



Wizard Lake Watershed & Lake Stewardship Association

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Newsletter #16

Fall 2012



*Laverne Faulkner,
Past Board Chair*

PAST CHAIR'S MESSAGE

The Wizard Lake Watershed and Lake Stewardship Association (WLWLSA) annual general meeting (AGM) was held with great success on Sept 29 at Jubilee Park's day use area. Under a beautiful blue sky, with a campfire burning by the lake, members of the board of directors discussed their programs

and accomplishments over the past year with those in attendance. You can read about many of those programs in this newsletter.

One of the most helpful parts of the meeting is hearing about concerns from the membership. This year those included: changing the slow zone of the lake to a no-wake zone; putting a slow zone through the narrows to enhance safety in this congested area; and maintaining a list of a point-of-contact name for each subdivision for ease of communication with counties and other groups. All ideas brought forward will be discussed and prioritized by the board of directors.

The board of directors was elected at the AGM as well and is: comprised of Blake Bartlett, Chris Daniel, Kate Daniel, Carole Ellsworth, LeVerne Ellsworth, Harold Hofstra, Cathy Holman, Ruth Kolodychuk, Walter Kolodychuk, Bryan Mason, Tim Purnell, and me. As always, please feel free to be in touch with any one of us for anything you'd like to discuss.



AGM—September 29, 2012

With this newsletter, I am no longer Chair of the Stewardship Association. I did not put my name forward for the Board Chair position at our last board meeting, following the annual general meeting. I will continue on the board as Past Chair, to assist and help the new Chair with their duties and to get them up to speed, and because I believe the WLWLSA has an important and relevant mission in helping safeguard the huge investment we all have in Wizard Lake.

I'm very proud of what your hard-working boards have accomplished since the inception of the Stewardship Association. Thanks to every board member who has given your volunteer hours to this organization, to everyone who has volunteered in any way to help out, and to the membership for supporting our mission. Your hard work and support over the past years is really appreciated.

I've loved doing the Chair job over the past 7+ years, but it is long past time that the reins be handed over to some new thinking and new enthusiasm. Harold Hofstra has been appointed by the Board as its new Chair, and I'm looking forward to working with Harold toward new directions and accomplishments under his leadership. Welcome to your new role Harold—you'll be working with a great group of people who feel passionately about the healthy future of Wizard Lake.

GREETINGS FROM THE NEW CHAIR

Harold Hofstra, Board Chair

Hardy hello from the new chair Harold Hofstra. One question that has been raised is where do we go from here. As the new kid on the block my passion is to create a renewed **AWARENESS**.



We have a group that built a strong foundation in the past now we need to take that to a future vision, so stay tuned.

BOATING SAFETY FOCUS GROUP

Chris Daniel

The Boating Focus Group for Wizard Lake, created by Leduc County in 2011, intended to bring forth ideas and recommendations to Leduc County Councillors. The intention was to make Wizard Lake and area a safer and more enjoyable experience for all users.



photo by Linda Purnell

The results of this focus group were 11 recommendations that in turn were presented to the Councillors for their consideration. Ten recommendations were accepted and adopted for implementation. The highlights are listed below:

- implement parking restrictions at the west end boat launch (north side)
- ensure enforcement patrols are provided at the west end boat launch (north side)
- Leduc County By-Law officers establish relationships with boat users to educate, caution and enforce safe boating regulations that enhance safety and enjoyment for all users
- Leduc County apply the same enforcement to the internal boat launch at Jubilee Park Camp ground
- the County review the rates currently charged for day and seasonal use of the 'day use area' at Jubilee Park
- Leduc County provide signage and education to inform boaters of the hazards at the area known as the 'narrows at sandy point'
- that Leduc County continue to engage the County of Wetaskiwin in all areas affecting the protection, sustainability and safety of Wizard Lake
- Leduc County continues to work to educate and inform residents and users of Wizard Lake on safe boating practices as well and policy changes which may impact boating

The recommendation to close the overflow parking at the West end Jubilee Camp ground *was defeated*.

Leduc County reports that overall they are happy with the improved safety as a result of the increased attention to the lake. They are confident that it is making a difference.

Restricted parking was implemented at the west launch and although improved signage is required in 2013 Leduc County feel this will be successful in controlling the number of boaters at this launch.

Check stops were also conducted on a few occasions leading toward the park and will continue in 2013. Leduc County will work with Peace officers to assist with monitoring licenses and equipment from boaters at the gates. Staff shortages played a role in this not being possible this season.

Efforts were made to increase awareness of the narrows on the lake. This winter Leduc County will consult with local residents to identify ways to improve this. Permanent signage at the Jubilee and west launch will be improved to better identify this risk.

Leduc County rates are reviewed annually and rate increases will be presented to Council this fall for boat parking and camping fees. Day use car parking remains the same.

Leduc County has committed to retain this focus group to review the success of and appropriateness of the current measures. It is anticipated that the group will meet before the spring of 2013. This was also one of the recommendations accepted by Council in 2011.

The feedback received to date by WLWLSA from boat owners and residents, as related to safety and responsible usage, ranges from "much improved" to "we still have a way to go."

If you have any comments and/or suggestions the committee would appreciate hearing from you. Your comments should be directed to Chris Daniel, Vice Chair, WLWLSA, at chrisddaniel@explornet.com or phone 780-985-3287.

Sincere appreciation goes out to members **Larry McKeever** and **Cathy Holman** for volunteering their time to review the WLWLSA 2011 financial records.



by LeVerne Ellsworth

A big thank you also goes out to WLWLSA board member, **Bryan Mason**, for preparing the financial statement ending May 31, 2012, filing our corporate tax return and maintaining our charitable status.

Bryan, Larry, and Cathy your assistance is invaluable!

WATER QUALITY SAMPLING PROGRAM — Alberta Lake Management Society

Carole Ellsworth

Alberta Lake Management Society (ALMS) were not able to sample Wizard Lake this year under the Lakewatch Program. Unfortunately, ALMS is restricted to 10 base lakes each year and give priority to lakes with little/no historical data. Pine, Sylvan, and Pigeon, lakes were among the lakes not selected for sampling this year.

ALMS recommended continuing data collection on Wizard Lake in the future. However, ALMS may decide on a more regular schedule (every 2-3 years) as interest in the program grows. We are fortunate to have data available from the 1996, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 sampling. WLWLSA plans on contacting ALMS in the spring of 2013 to encourage sampling next summer.

Larry McPherson has been the Wizard Lake volunteer captain who takes out the ALMS technicians.



What is the Lakewatch Program?

Alberta's volunteer lake monitoring program, known as Lakewatch, has been an important source of water quality data for lake and watershed stewardship groups, local government, provincial government, lake users, and cottage owners. Lakewatch strives to accomplish four primary objectives:

1. act as a platform for educating lake users about the aquatic environment;
2. foster and enhance public involvement in lake management;
3. facilitate linkages between aquatic scientists and lake users; and,
4. provide reliable water quality data at significant cost-savings.

The Alberta Lake Management Society (ALMS) ensures that the data collected is reliable through:

- a partnership with Alberta Environment to train summer staff;
- routine preparation, calibration, cleaning, and servicing of equipment;
- incorporating Quality Assurance / Quality Control (QA/QC) into sampling protocol; and,
- data verification and validation by technical experts.

Water samples are collected to determine the chemistry that

program monitors the effects of human activities in watersheds that can cause degraded water quality. For example, nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen are important determinants of a lake's potential productivity. The concentrations of these nutrients in a lake are altered (typically elevated) by land use changes such as increased crop production or livestock grazing. Elevated nutrient concentrations can cause increases in undesirable algae blooms resulting in low dissolved oxygen concentrations as well as degraded habitat for fish. Not only do these chemicals potentially pollute the aquatic habitat of a lake, but they can result in noxious smells as well.

The information that WLWLSA collects through Lakewatch will be used for a variety of purposes. The information can provide baseline information on the health of Wizard Lake to compare the state of Wizard to other lakes in the province. Tracking changes over time to feed into 'state of the watershed reports, and to determine if restoration efforts are having a positive effect are also important uses for the data collected through Lakewatch.

STREAM OF DREAMS

Cathy Holman



The Stream of Dreams program is an eco-education initiative through a non-profit society known as Stream of Dreams.

The Stream of Dreams Mural Society has a mandate to educate youth about watersheds – making a difference in how young people treat rivers, streams, lakes and oceans and the fish that live in them through a combination of art and science instruction.



WLWLSA is pursuing sponsorship of this award winning program with New Humble Centre School in 2013.



LAKE LEVELS

LeVerne Ellsworth

Annually, staff from Alberta Environment, Environmental Assurance Division, install a gauge at the west end of Wizard Lake. The gauge is monitored and the weekly readings are logged throughout the summer months. Our 2012 lake level readings will be charted by Alberta Environment later in the year.

Lake levels were very stable this year with a drop of 0.116 meters (4.57") from May 28 to September 24, 2012.

It is noted that more constant lake levels being maintained were after the installation of the weir in 1991.



STATE OF THE WATERSHED REPORT

LeVerne Ellsworth

A **State of the Watershed Report** answers questions such as:

- What is the current condition of my lake?
- How does this compare to conditions in the past ?
- What factors are contributing to the current condition?
- How does my lake compare to others in the area?

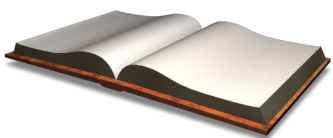
A **State of the Watershed Report** is:

- the scientific interpretation of watershed information and data .
- an objective tool that uses data and information to assess conditions and concerns .
- to use these analyses and findings to develop appropriate actions .
- a component of a watershed management package that leads to planning, implementation and evaluation.

WLWLSA has been working for several years on having a State of the Watershed (SOW) report completed for Wizard Lake. At the Annual General meeting held on September 29, 2012, copies of the draft report were on hand for viewing .

Aquality Environmental Consulting Ltd. are processing final revisions and anticipate having the report to us by the end of October.

Printed copies are expected to be costly so the next step will involve planning by the SOW Focus Group on how to get the report out to the public, how best to utilize the information, and how to involve Leduc County and County of Wetaskiwin with follow-up action and implementation of the recommendations.



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Cathy Holman

Do you have new neighbours at the lake or know of anyone interested in preserving the beauty, natural habitat, and recreational values we all treasure at Wizard Lake?

New members welcome — help spread the word!

Your membership and involvement supports the goals of WLWLSA:

- improve or maintain the water quality of Wizard Lake
- promote a safe environment for recreational use
- recruit, maintain and recognize the importance of the volunteer base and celebrate successes
- educate watershed residents and lake users about individual stewardship and sustainable practices regarding environmental, wildlife and aquatic conservation
- encourage responsible land use that is compatible with the sustainability of Wizard Lake
- sustain a healthy aquatic and wildlife environment
- reduce pollution from herbicides, pesticides, manure, sewage and other contaminants
- promote a healthy shoreline
- build good relationships with all jurisdictional bodies
- build community with residents and users to work toward common interests

We'd like to thank present members for supporting WLWLSA and for your concern in protecting the sustainability and enjoyment of Wizard Lake.

Donations are always appreciated and they are eligible for a charitable tax receipt, but most importantly, donations help build on past successes.

If you would like to become a new member or renew your membership please email: stewardship@wizardlake.ca

Join or Renew Today!

☐ → **\$40 lifetime membership**

☐ → **\$25 yearly membership**

GATE THAT CONTROLS LAKE LEVELS NOT ALL SMOKE AND MIRRORS

by Dave Lazzarino (reprinted from the Leduc Rep, Tuesday, September 13, 2011)

At first glance, there is really nothing strikingly magical about Wizard Lake, south of Calmar. The scenery is relaxing and boaters enjoy its recreation appeal.

But for a lake with a creek at one end and in a place like Alberta where "when it rains, it pours" is not just a saying, the lake level keeps a steady level.

A closer look reveals the real reason and it all comes down to a wall, a ladder and a guy named Blake Bartlett.

The wall is actually called a weir and was built with assistance from the Alberta Ministry of Environment in 1991 to minimize the amount of water draining out of the lake into Conjuring Creek at its south end.

The result was two-fold: it kept the lake level constant and it kept the creek from overflowing.

The weir is a permanent structure, but when the water levels get lower in the summer and fish have to get back into the lake after spawning downstream, there has to be a way for them to get around it. That's where the ladder comes in.

A gap that can be opened and closed was built in the weir. Along the sides of the gap are angled metal slots where fish can jump between to get back up through the opening against the current.

That's where Bartlett comes in. He is a nearby resident who minds the ladder throughout the year.

"It's not rocket science," he explained. In short, he heads down to the weir every so often and checks for fish. Some parts of the year he checks it every week but during times of higher concentration he can check it once or twice a day.

He's been doing the work since the last ladder maintenance person died in 2002. He was a welder for Leduc County for years and when he retired he took on the ladder duties.

The reaction to his work is sometimes suspicious. "Everybody thinks I'm draining the lake," he said, but explained that it couldn't be farther from the truth. In fact, the weir keeps water back. In times when there is more rainwater filling the lake like it was earlier this summer, the water can rise to substantially higher than the weir.

"I don't have a mandate of this kind of fish or that kind of fish. If fish are visible down here, I open it," he explained.

He said he usually keeps the gate closed at night and checks again in the morning. The highest numbers usually happen in the spring. "It could be late spring or early spring. The time frame is somewhat variable," he said.

As for whether fishermen bother him for tips on where to find the good spots, he said he isn't much use. "I don't know one fish from another and that's probably the best for me. That way I can't discriminate," he said with a laugh.

As for the reaction from the county, the simple device is working well. According to Rick Thomas, general manager of community services for Leduc County, the weir causes few problems except confusing some who may not be familiar with it. He said having someone like Bartlett who lives nearby helps keep the county from having to tend to it very much. And the proof that it is working is seen easily in the creek and the lake.

For more information on the weir, go to the county's website www.leduc-county.com and follow the links to agriculture and drainage from the drop down menu.

Blake Bartlett
Wizard Lake Resident and
WLWLSA Board Member



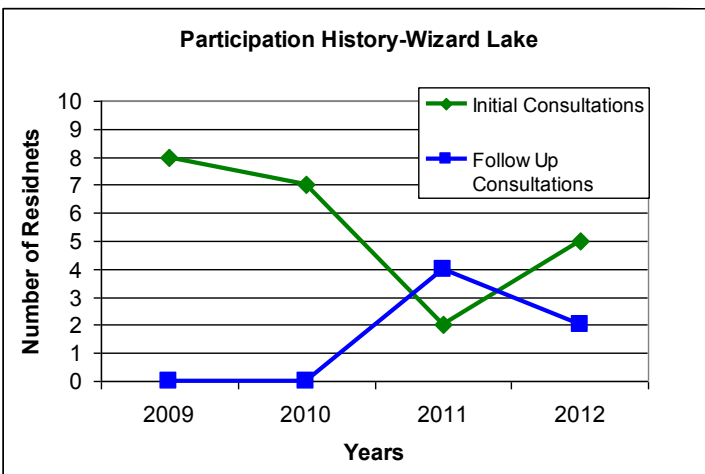


Dana Stromberg, Nature Alberta, Shoreline Advisor

HOMESITE CONSULTATION PROGRAM— WIZARD LAKE 2012

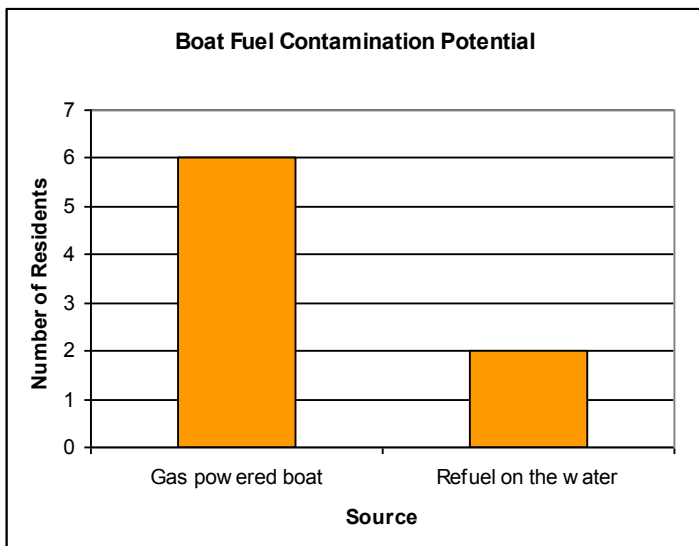
This summer was the fourth year that The Living by Water Project was active at Wizard Lake. In July, five initial and two follow up homesite consultations were completed over four days at Wizard Lake. Three of the five initial consultations were conducted for residents located on back lot properties having close proximity to the water.

- 57% of the residents are living in their permanent homes at Wizard Lake and all of which have installed water saving devices
- 43% of the residents had a hardened structure/retaining wall installed and all of which had turf grass up to this structure
- 43% of residents have had some experience/encounters with invasive plants on their properties
- 71% of residents are already using household products that are phosphate free
- 43% of residents are using pesticides on their property and 33% of those are also using fertilizers
- 29% of residents are using fertilizers on their property
- 86% of residents have gas powered boats and 33% of them refuel their boats on the water.



Fuel contamination is a concern and a comparison of the number of boat owners to the number of people who are refueling on the water can be used as an indicator for lake contamination potential.

Resident participation over the four year involvement has remained relatively the same for total participants, but just looking at the number of initial consultations it has increased from last year. Hopefully this will become a continuing trend in the future. The residents at Wizard Lake were very engaged and interested. Those who were exceptionally interested were new residents that are developing on the property and those that are renovating to modify their homes into permanent ones. It seems that some residents at Wizard Lake are really thinking of how their impacts can have long term affects and these residents are really trying to ensure that the lake environment will be in a healthy state in the future.



Dana Stromberg, shoreline advisor, attended the Parks Day event held at Jubilee Park public beach area at Wizard Lake. She was accompanied by Jane McDonald, a representative from ALMS, and Blake Bartlett and Harold Hofstra from the Wizard Lake Watershed and Lake Stewardship Association.

It should be noted that this program is run by a non-profit organization and is **not affiliated** with the government. Residents having a homesite consultation on their property can be assured of **complete confidentiality**.

For further information or to sign-up for a homesite consultation, please contact Kate Daniel at 780-985-3287 or catherinedaniel@xplornet.com and she would be happy to put you down for summer 2013.

PARKS DAY at Jubilee Park

Harold Hofstra

Awareness is one of the goals of the Wizard Lake Watershed and Lake Stewardship Association and what an excellent opportunity on **PARKS DAY**, July 14, 2012, at Jubilee Park.



Three display tables were set up. One for WLWLSA to promote our organization and its mission. The second table, hosted by Dana Stromberg, Nature Alberta Shoreline Advisor, for the Living by Waters Project, had a presentation on working toward healthier human and wildlife habitat along the shorelines of Canada. The Living by Waters Project provides free home-site consultations on how to make a difference to your shoreline and lake.

The third table, hosted by Jane McDonald of Alberta Lake Management Society, had a hands-on demonstration on testing water quality and what effect substances had on the water. Along with this display she had take-home Water Testing Kits so people could test their ponds or dugouts and then register their results online with ALMS. This display was certainly the attraction of the day and very well perceived.

SHORELINE CLEANUP

Carole Ellsworth

In the past, this scheduled event has been very successful with lots of trash and debris picked up by volunteers. The feedback received this year indicated that the shoreline cleanup was not warranted because the shoreline and water looked reasonably clean and high water levels made the shore less accessible.

Stay tuned for the next scheduled Shoreline Cleanup in 2013!

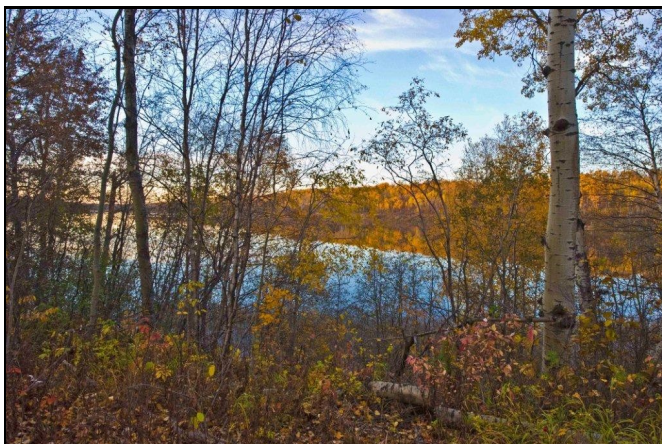


photo by Linda Purnell

♥ MEET JOURNEY ♥

submitted by The Patricks, WLWLSA members

Journey is probably the most well-known dog at Wizard Lake.

If you haven't met Journey yet, she loves to swim; but more than that, she loves to fetch. She will do anything to find someone to throw sticks or balls for her and sometimes it seems that she could do this forever. The moment she hears a boat stop at 'Pee Point' she is off and swimming across the lake. She finds a stick and you are stuck with her until you leave.



Although I have not yet met anyone who doesn't like her, we have had a few phone calls concerning her safety while swimming in the lake.

So this article is to explain how we feel about Journey and her 'wonderful life.' We too have worried about Journey getting hurt by a boat while swimming on her own. But I swim across the lake from time-to-time as well, and if Journey's swimming makes boaters drive a little more carefully, then I am a little safer when I swim.

A great number of boaters enjoy the beach at 'Pee Point' (*should there be an outhouse there?*) and I have heard from many of them about how much their children like to play with Journey. We can't even consider the thought of stopping her from having fun and living the good life. So we let her swim, and play, and try to catch and tie her up on really busy days. But in the mean time ... could everyone please look out for Journey's safety? Thanks, from the bottom of our hearts.



Fun Night for All

Harness Racing

at

Northlands Park



Friday, November 23/12

5:30 pm

Free admission and parking

Watch the races from the comfort of Colours Restaurant

Prime Rib Dinner \$36.54 / person

A **Special Race** Named After
WIZARD LAKE



Call Chris or Kate **985-3287** and join friends and neighbours
Payment to be made to Chris by Monday, Nov 1/12

A social community event sponsored by



**Wizard Lake Watershed
&
Lake Stewardship Association**