



## 2016 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 2016, the recipient of this award was our Laurier Lake volunteer, Bev Smith.-

Laurier Lake is one of four beautiful lakes that were left behind 10,000 years ago when glaciers carved a hummocky terrain of kettles, eskers, and lake basins. Volunteer Bev Smith told us how she came to this picturesque location:

*"In 1978, my husband was interested in getting some recreational land as a 'get-away' from our busy life in St. Albert. He found this land advertised in the Edmonton Journal. We came out to see it and it immediately felt 'right'. We really could not afford it: I was pregnant with our third child and going into a maternity leave; we had to assume a second mortgage on our house to come up with the money...scary, but we have never regretted it.*

*In 1997 we began to design our 'lake house'. We found a builder and the first structure he built was the garage. In 1999 we sold our St. Albert home and moved into a month-to-month apartment. Anything that we did not fit into the apartment was brought to the garage for storage. In 1999 we had the 'old' cabin moved and construction on our new home began. While the house was being built, we would 'visit' and live in the garage with a bed, a camping stove, a dish pan and a BBQ. We moved in on July 9<sup>th</sup> 2000."*

Shortly after moving to Laurier Lake, Bev joined the board of the Lakeland Industry and Community Association (LICA) as a Community Member. In 2002, LICA was discussing financially supporting lake monitoring and Bev jumped at the opportunity – this was her first exposure to the LakeWatch program and she has been volunteering ever since.



*Bev Smith and Ageleky Bouzetos: 2015*



*Bev Smith introducing a new generation of young women to science and stewardship.*

We asked Bev why she still loves her time on the lake each summer with the LakeWatch technicians:

*"I love having an appointment to get out on the lake and I love watching the growth of competence and skill of the technicians over the season.*

*I have taken interested young girls from the neighborhood out with me on these trips - they have come back with a new understanding of the broad possibilities that science has for women.*

*I have had friends of technicians out for a day trip, they are very interested and most have not been exposed to this part of the province. I even had a technician bring a visitor from Europe, it was exciting and interesting."*

Bev says she has learned lots through the LakeWatch program and recognizes the importance of the long-term LakeWatch data:

*"I don't think science really has a grasp on how our lakes work... I certainly don't. The longer I do this volunteering, the more I find out what I don't know. I have learned about how complex a watershed, a lake, and water chemistry is, that a green lake can be a safe and healthy lake, and about how many people care about this Province and the environment we live in. I have been at this so long I have been told that this lake has one of the longest histories of yearly testing. Wow!"*



*Bradley Peter and Alicia Kennedy presenting Bev Smith with the Volunteer of the Year Award: 2016.*

Whether high or low, lake levels have always been an interesting topic at Laurier Lake – in 2016, levels nearly reached historical maximums not observed since the mid 1970's. Bev has worked hard in her community to dispel myths surrounding Laurier Lake's water levels and talks to every person she can about the importance of cleaning their boat to prevent the spread of invasive species.



*Bev Smith and Technician Kara MacAulay: 2014*



Bev has volunteered with the LakeWatch Program for 12 seasons and every LakeWatch Technician she has worked with has recognized her as a volunteer of merit. Bev has been an extremely valuable member of the LakeWatch program – without volunteers like Bev, very little data would exist for some of Alberta's most valuable freshwater resources. To learn more about Laurier Lake and to find out how you can become a volunteer with the LakeWatch program, please visit [www.alms.ca](http://www.alms.ca) or call us at 780-702-ALMS.