

Alliance of Pigeon Lake Municipalities & Pigeon Lake Watershed Association Spring 2016 Update

The 5th Annual Pigeon Lake Leaders Session, held April 23rd, was jointly sponsored by the Alliance of Pigeon Lake Municipalities (APLM) and the Pigeon Lake Watershed Association (PLWA). Forty-seven leaders, healthy-lake partners and friends of Pigeon Lake gathered together.



Photo by Ron Taylor, Poplar Bay

“I saw the agents for change come together. I see action. It is going to take time, but this group is headed in the right direction.” Mark Smith, MLA for Pigeon Lake

Leader’s and supporters were updated; discussed progress and how we are working together and with the government on our Watershed Management Plan, and actions this year for the health of the watershed, the lake and its water quality.



Pigeon Lake Watershed Management Plan (PLWMP) Update

The Pigeon Lake Watershed Management Plan (PLWMP) is being developed by a committee of local municipal and watershed representatives, plus experts. The plan is being developed as part of the Provincial Water for Life Strategy working with the Battle River Watershed Alliance and the Government of Alberta.

Work on each PLWMP topic produces recommendations for Pigeon Lake, to be implemented by the different stakeholders. The PLWA (with SV support) implement the information and education recommendations. The municipalities (with APLM support) implement the recommended regulations and support communications, education and campaigns. Residents and businesses are encouraged to adopt the recommended practices and to support their municipal leaders to implement the new regulations.

Want to be part of the process? Be a PLWA member or a subscriber.

For more information:

www.aplm.org

www.plwmp.ca

www.plwa.ca

Watershed Action Update

Clean Runoff Project Summer – Part of PWMP Surface Water Management Topic 3

- Attend the **Clean Runoff Open House the morning of July 9th** am at Lakedell Ag Big Hall
- **Alberta Clean Runoff Guide** –The “official” draft will be made available at the Clean Runoff Open House.
- Residential **demonstration sites** are progressing. Leduc County is doing one at Mission Beach!
- **Rain Barrel Community Campaign!** Order by July 23rd via <https://rainbarrel.ca/PLWA> Pick up July 30th
- **Community Clean Runoff Groups** – Are forming to plan how to do the most in their community.
- **It is a big watershed.** It is a big project. We need people to help make it happen. Please consider volunteering – email Elynne at elynne.plwa@gmail.com or Susan at plwainfo@gmail.com. Thanks!
- **The PLWA is in the process of hiring summer staff to help with the Clean Runoff Project and to:**
 - o Organize the **Love the Lake Fun Family Day at the Provincial Park** – now set for **August 20th**
 - o Manage the **Aquatic Invasive Species Monitoring Program**
 - o Be a resource at the Lakedell Farmers Market’s and other events

Lawn Fertilizers Progress Update – PLWMP Topic 1

- 11 of 12 municipalities now have in place lawn fertilizer regulations prohibiting the use of fertilizers.
- **Healthy Lake-Lawn Program**
 - o An updated **[‘Spring Into Action Healthy-Lake Lawn’ email](#)** was sent out April 16th

Model Land Use Bylaw – PLWMP Topic 2 This ideal bylaw was created to guide municipalities to put into place lake smart land use by-laws for new or redevelopment within 800 metres around the lake.

Two Summer Villages now have lake smart land use by-laws. Two more Villages are close to bringing in new land use bylaws in and others are still in their review process.

Residents are encouraged to support their councils work on bringing in and enforcing these regulations.

In-Lake Update

The “In-Lake” Committee continues to investigate methods to reduce the nutrients already in the sediments and to help improve the water quality of Pigeon Lake. It was recommended that if feasible and environmentally safe in-lake treatment option(s) are found, a pilot project should be considered to test if improvements in water quality are possible.

- Phosphorous feeds the Blue Green Algae and since 57% of the Phosphorous source is from the lake sediment, it makes sense to look at options that would bind the phosphorous to the lake sediment. This option would involve some sort of chemical remediation like Phoslock or Iron Suppression. Last year, with volunteer help, information was gathered to determine if chemical remediation is an option worth pursuing.
- Certain species of zooplankton eat algae, so there could be an opportunity to bio-manipulate the trophic cascade for some benefit of the water quality. The work is on-going this year to see if it might benefit Pigeon Lake.
- Harvesting the Algae is another option to be reviewed. This option is just starting to be investigated to determine the cost benefits and net effect harvesting would have on reducing the phosphorous level and the frequency of blooms.

All recommendations will be based on the science for the protection of human health and the environment, which is of paramount concern. It must be understood that there is NO quick fix. It took 60 years to get where we are and could take many years to tip the scales back. 43% of the nutrient loading comes from the watershed. So, one thing that is recognized by all the organizations is that good watershed practices must be followed by all stake holders around the lake; otherwise the in-lake options will never succeed.