss the future of the volunteer Stewards Program, which seemed to be falling apart, along with the Natural Areas.

John Woitenko, Beth Jenkins and myself finally met with him on 11 Jan, 2000 and had a very useful discussion. I think he knew a lot more about the Stewards Program and Natural Areas by the end of our talk! While he did not make us a lot of promises, he did say that Protected Areas would not be downgraded and also that the Stewards Program would continue. (How else could they get people to do the Government's work for free?)

I think he also got the message that Natural Areas were important from a conservation and education point of view, and many of them didn't really fall into any of the proposed classes. We left him with a chart showing him how a new category of 'Conservation Area' might fit into the new system, which seemed to interest him, so we can only hope for the best!

We also asked him how much support the Department would be able to give the Stewards, and if they would be able to take an active part in management of their particular areas, but he was a bit more non-committal on this, although we provided him with some examples of where things had worked and where they hadn't.

- **DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLANS**

We had also suggested to members in our last Newsletter that they should be thinking about what a draft Management Plan for their area would look like. It will be a long time before the land managers get round to them all, so this would be a useful pro-active step. I believe one at least has been sent in and has been received favorably, although implementation is another matter!

- **FUTURE DIRECTIONS?**

Up to you! If you do have any general or specific problems with your Natural Area, could you let me know, before 21st. April, as these could then be discussed more fully at the Steward Forum at the Conference, when some of the key personnel from Natural Resources might be there.

The Association is here to help you -you aren't out there alone! But we all need to help each other and the Association will be more effective if it has strong support from its membership. So please join today!

Hope to see you in May!

Alison Dinwoodie  
(Acting President, SAPAA)