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President Message



Rick Brown

The spring is always a busy time of the year and there's no exception for CEMA! The working groups have already had a busy spring and are quickly preparing contracts and research for the busy summer months ahead.

The Reclamation Working Group (RWG) has recently completed a major upgrade allowing simpler and easier access to over 1600 technical and policy documents to create the new Oil Sands Environmental Management Bibliography available on the CEMA website. The New Groundwater working group held an Oil Sands Groundwater Workshop in Edmonton on March 20th, 2012 and has an aggressive research plan to deliver this summer.

Our new Land Working Group (LWG) is preparing a strong work plan for the next several years while its Linear Footprint Management Subgroup (LFMSG) has a challenging agenda for the remainder of 2012 with many contractors already conducting research. The Air Working Group (AWG) recently formed a Health Task Group to explore possible roles for CEMA to consider addressing subjects such as human, animal, and vegetative health issues. The task group is hoping to begin work this fall.

We are also very pleased about the advances being made in Traditional Environment Knowledge having advanced from an advisory committee to a full working group. The hard work of the members of the TEK Advisory Committee over the past 11 years is without question a key element to CEMA success in building strong relations with the local First Nations and Métis Peoples.

I would also like to acknowledge recent changes within the Alberta Government, with a new government, speech from the throne and of course the new Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD). This new department is a clear indication that Alberta's elected leadership are serious about developing Alberta's natural resources in a sustainable fashion. The reinforcement of environmental assurance and sustainable development will clearly play a pivotal role in the future direction of CEMA. Key amongst government decisions and activities is the direction the Government of Alberta intends to take with the provincial monitoring system. ESRD has consulted CEMA on numerous occasions and the Executive Director has already met with ESRD's Minister and the Chief Executive Officer for Monitoring. The CEMA Board and staff are very excited about potential future roles that we can play in Monitoring. The new work will fit very nicely without commitment to state of the environment reporting.

Lastly, I want to encourage everyone to take some time to rest, relax and enjoy the great outdoors, but I caution you to please do so safely. The recent rash of deaths and injuries due to unsafe boating, hiking, and driving recreational vehicles is a strong reminder to all of us to use our toys correctly and to always have safety devices with us, and more importantly, on us. Have an outstanding summer and we'll see you in the fall.

Rick Brown
CEMA President

Traditional Knowledge Working Group



Jumbo Fraser, near Lake Athabasca

One of the tasks assigned to the Aboriginal Coordinating Committee (ACC) was to determine the future path and structure of the Traditional Environmental Knowledge Advisory Committee (TEKAC). After reviewing the TEKAC's Terms of Reference, the Aboriginal Coordinating Committee made recommendations for a more direct and efficient use of the group towards Aboriginal programs, initiatives, and priorities. Thus the TEKAC has become a working group, the TKWG, with an approved new Terms of Reference.

Jumbo (Fred) Fraser, President of Fort Chipewyan Métis Local #125, has stepped down as the TK Co-Chair after four years, but remains on the group. Congratulations to Matthew Whitehead of Mikisew Cree First Nation GIR was elected to fill this seat.

The TKWG would also like to extend a huge, warm and heartfelt appreciation and thanks to Joanne Hogg, CNRL, who participated in the TEKAC for seven years and is leaving the group to accept another position in her company. Her dedication and hard work always provided deep and thoughtful consideration in all the group's projects. She will be sorely missed.

The group has completed the update to the TEK Bibliography earlier this year, with its host, the Athabasca River Basin Research Institute (ARBRI). This valuable resource tool can be accessed through the link on the CEMA website.

The TK Coaching Workshop is back for 2012! This one day workshop, on Sept. 12th, is aimed at CEMA working group chairs, board members, general membership and staff focusing on continuing education for traditional knowledge and research and cultural awareness training. This will ensure staff and members on the working groups are better versed in the area of TK, and its practical and meaningful application when making recommendations about the local environment. This workshop will offer knowledgeable Elder, academic and other guest speakers on cultural and practical applications in a conference session style forum, possibly with a field component.

The annual Elders Workshop will be held Sept. 13th for the member Aboriginal communities. It will focus on CEMA updates and working group projects, as well as vetting the work of the TKWG and Aboriginal Coordinating Committee (ACC). It aims to be as successful as last year!