

Agricultural Land Reserve Update

By Ione Smith, SWCS-BC President

SWCS-BC has been involved in the ALR-Protection and Enhancement Committee as one of its founding members since its inception in August 2004. ALR-PEC just recently celebrated its one-year anniversary and reflected upon many successful achievements thus far. One of the main successes has been clinching precious attention from the media regarding ALR exclusions. As you may be aware, the Agricultural Land Commission recently (August 2005) decided to allow the City of Abbotsford to exclude over 400 acres of prime agricultural land for industrial development. ALR-PEC promptly prepared a media release calling for a moratorium to be placed on any further exclusion decisions pending a full review of the decision-making panel structure of the ALC. One of the main concerns is that the ALC is veering

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SWCS-BC and PRSSS Collaborate on Spring Workshop

By Julia Brydon

SWCS-BC President -Elect

This past March, SWCS-BC joined forces with the Pacific Regional Society of Soil Science (PRSSS) to hold a spring workshop entitled "Fields of Convergence: The Diversity of Contemporary Soil Science". The workshop was aimed at practitioners, students and citizens interested in current applications of soil science and possibilities for the future. The workshop was attended by over 80 participants and included presentations, a tour of the Belowground Ecology Group Research Facilities and an open discussion on the development of a soil conservation act for B.C.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Ann Naeth, Associate Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics, University of Alberta and President, Canadian Society of Soil Scientists. She gave an excellent presentation on the new directions in Western Canadian soil science, which provided an overall context for the day-long workshop. Theresa Duynstee from the GVRD gave an informative talk on Biosolids Management and David Gaumont-Guay, a PhD candidate at UBC, presented his current research on carbon dynamics and soil respiration in the boreal forest. Bill Chapman from the Ministry of Forests summarized the progress in the soil's effectiveness re-evaluation and Kim Sutherland from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries discussed GIS as a tool for land use mapping. All talks were thought provoking and exposed us to new perspectives in soil science.

Thank you to all presenters and participants and to the Vancouver Branch of the B.C. Institute of Agrologists for their generous sponsorship of this event. We hope to hold more events such as this in the future...starting with our Fall Field Tour to Mayne Island, also in conjunction with PRSSS (see page 2 for more details)! ☺

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from its primary mandate to protect agricultural land and is bending to local and regional development pressures.

The combination of the Abbotsford decision and the media release created a lot of media attention. Dave Sands and Susan Ames of ALR-PEC and Ione Smith of SWCS-BC/Smart Growth BC were interviewed for the Vancouver Sun, the Globe and Mail, and several local papers. Additionally, Dave and/or Ione were interviewed on CBC Radio – BC Almanac show; CKNW Radio – the Bill Good show; and Rafe Mair's radio show. The media were very interested in the fact that the decision as to whether or not to remove over 1,100 acres of prime agricultural land from Barnston Island (approximately 85% of the island) is imminent. ALR-PEC feels that if the Barnston Island application is allowed that the general public will be very upset and that media attention will be renewed. Many citizens are concerned about the fate of the Avalon Organic Dairy operation and Opus Cranberries, both of which are located on Barnston Island.

One of the best outcomes of the recent media push was an invitation by Gordon Campbell to meet with the Minister of Agriculture and Lands (the Honourable Pat Bell) in Victoria on September 6th 2005. The presenters were Dave Sands (ALR-PEC), Ione Smith (SWCS-BC/Smart Growth BC) and Niels Holbeck (retired ALC Commissioner/Vancouver Island food producer). Additionally, we were also fortunate to secure separate meetings with both Bruce Ralston (NDP agriculture critic) and Carole James (NDP leader) to present our concerns over the state of the ALR and the integrity of the current ALC structure. We were pleased that we felt heard in all three meetings, and each of them responded to the photos we showed of the land excluded. It appeared that they had not seen the quality and productivity of the Abbotsford soil up close for themselves.

We left Victoria confident with the NDP's pledge to make the preservation of the ALR a primary issue that they will focus on during the next parliamentary session (which started September 12th). Furthermore, both the Liberal and NDP parties were keen to continue a discussion on the Soil Conservation Act proposal that was lead by SWCS-BC. We are currently seeking support for the proposal from the Pacific Regional Society of Soil Scientists and the Abbotsford Soil Conservation Society before going back to Minister Bell. ☼

Mark Your Calendars! Fall Field Tour

A SWCS-BC/PRSSS tour of Mayne Island on Saturday October 1, 2005

Participants are responsible for their own transportation to and from their ferry terminal of departure as well as the ferry fare. Please be advised that BC Ferries does not accept debit payment at this time.

AGENDA

10:00-10:35am: Arrive on Mayne Island.

10:00-1:00pm: Visit Mayne Island farmer's market and lunch provided by Mayne Island farmers.

1:00-5:00pm: Bus tour of island including small presentations from local conservancy groups describing the process of creating an official community plan for Mayne Island

5:30pm: Tsawassen bound participants depart (arrive at 7:00pm)

6:15pm: Swartz Bay bound participants depart (arrive at 7:00pm)

Participants may depart from Tsawassen ferry terminal on the mainland or Swartz Bay ferry terminal on Vancouver Island

For those leaving from the mainland, depart from the Tsawassen ferry terminal as foot passengers. The ferry leaves at 8:30am so it is recommended that you arrive by 8:00am or earlier. We will meet on board to complete registration.

For those leaving from Vancouver Island, depart from Swartz Bay ferry terminal as foot passengers. The ferry leaves at 9:15am so it is recommended that you arrive by 8:45am or earlier. We will meet you at the Mayne Island ferry terminal to complete registration.

Bus transportation on the island will be provided.

Students \$30.00 Professionals \$40.00
Registration fees include Mayne Island transportation and local catering.

Please RSVP to Rachelle Lalonde at
rlalonde@interchange.ubc.ca or 604-251-4046.

Report from Beer Garden Fundraiser

By Ione Smith, SWCS-BC President

SWCS-BC held a beer garden fundraiser at the Agora in the Agricultural Sciences building at UBC on Friday May 13th, 2005. We were fortunate to find Crannog Ales beer, a family-run brewery located in Sorrento, B.C. The beer was much tastier than any non-organic beer that we had ever sampled!

The turnout was good, with graduate students from several different departments attending. However, we had hoped for higher numbers, likely not achieved due to the fact that the event was held after exams. We secured financial support from the Resource Management and Environmental Studies Student Society to cover the costs of snacks, and the amount we received at the door covered the costs of the beer, advertising, etc. Most importantly we had three new student members register at the event and one student renew their membership. Increasing the membership of SWCS-BC is one of the main goals this year, so we can safely say that this event was a great success! ☀

SWCS-BC 2005 Annual General Meeting Vancouver, BC

The AGM is set for **Wednesday, November 16, 2005 at 6 pm** (location TBA).

Agenda items will include:

- Transboundary Water Issues
- New 2006 Slate of Officers
- Report on 2004/2005 activities

Stay tuned for more details and ways to get involved – check the website for updates:

<http://www3.telus.net/swcs-bc/intro.html>

Become a Member!

The SWCS was founded in 1945 with the following mission statement:

“The Soil and Water Conservation Society fosters the science and the art of soil, water and related natural resource management to achieve sustainability. We promote and practice an ethic recognizing the interdependence of people and the environment.”

Membership in the SWCS includes:

- ◆ receiving the Journal of Soil and Water Conservation and the Conservogram, the society's on-line newsletter;
- ◆ being networked among the thousands of members across Canada and the US

Membership rates:

Members - \$110 CDN or \$75 US

Student Members - \$25 US

To join the society, you can locate membership forms on the SWCS website at <http://www.swcs.org/> or contact Ione Smith (ionesmith@hotmail.com) for further information.

The 2005/2006 SWCS-BC Executive

Get Involved! We have several positions available for 2005/2006...

Unfortunately we will be losing three exceptional SWCS-BC executive members after this November's Annual General Meeting (please see Farewell article by Dave Clements). Laurens van Vliet, our regional director; Past-President Peter Friz; and Yona Sipos Randor, a Councillor are all moving on to new endeavours.

Obviously this leaves several vacancies for next year's slate of officers. We encourage all SWCS-BC members to consider being involved in the executive. Being a student, living outside of the Vancouver area or being very busy in other aspects of your life are no excuses to not be involved! Being involved in the Executive of SWCS-BC is a great experience that will open doors to a variety of contacts in the soil and water conservation field.

All positions are voluntary and the term commitment is for one year (except President which is a two year term). The executive meets approximately 4-6 times a year, including an Annual General Meeting in November. While all the meetings are held in Vancouver, there is the possibility of connecting to meetings via conference call. The time commitment is what you make it, but a minimum of approximately 3 hours a month is expected on average (sometimes more, usually less). You can nominate yourself and it will only go to a vote if more than one person expresses interest in a position.

The following six positions are available for the 2005-2006 term: **Vice President, Secretary, Membership Chair, Student Representative, Councillor** and **Newsletter Editor**. Please contact Ione Smith at ionesmith@hotmail.com if you have any questions about these positions. ☼

Proposed Slate of Officers for 2005/2006 (to be adopted at AGM, November 16, 2005)

Past President	Peter Friz
President	Ione Smith
President-Elect	Julia Brydon
Vice President	Open
Secretary	Open
Treasurer	Dave Clements
Membership Chair	Open
Student Representative	
Non-point Source Pollution Councillor	George Derksen

Farewell to BC Chapter Executives

By David Clements, SWCS-BC Treasurer

It is clear to me after 10 years or so, that the BC Chapter of SWCS is a great organization to work with for an extended period of time. I have yet to count the number of years **Laurens Van Vliet** has been involved in the BC Chapter, and we no doubt will continue to call upon his help and advice, but we want to honor his retirement from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada at the Agassiz Station last year and remember the countless volunteer hours he devoted to SWCS work as an extension of his efforts to develop innovative soil and conservation measures throughout his paid professional career. To this end we plan to nominate him for a SWCS "Outstanding Service" award this fall. As well as promoting SWCS in BC, Laurens was a strong voice for Canada, serving two terms as the SWCS Canadian Regional Director.

We also mark the passage of another long-time SWCS BC executive member, **Peter Friz**. He is stepping down after serving on the executive for nearly a decade, many of those years as an energetic president. We have him to thank for taking leadership on numerous BC Chapter events such as workshops and field tours, as well as the numerous unsung paper shuffling e-mails, and organizational duties incumbent on the position.

We also bid farewell to **Yona Sipos Randor** who also served the SWCS BC Chapter for several years with great enthusiasm, as a newsletter editor and a counselor. Yona will also be missed as she heads into the sunset (sunrise?) on her way to her next venture in Ontario.



Photo credit: George Derksen

Laurens Van Vliet, water sampling from a runoff plot study in Agassiz

Calendar of Events

SWCS-BC and PRSSS Fall Field Tour to Mayne Island

When: Saturday, October 1, 2005

Cost: \$30 students, \$40 professionals

Enquiries: Rachelle Lalonde at rlalonde@interchange.ubc.ca or 604-251-4046
or Ione Smith at ionessmith@hotmail.com

**See page 2 for more details

Farmland Forever? Planning for the ALR – A joint workshop by Farm Folk/City Folk, SmartGrowth BC and the Fraser Valley Conservation Coalition

When: Saturday October 15, 2005; 8:30 am – 12:30 pm

Where: Port Kells Centennial Hall, 18918-88th Ave, Surrey, BC

Cost: FREE

Enquiries: Ione Smith (ionessmith@hotmail.com)

SWCS-BC Annual General Meeting

When: Wednesday, November 16, 2005, 6:00pm

Where: TBA

Cost: FREE

Enquiries: Ione Smith (ionessmith@hotmail.com)

Climate & Fisheries: Impacts, Uncertainty and Responses of Ecosystems and Communities

When: October 26 – 28, 2005

Where: Victoria Conference Centre, BC

Cost: \$50 - \$275

Enquiries: Mark Johannes, mark@fishclimate.ca or 250-756-0930

Do you have an issue or event that you would like to write about in an upcoming issue?

Comments or suggestions for the newsletter?

Contact Julia Brydon
(juliabrydon@hotmail.com)