Environmental Advisory Committee

Winter Newsletter 2022

TO PROMOTE EDUCATION, ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS, AND PROVIDE ADVICE FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE VILLAGE OF SPRING LAKE

Seven Ways To Be Water Wise – Tips from the National Garden Bureau and Gardener's Supply Co.

- Use organic matter such as compost to increase water holding capacity of soil
- Using a soaker hose is more productive than a sprinkler as it applies water directly to the soil at the roots
- Using mulch prevents weeds from growing and soaking up the water. Organic mulch is best such as grass clipping, evergreen needles or shredded leaves
- Use a rain barrel, a 1,000 square foot roof collects approximately 625 gallons of water from one inch of rain
- Group plants with similar needs together eg: amount of sun or shade plants need
- Plant drought tolerant plants as they will get the water they need from rain, plant native plants that are adapted for your area
- Stay on top of gardening tasks such as weeding, thinning and pruning; it adds to the health of your plants, will require less water and over all reduce the amount of gardening chores.

Mayatan Water Study

There are several dozen small kettle lakes located on the post glacial landscape of Parkland County known as the Carvel Pitted Delta. There are approximately 25 named and 70 unnamed lakes in this area. These small lakes and their associated landscapes are considered to have unique ecological value by local and provincial governments, as well as conservation agencies. Spring Lake is one of these named lakes within this area.

During the summer of 2021, the Alberta Lake Management Society (ALMS) and the Mayatan Lake Management Association (MLMA) successfully delivered an expanded, community-based water quality survey program for 44 of these small lakes. This survey was a collaborative effort supported by several partners, including ALMS, MLMA, the Land Stewardship Centre of Canada (LSCC), the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA), the Stony Plain Fish and Game Association (SPFGA), and the Department of Earth Sciences, University of Alberta. Spring Lake was included in this water quality survey program. The final report came out in May 2022. https://alms.ca/carvel-pitted-delta/ is the website to log onto to get the full report. It is very interesting as to the chemical make up of our lake and the comparison of Spring Lake to the other lakes that were surveyed.

Wild Boars

As many of us read this spring, there is an abundance of wild boars that are roaming our province, along with other provinces in Canada. These animals rove in groups, (which are called sounders), they are very dangerous and are quite destructive to the environment. If you see any wild boars, especially within the Village, please stay clear of them and report them to the proper authorities. To report a sighting of wild boar, or signs of wild boar, safely take a picture of it (them), note the location, and fill out an online reporting form – or call 310-3276 (FARM).

Black Knot

This spring, we posted information on our community photo boards about black knot and how to safely deal with it within our community and in your yards. Unfortunately, it is a type of disease that likes to attach itself to fruit trees and some rose bushes. It is spread via spores by rain, wind, birds, and insects that have had contact with infected trees. The spores spread in the spring and infect other trees, then in the summer the infection creates green swellings at the tip of the branches. In the following years these swellings blacken and enlarge. To control black knot, each infected branch should be cut at least 6 to 8 inches below the knot. It is important to try pruning at the start of the branch instead of leaving a stump. After cutting branches with black knot, ensure your cutting blades are disinfected with a bleach spray between each cut. Unfortunately, diseased branches can still release spores for up to four months after they have been removed, so it is important to bag and dispose of them properly. It is important for the control of this tree disease that you inspect your property each year.

Fall Festival

Again this year the EAC participated in the community Fall Festival. Our table showcased three different types of nesting boxes, there were handouts about insects, owls and bats, along with a show and tell of hatched loon eggs and loon pamphlets. It was interesting speaking with those who stopped by to say hello and to see what we are all about.

Kids by the Shore

This is a program we offered for a Canada Day Celebration 2022 in partnership with the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA). Unfortunately, it had to be canceled as there were less than 10 children registered for the program. We will however, be in touch with the NSWA again in the spring and try to bring this very interesting program back in June. Watch for advertising in the spring.

Living With Beavers Presentation

In June this year, we sponsored a Living With Beavers presentation put on by the Cows and Fish organization. The presentation consisted of learning how Beavers are an integral part of living, working, and playing near water even though at times their activities conflict with those living by water areas. This presentation provided an introduction to beavers and management options. There were discussions about beaver basics - Ecology, natural history, and their watershed connections, beaver challenges in regards to human and beaver conflicts, along with some ideas for beaver management, how to co-exist with them along with discussions on how others are dealing and living with beavers.

Septic Sense Webinar

The County of Parkland again this year offered a webinar on how to keep your septic system healthy and in good repair. We have worked with them in presenting this very worthwhile and educational workshop. It is offered most years in September; hopefully next year it will be in person again.

Loon Update and Birds Canada Information

There were four nesting pairs of loons again this year and five chicks were hatched. Four of these chicks survived to the end of the season.

Birds Canada have said that a lake this size would ordinarily support one or two pairs of loons. We are fortunate to have four breeding airs and this is likely because of the island which breaks up our lake into four distinct areas. This is important because loons are very territorial. The island also helps protect nests from predators as does the nesting platform that we put out every year.

Birds Canada has been counting and tracking loons in Canada for 41 years. We are p;roud to say that for the last 31 of those 41 years, data has been collected land reported to them by one of our EAC members.

Birds Canada also asks loon survey volunteers to provide information about other bird species seen or heard at or around out lake this summer. The following birds were seen or heard by members of the EAC this summer and were reported to Birds Canada: Blue Heron, Canada Geese, Common Merganser, Hooded Merganser, Ring Billed Gull, Common Tern, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Double Breasted Cormorant, Red Necked Grebe, Horned Grebe, Mallard, American White Pelican, Tree Swallow, Spotted Sandpiper, Red Winged Blackbird, American Bittern, American Coots, Green Winged Teal and White Heron (also known as an Egret) and Trumpeter Swans this fall. This is just a sampling of the water birds we have seen or heard this summer, above the usual birds we have such as the Chickadee, Pileated Woodpeckers, Hairy Woodpeckers, Downy Woodpeckers, Robins, and so forth.

Ideas to Keep Your Paradise Intact

- Keep your lot well treed – never clear cut

● Protect shoreline vegetation; replant areas lacking shrubs and trees with native species
● Start a buffer strip by leaving some grass uncut near the water
● Avoid spilling fuels, antifreeze, paint thinner or other chemicals on land or water
● Do not use fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides
● Use only phosphate free soaps, detergents, and cleaners in your home
● Pump out your septic tank regularly – every two to three years if you have a field system
● Extend the life of your septic system by avoiding tank additives and minimizing water consumption
● Refuel your boat with care – do not spill
● Watch your boat's wake – it causes erosion and is a disturbance to birds nesting on the water's edge

EAC's reminders - Ways to Help the Earth

- Prevent erosion by mulching and using gutters and downspouts to redirect rain
- Use sleep timers for electronics
- Compost extras such as egg cartons, napkins, fire place ash along with your regular food scraps
- Do not let taps run when brushing teeth or washing dishes
- Collect rain water
- Do not idle your vehicles
- Recycle one sided printed paper to scratch pads or use both sides of your paper
- Unplug chargers and adapters when not in use
- Use vinegar or lemon as weed killers
- Be aware of the light and noise pollution your produce
- Plant a tree or two

We hope you have enjoyed this year's newsletter and reading about the activities we have undertaken this past year . We also hope you have picked up a pointer or two in regards to helping our Spring Lake environment to stay as healthy as it is and for our lake to continue to be one of the top healthiest lakes in the province. Keep up the good work everyone!

Your Environmental Advisory Committee Members