

Environmentally friendly practices for lakeshore residents



Lakes & lakeshores should be enjoyed in their natural state.

With an increasing number of lakeshore property owners undertaking small 'clean up' projects, we are slowly losing our natural shorelines. Residents can upset the delicate balance of a lake's ecosystem by how they manage their land.



Aquatic Vegetation: While many people may consider aquatic plants, such as reeds and cattails weeds, these plants play an important ecological role in maintaining the health of our lakes by:

- stabilizing the bed and shore;
- reducing soil movement and erosion; and
- providing habitat areas for fish, waterfowl and other wildlife.



Plants & Trees: Removal of trees or plants should be kept to a minimum. The dense, interlocking roots of plants and trees in or surrounding the lake:

- act as filters by trapping sediment and slowing run-off that can carry chemicals such as pesticides into the lake;
- hold the soil in place; and
- stabilize the bank.



Fertilizers: Use of pesticides or fertilizers on your lawn can damage the lake as the residue makes its way into the water. In addition, fertilizers promote algae growth in the lake.

Other resources: For detailed information on how you can help protect Alberta's natural water bodies, refer to the Alberta Conservation Association's *Caring for Shoreline Properties* publication.



"Where people are the key."

www.lacombecounty.com

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living at the lake

New reserve policy works to protect the public lands surrounding our lakes & rivers.



Protecting our lakes & rivers for future generations

Each year brings new residents and residential properties to the areas surrounding our lakes and rivers.

This increased demand puts pressure on the lakeshore and the natural habitat of these water bodies.

A new reserve policy was adopted by Lacombe County Council in December 2006. The policy aims to manage the County's reserve lands, protect lakeshores and public land, and provide everyone access to enjoy these areas.

Public lands at the lake

The beds and shores of most of our lakes are owned by the Province of Alberta, and are a resource for all Albertans to enjoy.

Lacombe County is responsible for two sources of public land near these water bodies: Environmental reserves and Municipal reserves.

Environmental Reserves (ER)

Land that is managed by the local municipality and intended to protect the natural environment, people and property from hazardous conditions (such as flooding), and provide public access to or along lakes and rivers.

Municipal Reserves (MR)

Land that is managed by the local municipality and intended to provide recreation facilities for the use and enjoyment of local residents and the general public. MR may provide water access and undeveloped green spaces that act as buffers between different land uses.

Managing reserve lands

Appropriate uses for ER:

- ER lands will generally be left in their natural condition
- Public trails may be developed where suitable
- Along lakeshores and rivers, a limited number of public pathways and stairs may be permitted to allow safe access to the water
- Winter storage of boat docks and boat lifts may be approved where environmental conditions are suitable

Appropriate uses for MR:

- Recreation facilities, such as sports fields, play structures and skating rinks
- Associated facilities, such as parking lots and washrooms
- Public trails
- Natural green spaces
- Winter storage of boat docks and boat lifts

How could the policy affect you?

You may be required to remove an encroachment or unauthorized structure.

Private facilities and structures, such as sheds, fences, gardens, driveways, pathways, stairs, decks, lawns and fire pits, are frequently found on environmental and municipal reserve lands.

Property owners will be required to remove the facility or structure if they are causing, or are at risk of causing, environmental damage, or if the County deems the facility obstructs public access to the reserve lands.

Where the County allows an encroachment to remain on a reserve, you will be required to enter into a license agreement.

In some instances, the County may consider allowing an encroachment to remain on a reserve and enter into a license agreement. The property owner

will need to pay a fee to the County for the encroachment to remain on County land.

The agreement will outline: the term of the license; the permitted use of the building or structure; insurance requirements; and a stipulation that minor maintenance may be completed, but the building or structure cannot be improved, expanded or replaced and when it reaches the end of its lifespan, the owner is required to demolish it and reclaim the land.

Encroachments & unauthorized structures on municipal reserves

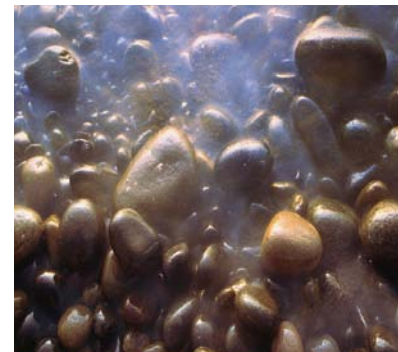
- Property owners will be asked to remove unauthorized materials and structures and reclaim the lands within one year of notification.
- Property owners who fail to remove the encroachment or reclaim the land may be responsible for the costs of Lacombe County completing

the work.

- In unusual or extenuating circumstances, the County may allow a structure to remain on reserve lands through a license agreement.

Encroachments & unauthorized structures on environmental reserves

- Landowners will be asked to remove private facilities such as lawns, decks, fire pits and storage sheds.
- Lands must be reclaimed by October 31, 2008.
- Existing trails, pathways and stairs may be licensed. License holders will be required to maintain access facilities in a safe and environmentally responsible manner, and provide liability insurance.
- Stairs must meet building code safety requirements or be certified by a professional engineer.



The role of community associations

Community associations can and will be an important part of how environmental and municipal reserve lands will be managed.

As these lands are intended for the enjoyment of the general public and adjacent landowners,

their maintenance must address safety issues and appropriate uses for specific areas.

These groups will play an important role in working with the County to plan for the appropriate uses of reserve areas.