Survey says…!

Last issue, Kilowatt Connection surveyed its readers to find out how well we’re communicating with you. Thank you for your responses and the rich input you provided. Here’s a brief report on what you told us and how we’re acting on the information.

We may have borrowed our headline from game show trivia, but we’re all business when it comes to your feedback. To all who took the time to fill out our readership survey, thank you. We’re pleased, 93 per cent of you said Kilowatt Connection is your preferred way to receive information about TransAlta. Another 83 per cent said you read every issue from cover to cover.

With such a thorough knowledge of our newsletter, it’s no wonder so many of you also had great comments on ways to improve. Our 2004 issues (of which there will be three) will incorporate many of your suggestions.

Here is some of what you told us:

• Increase Kilowatt Connection’s accessibility. You wanted more ways to share the news. As a result, we’ve updated the look of our publication to ensure it’s easy to read, photocopy and fax to others. Beginning with this issue, PDF versions of Kilowatt Connection will also be available at www.TransAlta.com/KilowattC. The back page of each issue will also feature a subscription form to ensure everyone who wants to receive our newsletter, can.

• Use Kilowatt Connection to talk and listen. Because so many of you prefer TransAlta to communicate with you via this newsletter, we’re incorporating a number of ways for you to regularly give us feedback. The “Ask us…” feature (see page 5) in this issue, for example, is a way you can get answers to your TransAlta-related questions.

• Offer alternate points of view. We understand you’re looking for the whole story on a variety of TransAlta-related topics. When possible, we’ll include updates from stakeholder committees (such as the “Wabamun Watch Update” on page 5) and articles and quotes from others to bring more balance to the news and information we report. You can also check out our “For Another Point of View” piece (page 5), which lists non-TransAlta sources of environment- and area-related information.

• Update us on the issues that matter. When rating topics of greatest interest to you, your top five were lake level; water treatment plant; environmental issues related to TransAlta’s operations; news about Sundance, Keephills and Wabamun plants; and news about Highvale and Whitewood Mines. We will attempt to report on these topics in each issue.

Thank you for helping us communicate better.

Sincerely,
Cheryl, Colleen and Ralph
The Kilowatt Connection Editorial Team
Wabamun Lake Water Treatment Facility produces 22.8 million cubic metres in 2003

The Wabamun Lake Water Treatment Facility surpassed its 2003 requirement to produce 20 million cubic metres of water for Lake Wabamun, producing 22.8 million cubic metres.

“We’re slightly ahead of our annual commitment to repay our historic debt to Lake Wabamun,” says Ken Omotani, senior environmental engineer, TransAlta. “Our plant people did an incredible job last year of looking for and implementing improvements to our operations.”

“We did a thorough review of our operations and we’re pleased with the improvements we made,” explains Helen Jacobsen, production area leader for the water treatment facility. “We modified piping, increased capacity on flow metres, and changed out the under-drain systems for better back wash. All of this adds up to better overall performance. In 2003, this meant surpassing our production commitment for the lake. That’s a good feeling.”

TransAlta’s operations are one of many factors that affect the level of Wabamun Lake. Other impacts include precipitation, surface run-off, ground water flows and natural evaporation. TransAlta built the Wabamun Lake Water Treatment Facility next to the Sundance plant in 1997 to mitigate our operations’ historic and ongoing effect on lake level.

Subsequently, and based on input from local stakeholders, we expanded our output of water to the lake with the construction of an additional plant. It began operating in May 2002 to ensure we meet our license requirements.

For more information about TransAlta’s Water Treatment Facility visit: www.transalta.com/WabLakeWaterTreatmentPlant

The graph below illustrates our total water production to Wabamun Lake from TransAlta’s Water Treatment Facility. TransAlta plans to repay 20 million cubic metres per year from 2004 to 2006 and another 8 million in 2007, unless the lake overflows the weir. For a easier to read version, this graph is on our web site: www.transalta.com/WabLakeWaterTreatmentPlant

CASA’s Electricity Project Team working to reduce air emissions

As a member of the Clean Air Strategic Alliance (CASA), TransAlta and 29 other representatives from government, industry and non-government organizations have been working on a framework to reduce air emissions from Alberta power plants. The team recently presented its framework to Alberta Environment Minister, Lorne Taylor.

“This framework will result in significant emission reductions over time, without a significant increase in electricity prices,” says Tom Marr-Laing, executive director, the Pembina Institute, “and it will support development of renewable and alternate energy supply in the province.”

The CASA framework is a leading example of co-operative decision-making between government, industry, environmentalists, health advocates and local community groups. More than 350 Albertans added their input at 11 public meetings held across the province. For more information and/or to download the full report, visit http://casa-electricity.org.

...continued on page 3
Under the framework, sulphur dioxide emission levels should be reduced 46 per cent by 2025; nitrogen oxides 32 per cent by 2025; particulate matter 51 per cent by 2025; and mercury 50 per cent by the end of 2009.

“This framework is solid,” says Mike Kelly, director, Environment, Health and Safety, TransAlta. “It’s a plan that is economically feasible, really good for the environment and ensures the protection of Albertans. It includes clear emission standards and incentives for continuous improvement. The plan makes sense.”

Other framework highlights include:

- New emission standards for new power plants;
- Emission reduction requirements for existing power plants;
- Emissions trading system for sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides;
- Provisions for addressing “hotspots;”
- Process to look at energy efficiency and energy conservation initiatives; and
- Multi-stakeholder five-year review process.

CASA is a non-profit, consensus-based association of senior representatives from government, industry and non-government organizations (including health and environmental groups) who are committed to develop and apply a comprehensive air quality management system for Alberta.

Alberta Fish and Game Association honours TransAlta

The Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA) recently presented TransAlta with their annual corporate award, recognizing the company’s contribution to the newly created 1,000-acre Wabamun Whitewood Conservation Properties near Wabamun Lake.

TransAlta donated 120 acres of reclaimed land from its Whitewood Mine and $5,000 to the AFGA's Wildlife Trust Fund for the establishment of the conservation area. The area also includes a 312-acre parcel of land reclaimed by TransAlta in 1997, and 480 acres purchased by the AFGA Wildlife Trust Fund with the help of a number of affiliate clubs.

“The award is especially gratifying, as the donated property is reclaimed mine land from our Whitewood Mine,” says Cam Bateman, manager, Technical Services, Fuel Supply. “Recognition by the Alberta Fish and Game Association of this property as significant wildlife habitat speaks volumes to the success of our land reclamation program.”

The Wabamun Whitewood Conservation Properties is established for wildlife and habitat conservation, education and recreation. The area is large enough to ensure long-term habitat values in the region, sustaining a variety of wildlife populations.
Wabamun Whitewood Conservation Properties

by Brad Fenson, habitat co-ordinator, the Alberta Fish and Game Association (a similar article will also be published in Outdoor Edge, May/June 2004, a newsletter of the Alberta Fish and Game Association)

The collaborative effort of the Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA) membership, community service clubs and TransAlta has allowed the AFGA Wildlife Trust Fund to secure one of the largest conservation properties in central Alberta.

The Wabamun Whitewood Conservation Properties are located just north of Wabamun Lake and Highway 16. The area is a transition zone between aspen parkland and the boreal forest, providing a unique blend of habitats that benefit a wide range of wildlife and provide incredible biodiversity. The terrain is gently rolling with densely wooded uplands and productive sedge wetlands. The properties border the Whitewood Mine, used for coal extraction, enabling TransAlta to produce electricity at their Wabamun facilities.

This isn’t the first property the AFGA Wildlife Trust Fund has secured on this landscape. In 1997, TransAlta helped secure the East Pit Lake property for conservation by working with the AFGA and local affiliate clubs. The 312 acres comprising the East Pit Lake property provide recreational angling, nesting cover, wintering range for ungulates and a wide range of other benefits for conservation.

In early 2003, the Stony Plain and Spruce Grove clubs brought a referral to the Wildlife Trust Fund for a property neighboring East Pit Lake. The project was seen as a positive initiative and staff and volunteers went to work raising funds to move forward with the purchase. The half section contains 251 acres of native habitat with white spruce, aspen, willow, Saskatoon, chokecherry, wild rose, sedge meadows and wetland basins.

Funds came in from 20 different sources including 18 AFGA clubs and zones, as well as the Stony Plain Elks, TransAlta and Alberta Sustainable Resources Development. The incredible support allowed the AFGA Trust Fund to secure the property and before long we were working on additional properties on the landscape.

TransAlta offered to donate a quarter section of land directly west of the property we just completed purchasing. A second property listed for sale was looked at adjacent to the TransAlta quarter and before we knew it our project had grown from a half section to four quarters. With the club support we were able to put an offer on the additional property for sale and it was secured in September 2003.

In total, the AFGA Wildlife Trust Fund now owns, or has secured, 844 acres in the Wabamun area. The region is blessed with an abundance of wildlife, including white-tailed deer, mule deer, moose, elk, ruffed grouse, ducks, geese, woodpeckers, songbirds and a host of other flora and fauna.

There will be a ceremony celebrating our conservation achievements in June 2004. We look forward to seeing our affiliate clubs and members and conservation partners from TransAlta at the event to share our success and appreciation.

Decommissioning update:
Wabamun Power Plant

The Wabamun Power Plant’s Unit III shut down in November 2002. Units I and II will be shut down later this year.

The Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (AEUB) allows TransAlta to apply for the recovery of costs associated with decommissioning. That application, initially filed in November 2003, is currently before the Board, and slated for a full hearing, in July.

By December 2005, TransAlta must prepare and present a decommissioning and reclamation plan to Alberta Environment. The company will be inviting public input prior to preparing the Land End Use plan.

For more information on the decommissioning of the Wabamun Power Plant, contact ralph_leriger@transalta.com.
**Wabamun Watch Update**

*by Rob Dickie, Wabamun Watch*

Lake Wabamun Watch is fast approaching its second year of monitoring TransAlta activities as they relate to possible environmental impacts to Lake Wabamun. The major issues that continue to be tabled include water and sediment quality, water levels and a general focus on studies being conducted by both TransAlta and Alberta Environment.

On Nov. 26, 2003, Lake Wabamun Watch held a public meeting in Stony Plain where Alberta Environment presented their findings as it related to: Trends in Water Quality, Metals and Trace Organics in Sediments, Significance of Sediment Quality on Aquatic Organisms, and Disinfection Byproducts. These studies were initiated in the spring of 2002. An overall statement from Alberta Environment was that swimming and playing in Lake Wabamun is no more of a concern than in any other lake.

In addition to Alberta Environment’s presentation, Golder Associates, an independent consultant currently working with TransAlta, provided an overview of the risk assessment they are completing. The conclusions from the risk assessment indicated that there are no increased risks to human, wildlife or fish as it relates to the metals present in the water, sediment or soil. Further data from the Alberta Environment studies will be incorporated into Golder’s risk assessment. This information will be presented at the next Public Meeting to be held in the spring of 2004.

Currently, Lake Wabamun Watch meets on the first Wednesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. at the County of Parkland Office. We currently have two executive positions open and would be pleased to have additional input from other stakeholders on the Lake. For further information please visit our website at [www.wabamunwatch.com](http://www.wabamunwatch.com).

**Ask us!**

**Q:** TransAlta needs operating licenses and approvals from Alberta Environment to operate its plants. As a community member, how can I get involved with this process?

**A:** TransAlta is interested in your questions and concerns about our operations. Your feedback is an important part of the approval process and we encourage you to bring your questions and concerns to us so we can answer them directly. Please direct any concerns about TransAlta’s operations to Ralph Leriger, senior advisor of Stakeholder Relations, at 780-892-5560, or by e-mail to: ralph_leriger@transalta.com

TransAlta also receives feedback from our stakeholders through various public and regular stakeholder meetings, such as those held by the Wabamun Watch Committee.

There are also opportunities to become a participant in the approval process when TransAlta files applications with Alberta Environment. This process occurs during the initial approval phase and again later during the approval renewal phase.

**For another point of view**

You’ve told us you’d like learn more about TransAlta’s operations and Alberta’s environment from sources other than TransAlta. Here is a list of websites where you can learn more:

- Alberta Energy and Utilities Board, [www.eub.gov.ab.ca](http://www.eub.gov.ab.ca)
- Alberta Fish and Game Association, [www.afga.org](http://www.afga.org)
- Clean Air Strategic Alliance, [www.casahome.org](http://www.casahome.org)
- Wabamun Watch, [www.wabamunwatch.com](http://www.wabamunwatch.com)
- West Central Air Shed Society, [www.wcas.ca](http://www.wcas.ca)
Highvale Mine applies to renew operating licenses

The Highvale Mine’s two operating licenses will expire at the end of December 2005. TransAlta will be applying this year to renew these licenses for a ten-year period, to the end of 2015.

“There will be no change to the permit boundary or opening of new pits,” says Cam Bateman, manager, Technical Services for Fuel Supply, TransAlta. “This is a standard renewal of the existing mine licenses and approvals and the operation is planned to continue without any significant changes.”

TransAlta has received these approvals previously every five years since the operations started in 1971.

The operating licenses are granted under the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act, the Water Act and the Coal Conservation Act. For more information on license renewal plans or to comment, contact cam_bateman@transalta.com or call 403-267-7128.

Personal Information Protection Act

On January 1, 2004, new legislation was proclaimed in Alberta dealing with the protection of personal information. The legislation balances the right of individuals to have their personal information protected and the need of organizations to collect and use information for reasonable purposes.

TransAlta respects your right to privacy. Any personal information that TransAlta holds about you including your name, address, phone number and e-mail address are used only for the purposes of preparing a mailing list for Kilowatt Connection and for purposes of TransAlta making direct contact with you for matters which TransAlta believes is of interest to you. TransAlta does not sell its mailing lists or make them available for any commercial use.

If you prefer that we do not store or use your personal information in any way (for example, mailing list for Kilowatt Connection), please notify us by telephone or e-mail.

- Our Privacy hotline is: 1-888-806-6646
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Kilowatt Connection

Kilowatt Connection is published three times per year by TransAlta to share information with the communities in the Wabamun Lake area.

If you have any questions about TransAlta or our operations in the area, please contact:

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