



COUNCIL 2014 Winter NEWSLETTER

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Greetings from your Summer Village Council!

As 2014 draws to a close and we continue to wait on important developments regarding the sewer, we want you to share with you some information we have learned about a very interesting future project!

A bright idea on the horizon is the Watershed Management Plan's next module to reduce run-off. This may sound a bit contradictory; after all, for those of us who remember recent drought years, don't we want to fill the lake with water in the spring and when we get rain storms?

Actually, Alberta Environment & Sustainable Resource Development's water sampling studies (see *Pigeon Lake Nutrient Balance*, Taichreb, 2014 available on PLWA's website) have shown that diffused surface water runoff contributes about half the amount of nutrients (including phosphorus that feeds blue-green algae) which go into Pigeon Lake from watershed lands in a year.

Some examples of water runoff are from: roof drains, swales to direct water to the lake, roadside ditches and culverts, springs, streams and wetlands. Also, the report says that another roughly 40% of the phosphorus comes from dust in the air. Snow and rain can cause this dust to be deposited on roof-tops and be ready to wash into the lake in a following storm. To prevent these nutrients from going into the lake, we need to look at the way water travels and find ways of trapping nutrients (and toxins) and filter them out of the water.

Water flowing over developed land tends to be more concentrated and moves faster, picking up more nutrients; but there are techniques that we can use to improve water quality and storm water management. For instance, if swales move water into wetlands and downspouts end in water gardens and we use rain barrels to water flower pots, these help slow down the flow of water and allow nutrients to be taken up by plants instead of feeding algae.

As a municipality, coming up with a storm-water drainage plan can play the same role in filtering nutrients while directing water away from cabins and lakehouses. So stay tuned, and look for information and ways to participate in the Watershed Management Plan.

Thinking about rain gardens and run-off will appeal to a lot of residents, especially our gardeners and nature-lovers, and provide another reason to think about next summer on those cold winter evenings. So we invite you to sit back with a warm drink and dream...!

Southside Wastewater Update

The South Side Wastewater Committee and the Regional Wastewater Committee are continuing to work hard moving forward a number of project elements crucial to the long-term success of the wastewater project.

The project work consists of four parts: the regional line, local collection systems, connections between the regional and local lines and individual lot connection.

Construction of the regional line between Mulhurst Bay Lagoon and the Village at Pigeon Lake is expected to be completed in early 2015. Funding for this project phase came from the Province of Alberta (92%) with the balance being shared by each of the six participating municipalities consisting of Ma-Me-O Beach, Norris Beach, Crystal Springs, Grandview, Poplar Bay and the County of Wetaskiwin, based on lot counts. Funding for the next phase of the regional line, from the Village to Poplar Bay, has been requested and construction will begin after funding has been secured.

The expansion of the lagoon required to accommodate the additional wastewater has already been completed.

Before final decisions can be made on the design and financing of the local collection systems, additional engineering work needs to be completed to determine the best technical solutions for the south side communities. As well, we need to determine the most efficient and cost-effective management structure for the south side regional collection system. The Regional Wastewater Committee, with representation from the participating south side summer villages, is currently reviewing management options.

Under a regional collaboration grant, the committee has hired MPE Engineering Ltd. to complete a preliminary design, servicing plan and capital construction budget for our proposed local wastewater collection system. We anticipate this work to be complete by early 2015.

Concurrent with progress on the technical design, work is well underway to determine the best way to manage the south side regional system in a reliable, cost effective and transparent manner over the long term. The committee is reviewing the management options to determine what solution will best meet the unique needs of the south side communities' wastewater collection system and what the system's ongoing operating will be.

As we move forward, keeping system costs as low as possible remains a priority. Representatives from each south side community are actively pursuing additional federal and provincial grants to offset the capital costs required to construct the local system within each community.

We are also investigating other financing options to keep the project affordable for all residents while giving us an effective, reliable system for decades to come. Once the engineering design and financing options are determined, we will be able to provide more accurate estimates of the local capital costs and proposed annual operating costs.

Finally, the committee is committed to keeping you updated throughout this project. Between now and the spring of 2015, the technical, management and financing options and recommendations are expected to be ready. We look forward to sharing those with you through this newsletter and each community's website. We also appreciate the questions some residents have posed. We will continue to provide timely answers to questions as the technical and financial information becomes more defined.

Regional Emergency Management Plan Update

The REMP has won the Alberta Municipal Excellence Award. A special congratulation goes to all of those who have helped build REMP and helping strengthen Alberta.

Alliance of Pigeon Lake Municipalities

Public Update on Lake Water Quality Initiatives from Brian Waterhouse APLM Chair

The Alliance of Pigeon Lake Municipalities (APLM) formed an In-Lake Technical Committee last November following investigative work into possible approaches to mitigate water quality problems at Pigeon Lake. The goal of this Committee is to develop a recommended Action Plan based on the scientific validity of alternatives that have merit. The Committee began with a workshop to discuss and review all alternative methods of dealing with blue-green algae at Pigeon Lake. Workshop attendance included Chris Teichreb and Ron Zurawell, scientists from the Alberta Government's Department of Environment & Sustainable Resource Development (SRD), two experts in lake management from the United States, representatives from the In-lake Technical Committee, Water Smart, the Alberta Lake Management Society, and the University of Alberta. It was recommended that if a feasible and environmentally safe in-lake treatment option is found, a pilot project should be considered to test if improvements in water quality are possible.

Alberta Environment SRD's recently completed a report titled Pigeon Lake Phosphorous Budget and similar reports will provide input into APLM's efforts to improve water quality. It is recognized that In-Lake options are only part of the solution to improving the water quality of Pigeon Lake; controlling the in-flow of nutrients is also required.

The APLM continues to work with the Pigeon Lake Watershed Association (PLWA), support the Pigeon Lake Watershed Management Plan, and encourages property owners in the Pigeon Lake Watershed to reduce nutrients from entering Pigeon Lake by referring to the recommendations listed on the PLWA website at www.plwa.ca.

Alta Gas Update

The gas lines for the Summer Village that were replaced this summer are now complete. There will be some clean-up that will be completed in the spring of 2015. We would like to thank all residents for their patience while this project was taking place.

We hope this message finds you all enjoying the festivities of the season with family and friends, and wish you all "a...."

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Doris, Grant and Kevin