

# Buffalo Lake Management Team

Alberta Lake Management  
Society  
September 28, 2018

Henry Hearonimous Family 1903





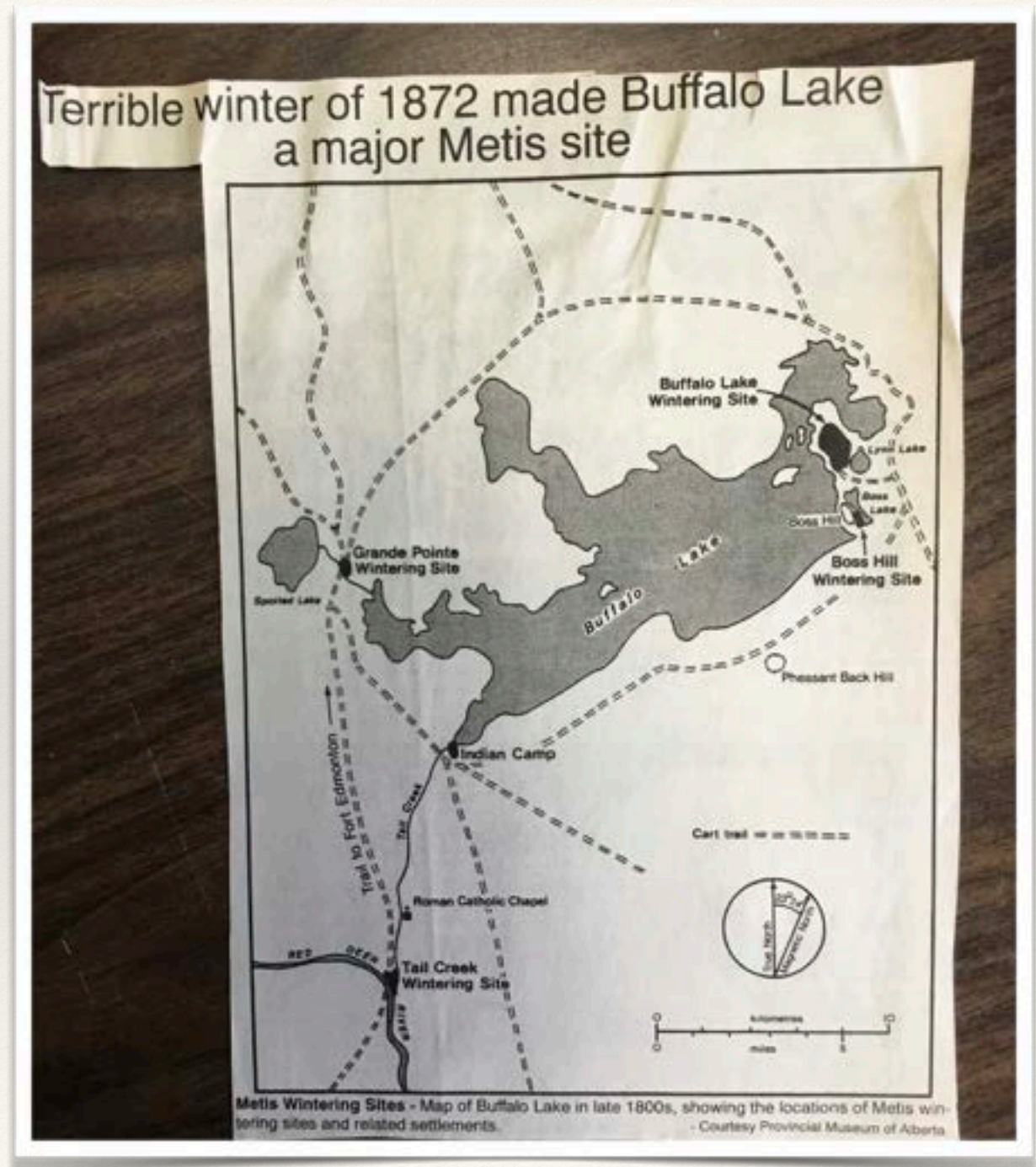


# **BUFFALO LAKE** MANAGEMENT TEAM



# Early History: Naming of Buffalo Lake

- ❖ 1814 first Map of Buffalo Lake by David Thompson
- ❖ Legends of the Tsuu T'ina and Cree





# How Buffalo Lake got its name

By Tom McCormack  
Sweetgrass Writer

*Long ago, in Red Deer country, the Sarcee Nation was large. A tragic course of events resulted in the division of the band.*

The people were starving. Even small game was scarce. The leaders met in council and opened their hearts for guidance from the Great Mystery. What they received was direction that was contrary to what the majority of the band believed should be done. The sacred spirit told the leaders to send their two best hunters to the north-country to find food.

The two hunters went north, trusting in the wisdom of the Medicine-power. As they crossed the fourth ridge in their travels, they saw an Eagle circling four times. Its path of descent brought their attention to a buffalo. They chased that buffalo over four large hills until the creature tired and settled in a deep valley.

Quietly they approached the buffalo. One of the men raised his spear and prayerfully opened his heart to the Creator. Then he killed the buffalo.

They prepared to butcher the buffalo with their stone knives, but instead of blood running from the creature, water oozed out. The two men looked around for a sign, but they only felt a cold chill running down their backs.

The water was gushing out of the buffalo and filled up the valley. The men moved back and observed the water rising quickly. They ran for the top of the ridge and when they looked back at the valley, they saw it had filled with water and had taken the shape of a buffalo.

They rubbed their eyes and looked above only to see that the

thunderclouds had also developed into the shape of a buffalo. As they gazed down on the lake they noticed a dark blue streak of water running through what looked like the backbone of the buffalo. Here the water was deep. Where the hooves were, there appeared two black boulders. The eye of the buffalo was a large brown rock. Under the buffalo's chin, cat-tails were seen. Around the shape of the creature was thick grass that looked like fur.

Small willow trees grew off the buffalo's head like scruffy hair. A black rock appeared as the snout of a buffalo. The men saw what looked like a tongue coming out of the buffalo's mouth! (This was perhaps four large beaver tails fanned out side-by-side, one up against the next).

There were two pointed trees growing out of the buffalo's head in the shape of horns. Coming out of the buffalo's rump was a stream of water — looking like a tail. A fog was seen where the buffalo's snout was, with the wind whipping the smoky mist.

The men looked at each other, then gazed back at the lake, only to see buffalo-shaped thunderclouds reflecting off the water. They immediately returned home to their village.

The people ran to greet them, but the two men were incoherent. The people thought perhaps they had been hit in the head, making them crazy. Their families and relations were worried, so they went to get the chief and medicine people.

The leaders said "this was not a vision from the spirit world that these men had, but they saw something very powerful and tangible. Let's follow these two hunters to see what sacred medi-



DEBORA LOCKYER

Buffalo Lake is located northwest of Stettler.

cine they experienced."

So the entire band headed north and got to the top of the ridge overlooking the lake. The people looked down and were astonished by the distinct features of the buffalo. Then the dark clouds moved over the lake and the people looked up, frightened by the thunderclouds in the shape of a buffalo. Then the clouds cleared away and sunlight hit the water in the lake, nearly blinding the people.

The leaders thought this was a good sign — although the medicine people had a conflicting opinion. The band decided to continue north to find game, because they thought the buffalo was a good-medicine sign.

They ran into a blizzard. Out of necessity, they headed south until they got to the lake which was now frozen over.

"Rather than go around the lake, we can save time by going across the ice," the chief said. One-third of the people crossed

over the ice to the far side of the lake, one-third were out on the ice and one-third were preparing to cross over. A little boy ran over the ice to something sticking out of the lake.

"Bone, bone, bone," he cried. His grandmother walked up to him and said "that's not a bone, that's a buffalo horn". The grandmother took out her stone axe and struck the horn once, twice and three times, but nothing happened. She swung her stone axe a fourth time and with a powerful blow struck the horn.

A loud cracking sound echoed across the lake as the ice opened up. Children, adults, and horses tried to run. The tribe on both shores of the lake looked on in horror as they saw the people and heard their yelling and screaming. They watched the people on the lake slide into the water through the ice.

There was silence as the two groups looked across at each other in shock. The chief presided over

a sacred burial ceremony for the departed loved ones.

The people on the south shore are now known as Sarcee. The people on the north side of the lake are now known as the Beaver people and Chipewyan. The Beaver people speak the same language as the Sarcee. . . except they talk faster.

Buffalo came from all directions to that lake and game was plentiful from that moment on.

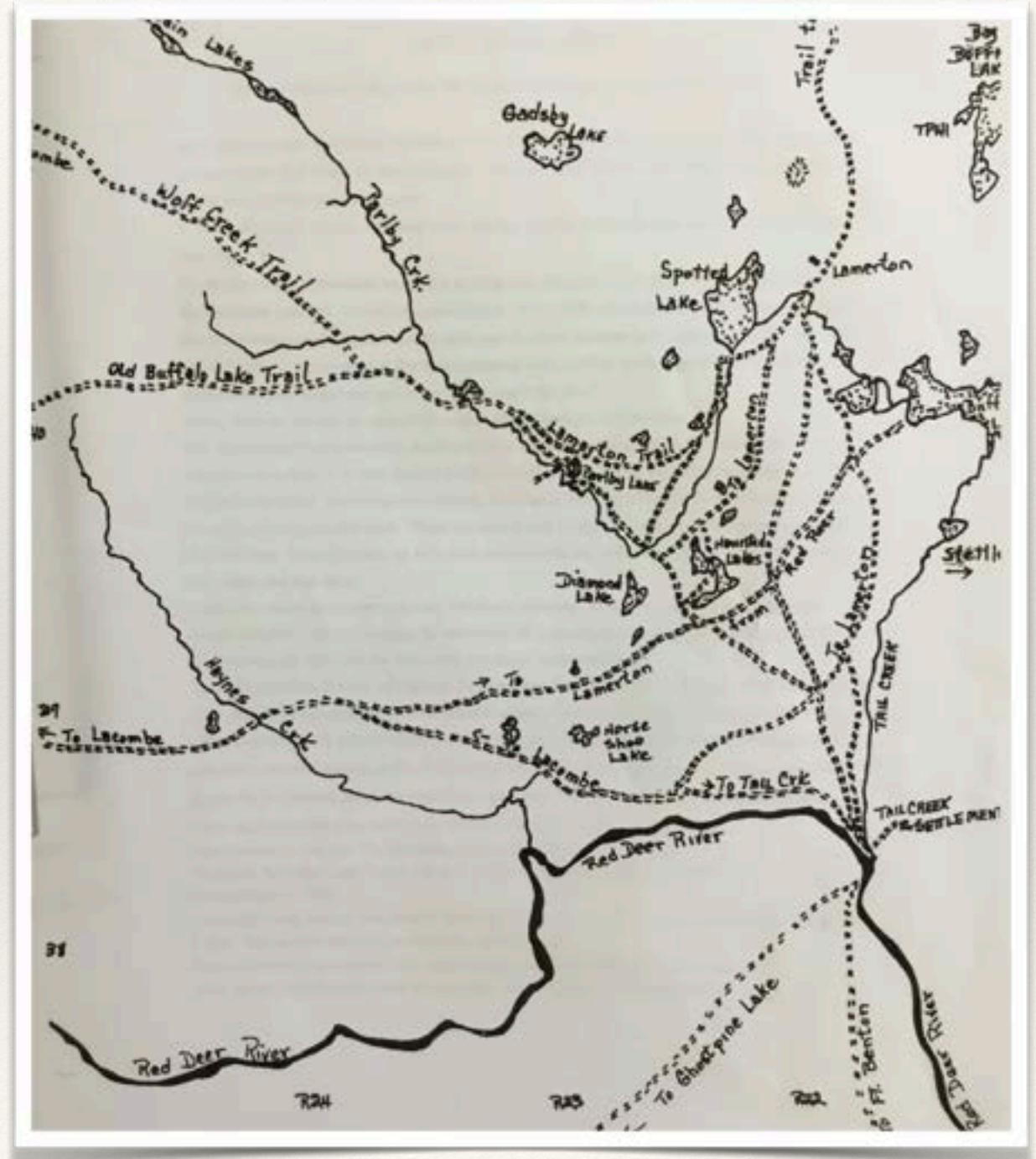
If you go down to Buffalo Lake at dusk, you can hear the spirits of the people who live down in the lake. Wait until the playful laughter of the children quiets to hear the echoes of those that died there.

Tom McCormack, of Native Pamunkey descent, is a performing story holder and teller. His audio tape *Tales from Western Tribes* is available by calling (403) 945-2994 or from Spirit River Productions, 8210 - 109 Street, Box 52184, Edmonton, AB T6G 2T5.

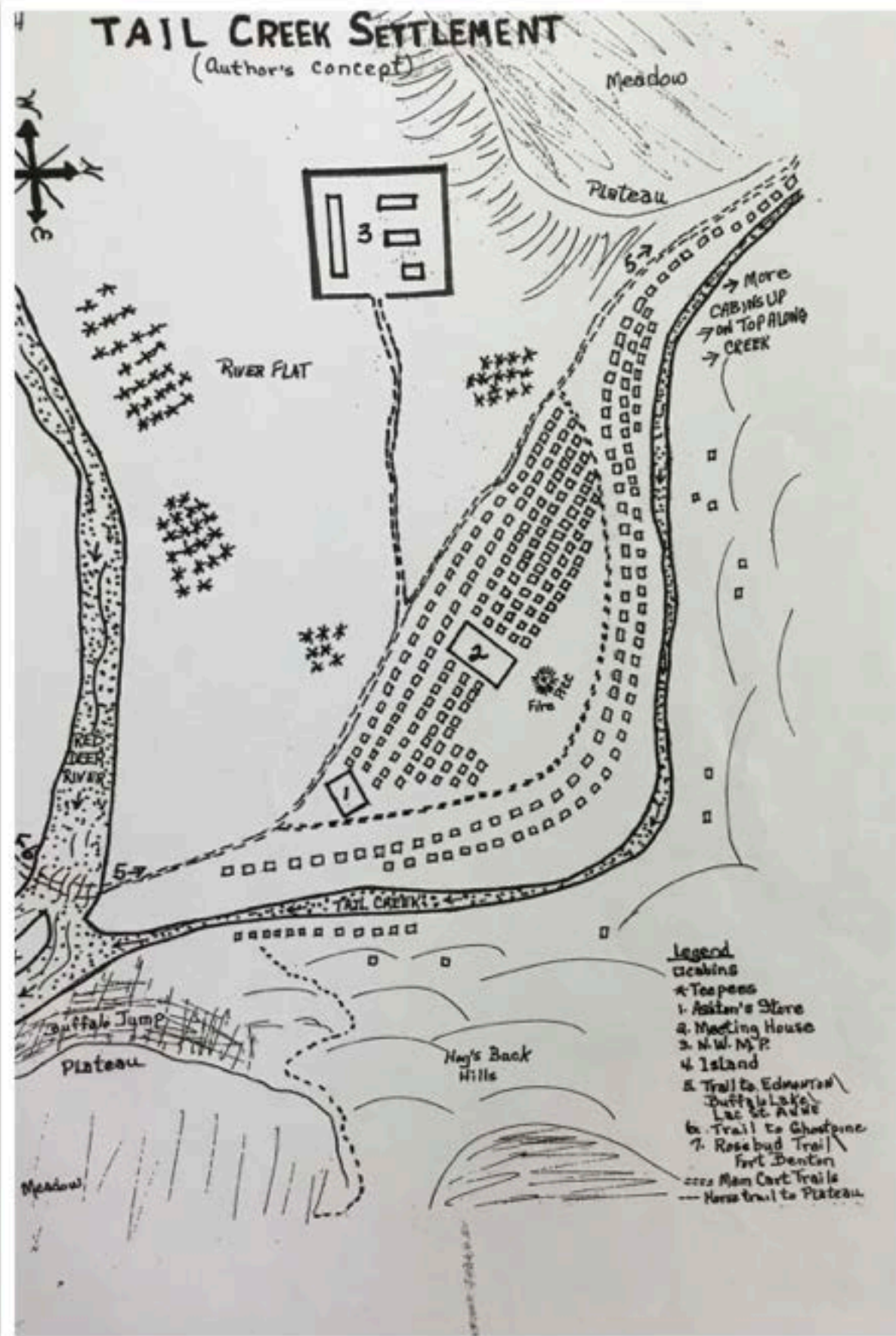


# Metis Settlement

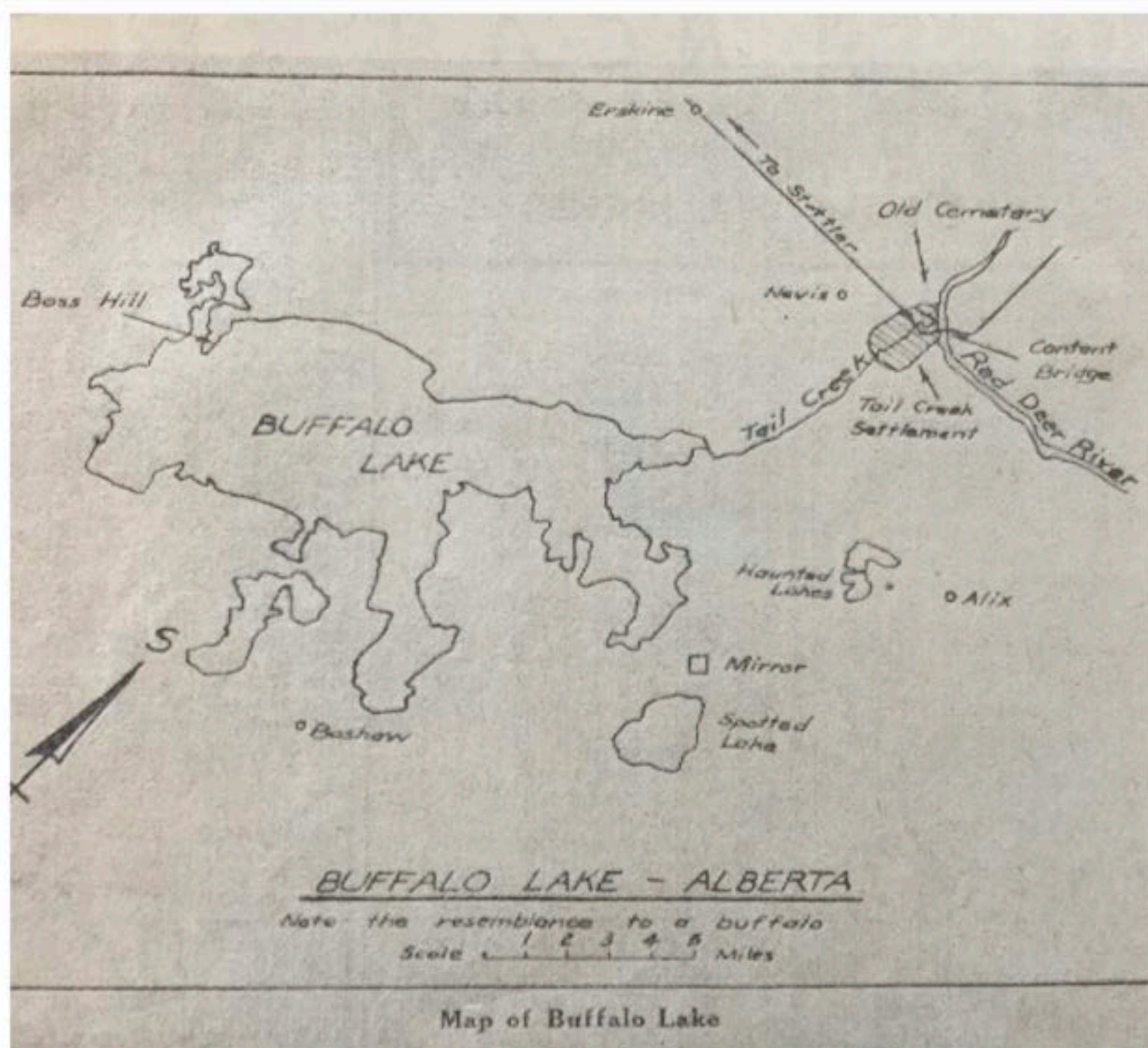
- ❖ Established as a trading post of 1870
- ❖ Tail Creek was the largest Metis settlement in North West Territories
- ❖ Population of 2000 people at it's peak in 1875
- ❖ Destroyed by fire in 1878











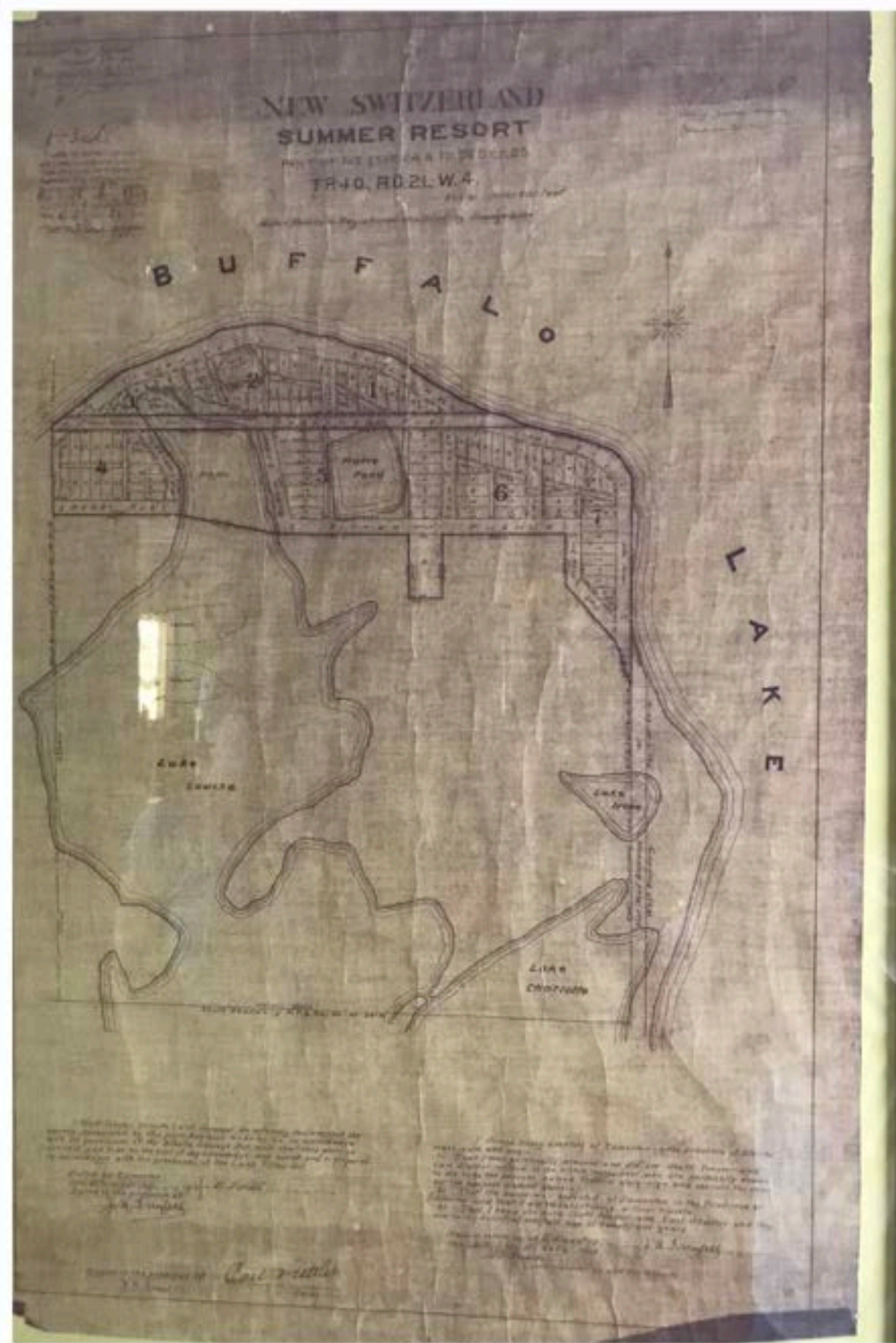


# Moving into 1900's

- ❖ “Hannah’s Beach” changed to Rochon Sands
- ❖ Once called the Summer Resort of “New Switzerland”
- ❖ Today 2 Provincial Rec areas - Boss Hill, The Narrows
- ❖ 1 Provincial Park
- ❖ 2 Summer Villages (Rochon Sands, White Sands)
- ❖ Numerous private developments
- ❖ Counties of Stettler, Lacombe and Camrose











D. A. Rochon's Livery Stable, Rochon Sands.

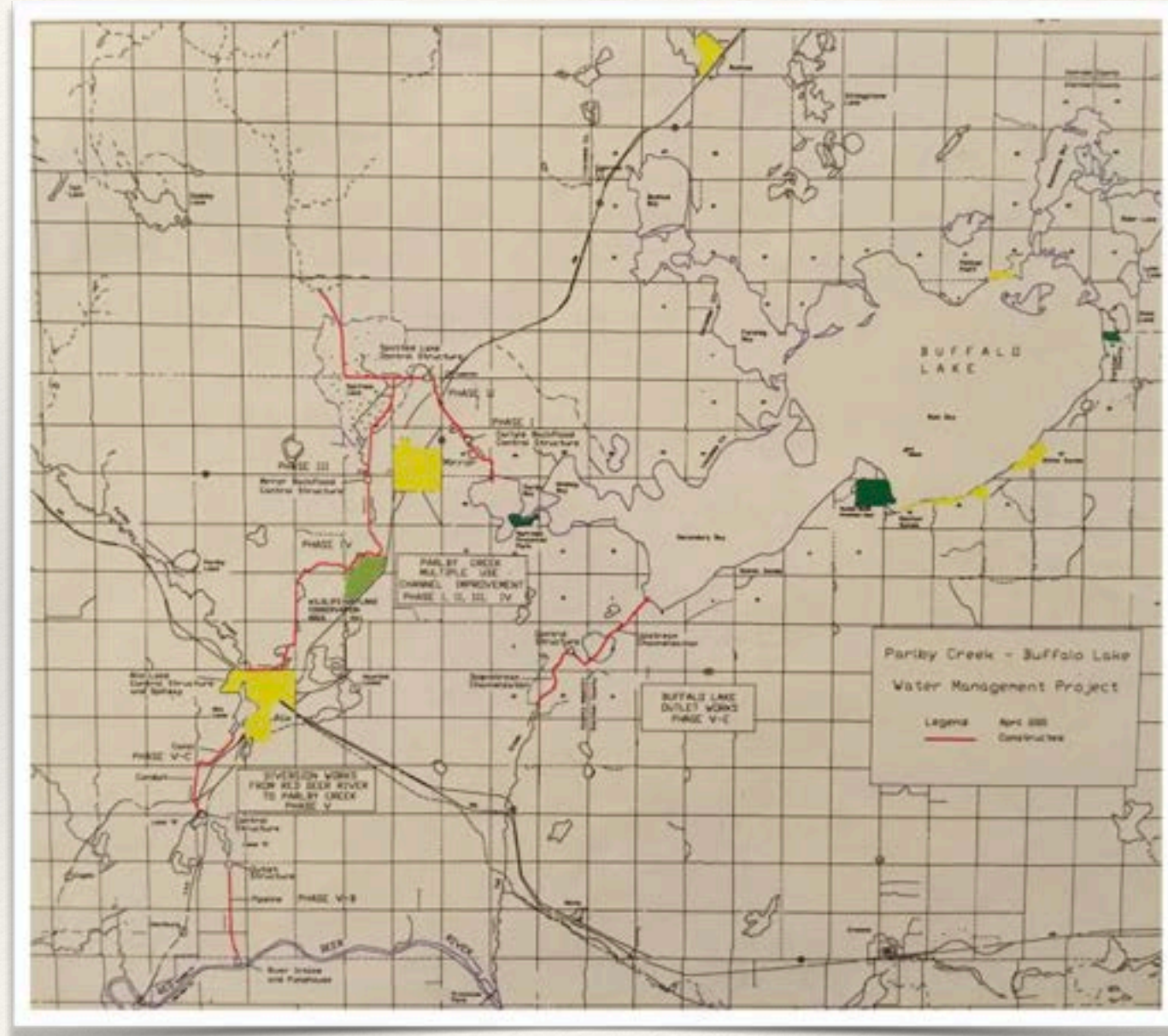






# History of BLMT

- ❖ 1985 Alberta Environment commenced with construction of Parlby Creek - Buffalo Lake Water Management project





# B.L.M.T.

## Official Project Opening 1991





















# Buffalo Lake

## Integrated Shoreland Management Plan



BLISMP







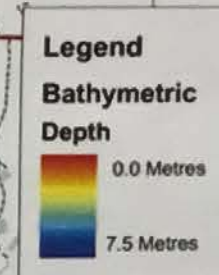
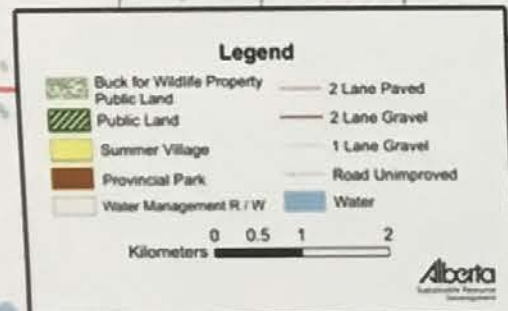
# Historic Challenges and Initiatives

- ❖ Stabilize water levels in Buffalo Lake
- ❖ Provide a reliable water supply for the villages of Mirror and Alix
- ❖ Enhance Fish and Wildlife habitat
- ❖ Provide agricultural flood control



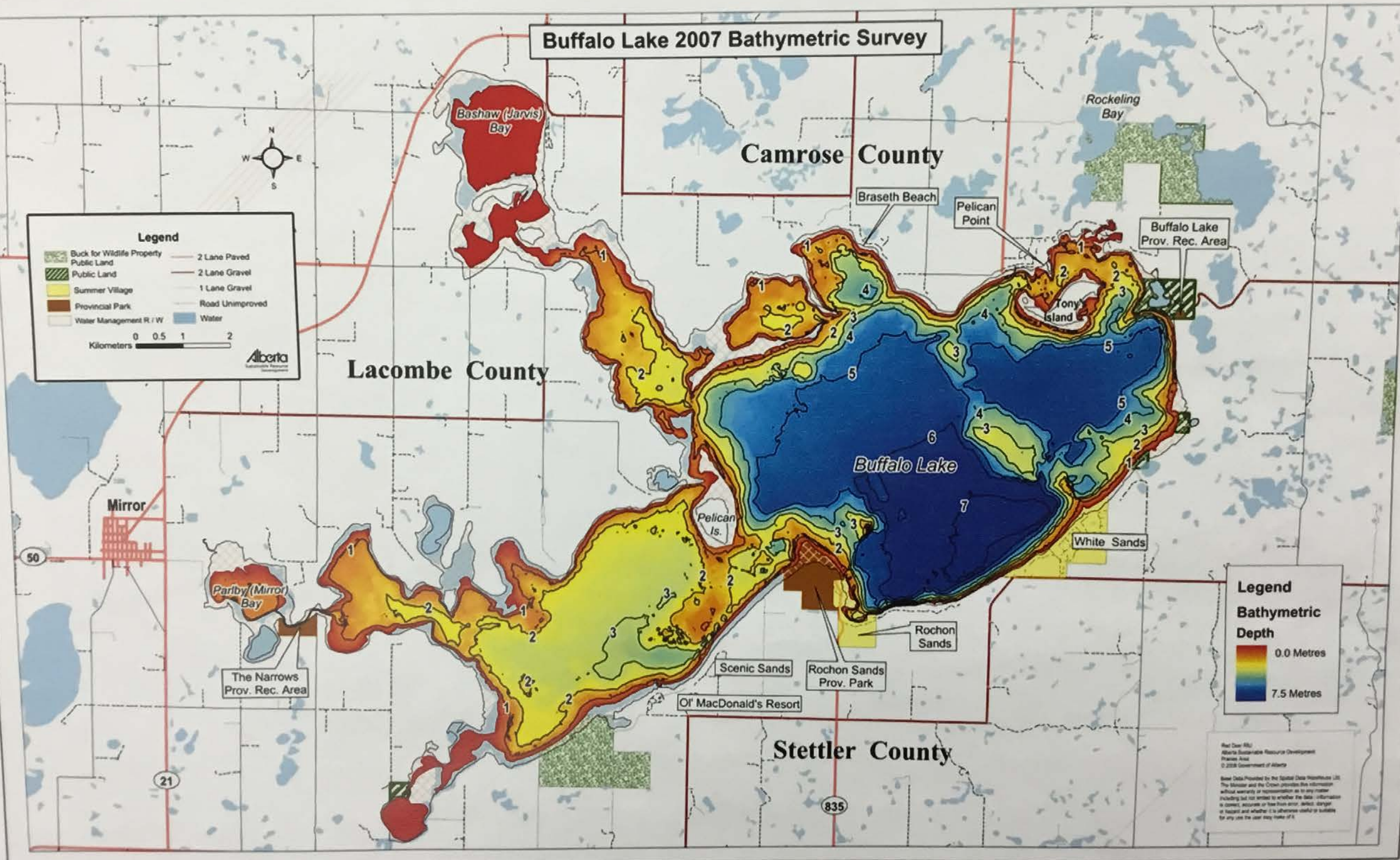


# Buffalo Lake 2007 Bathymetric Survey



Real Data 2007  
 Alberta Sustainable Resource Development  
 Planning Area  
 © 2008 Government of Alberta

Base Data Provided by the Spatial Data Infrastructure Unit  
 The Minister and the Crown provide this information  
 without warranty or representation as to any matter  
 including but not limited to whether the data information  
 is correct, accurate or free from error, defect, danger  
 or hazard and whether it is otherwise useful or suitable  
 for any use the user may make of it.





## Buffalo stabilization - "this will be the year"

There is actual basis to the rumor — which started circulating right after the Stettler byelection campaign in May — that the Alberta Government intends to proceed with a 1980 plan to stabilize the level of Buffalo Lake.

The old editor, who has for more than 100 years advocated stabilization of the lake, was scooped on this great piece of news by Bashaw Star editor Martin Burns. Mr. Burns apparently heard it quite recently during proceedings of the Legislative Assembly where he sought sanctuary from some irate readers who had chased him all the way to Edmonton.

Ron Moore, PC MLA for Lacombe — who, by the way, has heretofore never shown the slightest interest in the improvement of Buffalo Lake — asked Environment Minister Ralph Klein if he could let the people of central Alberta know if the government is going to proceed with

Buffalo Lake stabilization, or if the plan had been shelved.

Mr. Klein said, "The project has not been shelved. As a matter of fact we are proceeding with this important water management project. Certain portions of the project are being implemented already, certainly those related to flood control. With respect to the lake stabilization program, this matter is under study still, and hopefully we will have a report in the not too distant future."

Mr. Moore asked, "Could we have some indication of the timetable when we'll proceed with this . . . we seem to always proceed next year. Is this the year?"

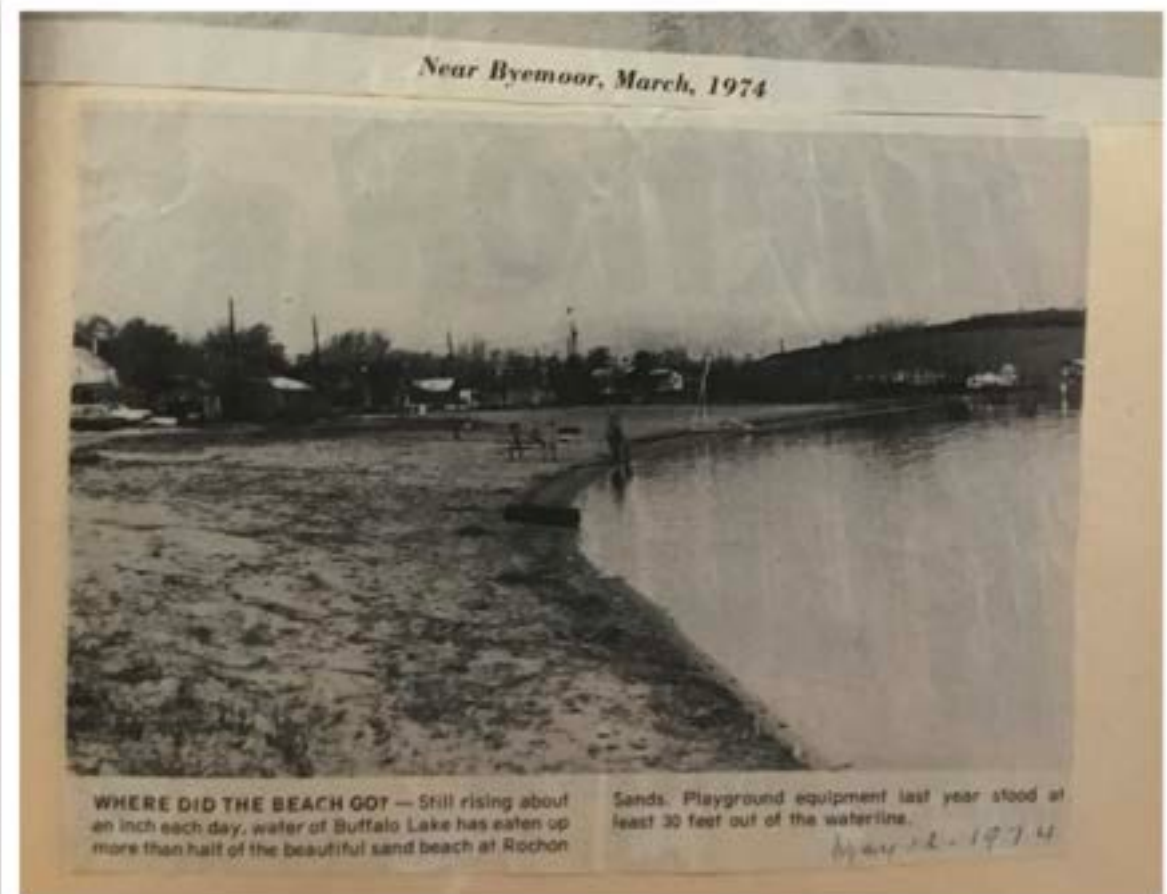
Mr. Klein said, "Hopefully this is the year. No, I'm sure this will be the year. As a matter of fact, this will be the year."

Mr. Moore said, "We've gone through, I think, around 18 studies, very in-depth studies . . . when he indicated that this was the year, this

isn't the year for another study. Can we be assured of that?"

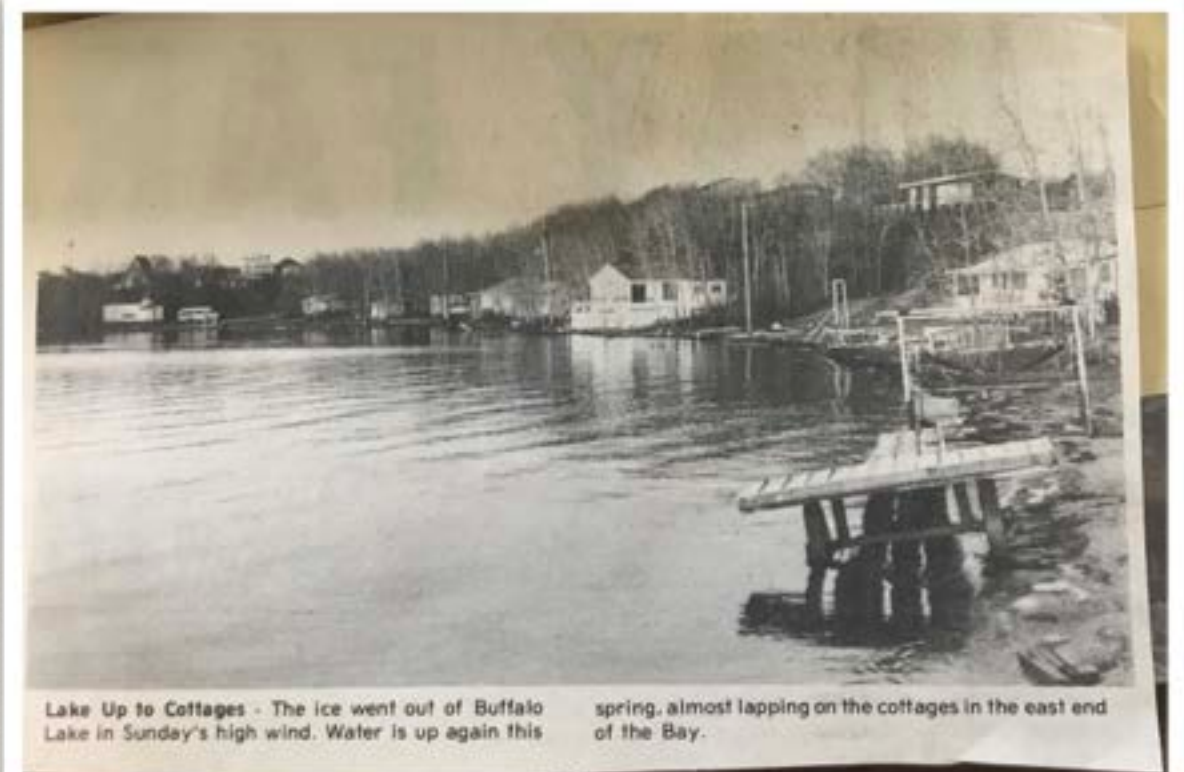
Mr. Klein said, "This involves, of course, a diversion of water from the Red Deer River to Buffalo Lake, and of course there are some environmental problems that will have to be assessed through a full environmental impact assessment. Of course, that will be undertaken after the final report is submitted this year, and soon this year. Once the environment impact study has been completed, the deficiencies will be addressed, and hopefully we can get on with the project. But there will be no more studies."

(Direct quotations are taken from the official version of the proceedings in the Alberta Legislative Assembly and our apologies to Mr. Burns whose subscribers love him like the subscribers of *The Independent* love the old editor.)



WHERE DID THE BEACH GO? — Still rising about an inch each day, water of Buffalo Lake has eaten up more than half of the beautiful sand beach at Rochon

Sands. Playground equipment last year stood at least 30 feet out of the waterline.



Lake Up to Cottages - The ice went out of Buffalo Lake in Sunday's high wind. Water is up again this

spring, almost lapping on the cottages in the east end of the Bay.



# Current Challenges

- ❖ Zebra Mussel
- ❖ Prussian Carp
- ❖ Whirling disease
- ❖ Ice Shacks sinking











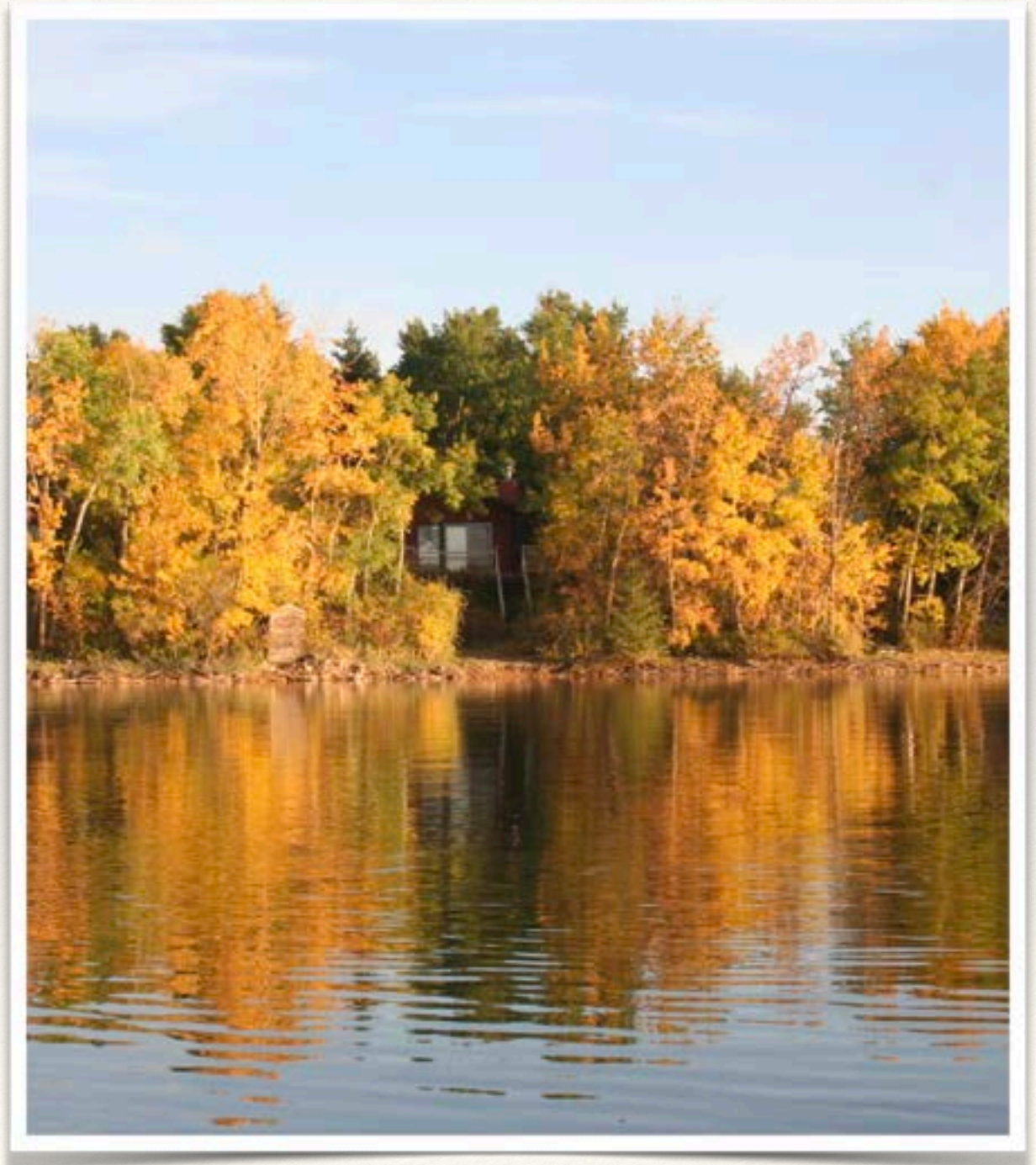


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# Future of Buffalo Management Team

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- ❖ BLMT are the eyes and ears on the ground for the Buffalo Lake Integrated Shoreland Management Plan





Narrows 2011





