



# Insider

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**We welcome your submissions!**  
If you have any ideas for our publication or an article to submit for consideration, please send it in and we would be glad to include it.



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Dear CEMA Members,

This past year has been challenging, rewarding and exciting for CEMA!

Throughout the past 12 months CEMA has finalized several excellent products. We've seen the announcement of the Terrestrial Ecosystem Management Framework, which received local, provincial, national and international attention all through the year. The completion of this important land use plan for the region is one of the highlights of our Association since its inception.

Other CEMA realizations throughout the year have included the Nitrogen Management Recommendations, TEK Bibliography, Reclamation Database, and the Land Capability Calculator. We also increased our presence in the Wood Buffalo region, with our Joint Community Report, Open House in Fort Chipewyan, and Environment Week Activities in collaboration with the Royal Alberta Museum.

As I head into my final few months as President, I will continue working hard with the same energy and dedication that I brought to the job 2 years ago. As I look back on 2008, I believe it has been a watershed year for CEMA - a year where we produced important and influential products and were heard by more Albertans and Canadians than ever before.

As we move into 2009, we will be charting new territory and tackling new issues. We will have strong new allies in the provincial government's regional advisory council for the land use framework, but we will also be working within a new global economic climate. We have a lot to accomplish in 2009 and we have a strong work plan, budget, dedicated staff and members to make next year even better!

Finally, as the holiday season approaches we need to be thankful and reflect upon our friendship and the accomplishments of the CEMA family members over the past year. I wish everyone a wonderful holiday and happy new year!

*Randall*



## CEMA MC Meets With Deputy Ministers

On Friday November 9, 2008, the CEMA Management Committee had an important meeting with the Alberta Government Deputy Ministers of the Environment, Sustainable Resources Development and Energy Departments. The discussion focused on CEMA's role in the development of the Regional Advisory Council in Northeastern Alberta and the positioning of the Terrestrial Ecosystem Management Framework components within the provincial government policies.

The hour long meeting with Messieurs Peter Watson, Jim Ellis and Eric McGhan was an opportunity for a frank discussion about CEMA's value added and potential contribution from a senior government officials' perspective. Members of the Management Committee asked detailed questions pertaining to land use, protected areas and the organizations' future involvement in the development of management frameworks and the regional plan for north eastern Alberta which includes the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. This productive meeting allowed the Management Committee to present CEMA successes and engage Deputy Ministers in future work plans for the years ahead. The government officials did stress the importance of CEMA continuing with its present work plans and involvement in the Regional Advisory Committee.

At the end of meeting CEMA was presented with a copy of the third-party review by Price Waterhouse Cooper (PWC). A copy of the report is available on the CEMA website. The Alberta Government won't respond to the PWC report until a second, third-party review of CEMA for the Athabasca Tribal Council is completed in early 2009.



Glen, Don, Randall, Ruth, Helene, Jumbo, Melanie, Stuart, Jim Ellis, Peter Watson, Judy and Eric McGhan

## What's Inside

At CEMA we are committed to achieving the goals set out by our membership at a professional level. We are pleased to provide you with our newsletters to inform you about the progress we made.

Nonetheless, we hope you enjoy this issue for Winter 2008 and we look forward to any feedback you might have.

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## Peter Koning in Spain



Peter Koning in Spain

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature World - Conservation Congress is one of the world's largest and most important conservation events. Held every four years, the Congress aims to improve the management of the natural environment for human, social and economic development. The most recent Congress was held in Barcelona, Spain from October 5-9, 2008. More than 8,000 of the world's leading decision makers in sustainable development attended: from governments, NGOs, business, the United Nations and academia.

Sustainable Ecosystems Working Group (SEWG) Co-Chair Peter Koning presented at the congress. His presentation profiled SEWGs Terrestrial Ecosystem modeling work, which is used to test future development scenarios and management options to see how desired environmental, economic and social outcomes might be met. Not surprisingly for such a conservation-focused event, oil sands development was the subject of several comments, concerns and questions.

## 2009 CEMA Meeting Dates

### General Meeting Dates:

**\*\*All GM's will be held at the Sawridge Inn, in Fort McMurray\*\***  
(Several members have expressed a desire to limit these meetings to one day, with extended times if required. All effort will be made to accommodate this).

March 25<sup>th</sup>  
March 26<sup>th</sup> (AGM)  
June 3<sup>rd</sup>  
June 4<sup>th</sup>  
September 23<sup>rd</sup>  
September 24<sup>th</sup>  
December 9<sup>th</sup>  
December 10<sup>th</sup>

### Management Committee Meetings:

**\*\* All meetings will be held in Fort McMurray, except for the prearranged meetings with MC/PM/CC or where the agenda will permit a phone conference call. \*\***

January 22<sup>nd</sup>  
February 19<sup>th</sup>  
March 19<sup>th</sup>  
April 23<sup>rd</sup>  
May 21<sup>st</sup>  
June 18<sup>th</sup>  
July 10<sup>th</sup>  
September 3<sup>rd</sup>  
October 21<sup>st</sup>  
November 19<sup>th</sup>  
December 17<sup>th</sup>

### Program Manager/Co Chair/Management Committee Meetings:

**\*\* Location of meetings to be arranged \*\***

January 21<sup>st</sup>  
April 22<sup>nd</sup>  
July 9<sup>th</sup>  
October 20<sup>th</sup>

*\* Dates and locations are subject to change.*

**A complete list of working groups meeting dates is available at**

**(780) 799-3947 | [www.cemaonline.ca](http://www.cemaonline.ca)**

# A Vision for the Aboriginal Round Table

by Alice Martin, Aboriginal Round Table Facilitator and Deborah Simmons, SENES Consultants Ltd.

The Aboriginal Round Table met on November 27 & 28 to clarify a vision and develop an action plan. People from the communities were invited to come and share their thoughts. There was a good turnout of people who are concerned about the level of development in their traditional territory and how it is affecting the environment and their way of life.

It was evident that this group was serious about taking action. In two days, the group was able to develop a common vision and mission, establish priorities, an action plan and identify a task group to carry through the plan.

The vision of the Aboriginal Round Table is for “total participation of aboriginal communities in monitoring and management of impacts in our traditional territory.” The mission is to “facilitate the total participation of aboriginal people in CEMA.”

Three priorities were identified related to aboriginal participation in traditional knowledge and science-based aspects of cumulative environmental management:

1. Youth empowerment
2. Capacity-building
3. Long term planning

A task group consisting of one representative from each of the participating aboriginal communities will be responsible for carrying out activities related to each of the three priorities over the coming year. People also stressed the need for a full time staff person to ensure that the Aboriginal Round Table is successful in achieving its objectives.



Jumbo, Glen, Louis, MaryAnn, Cleo, Bob, Russell, Roland, Glenda, Alice, and Peter



Glenda, Louis and Sherri



Alice Martin speaks at the Round Table



Roland presenting a point while Alice and Debrah listen on

Photo Credits: Cleo Reece

We would also like to thank the Elders, Members, MC and CEMA staff for their assistance in this production.

# In The News

## Seeing Suncor

Glen Semenchuk stresses the importance of CEMA staff understanding the sectors involved in the Association and how their individual roles integrate into the total organization. To this end, the CEMA staff went on a tour of the Suncor facility north of Fort McMurray in October. The staff was guided around the property and learned about the inception of Suncor, its development over the years and the reclamation efforts being made.



Lynette, Bharati, Ashley, Kyle, Alexis, and Dan at Suncor

## Thank You Dan

Dan Stuckless departed from CEMA in late November. After three years spent at CEMA, Dan has accepted a new position as Program Manager with the Fort McKay Industrial Relations Committee, just in time for the arrival of his and Julia's third child in the spring of 2009. Dan was very popular with CEMA staff, members and the Aboriginal Community Members. Dan we miss you already!



Dan Stuckless

## Fort Chip Visit

In September, two CEMA staff joined our own Jumbo Fraser in Fort Chipewyan for an historical tour of the town. Lynette and Ashley stayed at the Fort Chipewyan Lodge overlooking the Athabasca. They were treated to a ride in Jumbo's boat (the Amy Lynn) and escorted on a tour of the area. During their tour of the museum, they saw a picture of Jumbo competing in, and ultimately winning a dog sled race in 1967. This trip served as a pleasant reminder to our staff members of why CEMA was created: to protect the picturesque region of Wood Buffalo.



Ashley, Jumbo and Ashley

## Technical Program Managers (TPM)

It was recently announced that long time TPM, Veronica Chisholm, will be moving on to new challenges. RWG would like to thank her for the great work with the SVSG, the Reclamation Certification Sub-Group (RCSG) and with the Biodiversity and Wildlife Sub-Group (BWGS). RWG is currently in the process of hiring a new TPM with expertise in soils, vegetation, biodiversity and wildlife.

RWG is also pleased to announce that Theo Charette, the TPM responsible for RWG, the End Pit Lakes Sub-Group (EPLSG), and the Wetlands and Aquatics Sub-Group (WASG), has agreed to a new two year contract. RWG is pleased that Theo will be continuing to offer his services and expertise to the work of RWG.

## Program Managers



Alexis McIntyre



Kyle Harrietha

Alexis McIntyre has made the transition to RWG with a primary focus on the Soils and Vegetation Sub-Group (SVSG). Kyle Harrietha remains at RWG and will take on additional responsibilities as RWG PM.

Heather Bartlett is the new SEWG Program Manager. She is originally from Eastern Ontario, graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Anthropology and History from the University of New Brunswick. She enjoyed conducting her field research in Mexico on Indigenous Knowledge in traditional plants and medicine. Heather ventured out to Fort McMurray one year ago. The northern living experience reminds her of her early years spent growing up on a reserve with the Eastern James Bay Cree. Heather is excited to be working with CEMA.



Heather Bartlett

## Wetlands and Aquatics Subgroup (WASG)

The Wetlands and Aquatics Sub-Group has been working to initiate two major projects over the past few months. The first is the initiation of Phase 2 of the Indigenous Wetlands Classification in the Oilsands Region. The goal of the second phase (Pilot Study) is to produce a set of community-identified wetland values that will contribute to the development of an indigenous ecological wetlands classification at a regional scale. This will be achieved through a field research program working with the elders of a single community. The Pilot Study will also be used to test and refine the research approach identified in the Scoping Study so that this approach can be more readily adopted in other areas.

As well, the WASG is pleased to announce that it has selected SNC Lavalin to conduct its Wetlands Technology Transfer Project. Technology transfer, in general, is the process by which theoretical research and knowledge is developed into practical applications. The main goal of the Wetlands Technology Transfer is to translate knowledge and research on wetland processes and function into practical application for reclamation in the oil sands region. Later on, the WASG will incorporate this Technology Transfer into the Third Edition of the Wetlands Guide. Approximately a dozen experts from various wetland research fields will be invited to participate in the Technology Transfer process. Knowledge will be extracted and transferred from the experts through workshops where participants will be asked to comment on pointed questions. The technology transfer document will be a synthesis of these workshops.

## Surface Water Working Group (SWWG)

The Socio-Economic Task Group (ETG) of the Surface Water Working Group (SWWG) has begun the early stages of planning and implementing a work plan aimed at addressing the socio-economic issues potentially impacted from the lower Athabasca River water withdrawals. A report entitled "Qualitative and Quantitative Socio-Economic Data Scoping Analysis" by Gardner-Pinfold was recently approved by the task group. This report provided information on water uses and their economic value, where possible. Two other studies, assessing recreational uses and Traditional Land Use, are in the planning stages and the task group hopes to initiate them in early 2009. The ETG's work will contribute to the development of the Phase II Water Management Framework recommendations, along with information from other SWWG task groups.

## Sustainable Ecosystems Working Group (SEWG)

Since receiving the response to the Terrestrial Ecosystem Management Framework (TEMF) from the Government of Alberta in September 2008, SEWG has adapted its 2009 work plan to provide the most relevant path forward as possible. As there is uncertainty in the final outcome of the North East Regional Plan and in specific how SEWG's recommendations will inform this plan, the proposed 2009 work focuses on several goals that will be relevant to the planning process itself. These goals include completing work that will: be beneficial to the NE planning process; tangibly support the achievement of desired outcomes that are likely to be present in the NE plan; and take advantage of SEWG's multi-stakeholder composition. This work plan will be presented by Co-Chair Peter Koning at the December 4th General Meeting.

In addition, SEWG has approved the Wildlife Movement and Habitat Connectivity report by Jacques Whitford and is in the final stages of completion of the Indicator Status Assessment report by Silvatech which will enhance the modeling work already incorporated in the TEMF.

## Reclamation Certification Sub-Group (RCSG)

Since the completion of the RCSG Report of Reclamation Certification the RCSG has been working on its work plan for 2009 and is in the process of selecting a contractor to assist in the development of reclamation certification criteria document. It is anticipated that the contractor will be selected in December with a final document will be brought forward for review in June 2009.

## Traditional Environmental Knowledge Advisory Committee

The TEK Advisory Committee completed its annual TEK Coaching Workshop on November 20th and 21st in Fort McMurray. This two day workshop themed "Building Relationships and Listening" was a great success with 50 participants from the Aboriginal Community, NGO, Industry and Government in attendance. Presentations included an introduction to TEK, and how CEMA Working Groups have integrated TEK in their past projects and what they have planned for the future. A wide range of guest presenters coached the audience on the integration of Traditional Knowledge and Western Science, and offered cross cultural training. This workshop will be held again in 2009 in addition to the annual Elder's workshop. The TEKAC also plans to begin a new Community Orientation Project in the spring of 2009.

## Biodiversity and Wildlife Sub-Group (BWSG)

The BWSG under the guidance of a TEK Facilitator from SENES Consultants in Yellowknife has recently completed its TEK workshops which were gathering information on biodiversity. Workshops were held in Fort McKay, Fort Chipewyan, and in Fort McMurray with CEMA's aboriginal members. The response to these workshops has been positive and has gone a long way to reengaging CEMA with many of its aboriginal members. Information gathered during the workshops will be used to develop recommendations on future reclamation practices and monitoring. The results of this traditional knowledge project will be used in developing recommendations for a revised version of the *Guidelines for Reclamation to Forest Vegetation in the Athabasca Oil Sands Region*. A final report is expected in the first quarter of 2009.

BWSG has also initiated a contract on the selection of criteria to evaluate biodiversity on reclaimed sites with the Alberta Research Council (ARC).

**At CEMA, we make every effort to keep you updated on the progress of Working and Task Groups as it occurs**

## NO<sub>x</sub> SO<sub>2</sub> (NSMWG)

On December 2 – 4, 2008, the Nitrogen Eutrophication Workshop will be hosted at the Delta Hotel in Calgary. During this workshop leading scientists from Europe, the United States and Canada will discuss nitrogen eutrophication. Desired outcomes include the development of a work plan to establish regional critical loads for nitrogen eutrophication.

Research projects were completed in 2008 to update or add new information to the Interim Eutrophication Management Framework and the Acid Deposition Management Framework. The results provided:

- Assessment of Nitrogen loading and terrestrial vegetation, which identified information gaps and assessed potential monitoring improvements.
- Summarization of leaf area index (LAI) statistics associated with varying vegetation covers and seasons in the RMWB. LAI is an important parameter for modeling acid deposition.
- Evaluation of critical loadings for aquatic ecosystem modelling, and field surveys of groundwater contributions, sampled waterbodies and measured precipitation levels on specific sites.
- Sensitive soil survey, which encompassed lab analysis and desktop mapping to improve quality of data on soils properties.
- Field studies of N deposition impacts on lakes.

## End Pit Lakes Sub Group (EPLSG)

EPLSG is working with CH2MHill on the End Pit Lakes Technical Guidance Document Review. CH2MHill is managing the review of the EPL Technical Guidance Document by experts in various disciplines relating to end pit lakes including general EPL Technology, Aquatic Ecology, Biogeochemistry, Geotechnical, Hydrology and Hydrogeology, and Lake Physics. The purpose of the technical review is to provide constructive criticism to ascertain critical knowledge gaps. In particular, there is an urgent need to structure investigations in the 2009 to 2011 period to fill these knowledge gaps.

CEMA is scheduled to publish the revised technical guidance document in 2012. Therefore, reviewers will identify to the best of their abilities not only knowledge gaps, but provide research guidelines to fill those gaps as best as possible within a two to three year timeline. If critical technical or scientific information cannot be effectively researched within this timeline, detailed rationale will be laid out describing both the need for this information and the difficulties in obtaining it within this research timeline. The final report will include a synthesis of all comments and recommendations and will be clearly linked to the EPL Technical Guidance Document.

## RWG Co-Chairs

It was recently announced that Ron Lewko from Syncrude will be stepping down at the end of the year as RWG Co-Chair. RWG would like to thank Ron for his dedication and hard work. The group looks forward to his

continued participation. Fred Kuzmic from Albian Sands has recently been elected as the new Co-Chair of RWG and will be working closely with long-serving Co-Chair Tanya Richens from Alberta Environment.