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No. 29

Spring 2023

Signs of Spring

WWMC Chair Report by Sue Styles

Regardless of where you are in Alberta, the season of spring is always welcome. We note signs of spring at Wabamun Lake, including the 'renewal of nature' kind of signs, such as the return of the warmth of the sun, the emergence of poplar and willow catkins, and magpies taking a bath in cold melted snow puddles on the roads. However, there are also other signs of spring such as the removal of ice fishing huts from the frozen lake, less sanding and salting of roadways, and the completion of winter water sampling. Like in all Alberta watershed stewardship groups, we at the WWMC are mindful of the seasons as stewardship activities do change with them. Before we march full on into our spring/summer activities, I want to share with you what has been happening at the WWMC during the past winter months.

Governance:

The WWMC

- is pleased to announce it is now a **CRA registered charity** (see p. 2).
- is preparing to launch a new annual membership program (effective July 1st) (see p. 3).

Implementation of the [Wabamun Lake Watershed Management Plan](#):

The WWMC

- organized a Winter Lake Clean Up activity combined with participation in the Alberta Conservation Association's Kids Can Catch Family Day weekend event in the area of the Wabamun Boat Launch pier.
- completed 2022-2023 Winter LakeKeepers water sampling (Dec/Jan/Feb/March). This activity was combined with wonderful opportunities for us to meet with lake stakeholders and share our mutual knowledge of lake issues.
- received confirmation of participation this upcoming summer in the "Tracking and forecasting of cyanobacterial blooms using remote sensing techniques under a changing climate" project. This project is funded by Alberta Innovates. Professor Rolfe Vinebrook of the University of Alberta is the project principal investigator. The project has numerous collaborators, including the University of Alberta, Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute, Alberta Lake Management Society, Alberta Environment and Protected Areas, Alberta Health, Associated Environmental and Pigeon Lake Watershed Association.
- advanced plans for an emergent aquatic vegetation (Bulrush) restoration demonstration project in summer 2023. This project arises from the WWMC's interest in shoreline erosion mitigation and preservation of ecosystem habitat.



Alberta Conservation Association's Kids Can Catch, Wabamun Lake, Family Day 2023

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- has become informed about upcoming timelines and processes for Wabamun Lake and watershed municipalities Land Use Bylaw revisions to advance alignment of bylaws/policies with protection of the health of Wabamun Lake and watershed.
- is reviewing the proposed Wabamun Waterfront Initiative to provide feedback/concerns with this lakeshore development.
- is continuing to work collaboratively with TransAlta to gain understanding of the hydrology component of the [Highvale Reclamation Plan \(PDF\)](#) application as it relates to the future health of Wabamun Lake.
- met with the technical advisory subcommittee of the Wabamun Watershed Management Plan Implementation Steering committee to advance development of surface water quality goals for Wabamun Lake.
- organized a WWMC Board presentation by Enbridge on the [Open Access Wabamun Carbon Hub](#) to gain understanding of potential impact of this initiative on Wabamun Lake and watershed. At this time, it is determined there is no apparent impact on Wabamun Lake.
- is planning for a Foreshore Integrated Management Planning initiative at Wabamun Lake to be completed by [Living Lakes Canada](#) (pending grant funding).
- posted [road salt management resources](#) on [wwmc.ca](#).
- began a long-awaited engagement with young students by making a presentation to the grade 7 science class at Wabamun school. The students were quite engaged learning about the concepts of watersheds and the Wabamun lake ecosystem. Thanks to teacher Brian Pon and principal Les Worthington for making this happen.



Parkland County Mayor Allan Gamble and Emily House, CAO of Summer Villages, with WWMC's Neil Fleming during March winter water sampling



Wabamun School Teacher Mr. Pon and WWMC's Neil Fleming speaking with Grade 7 students about lake watersheds

The [Wabamun Lake Watershed Management Plan](#) is guided by a vision:

The Wabamun Lake watershed is a healthy ecosystem with a robust economy and a thriving community that actively demonstrates its collective responsibility to steward the lake environment, for current and future generations.

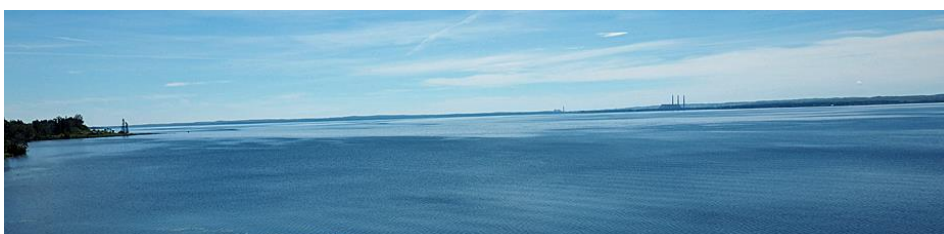
I thank each of the WWMC Board of Directors and Representatives and WWMC collaborative partners for partaking in this collective responsibility to steward the lake in a positive way, and I invite you, the readers of this Newsletter to also participate where possible (and many of you do) in the stewardship of Wabamun Lake.

We welcome your emails, feedback, and your interest in participating in projects, serving on the WWMC Board of Directors, or other lake stewardship volunteering.

Please visit [WWMC.ca](#), Contact us info@wwmc.ca, Follow Us On [Facebook](#), Tweet Us [@WabamunWMC](#).

We Are A CRA-Registered Charity!

After much work by our executive committee to comply with Canada Revenue Agency requirements, the WWMC is proud to announce that it is a registered charity, able to issue tax receipts for donations. We have also partnered with the charity CanadaHelps to help us collect donations and issue receipts. Please go to our [Donation page](#) for more information and indeed to make a donation. **Thank you.**



WWMC Membership Changes

As a result of the process of obtaining charity status from the Canada Revenue Agency, the WWMC changed its bylaws last year to comply with CRA as well as Alberta Society Act requirements. One of those changes requires members to renew their membership each year, in our case by June 30th. Therefore, all members of the Wabamun Watershed Management Council will have to renew their memberships by **June 30th 2023** if they wish to continue supporting the WWMC and receiving newsletters and notices about the lake, watershed and WWMC activities and events.

General Membership remains **free**. However, the membership application process has changed. You now must fill out a membership application form found on our website that includes required mailing address information. All new and renewed membership applications confirmed now will be good until June 30, 2024. Go to [Get Involved](#) for more information and to make your membership application.

2022-2023 Board of Directors

by Sue Styles

Last month, we introduced you to three members of our WWMC Board of Directors. In this Newsletter, we are pleased to highlight three more directors for their commitment and contributions to WWMC Board decisions and their supportive work to protect the health of Wabamun Lake and its watershed. Go to [Board of Directors](#) for a complete list of directors.



Randy Heil

Like so many on the lake, Randy's family has had a cabin at the Lake for a long time—for the past 60 years. The family is now into its 3rd generation who love and appreciate the lake lifestyle and want to ensure lake quality continues. Randy conducted a law practice in Spruce Grove prior to his retirement four years ago. In 2013 he acquired the Wabamun Home Hardware franchise.

Michelle Foster

Michelle has a vested interest in Wabamun Lake as she is the fourth generation of her family to be a part of the wonderful Seba Beach community. She has 17 years of experience working at an environmental consulting company and runs a veterinary practice with her husband. Michelle has served on the WWMC Board of Directors since 2020 and draws from her experience as an environmental scientist as well as previous experience working on "rewilding initiatives" with the City of Edmonton and participating in the Nature Alberta Living by Water program.



Parkland County Council—Rob Wiedeman

Rob Wiedeman replaces Councillor Natalie Birnie as Parkland County's representative on the Board. Rob is the Councillor for Division 5 that includes Wabamun. This is his first term back since 2010. Previously, Rob was Councillor from 2001 to 2007 and Mayor of Parkland County from 2007 to 2010. He has sat on many lake/watershed committees including Wabamun Watch from 2001 to 2010. Rob also represented the area during the CN oil spill and was active during the clean-up and aftermath. He has lived in Parkland County for 25 years and prior to that spent many days at the family cabin at Wabamun Beach next to the Provincial Park.

Lake Water Level Update

by Neil Fleming

The calendar says it is spring, so open water season at Wabamun is less than a few months away. However, the limited snow cover this winter and the low lake level last fall, point to another year of low water level, at least to start. So, it may be helpful to revisit the factors influencing lake level.

The only significant water inflow to the lake is precipitation that falls on the immediate watershed, or the area of land around the lake that collects rain and snow. The Wabamun watershed is small, being only about 3 times the actual size of the lake. There is no water course from outside the watershed to feed the lake.

The only outflow from the lake is a small stream at the east end which is governed by “The Weir” a simple depression in a paved road, set at an agreed upon 724.55 metres above sea level. Evaporation plays a much larger role in drawing down the lake than any outflow at Wabamun Creek even when it is flowing.



Outflow over The Weir, starting Wabamun Creek

During periods of heavy rain and snow, as seen a few years ago, water level may rise above the weir and conversely during periods of low precipitation, water level will drop below 724.55 m. Lake level is currently at about 724.20 m, meaning that no water has flowed from the lake for over 2 years. The height of the weir actually has a negligible effect on lake levels due to the small amount water allowed to flow over it when levels are high and has no effect when levels are low. It doesn’t matter what level the weir was set at, if there is no water entering the lake water levels would continue to drop.

Invariably, the conversation always leads to the TransAlta water treatment plant which only operates to replace water that would have naturally reached the lake had the Highvale mine not existed.

Contaminated water flowing from the strip mine is collected to prevent it from reaching the lake. It is diverted to their cooling ponds, treated and pumped to the lake in volumes equal to what would have naturally flowed to the lake from a pre-disturbance state. So, when operating as designed, the water treatment plant has zero impact on lake level. Any talk of increasing the volume of pumping is a nonstarter given the Government of Alberta’s desire to move away from any artificial control of water body levels.

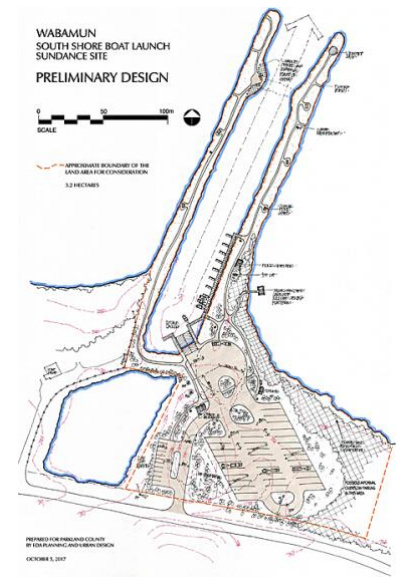
The takeaway is that the only thing that will raise the lake level is sustained periods of rain and snow, so may I suggest, you be careful what you wish for! For more information, go to our [Lake Water Level page](#).

South Shore Boat Launch Update

In the Summer 2022 *Lakescape*, we reported that the South Shore Boat Launch, located at the old Sundance launch on the south shore, should be completed by the spring of 2023. Unfortunately, the project has experienced some delays. As reported by David Cross, General Manager Agriculture, Community and Protective Services for Parkland County, the boat launch requires additional work, including dredging the lake bottom to ensure safe passage of vessels.

The dredging and other in-water activities cannot begin before July 1 to comply with the Provincial Restricted Access Period that protects fish during critical stages of their life cycles, such as spawning, egg incubation and fry emergence. The dredging is projected to take up to two weeks to complete. Once that work is completed the launch will be open for operations.

For additional information, please refer to the Parkland County [Wabamun Boat Launch web page](#) or contact prc@parklandcounty.com.



2017 Preliminary Design of the South Shore Boat Launch



Donors

The WWMC gratefully thanks the following people who have donated to the WWMC to continue our work protecting the health of Wabamun Lake: Kelly and Mary Aldridge, Margaret Bakker, Todd Baldwin, Rob Cowley, Sandy Drummond, Carol and Keith Epton, Neil Fleming, Colleen and David Judge, Kobylko Family, Doris Kent and John McIvor, Don Meredith, Julia and Tony Nelson, Cliff Richard, Robarts Family, Bill and Kate Russell, Denise and Bernie Wade. **Remember:** Donors to the WWMC will now receive a tax receipt. Go to our [Donate page](#) for more information.

Corporate Members

The WWMC thanks the following businesses, governments and organizations for joining the WWMC as corporate members and helping the council achieve its goals. Go to [Get Involved](#) for more information about Corporate Membership.

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Wabamun



Silver Members



Bronze Members

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