

**Lake Stewardship Community of Practice
Meeting #1
May 30, 2022**

Attendance:

14 attendees representing 11 unique organizations.

Plenary Presentation: Blake Bartlett of the Wizard Lake Watershed and Lake Stewardship Association

- Developed a 30-page sleeved informational binder which was delivered to every member of the lake watershed.
- Binder developed to inform residents of pertinent information relating to Wizard Lake and its watershed, to provide watershed residents a plain language report of the water quality entering Wizard Lake, and to open conversations between WLWLSA Directors and watershed residents.
- More information regarding recent tributary monitoring will be delivered to residents in 2022 to update their binder.
- Additional projects by the WLWLSA include:
 - ALMS LakeWatch program,
 - ALMS LakeKeepers program (winter),
 - Information bulletin boards,
 - Canada Day Boat Parade,
 - Biohaven Floating Island project,
 - Shoreline cleanups (1.7 tonnes of garbage in 2017),
 - 'Try It' Winter Event (345 participants 2014),
 - Lake use etiquette and safety signage.
- Contact Blake Bartlett for more information at blake@wizardlake.ca

What We Heard - Stewardship Survey:

- 7 Responses from Lake Stewardship COP members.
- 71.4% represent a Lake Watershed Stewardship Group.
- All respondents indicated they were not aware or only somewhat aware of stewardship activities happening at other lakes in Alberta.
- The primary topics of interest were: ideas for stewardship activities, advocacy, and membership.
- 57% of respondents indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic reduced engagement with members.
- 57% of respondents indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic reduced engagement with other stewards.

Breakout Rooms:

1. What are the main factors for stewardship engagement at your lake?

Engagement tends to fluctuate as issues arise and resolve at the lakes. Main factors identified, include:

- Weeds including invasive weeds such as flowering rush,

- Lake levels both high and low,
- blue-green algae blooms,
- watershed development.

2. What are some of the more successful stewardship initiatives implemented at your lake?

- Competition to determine who could sign up the most members,
- Moose Lake “Keep the Lake Blue” campaign which lists 52 actions residents can take to reduce their impact on the lake, including lawn signs to identify them as participants in the program.
- Jackfish Lake developed 1000 postcards which were delivered to residents and handed to visitors at the main public boat launch. The postcards included information on the stewardship group, lake etiquette, and best practices.
- Pigeon Lake Watershed Association developed a Watershed Management Plan which was endorsed by all 12 municipalities around the lake including four Indigenous Bands.
- Pigeon Lake Summer Villages implemented municipal fertilizer bans.
- Pigeon Lake Watershed Association delivers welcome packages to all new residents.
- Mayatan Lake developed an informational binder for all residents.
- Mayatan Lake hosted an annual educational Pond Party day for local school kids with support from Parkland County.
- Muriel Lake has been successful in studying culverts, developing digital elevation models for the watershed, and installing beaver deceivers, to address low water levels.

3. What are some of the less successful initiatives implemented at your lake?

- Shoreline cleanups: only a handful of people come out and participate.
- Projects seem to have an initially high level of excitement but this tends to waiver as the project is implemented.
- Most groups identified the importance and challenge of gaining County or elected officials support for stewardship activities. Some groups recommended making presentations to Council to ensure they are up to date on stewardship activities.
- Some groups identified stigmas associated with stewardship groups (e.g. anti-development) can limit engagement.
- Many groups identified challenges with succession planning.

4. What are your plans for the upcoming summer season?

- Mayatan Lake is hoping for a barbecue and bird count. Mayatan Lake is supporting a water quality study on ~40 small lakes in the Stony Plain region.
- Pigeon Lake Watershed Association plans to host six events with six communities around the lake. Currently planning for shoreline restoration workshops.
- Other plans included LakeWatch, LakeKeepers, Creekwatch, stewardship trivia, community science initiatives, and a farmers market native plant giveaway.

Key Takeaways:

- All participants indicated they were unaware or only somewhat aware of stewardship activities by other watershed stewardship groups in Alberta.
- Engagement fluctuates with lake issues.
- Development is one of the main drivers of lake health; however, is also highly contentious and the hardest one to mitigate.
- Many successful stewardship initiatives: educational programs for kids, educational/informational materials, municipal fertilizer bans, successful grant proposals.
- Positive and productive relationships with the County are key for lake watershed stewardship group success and are often challenging to build and maintain.