



## 2015 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 2015, the recipient of this award was our Crane Lake volunteer, Ron Young.-

Crane Lake is a picturesque, mesotrophic lake which lies 30 km west of Cold Lake, and only 6 km from where our Volunteer of the Year, Ron Young, was raised. Ron used to walk to the lake as a child, and still feels the lake is a beautiful spot. With 80% of the shoreline designated as crown land, Crane Lake maintains a natural and undisturbed shoreline for much of its length. Ron keeps his boat in the water for nearly the entire open-water season and sat on the Crane Lake Advisory and Stewardship Society, so he was a natural fit for the LakeWatch Program. We asked Ron why he felt water quality data was important:

*"...it is critically important to have baseline data, plus ongoing monitoring. We have to know early if area resource development is affecting the lake. The biggest challenge [at the lake] comes from oil companies who want to build plants next to the lake, or drill under the lake. Another [challenge] is educating landowners to respect the environmental easements along the shore."*



*Volunteer of the Year Ron Young and LakeWatch Technician Ageleky Bouzetos – Crane Lake, 2015*



*Volunteer of the Year Ron Young and LakeWatch Technician Nicole Meyers – Crane Lake, 2013*

When asked what he likes best about volunteering, Ron said:

*"I enjoy the testing. I like to have experts who are able to answer my questions about invasive plant species, or the emerald lake color that appears when the water temperature rises."*

In recent years, Crane Lake's water has appeared glacial-blue for much of the open

water season. This unique phenomenon is referred to as lake-whiting, and has even been observed in some of Canada's Great Lakes. This phenomenon is most often observed in mesotrophic lakes and caused by blooms of picoplankton – microscopic algae or bacteria which cause the precipitation of calcium-carbonate along their membrane; it is the precipitation of calcium-carbonate which results in the unique colouration. Such blooms are benign and result in stunning water clarity and colour. This phenomenon has also been observed at Marie Lake and Minnie Lake.



*A lake-whitening event observed at Crane Lake in 2014. Photo: Kara MacAulay*



LakeWatch Technician Ageleky Bouzetos and Volunteer of the Year Ron Young – Crane Lake 2015.

Ron has volunteered with the LakeWatch Program for five seasons and every LakeWatch Technician he has worked with has recognized him as a volunteer of merit. Ron has been an extremely valuable member of the LakeWatch program – without volunteers like Ron, very little data would exist for some of Alberta's most valuable freshwater resources. To learn more about Crane 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 780-415-9785.

