



President's Message

The ELC has been extremely fortunate throughout its history to have stable sources of funding: a core grant from the Alberta Law Foundation and, over the past several years, revenues generated by the Centre providing for Alberta Environment search services for reclamation and enforcement. This has been particularly helpful to the Centre's Board of Directors, as we have not had to be a "fund raising" Board but rather one that helps set policy and strategic direction.

All good things come to an end. Alberta Environment has now moved the reclamation search service to an online portal and the ELC has lost one of its stable funding sources. The enforcement search service may follow in the future. As a result, throughout 2010 the Board worked with Centre staff to develop a fund-raising strategy and plan to replace lost revenue. In September, the Board approved a suggestion made by Centre staff to apply to be accepted in a program to build fund-raising capacity for non-profit organizations. Happily, the ELC was accepted into and is now in the midst of this program.

This is a great example of the excellent working relationship which the Board has with Executive Director Cindy Chiasson and her staff. The Board is very pleased at the proactive approach the Centre is taking to get ahead of this serious challenge.

The Board is also proud of the Centre's other accomplishments during 2010, including being a valued participant in the Alberta Utilities Commission's inquiry into hydro energy development in Alberta and making submissions to Alberta Environment on an application by the Eastern Irrigation District to amend its water licence to allow the sale of water rights for uses other than irrigation. In addition, the Centre has continued to be a leading participant in the vigorous and ongoing debate over Alberta's Land Use Framework.



On behalf of the Board, I would like to congratulate the ELC on another successful year in 2010.

– Gavin Fitch, President

The Environmental Law Centre (ELC)

was incorporated in 1982 with the express purpose of providing Albertans with an objective source of information about environmental and natural resources law. Over the years, its mandate has broadened to extend the provision of service across the country.

The ELC's vision is a clean, healthy and diverse environment protected through informed citizen participation and sound law and policy, effectively applied. Its mission is to ensure that laws, policies and legal processes protect the environment. To achieve this vision and mission, the ELC pursues these ends:

- People are actively engaged in decisions to protect the environment; and
- Laws are effective in protecting the environment.

The ELC's strategic objectives for 2011 to 2013 are to:

- Increase Albertans' awareness and ability to use laws to protect the environment;
- Review, evaluate and promote reforms to protect watershed and aquatic ecosystems;
- Improve environmental considerations in land use planning and decision-making processes in Alberta;
- Reform environmental impact assessment to lead to substantive decisions that protect the environment; and
- Improve legal rights to public participation.

At the Environmental Law Centre, we value:

- The environment as a key component of the public interest;
- A well-informed citizenry;
- Openness and transparency;
- Inclusiveness;
- Legal and intellectual integrity;
- Independence and balance;
- Accountability; and
- Respect.

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Executive Director's Message

Last year I made about a dozen presentations around the province, mostly speaking about land use. One in particular sticks in my mind – not because of the topic or the location, but because of the audience. It was a very cold and snowy Saturday morning in Red Deer, five weeks before Christmas. The roads were bad and there were many other things people could have been doing that day, but at least 150 people from across Red Deer County had come to a workshop on conserving natural areas. They were interested, engaged and asked lots of thoughtful questions. Also, they weren't your stereotypical "tree-huggers" – they were farmers, business owners, acreage residents and much more. They were concerned about protecting natural areas in their county, making a living and enjoying good communities. None of the issues they raised were easily resolved.

For me, those people in that setting were a very real representation of the growing awareness and concern Albertans have for environmental issues. More people want to ensure that environmental matters are considered in daily decision-making and more of them are stepping up to become involved. I believe this heralds a period of change and opportunity for Alberta and for all of us who work for environmental protection, with even greater possibilities for public engagement, discussion and collaboration. At the Environmental Law Centre, we interact with an increasingly broad range of users and are eager to support even more public involvement.

In 2011, we'll continue to work on water and land use matters as issues of key importance to Albertans. Public participation in legal and regulatory proceedings will continue to be a major focus. We plan to expand our reach through social media and improve how we get information and materials to all our audiences by examining in further detail how people gather and use information. Most importantly, we want to work with our users, supporters and others to determine how we can best serve Albertans and encourage them to support our activities and services. We're ready to have some great discussions with you as our work proceeds.

– Cindy Chiasson, Executive Director



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Achievements 2010

- Made 41 presentations (in-person and online) to over 1300 people on a variety of topics, including access to information, land use, water, species at risk, nuclear regulation, etc.;
- Appeared in media 34 times (radio, TV, print) and published 4 articles in *Alberta Oil Magazine*;
- Reimagined and redesigned *News Brief* and published an issue in late 2010;
- Received over 26,700 hits to our online library catalogue;
- Provided briefs, submissions and comments regarding the *Alberta Parks Act*, *Lower Athabasca Regional Plan*, *Water Act*, *Public Lands Administration Regulation* and others; and
- Published two reports on watershed plan implementation and reclamation security for oilsands mining

Goals 2011

- Continue to increase Albertans' awareness of the ELC's information and education programs through the use of social media and other methods of on- and off-line delivery;
- Advocate for provincial government accountability for adoption and implementation of watershed management plans;
- Work to ensure water allocation systems are protective of environmental flows;
- Develop criteria for regional environmental assessments;
- Advocate for the inclusion of ecological based cumulative effects thresholds in land use plans; and
- Improve access to, and delivery of, environmental information in Alberta.

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To see the ELC's 2010 audited financial statements, please visit our website at www.elc.ab.ca

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The ELC gratefully acknowledges the

**Alberta LAW
FOUNDATION**

for providing the ELC's annual operating grant.

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Thank You!

The Environmental Law Centre's work cannot be done without the help of its volunteers, who give generously of their time to assist in various projects and activities.

The Board of Directors is the volunteer mainstay of the Centre; the Directors freely gave their time to support the Centre's charitable goals. Other volunteers also helped the Centre in 2010:

Sir John A. Mactaggart Essay Prize in Environmental Law, Judging Committee

David E. Mercer, The City of Calgary, Law Department
Judy Stewart, Barrister & Solicitor
Shawn Munro, Bennett Jones LLP

Oil Sands Reclamation Security Research, Advisory Committee

Larry Brocke, Millennium EMS Solutions Ltd
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Dan Woynillowicz, Pembina Institute for Appropriate Development

Environmental Assessment Reform, Research Assistant

Hasna Shireen

Support the ELC

To carry out its work with the public, the Environmental Law Centre depends on donations, grants, contract work and volunteers. 100% of all donations received are applied directly to public programming. Environmental Law Centre donors will receive a tax receipt* and are entitled to donor benefits.

Please contact Cindy Chiasson, Executive Director, with any questions you may have about donating to the Centre.

*Canada Revenue Agency Registration Number 11890 0679 RR0001



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Donor Benefits

Benefactor (\$5,000 and over) and Patron (\$2,500 - \$4,999)

- Tax Receipt
- ELC Annual Report and audited financial statements
- Acknowledgement in the ELC Annual Report and on the ELC website
- Notification of all Centre public seminars, conferences and new Centre publications
- Website link on ELC website

Partner (\$1,000 - \$2,499)

- Tax Receipt
- ELC Annual Report and audited financial Statements
- Acknowledgement in the ELC Annual Report and on the ELC website
- Notification of all Centre public seminars, conferences and new Centre publications

Friend (up to \$999)

- Tax Receipt
- ELC Annual Report and audited financial Statements
- Acknowledgement in the ELC Annual Report and on the ELC website

Donations supporting public programming can be made to the Environmental Law Centre by:

- Fax to (780) 424-5133;
- Mail to 800, 10025 - 106 Street, Edmonton, AB T5J 1G4; or
- On our website at www.elc.ab.ca.