



# WBEA@Work

AN UPDATE ON WBEA'S LATEST WORK  
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## Executive Director's Report

*Dr. Kevin Percy*

In my April WBEA@Work report, I noted our science-based monitoring has been advanced by the partnerships we have developed with universities, institutes, and other agencies such as governments. The scientific expertise WBEA has brought into the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo through partnerships has clearly enhanced our monitoring capacity, and is producing a more complete picture of environmental health in our region.

In this newsletter we again feature some regional, provincial, and national partnerships. Our recent Annual General Meeting saw the election of new Governance Committee Officers and Directors from WBEA's multi-stakeholder Membership. Our Membership is now comprised of 29 organizations from Aboriginal, Environmental Non-Government, Governmental, and Industry sectors.

The July 16th visit of Canada's Environment Minister, the Hon. Peter Kent, and Alberta's Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (AESRD) Minister, the Hon. Diana McQueen, to WBEA facilities highlighted strong and continuing collaboration with both agencies. WBEA partners with Environment Canada (EC) to monitor total gaseous mercury, Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's), and Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAH's) at five of our 15 air monitoring stations. EC and AERSD will upgrade WBEA's Air Monitoring Station #13 - Fort McKay South this fall in order to initiate enhanced deposition measurements under the Joint Canada - Alberta Implementation Plan for Oil Sands Monitoring.

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*From left to right, Canada's Environment Minister Peter Kent and Alberta's Environment and Sustainable Resource Development Minister Diana McQueen met with WBEA Executive Director Kevin Percy and WBEA President Diane Phillips at WBEA's Field Operations Centre.*

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*Dan Stuckless, Manager, Environmental Affairs, Fort McKay Sustainability Department, and James Grandjambe, Fort McKay First Nation community member, with the Bertha Ganter commemorative plaque.*

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#### Executive Director's Report

AESRD forest health staff have just completed annual tree insect and disease surveys at 23 WBEA forest health monitoring plots.

WBEA partnered with the Fort McKay First Nation this spring and summer in two significant undertakings. A ceremony was held on May 22 to rename WBEA's Air Monitoring Station at Fort McKay in honour of the late Fort McKay environmental advocate Bertha Ganter. (Left).

The Fort McKay Berry Focus Group has been collaborating with WBEA since the fall of 2010 to share Traditional Environmental Knowledge about berries. The group has undertaken 3 field trips with WBEA this season and an extended trip to Moose Lake in late August.

I hope you enjoy the September WBEA@Work.



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## Ministers of Environment Visit WBEA Facilities

Jane Percy, WBEA Communications

The Hon. Peter Kent, Canada's Minister of the Environment, and the Hon. Diana McQueen, Alberta's Environment and Sustainable Resource Development Minister, visited WBEA on July 16th. The Ministers were in the region to tour several of the new oil sands monitoring stations now in place in the early stages of the implementation of the **Joint Canada-Alberta Implementation Plan for Oil Sands Monitoring.**

The Ministers were welcomed to WBEA's Field Operations Centre (FOC) by WBEA President Diane Phillips and Executive Director Kevin Percy. There they viewed Environment Canada's Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) equipment. Environment Canada Research Scientist Dr. Kevin Strawbridge demonstrated the LIDAR equipment. (Left) WBEA technician Melissa Lemay provided a description of air analyzers in WBEA's Mobile Monitoring Unit. The Ministers visited WBEA's AMS #6 in Timberlea, Fort McMurray. (Centre) Kevin

Percy spoke on the purpose and scope of WBEA's air monitoring activities, existing collaborations under the 2010 Environment Canada-WBEA MOU, and WBEA's activities contributing to the Joint Plan. The Ministers were then given a tour of WBEA's Patricia McInnes Air Monitoring Station by Sanjay Prasad, WBEA-AATC Program Manager. (Right) Of particular interest was Environment Canada's ambient air mercury analyzer which has been in operation there since November 2010.



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## WBEA's Annual General Meeting

*Jane Percy, WBEA Communications*

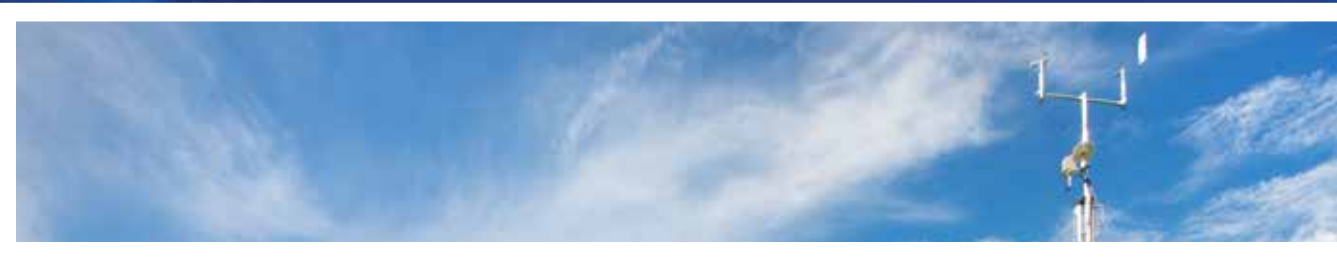
On June 13th, WBEA's Annual General Meeting was held in Fort McMurray. Diane Phillips, Syncrude Canada Ltd., was elected WBEA President by the membership. Nick Veriotes, Total E&P Canada Ltd., was elected as Vice President. Also joining the Governance Committee as Directors of WBEA are Marc Huot, Pembina Institute for Appropriate Development (Secretary-Treasurer) and Angela Pohl, Suncor Energy Inc. (Director).

The seven Directors constituting the WBEA Governance Committee are:

- Diane Phillips, Syncrude Canada Ltd.** - WBEA President
- Nick Veriotes, Total E&P Canada Ltd.** - WBEA Vice President
- Marc Huot, Pembina Institute for Appropriate Development** - WBEA Secretary -Treasurer
- Daniel Stuckless, Fort McKay First Nation** - WBEA Director
- Michael Aiton, Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development** - WBEA Director
- Lance Miller, Devon Canada** - WBEA Director
- Angela Pohl, Suncor Energy Inc.** - WBEA Director

At the AGM, retiring WBEA President Ann Dort MacLean, Fort McMurray Environmental Association, and WBEA Vice President Kevin Scoble, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, were sincerely thanked by Members and staff for their many years of dedicated service to WBEA's Governance Committee.

At the AGM Sunshine Oilsands Ltd. was also confirmed as the newest member of WBEA.   



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# WBEA Honours the Memory of Bertha Ganter

*Jane Percy, WBEA Communications*

The Wood Buffalo Environmental Association honoured the memory of the late Bertha Ganter with a ceremony to rename our Fort McKay Air Monitoring Station “Bertha Ganter - Fort McKay”. WBEA has operated an air quality monitoring station in the community of Fort McKay since 1998.

The ceremony on May 22, 2012 recognized Bertha Ganter as a respected member of the Fort McKay First Nation and an environmental advocate for her community. For five years prior to her passing in 2004, Bertha was the Coordinator of Environmental Affairs for the Fort McKay Industry Relations Corporation.

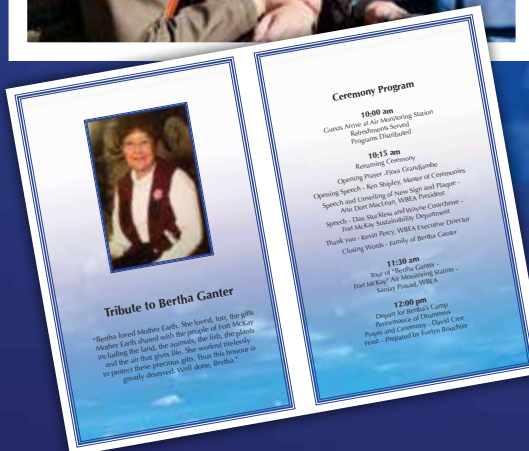
Bertha was generous in sharing her understanding of Traditional Environmental Knowledge. Her work with WBEA dovetailed with her lifelong interest in the environment, and was much appreciated during the many years she participated on WBEA committees.

The formal renaming ceremony including tributes by representatives of Fort McKay and WBEA as well as by Bertha’s daughter, Brenda,

*Top: A ceremony was held in the community of Fort McKay in May to rename AMS 1 in honour of the late Bertha Ganter.*

*Middle: Darrell Martindale and Theresa Grandjambe.*

*Bottom: Inside pages of Ceremony program.*



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was held at the Air Monitoring Station in the morning. Following the ceremony tours of the newly renamed station were provided. A gathering and lunch followed at Bertha's former camp on Target Road, Fort McKay.

WBEA Executive Director, Kevin Percy, thanked all those who contributed to the success of this important occasion including:

- Ken Shipley, Master of Ceremonies.
- Flora Grandjambe who gave an opening prayer.
- WBEA President Ann Dort MacLean who welcomed everyone on behalf of WBEA.
- Shawn McClure, creator of the new station sign.
- Rick Grandjambe, creator of the commemorative plaque.
- Dan Stuckless, Fort McKay Sustainability Department.
- Wayne Courchene, Trappers Relations Coordinator, Fort McKay First Nation.
- Sanjay Prasad, WBEA-AATC Program Manager.



*Left: Alvaro Pinto, the Director of Fort McKay First Nation's Sustainability Department and Kevin Percy the Executive Director of WBEA.*



*Right: Bertha Ganter's Family.*

- Fort McKay Capital Projects.
- Evelyn Bouchier.
- David Cree and Nick Giantt.
- WBEA staff.
- Theresa Grandjambe.
- Bertha's Family.
- Fort McKay Berry Focus Group.
- As Ken Shipley stated in his tribute, "Bertha loved Mother Earth. She loved, too, the gifts Mother Earth shared with the people of Fort McKay including the land, the animals, the fish, the plants and the air that gives life. She worked tirelessly to protect these precious gifts. Thus this honour is greatly deserved. Well done, Bertha."
- Fort McKay Sustainability Department.
- Janelle Baker, Little Seed Consulting.
- Sakasteew Transportation.
- Darrell Martindale, Shell Canada Ltd.

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## Fort McKay Traditional Knowledge Berry Focus Group Holds 2012 Field Trips

*Janelle Marie Baker*

The Fort McKay Berry Focus Group has been collaborating with WBEA since fall 2010 as a part of WBEA's Terrestrial Environmental Effects Monitoring (TEEM) program. Through a series of workshops and meetings, in which WBEA has participated, the Fort McKay Berry Group has designed a community-based research project in which they will be sharing their traditional knowledge about local berry populations. The team elected two representatives who manage field trips. Janelle Baker, an environmental anthropologist, is working on contract with WBEA and coordinates activities with the Fort McKay Sustainability Department and WBEA. Among her tasks is recording information that the Group gathers.

The Fort McKay Berry Focus Group went out in the field for their first field trip on May 29, 2012 and visited a berry-picking site near the community of Fort McKay. The harvesting area is known for its large cranberry patch that blankets a hillside and many of the Berry Focus Group members have fond memories of walking there with their families to pick berries and have picnics. The Fort McKay group was excited to see an abundance of flowers on the berry bushes that suggest that it could be a good year for berries. They shared stories, knowledge, Cree and Dene names for plants, took photos, video and used a GPS to record the locations of berry patches. The group is planning their next field trip to check other important community berry patches in preparation for field trips later this summer when the berries are ripe and they will actually gather plants (for testing and for consumption) and share more information.



*James Grandjambe is a member of the Fort McKay Berry Focus Group.*

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Fort McKay Traditional Knowledge Berry Focus Group Holds 2012 Field Trips

Top: Cranberry flowers.

Bottom: Blueberry flowers.



Local indigenous knowledge about wild plant health is valuable, as indigenous people have been gathering and observing plants for many generations. Oral traditions and knowledge sharing about local food supplies is a strong practice in indigenous communities, as people are still passionate about, and prefer wild food sources. Systems of knowledge, food sharing and reciprocity are important to the cultures of Fort McKay, because these acts represent social cohesion and survival. For these reasons, it is crucial that information gathering about traditional knowledge be community-driven to ensure accuracy, and to ensure that cultural protocols are being respected throughout this project. WBEA has signed an information sharing agreement with Fort McKay and is excited to be working with the Fort McKay Berry Focus Group with hopes that this project will grow into more forms of meaningful collaboration, including an opportunity to relate traditional indicators of berry health with those of western science, in local communities in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.    

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- WBEA visited Grade 5 and Grade 8 science classes at Fort McMurray Islamic School on Greely Road. Presentations were made by the Executive Director, an AATC Technician, and WBEA Communications about WBEA's air monitoring network, the AQHI, and our forest health monitoring work. The visit concluded with students touring the Mobile Air Monitoring Unit.  

- WBEA hosted a booth at the Spring Trade Show in Fort McMurray.  

- Executive Director, Kevin Percy, (centre) was an invited speaker at the Institute Of Sustainable Energy, Environment and Economy (ISEEE), University of Calgary, where he presented a seminar entitled "Science-based Environmental Monitoring in the Oil Sands" on March 19th. Dr. David Layzell (right) is the Executive Director of ISEEE.  


- Bernadette Proemse, University of Calgary, successfully defended her PhD this spring. Bernadette's research using stable isotopes to trace emissions was co-funded by WBEA through an NSERC partnership.  


- Kevin Percy met with Environment Canada Deputy Minister Paul Boothe and Assistant Deputy Minister Karen Dodds, in Ottawa to report on WBEA's scientific monitoring on April 19th.
- In May, WBEA began monitoring air quality in Conklin, a southern hamlet in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, for a three month period using our Portable Air Monitoring Unit. The data collected will provide a reference point for comparison with a 2009 WBEA air quality survey in Conklin. During the Conklin Spring Trade Show residents were able to view "real-time" local air quality data at the WBEA booth.  


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- Concordia University College of Alberta Environmental Science students and Professor Sheri Dalton visited WBEA and were given a tour of AMS 6 by Sanjay Prasad in May.
- The 2011 WBEA Annual Report is complete and may be viewed on our website at <http://www.wbea.org/library/annual-reports>. Printed copies can be provided as requested. Please phone WBEA at (780) 799-4420.
- Kevin Percy presented a seminar on WBEA's operations and scientific monitoring to Alberta Innovates in Edmonton on June 22nd.
- WBEA recently developed an AQHI app for Apple mobile devices which is available on iTunes. The app features AQHI readings for four RMWB stations. The app is free to download and can be found by searching "WBEA AQHI" in the iTunes store, or visiting the following link: <http://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/alberta-aqhi-by-wbea/id532683869?mt=8>



- The Hon. Bob Rae, Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, met with Kevin Percy to discuss WBEA's monitoring work in the region, on July 10th. Mr. Rae visited WBEA Air Monitoring Station 6 in Fort McMurray where WBEA - AATC Program Manager, Sanjay Prasad, provided a tour of the station and a description of the air analyzers and specialized monitoring equipment.
- Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (AESRD) personnel assisted WBEA with a survey of forest health and tree condition once again this summer. From left to right, Lakeshore Helicopter pilot, Don Cleveland; TEEM technician, Kendra Thomas; Tom Hutchinson, Regional Forest Health Officer; Martin Robillard, Forest Health Technician; and Alex Bileau, AESRD summer student, prepare for a flight to survey one of WBEA's network of 23 forest health plots.



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