

## Watershed Science Tour

October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009



Many of our basin residents are unaware of the vast amount and diversity of research currently being conducted in the Oldman River Watershed. The Watershed Science Team decided they wanted to give people the opportunity to see some of these projects first hand by getting out in the field where all the action happens.



For their first ever Watershed Science Tour they selected projects around the Pincher Creek area starting with a tour of the Piikani First Nation Water Treatment and Municipal Waste Management. The director of Piikani Public Works, Floyd Provost, gave a presentation explaining the process they go through to treat their water and how they not only supply a clean source of drinking water to their residents but that they also ensure the quality of water is maintained for all downstream users.



The bus stopped at the Summerview Bridge where a water quality monitoring demonstration was given by Kristi Bonham and Wendell Koning with Alberta Environment. We were shown the variety of equipment and techniques used to collect water samples and discussed what parameters are analyzed in order to determine water quality.

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development representatives, Clair Fitzpatrick and Jollin Charest, took us to one of their sites along Indianfarm Creek where they have implemented beneficial management practices (BMP's). There they discussed an example of practice change and how the effectiveness of the BMP is evaluated.



We enjoyed some wonderful home cooking at the Bloomin' Inn where we stopped for lunch and had an opportunity to warm up!

Dr. Doug Inglis from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and graduate student, Matt Thomas took us through the fascinating world of Waterborne Human Pathogens focusing on *Campylobacter*. What a captivating topic that left us all wanting to know more – this being quite the challenge considering this discussion on gastrointestinal pathogens was occurring while people were still finishing their lunch.

We then travelled out to the Oldman Dam where Salina Perry and Mark Potvin with Alberta Environment gave us a flow monitoring demonstrations using the new ADCP (Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler) technology.



Also near the Oldman Dam we stopped to get a first hand look at the very talked about algae: *Didymo* (*Didymosphenia geminata*). Michael Bryski, with Alberta Environment Water Management Operations, took us through the invasive nature of this algae and the threats it poses on Oldman River ecosystem.

The last stop on the tour was in Fort MacLeod where we had Dr. Andy Hurly with the University of Lethbridge discuss riparian bird habitat studies. The plan was to get out and walk through the riparian area however we were confined to the bus due to the blizzard that came upon us!

Despite the cold weather, the presenters took the time to set up and give great, informative presentations. Everyone on the tour appreciated this and the feedback was extremely positive. It was obvious that everyone really enjoys their work and this truly inspired the participants on this tour. The Watershed Science Team feels this first attempt at a Watershed Science Tour was successful and hope to be able to hold more like it in the future!

