



To Enhance, Preserve & Protect Pigeon Lake & Its Watershed

PLWA 2009 Activities AGM Summary

In 2007/2008 the PLWA was established, in its current form, including the recruitment of directors and members, raising funds, establishment of stewardship and other programs, developing relationships and providing a baseline for the Association's future activities including water quality assessment, the initial State of the Watershed Report and a shoreline video-graphical assessment.

The Mission of the PLWA is to enhance, preserve and protect Pigeon Lake and its watershed as a healthy and environmentally sustainable ecosystem for current and future generations. The Association has a strong priority to educate and inform the public with advertisements in local papers and a website specifically created to improve communication with the membership, policy makers and general public about initiatives, issues and concerns in the Pigeon Lake watershed. (www.pigeonlakewatershedassociation.com) Please see the website for details.

In 2008/2009 the PLWA continued to advocate on behalf of members and build a strong base for the future activities of the Association and the enhancement of stewardship activities and programs.

- Advocating for the rapid implementation of the Regional Wastewater System expansion. The province has approved funding for the detailed engineering of the option selected by both counties and the summer villages not yet on the regional system. In the interim, most summer villages are requiring ratepayers to convert to holding tanks, to protect the lake and to be ready for the regional system, once implemented.
- Publishing *Guide To Holding Tanks* for use by residents when installing a tank which can be hooked up to the future regional collection system.
- Working with the Province of Alberta; recommending that in the Provincial Park they install a tank and use pump outs until it can be attached to the regional wastewater system.
- Reviewing in-lake techniques to mitigate the blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) and lake water level problems.
- Participating in the development and endorsing of the recommendations of the Pigeon Lake Fisheries Management Plan.
- Completing a review, by the Environmental Law Centre, of all laws, regulations and policies impacting Pigeon Lake and its watershed
- Responding to high density residential development proposals and oil & gas operations which have a negative effect on the watershed. This includes a request to renew a license to withdraw water from the aquifer which charges the springs that feed the lake. To date, it has not been approved for renewal.
- Gaining representation, on behalf of the PLWA on the Boards of the Battle River Watershed Alliance, (which is the designated Water Planning Advisory Counsel for the basin that Pigeon Lake falls within) and the Alberta Stewardship Network.

- Attending and presenting at local and national stewardship workshops and conferences to expand the Association's learning and networks.
- Assessing the Province's *Land Use Frame Work*, and attending the County of Wetaskiwin's review of their Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw and the County of Leduc's regional area structure plan for the north west portion of the lake

In 2008/2009 the Association expanded stewardship events and programs, including:

- Determining the "Top 10" things residents can do to reduce their impact on the lake.
- Conducting spring and fall Shoreline Clean-ups and a Christmas Creature Count.
- Partnering with the Federation of Alberta Naturalists, *Living By Water Program*, to sponsor
 - Homesite Consultations – free, confidential, on-site review of first and second row cottage properties to inform residents about positive actions that they can make to their home and yard to maintain healthy shorelines and easily reduce impacts on the lake to improve water quality and habitat.
 - Environmental Workshops – Healthy Shorelines 101, to help shoreline and back lot property owners learn best management practices of shoreline living including riparian setbacks, onsite water management and more.
- Partnering with the Counties of Leduc and Wetaskiwin to sponsor, for agricultural residents.
 - Riparian health assessments, Environmental Farm Plan Workshops, on farm water quality testing, stewardship programs, water management, and Alberta Agriculture's Growing Forward Initiatives.
 - Horticulture including Shelterbelt Workshops, tree orders, tree and plant disease, insects and pruning.
- Attending Farmers' Markets, Fairs and speaking at summer village Annual Information Meetings
- Sponsoring Environmental Farm Plan, Shelterbelt and Working Well Workshops and the Love the Lake Pledge – change does not happen overnight; however, if all residents made an number of small changes to their behaviours and to their watershed properties, shoreline habitat and water quality would improve without compromising a resident's lifestyle
- The PLWA Board determined that initial memberships, in 2007 were valid for a two year period, thus 2009 marks the Association's first membership renewal. In addition to individual and family memberships, the summer villages of Argentia, Golden Days and Itaska purchased memberships on behalf of their ratepayers. Due to privacy concerns they can not provide individual's personal information to the Association and have asked their ratepayers to provide their information directly to the PLWA. Membership grew, in 2007/08 to over 1,600 including individuals and those summer village ratepayers for whom the Association received personal information. To date almost 1,000 individuals have renewed their memberships excluding those for who memberships were purchased by their summer village and who have not provided their information to the Association.
- The PLWA received a County of Leduc environmental award and was nominated for the prestigious Emerald Award in recognition of is efforts over the past two tears.
- At a special meeting in 2009 PLWA members approved amending Articles of Association and the PLWA gained registration as a Canadian charity under the Income Tax Act.

During the last year a number of PLWA directors retired. On behalf of the Board of Directors and members of the Association we would like to thank Ray Capowski, WD (Bill) Grace, Peggy Juchli, Brian Johnson, Charles Rees, Eric Seneka and Erwin Zotzman for their dedication and service.

Peggy Juchli has continued with the TD Lakeshore Clean-up this Fall and may be contacted at 780-389-4260 to join the clean-up action on individual beaches. Last year over 2000 pounds of garbage was removed from the lake.

In 2009 Board developed a “game plan” which included five major initiative areas:

1. Restoration & Preservation of Natural Ecosystems
2. Water Quality
3. Stakeholders Engaged In Best Environmental Practices
4. Balanced Fisheries Management
5. PLWA Sustainability

For each initiative the PLWA developed longer term objectives, measures of success and specific activities to be completed

In 2009/2010 will be reaching out to watershed stakeholders to encourage them to get involved and implement measures which can help save the lake. Major activities planned include:

- Continue to review in-lake treatment techniques to improve water quality and lake levels.
- Advocate for rapid implementation of the Regional Waste Water System.
- Continue with the second phase of the Environmental Law Centre review – working cooperatively with lake municipalities to identify and implement uniform best regulatory practices.
- Sponsor a cumulative effects Integrated Watershed Management Plan to engage stakeholders to identify issues, develop mitigation strategies and to implement the strategies and measures identified.
- Continuing to expand stewardship and education programs to provide watershed residents and visitors with the information they need to reduce nutrient loading going into the lake.
- Providing input into the province’s Land Use Framework and both counties’ development plans.
- Support the implementation of the Pigeon Lake Fisheries Management Plan.
- Continue to implement the Board’s game plan and continue to develop PLWA practices.

Membership fees fund the Association’s communication activities but the PLWA relies on donations and grants to fund programs and activities. Our plan for 2009/2010 contains even more aggressive measures to enhance, preserve and protect the lake, including the expenditure of funds. Members who have not yet renewed are encouraged to do so and all members are encouraged to make tax deductible donations to fund the Association’s activities for which income tax receipts will be issued.

YOU CAN HELP BY:

- Identifying and implementing ten things that you can do to reduce your impact on the lake and its watershed and the environment.
- Getting involved in Pigeon Lake Watershed Association and other stewardship activities.
- Attending the educational activities sponsored by the Association and applying what you learn.
- Serving as a good example to your neighbours and visitors, encouraging them to do the same.
- Expressing your concerns to your elected representatives of the municipal (summer village and country), provincial and federal levels of government.