

PARCS UPDATE #9 – MAY, 2010

1. PROFILE OF A LAKE – DEVELOPMENT VERSUS ENVIRONMENT

At six kilometres long and half a kilometre wide, Lac Pelletier is a tiny jewel of water tucked among soft rolling hills of golden prairie. Located 43 kilometres southwest of Swift Current, this natural spring-fed lake is a welcome oasis surrounded by miles of arid farmland. It was a source of sustenance and survival in the early days, but times have changed. It is now a growing resort area with a regional park that draws people from around the southwest corner of the province, and with increasing frequency from points beyond. Development is flourishing and some long-time cabin owners are cashing in on the boom by selling out while other lake users, wanting to preserve their paradise, become stewards of the water.

"I guess what we're seeing now is what didn't happen here the last thirty years," says John Froese, who has served as president of the Lac Pelletier Regional Park Board for fifteen years. Froese is also president of the Saskatchewan Regional Parks Board and says that all parks in the province have experienced growth.

"We're noticing it more so further north along the natural tree lines because there are more lakes up there as well."

As a result of its new popularity, the cost of owning waterfront real estate at Lac Pelletier has skyrocketed, with some cabins selling for \$300,000. "The exorbitant prices indicate positive growth," says Froese. "We're not against what's happening but we are all a little astonished at the prices."

With the regional park getting busier every year, Froese says meeting the need for more campsites is always challenging. He says the increased traffic does help in creating enough funds for improvements and upgrades to infrastructure, but it can create some challenges as well. Froese admits that the water situation is heavily taxed at times with water sports, saying, "We hope that we don't have to put restrictions on the number or size of boats, but that may be coming."

Lac Pelletier Regional Park was created in 1964. The park runs down the east side of the lake and wraps around the south end. It has two major swimming and camping areas and boat launches. Darling's Beach has a store/restaurant, mini-golf and arcade, the park office, and a nine-hole golf course. The lake is stocked, making it a popular fishing destination in summer and winter. Summer also brings many water sports enthusiasts.



The entrance to Lac Pelletier Regional Park offers a sweeping view of this "tiny jewel of water tucked among the soft rolling hills of golden prairie".



Terry Unrau, better known as Clancy, and his partner MJ Kraft have operated Clancy's On The Beach, a combinations store and restaurant, for the past five years. They say they have all the business they can handle in the summer and they notice the lake getting busier in the winter as well.

"We have a lot of Alberta travelers coming through asking if anything's for sale," Kraft shares. "A lot of Saskatchewan people are coming back, too," Unrau adds.

To meet the demand, landowners are opening more lots in the cabin areas while some agricultural land is being converted to resort district. Lac Pelletier is not the only park in the area expanding. Two new resorts are slated for Reid Lake, to the west of Lac Pelletier. Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park, north of Swift Current, is also under pressure. Although it's a great economic boost for some, others are aware of the environmental impact this development could be having.

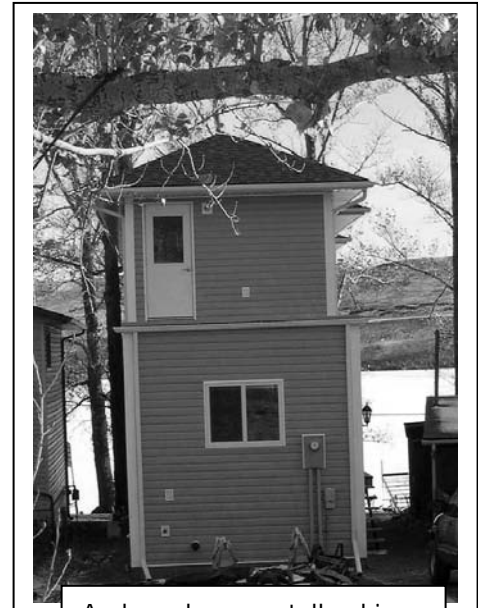
"It's important to think about the environment these days," Kraft says. "We want to see people coming here to enjoy the lake, but we also want there to be a lake here to enjoy."

Joan Williamson helped found the Swift Current Creek Watershed Stewards and the Lac Pelletier Water Stewards group in 1999. "My main reason was to raise awareness of the value of looking after the water and the environment, but mainly it was about the water," she says.

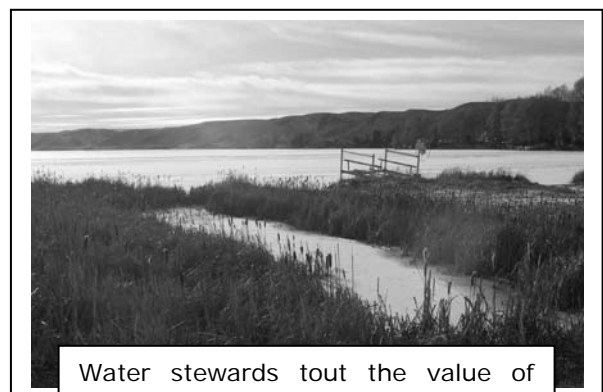
The lake stewards have done well-testing around the lake on a volunteer basis and have assisted with lake-water testing as well, providing annual reports on the results. Williamson feels her biggest achievement was getting a lagoon built which meets all environmental standards.

"We have to have a different attitude towards the environment. The lake stewards are not about policing, we're just trying to protect what's there. Our main objective was to raise awareness and I think that's been achieved."

*Note: This article has been reprinted from the Summer 2008 issue of **Prairies North**, with permission of the magazines editorial staff and the author, Barb Parchman. Photos and photo comments are 2009, by Lynne Saas.*



A brand new tall skinny cottage squeezed onto a narrow lot between existing cottages is indicative of the demand for rare lakefront property at Lac Pelletier.



Water stewards tout the value of bulrushes in marshy areas for their role in providing natural cleansing of lake water, thus helping to prevent the growth of algae. Bulrushes on the south end of Lac Pelletier have been removed to provide access to the water for the cottage owners in the new cottage subdivision.

2. BE ON GUARD AGAINST ZEBRA MUSSELS

Sask Power is concerned about the risk of zebra mussels being introduced into provincial water bodies. This concern became even more pronounced when the invasive species was found attached to a Saskatchewan boat recently purchased in the USA.

Zebra mussels are small freshwater mollusks that can spread rapidly once introduced into a lake or river, they lay up to one million eggs in a year. They grow so rapidly, zebra mussels have the potential to damage cooling systems in boat motors. They can also clog the intake pipes used to supply water to cottages, cities and Sask Power's power generating plants. Zebra mussels could also do serious damage to lakes and river ecosystems, impacting native clams and disrupting commercial and recreational fisheries¹.

At the 2010 Parcs Convention we hope to include a session describing things we can do to prevent the spread of zebra mussels in our province.

3. WE NEED YOUR INPUT FOR CONVENTION 2010

In the spring of 2009 we sent you a questionnaire asking what you needed to learn more about at the Parcs fall convention. You told us that you were most interested in hearing about:

- Protecting our lakes and our beaches.
- Dealing with noise, nuisance, dogs, ATV's, snowmobiles.
- Boat launches, boat docks, marinas and boat lifts,
- Recycling, garbage, landfills, sewage disposal and lagoons.
- Bylaw enforcement officers

So we planned workshop sessions involving these topics.

Visit our website at **Parcs-sk.com** and click on **Events** to read all about the sessions at our Spring Workshop.

Once again, we are polling you to hear what you need from the Parcs fall convention. Do you want us to revisit some of the previous topic? Are you especially interested in any of these?

- Policies (setting and maintaining bylaws)?
- Hiring, training and evaluating staff?
- Writing grant proposals?
- Communication (websites, newsletters)?
- Community planning?
- Safety standards for playground equipment?
- Subdivision planning and approval?
- More on policing?
- Fire protection, EMO planning?
- Infrastructure (roads, lagoons, landfill)?
- Services (potable water, garbage disposal)?

Mark your Calendars

PARCS Convention 2010

October 14, 15, 16,

Saskatoon Inn

The input form on the back of this sheet is designed to be open ended. Now that you know that we are listening, please tell us your needs. What topics would you most like to have included at our fall convention? We need replies by July 1st!

¹ Taken from the Sask Power Shand Greenhouse Review, Fall 2009, Volume XIII, Issue II

To: Parcs Convention Planning Committee
Email your replies to: saas@sasktel.net – or -
Fax this page to: 854-4412

From: _____ (Resort Community)

1. The three most important topics that our resort community would like to have addressed at the 2010 convention are:

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2. The Convention Planning Committee is considering having a “Sharing Symposium” where representatives from resort communities would sit at a table and be prepared to share their experiences about a particular topic with other delegates who drop by that table to ask questions. We have already had delegates who have volunteered to share about:

- How they decommissioned a land fill.
- How they set up a supervised recycling program.
- How they moved the quads away from the residential area in their village.

Do you have an interesting or useful experience about which you would be willing to answer questions from fellow delegates?

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Please, we need your replies to both questions by July 1st.

Have you sent in your 2010 membership fees yet?

The fee structure for Parcs is based on the number of cottages in your community (see below).

- ___ \$50 for 1-30 cottages (2 voting delegates)
- ___ \$125 for 31-49 cottages (3 voting delegates)
- ___ \$195 for 50-149 cottages (4 voting delegates)
- ___ \$265 for 150-249 cottages (5 voting delegates)
- ___ \$385 for 250-499 cottages (6 voting delegates)
- ___ \$550 for 500+ cottages (7 voting delegates)

Organized Hamlets should notify their RM's to forward payment. Resort Villages pay directly, to:

Provincial Association of Resort Villages of Saskatchewan
Box 52
Elbow, SK, S0H 1J0

Our Cover Story

“At our cottage we emphasize relaxation. Consequently, I have a basket full of magazines in the bathroom to entertain guests who are using the facilities. I keep the basket full of current and back issues of **Prairies North**. Invariably, a guest will emerge having clipped out the subscription notice from the inside of the magazine and commenting, ‘I just love this magazine.’

Subscriptions to Prairies North are my favourite Christmas gift.” - *Lynne*

Thanks to Prairies North for sharing the front page story.

To order your own subscription, visit their website at www.prairiesnorth.com or email leora@prairiesnorth.com