

PARCS UPDATE #30 – OCTOBER, 2012



OUR FIRST EDITORIAL EDITION

1. A NEW FEATURE FOR OUR NEWSLETTERS

We at PARCS are hoping to implement a new feature as part of our monthly newsletters. We are going to ask PARCS members to submit opinion pieces about issues important to their communities. We are hoping to hear a variety of opinions on a variety of topics. We'd like to include one editorial in each of our future newsletters and we hope that the majority come from you!

To get the ball rolling, we are including two editorials in this edition.

- On page 2, Sherry Jimmy speaks out about the new Wildfire Act and her concerns about the implications for rural municipalities and for their resort communities.
- On page 3, Cliff Schmidt, who is a cottage owner on Wakaw Lake, tells why changes are needed to division boundaries in Saskatchewan rural municipalities.

2. MEMBERS TALKING TO MEMBERS

- "We're building a lagoon for a fraction of the price and we're helping the community"
- "We teamed up with our neighbouring community to find out how we could build a lagoon together"
- "Lagoons aren't the only alternative."
- "We rolled up our sleeves and made a policy about docks on our lakes."
- "It took a lot of doing, but we rebuilt our shoreline."
- "We used a new gathering place to foster a new sense of community."
- "We searched for new ways to get people to help build our community."
- *And much more – at the Members Fair on Saturday afternoon at the convention.*
- *It's not too late to register.*

In this edition:

- The new Wildfire Act will be tough on those communities with the least capacity. **p. 2**
- Do we need *Rep by Pop* in Saskatchewan rural municipalities? **p. 3**
- It's not too late to email your convention registration. **p. 4-5**

Email your registrations for convention
(saas@sasktel.net)

Or fax the registration form found on the last page. **(854-4412)**

Pay at the door.

3. GUEST EDITORIAL - ‘WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT’: Shifting Responsibility to the Rural Municipality

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment has recently unveiled its plans to replace *The Prairie and Forest Fires Act, 1982*. The new legislation, titled *The Wildfire Act (Saskatchewan)*, is progressive in that it focuses on preparedness and prevention – why wouldn’t we want to prevent forest fires from happening? The legislation also shifts responsibility from the provincial government to the rural municipality, and to industrial and commercial operations.

While ‘less government’ may be welcome, the establishment of regulatory standards, their enforcement, and disaster response (that which exceeds the capacity of the local government) is still very much a provincial government responsibility.

Changes proposed under *The Wildfire Act* and their potential impacts include:

CHANGE IN LEGISLATION	IMPACT
Removal of the 4.5 km ‘buffer zone’ adjacent to provincial forests, including privately owned and occupied Crown land	Rural municipalities will become responsible for wildfire suppression in this 4.5 km zone. Is there sufficient CAPACITY?
Provincial Burning Permits will no longer be needed in the 4.5 km ‘buffer zone’, to be replaced with a Burning Notification System	Many RM’s require Burning Permits and will continue to do so, but will the provincial notification system alert the RM of a planned burn?
Industrial and commercial Operations within the 4.5 km buffer zone will need to adhere to additional new legislation <i>The Wildfire and Preparedness Code Chapter</i>	Industrial and Commercial operations, including Crown Corporations, will be responsible for planning, prevention, preparedness (including liability), and damages for fires, including any costs incurred by the Ministry of Environment

Although rural municipalities have always been responsible for fire suppression on RM lands adjacent to a provincial forest, they now will be responsible for privately owned and occupied crown lands as well. One could make the argument that lands adjacent to a provincial forest actually pose a higher risk for wildfires than other lands. There is no denying that the new legislation and the prevention, preparedness, and suppression of wildfires place the responsibility for risk management and mitigation directly on municipal governments.

Once again, PARCS raises the issue of CAPACITY and potential impacts on resort communities, many of whom are dependent on their rural municipality for protective services which they lack the capacity and jurisdiction to manage on their own.

Submitted by - Sherry Jimmy, PARCS 2nd Vice President, resident of the Organized Hamlet of Bayview Heights, and recently re-elected to the Council of the RM of Meota.

4. GUEST EDITORIAL – REPRESENTATION BY POPULATION: Especially needed in rural municipalities with cottage communities

As you may be aware, at the present time there are two electoral boundary reviews underway in Saskatchewan. Both federal and provincial electoral boundaries are being reviewed with changes to both being proposed. These reviews are triggered automatically every ten years following the release of information gathered by the national census, which shows population shifts/growth within the country. Unfortunately we have no such automatic trigger at the municipal level in rural Saskatchewan, with most rural municipalities operating with the same divisional boundaries that were put into place one hundred years ago, well before many of our unorganized lakeside communities came into being.

A keystone upon which Canadian democracy was founded is “Representation by Population (Rep by Pop)”. Municipal councils do have the ability to review boundaries and ask the minister responsible to alter them, but in practice this seldom happens. What happens more often is that voters become dissatisfied with divisional boundaries which no longer evenly distribute the vote and are forced into an adversarial approach in order to have the boundaries altered.

In our case, the Property Owners of Wakaw Lake (POWL) suspect that the two divisions of our municipality that encompass the unorganized lakeside communities surrounding the lake may contain of up to seventy percent of the eligible voters of the Rural Municipality. Yet these ratepayers elect only two or the six seats on council¹.

To alter the boundaries against the council’s wishes requires that a petition be drawn up and signatures be obtained from eligible voters, forcing council to conduct a referendum on the issue. This adversarial process tends to spawn animosity, pitting rural residents against the city residents who own property in the unorganized lakeside communities. If instead, the province required periodic reviews of divisional boundaries in rural municipalities (similar to Ward system reviews in urban settings) the animosity surrounding forced changes could be avoided.

Submitted by – Cliff Schmidt, cottage owner on Wakaw Lake and member of the Property Owners of Wakaw Lake (POWI).

The following resolution is coming before the upcoming convention:

Whereas: Unorganized lakeside communities deserve equal representation based on population on Rural Municipal Councils, and

Whereas: Currently there exists no process to trigger an automatic review of voter distribution within Rural Municipality Divisions and the current method of petition and referendum creates hostility for those engaged in the process and tends to pit permanent rural residents against seasonal lakeside community residents, therefore

Be it resolved: That PARCS lobby the provincial government to enact legislation calling for periodic reviews of rural municipal divisional boundaries to ensure that divisions reasonably respect the voter distribution within the rural municipality.

Moved by - The Property Owners of Wakaw Lake.

¹ Note: we are unable to determine the exact percentages as the RM does not maintain a voters list

AGENDA – PARCS CONVENTION 2012**FRIDAY OCTOBER 12th**

1:00 to 1:30 pm – *First registration at the Manitou Inn, Manitou Room*

1:30 to 5:00 pm – Two Concurrent Strands

	<i>Manitou Room</i>	<i>Renown Room</i>
1:30 - 3:00 pm	<p>New Councillors' Workshop</p> <p>This workshop will cover Module 1 of the Municipal Leadership Program: <u>Municipal Leaders' Roles and Responsibilities</u> - Council procedures and policy decision-making.</p>	<p>PARCS Position Paper 2012</p> <p>This workshop is designed as a catch-up session for those cottage communities that were unable to attend one of the summer workshops.</p>
3:00 - 3:30 pm	<i>Nutrition Break</i>	
3:30 - 5:00 pm	<p>New Councillors' continued</p> <p>For more information about the Municipal Leadership Program visit their website at www.mldp.ca</p>	<p>Grant Writing Workshop</p> <p>This workshop is offered by the Municipal Capacity Development Program.</p>

6:30 to 7:00 pm – *Late registration at Danceland*

7:00 pm – President's Banquet at Danceland (*complimentary bus to and from Danceland*)

- After Dinner Speaker - **Hamilton Greenwood's** Photo Essay on the Glory of Saskatchewan

SATURDAY OCTOBER 13TH - *All sessions, Manitou Room at the Manitou Inn*

8:00 a.m. – *Complimentary hot breakfast*

9:00 a.m. - PARCS Business

- Report on the 2012 Summer Workshops
- Members' role in lobbying government
- Revised PARCS bylaws
- Regional Meetings

10:00 a.m. - *Nutrition Break*

10:30 a.m. – PARCS Annual Meeting

11:30 a.m. – Luncheon speaker – **Jason Matity** producer and reporter of CTV's "Reel Em In"

Noon – *Complimentary lunch*

1:00 to 2:30 p.m. – Members Fair

- **Theme One – The challenge of sewage of treatment**
- **Theme Two – The challenge of building community**
- **Theme Three – The challenge of managing the lakeshore**
- Presentations will be followed by questions from convention delegates

2:30 to 3:00 p.m. – *Nutrition Break*

3:00 to 4:30 p.m. – Lake Management Plans

- **Dr. Bob Patrick** of the University of Saskatchewan will speak about the **capacity of a lake** to withstand the pressures of development along the lake's shoreline and the role that cottage communities can play in protecting our lakes.
- **Ralph Leibel** from the Planning Branch of the Ministry of Government Relations will explain how cottage communities' Development Plans can include bylaws

PARCS CONVENTION 2012 - REGISTRATION FORM

Name of Community: _____

Contact email: _____

Contact phone number: _____

Registration includes all workshops, banquet, Saturday breakfast and lunch.

Number of attending **members:** _____ x \$120 = \$ _____

Number of attending **non-members:** _____ x \$220 = \$ _____

Number of extra banquet tickets: _____ x \$20 = \$ _____

(No spousal convention packages available)

Number of half-day registrations _____ x \$40 = \$ _____

(Please specify number attending below)

_____ attending Friday afternoon only

_____ attending Saturday morning only

_____ attending Saturday afternoon only

(Half-day registrations include coffee break but no meals.)

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

Names of voting delegates:

Friday concurrent sessions: Number attending:

New Councillors' Workshop: _____ **OR** PARCS Position Paper catch-up : _____

Grant Writing Workshop (MCDP): _____

RESERVE YOUR HOTEL ROOM FOR CONVENTION

- Brown's Motor Inn, 946-2863
1-866-423-9504
- Harmony House B&B. 946-2707
www.harmonyhousesask.com
- Lakeside Country Inn
946-3456, 1-888-946-2211
- Manitou Acres B&B
1-800-946-4027
- Manitou Retreat Motel
946-33634
- Salty Surf Inn, 946-2905
1-800-946-2110
www.saltysurf.com
- Serenic View B&B, 946-3821
www.serenicviewbandb.ca
- Shady Rest Motel, 946-2741
www.shadyrestsask.com

There may still be a few rooms left at the Manitou Springs Hotel and Spa. **946-2233.**