



Wizard Lake Watershed & Lake Stewardship Association

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NEWSLETTER #20

FALL 2015

CHAIR'S MESSAGE

by Harold Hofstra



Chris Daniel (l) & Harold Hofstra (r)

As I prepare this article for the newsletter I'm looking out at the spectacular colours on the trees, what a beautiful transition into Fall.

At the September 5, 2015 WLWLSA Annual General Meeting (AGM), we also looked at transition on the Board of Directors. We welcome new directors Brian Clemo and Benn Kilburn to the board.

We also recognized Chris Daniel, Vice Chair and long time board member, who is stepping down. Chris has been an anchor in WLWLSA with his involvement with the counties of Leduc and Wetaskiwin in formulating a boat safety protocol and improving the Area Structure Plan. We thank you Chris for sharing that vision for a healthy lake for future generations.

The AGM was very well attended, which shows us that lake stakeholders do care about a healthy lake. During the meeting we asked what concerned people the most about Wizard Lake. Some of those concerns were about the runoff going into the lake which cause nutrient overloading, leading to more algae. What about more retention ponds? How do we keep a handle on litter bugs? Noxious weeds? All were very good questions.

The WLWLSA board continues to work towards improving conditions and keeping our membership informed. The support of our membership and their valued input make for a strong and united WLWLS group. The WLWLSA board believes that being well informed and proactive will help to sustain healthy waters for future generations.

With the preparation for the newsletter this ends my term as board chair, so I would like to thank all those who have put in countless hours in making this lake a place to unwind and enjoy the sunset. Blake Bartlett has willingly agreed to lead us on as board chair. With that I leave you with a quote from Dr. David Suzuki ...

**"Our independence includes our natural world, how we move through it,
how we interact with it and how it sustains us."**

NEW BYLAW ON FERTILIZER RESTRICTIONS

The County of Wetaskiwin has passed a new bylaw restricting the use of cosmetic lawn fertilizer on a distance of 100 meters from the shoreline. The bylaw includes six of the larger lakes within the County : Battle Lake, Buck Lake, Coal Lake, Pigeon Lake, Red Deer Lake, and Wizard Lake.

In the WLWLS commitment to keep all lake stakeholders informed we pass this information on. Leduc County is also preparing a similar bylaw with restrictions on the use of cosmetic lawn fertilizers. These new bylaws are all part of controlling the nutrient loading into the lake which in turn stimulates algae growth. For further information on these new bylaws please check with the county offices.



WIZARD LAKE 2015: A YEAR OF POSITIVE CHANGES

by Blake Bartlett



After a troubled year of 2014 with blue green algae, meetings were held in the winter of 2015 with Alberta Health Services, Alberta Environment, Alberta Lake Management Society, Leduc County and WLWLSA. At those meetings we were informed about possible upcoming changes in the algae advisory postings of Alberta lakes. Dr. Chris Sikora of AHS, announced the new adviser postings format at our June 4, 2015 workshop which was held at Glen Park Hall.

2015 winter had little snow, thus little runoff. The 2015 spring and summer were unusually warm and some lakes were hit hard with algae problems. Fortunately for us not at Wizard Lake.

Looking forward, I will continue to monitor algae occurrences not just at Alberta lakes but across Canada/North America. As good stewards of Wizard Lake, we must continue to do our best to control undesirable products from entering our watershed and lake. Everyone doing their bit, will keep Wizard Lake the beautiful lake we are accustomed to and proud of, not to mention "the best kept secret" there is for a recreational lake in Alberta.

I look forward to updating you at the summer 2016 workshop on any new blue green algae theories and what's happening in other areas.

PROHIBITED NOXIOUS WEED ALERT

Himalayan Balsam has been classified by the Alberta Government as a prohibited noxious weed, which means that this plant is not allowed to exist on your property. An escaped ornamental, this fast growing aggressive weed has been seen on the south side of Wizard Lake in the Curilane B subdivision, however the lakeshore has not been inspected. **Help eradicate this weed** — be on the lookout for it and dispose as directed.

» Overview

Himalayan Balsam shades-out competing vegetation. It exhibits an impressive growth rate with some plants growing to 3 metres tall. It attracts pollinators away from native species with its high nectar content and extended flowering. **It overtakes riparian areas on a lake eventually choking out all native vegetation.**

» Identification

Stems are smooth, hairless, and usually hollow, tinged red-purple and are easily broken. Stems grow 1 to 3m tall and there may be some branching.

Leaves are lance shaped or elliptic with pointed tips and rounded bases, and 6-15cm long. The leaves are stalked and have sharply serrated edges. They occur opposite or in whorls of 3. Leaf size decreases with height on the stem.

Flowers are large — 2.5 to 4 cm long — in shades of pink through purple, occasionally white. Flowers occur 5-10 together in racemes on long stems borne in the upper leaf axils.

Seed Capsules are 1.5-3.5 cm long and up to 1.5 cm wide and contain up to 16 seeds which are 4-7 mm long and 2-4 mm wide. Seeds require cold stratification before germination. **DON'T PICK when seed capsules are present, they explode when contacted.**

» Disposal

Pull, bag, seal and dispose in a landfill bound garbage. **NEVER** put invasive plants in the compost. Himalayan Balsam has a shallow root system and can easily be pulled by hand. Cut stems do re-grow from the roots.



BUOY REMOVAL



On September 11, 2015, Blake Bartlett volunteered and used his pontoon boat to assist Leduc County remove the swim line and speed limit buoys from Jubilee Park and area, as well as the speed zone at the west end and the buoy at the west end boat launch.

Dean Ohnesty, Parks & Recreation Director, Nicholaus Moffatt, Parks Planning Supervisor, and volunteer LeVerne Ellsworth were on board to assist with this task. Dean Ohnesty mentioned that Jubilee Park had a very successful season.





2014 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

-The Volunteer of the Year Award is awarded to a volunteer who has shown outstanding dedication and enthusiasm for the LakeWatch Program. In 2014, the recipient of this award was our Wizard Lake volunteer, Larry MacPherson.-

Wizard Lake is a long, serpentine, lake lying within a steep, glacial meltwater channel just south of Calmar. Close in proximity to Leduc and Nisku, Wizard Lake seemed the perfect location for volunteer Larry MacPherson to call home. Larry has lived at Wizard Lake for 16 years and first became involved with ALMS through the Wizard Lake Watershed and Lake Stewardship Association (WLWSA). We asked the WLWSA why they felt water quality data was important:

"...the WLWSA Board had a commitment to science, governance, and action. The Alberta Lake Management Society was an obvious choice where to begin with the scientific data. This data provides an important baseline of water quality and continuing monitoring for the chemistry of environmental indicators. Early detection of detrimental changes in water quality because of nutrients or aquatic invasive species is important for implementing a rapid response system." - Carole Ellsworth, WLWSA Director



Larry MacPherson recording data on Wizard Lake. 2011



Bald eagle at Wizard Lake. Photo by Elynn Murray, 2013.

Larry has been a part of this effort to collect water quality data through the Alberta Lake Management Society for five years. Not only has Larry served as a LakeWatch volunteer, he has also volunteered to check and distribute invasive mussel substrates and was one of the first volunteers involved in our Invasive Macrophyte Monitoring Pilot Program. Larry has been an exemplary volunteer, showing dedication to monitoring and kindness to our technicians. As well, he has always made an effort to involve his grandchildren in the monitoring, fostering



an enthusiasm for science and the environment. As the recipient of the Volunteer of the Year award, Larry was asked what his favourite part of volunteering with ALMS was:

I like working with ALMS because the technicians are enthusiastic, bright, and enjoy their job. As well, I like the opportunity to involve my grandchildren in learning and understanding lake stewardship. Whenever my grandchildren have gone out with us, the technicians have coached and involved them. I also enjoy being a part of and helping the Wizard Lake Watershed and Lake Stewardship Association.



Larry's grandchildren, Jack and Anna, and technician Elynn Murray, collecting a sample for Dreissenid mussel veligers. 2013.

Larry has been an extremely valuable member of the LakeWatch program – without volunteers like Larry, very little data would exist for some of Alberta's most valuable freshwater resources. To learn more about Wizard Lake and to find out how you can become a volunteer with the LakeWatch program, please visit www.alms.ca or call us at 780-415-9785.



Wizard Lake. Photo by Jessica Davis, 2011.

The Wizard Lake Watershed and Lake Stewardship Association personally thank Larry MacPherson, Wizard Lake Estates, for his donated time and dedication to these projects. All of us who enjoy Wizard Lake are indebted to volunteers such as Larry who assist agencies and government departments with a concern to maintain a healthy lake for our continued enjoyment.

