

# **Central Region Recreational Lakes Workshop**

## **November 20, 2010**

### **Final Summary Report**

#### **Introduction**

In February 2010, Alberta Environment (AENV) hosted the first Central Alberta Recreational Lakes Workshop at Ma-Me-O Beach on Pigeon Lake to bring together stakeholders from nine of Central Alberta's most intensively used lakes. Representatives from Pine Lake, Sylvan Lake, Gull Lake, Pigeon Lake, Wabamun Lake, Lac La Nonne, Lac Isle, Lac St. Anne, and Nakamun Lake came together to network and share their concerns and successes.

At the February workshop, six main areas of concern were identified as issues that the group would like to address in the near future. With that in mind, a second Recreational Lakes Workshop titled "Building to Action" was scheduled on November 20, 2010, also at Ma-Me-O Beach. The aim of this follow-up workshop was to determine shared actions that the lakes could work on collectively, with the help of AENV, to address the common concerns on these lakes. Note: This version of the report was sent out as a "first draft" to allow feedback on the proposed action plan that it contains.

#### **Overview of Day**

The November 20<sup>th</sup> follow-up workshop was organized in two distinct sections. The morning was focused on a quick overview of the steps leading up to the workshop to ensure that all participants were on the same page. This was followed by an overview of a *Recreational Lakes Science and Legislation 101* presentation that is being prepared as a tool for lake leaders to share with their constituents/partners. Lunch followed and was devoted to networking and more importantly identifying the top five issues the overall group wished to seek solutions for in the afternoon sessions.

Review of the top issues identified, indicated the desire to discuss 5 of the top concerns expressed at the February workshop along with one additional issue, that being Sustainability for Stewardship Groups. Using an "Open Space" facilitation process, participants self-selected a table based on which of the six areas of concern they wanted to explore. After 30 minutes, the opportunity was given to switch to another table of interest, followed by a third opportunity. The full results of these facilitated discussions are included in the appendix of this report.

The workshop culminated with facilitators from each table sharing the key actions each discussion group had identified, followed by a group exercise and wrap-up aimed at identifying some initial thoughts for preferred group actions. AENV committed to sending out this summary report along with supporting materials for the groups to use.

## Key Actions

The following section outlines the key actions presented at the end of the small group sessions – see Appendix A for complete notes from small group discussions:

<b>TOPIC #1: The concept of an Advisory Board was suggested as a way to guide the work of those with legislative authority around lakes. <i>Facilitated by Christine</i></b>
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Present a business case to stakeholders on user fees. User fees can go to the strategies of the organization</li><li>2. Connect the ad-hoc groups for a common voice</li><li>3. Create a group pertinent to these nine lakes right now</li><li>4. Get support from agencies so the group is legitimate. Provide core information, administrative support. Gather as one voice.</li><li>5. Advocate for levies to finance this group (partnership/secretariat/board/committee)</li></ol> |
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<b>TOPIC #2: There is much confusion and lack of consistency regarding jurisdictional authority around lakes. <i>Facilitated by Candace</i></b>
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Working together (government &amp; stakeholders) – engaged and with an attitude of solutions</li><li>2. Promote good stewardship that changes attitudes and perceptions</li><li>3. Understand roles, responsibilities, jurisdictions, and vision of those in our “place”</li></ol> |
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<b>TOPIC #3: There is a need to increase the understanding of lake users/residents regarding their impact on lakes in general. <i>Facilitated by Donna</i></b>
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Local Solutions e.g. connect to 1-800 number; empower WPACs &amp; Stewardship Groups with resources to educate/mediate, etc.</li><li>2. Educational Programs, e.g. Agrium/BRWA partnership program “caring for our Watersheds”, Alberta Parks can deliver summer youth programs on “love your Lake” or “Caring for our Watershed”, etc, schoolscurriculum (“Caring for our Watershed” used in school curriculum), Lakes 101, Assoc of SV Stewardship Guidelines, etc.</li><li>3. Create a communication plan/strategy, e.g. how to build understanding of lakes users/residents re their impact on lakes, create a web site, w/appropriate links to what’s already out there, use two tier targeted approach – educational approach with some room for consequences for poor/bad actions, etc.</li><li>4. Simplify the application process, i.e. create a single window for approvals</li><li>5. Lakeshore Cleanup Projects, e.g. county based, involves youth &amp; families</li><li>6. Summer Village Communication Plan, e.g. “Love Your Lake” Awareness pamphlets, capitalize on mail outs, reach the “big city/rich folks”, summer educational programs</li></ol> |
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<b>TOPIC #4: There is wide-spread concern with how lake/watershed management (or lack thereof) is negatively impacting environmental, social &amp; economic aspects of lakes</b>
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*Facilitated by Andrea*

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Understanding: Association of Summer Villages Stewardship Guidelines – this group should review &amp; research the resources</li><li>2. Capacity: Collective writing campaign to ask for money, resources, support. Push for local level watershed management – planning that includes social/economic/environmental. Network with AUMA, AAMDC, each to help capacity.</li><li>3. Clout: Watershed groups make an effort to interact with Counties. Petition the government to look at lakes in social/economic &amp; environmental context and to make the consultation process more effective.</li><li>4. Force the land-use division to be made according to locally developed criteria</li></ol> |
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<b>TOPIC #5: Lake groups feel disconnected from Watershed Protection and Advisory Councils and the work on the Land-use Framework</b>
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*This topic was not discussed at the workshop.*

**TOPIC #6: Concern was expressed with the decline in lake monitoring as this may impact the effectiveness of lake management in the future. *Facilitated by Curtis***

1. Develop a monitoring plan that is place-based and involves all stakeholders
2. Computerize data
3. Analyze data to provide trends, understanding & identify actions – keep it simple
4. Jointly lobby government to re-instate funding
5. Summer Village & Watershed Stewardship Groups need to identify common outcomes to direct monitoring.
6. Develop an integrated monitoring approach with available data

**TOPIC #7: We need to make stewardship groups sustainable *Facilitated by Glenn***

1. Develop a “franchise” model for sustainable stewardship groups or could focus specifically on lake stewardship groups.
2. Standardize watershed management plans and other common tools lake groups need, e.g. brochures, presentations, etc.
3. Develop a funding model that is based on completion of specific tasks, i.e. automatic gates for desired tasks.
4. Complete scoping out the Water for Life model so that is clear what the roles and responsibilities of the WSGs are, i.e. give them a clear role and relate to funding as outlined above.
5. Reallocate staff to provide a Watershed Stewardship coordinator for region to work on common goals and needs
6. Develop a computer program through ROL that allows on-line sharing and discussion, e.g. funding sources and examples of good applications
7. Need leadership from government to scope out roles of WPACs & WSGs that allow mutually supportive interactions, i.e. get the house in order
8. Resolve issues with coordination and dissemination of information

**Individual Commitments**

As part of the small group discussions, participants were given the opportunity to make a personal commitment to the topics under discussion. The following table summarizes the commitments made by individuals as grouped by topic.

<b>Topic Area</b>	<b>Commitment</b>	<b>Name <i>compare to list</i></b>
Advisory Board for Lakes	Will follow up on group in Eastern Townships (Rappel) that has created a partnership group	Gisel Bourgeois
	Support the formation of a Lakes Advisory Board	Margaret Glasford
Communication Strategy & Tools	Enhance communication tools developed for residents	Ruth Hunter-Moffat
	Help with a communication strategy	Dennis Irving
	Research lake education resources or the internet to be circulated to lake residents, community groups, summer villages and counties/MDs	Margaret Glasford
	I can organize/conduct an education session at my summer village	Chris Simard
	- IWMP Committee-PLWA funding for Stewardship; - BRWA-WPAC funding for education; - ACMS completion of template for lake management; - lobbying for single government of Pigeon Lake	Jim Stevens
	I would agree to make presentations of my Summer Village to help educate them on these issues	Chris Simard

	Educational Programs	Dave Evoy
	Educate residents at SV of Silver Sands on impact of residents on quality of lake (go door to door to at least 50 full time residents this spring – 24 seasonal residents this summer)	Bernie Poulin
	Investigate BRWA/AGRIUM partnership at a Pigeon Lake are school	Deb McDaniel
	Gathering information on jurisdictions and sharing with watershed groups	Susan Samson
	Ensure ASWA becomes directly involved in this initiative	Peter Pellatt
	I will report back to my summer village and suggest how they can address the issue of enforcement of sewage systems, inspection & maintenance	Kelly Aldridge
	Lake shore clean-up	Hugh Sanders
	Promote understanding of the Department's regulatory role	Pete Langelle
	Help promote good stewardship	Don Meredith
Regional Stewardship Planning	Spearhead the creation of a watershed management plan for the Lac La Nonne Watershed; should the municipalities be fully engaged	Jeff McCammon
	I will take the action items to GLWQMS to see if our group can involve/expand the clout of lake stewardship	Tim Casey
	Invite the County or a municipal government representative to talk on their re-zoning process for land specifically with development in mind	Margaret Glasford
	Become an effective voice on Summer Village Council for watershed management	Don Davidson
	Encourage common by-laws re: lake impact through all Pigeon Lake municipalities	???
	As a board member of BRWA assure completion of the State of Watershed plan and follow up through IWMP	Hugh Sanders
Lake Monitoring and Computerized Program	Summer Village will help with this topic, i.e. monitoring and user pays	Dennis Irving
	Lobby with government to coordinate computerized lake monitoring	Pete Langelle
	Promote and obtain cooperation of my municipal government to participate in a local monitoring project	Gordon Drybrough
	Deliver watershed monitoring proposal to the Sylvan Lake Management Plan Committee	Graeme Strathdee
Stewardship Franchise Model	I will personally commit to participating on a task force to develop a "Stewardship Franchise Model"	Verne Schneider
	I will commit to contributing in whatever way I can to the development of a lake stewardship "franchise" model and centralized record-keeping and business model	Kelly Aldridge
	I would commit to a process to provide input to a	Jeff McCammon

	system where stewardship groups would get support (funding & capacity) by meeting set “acts” (an Automatic Support System)	
	I will contribute towards a sustainable governance model for watershed stewardship in Alberta	Dwayne Willmer (LWSS)

## Action Plan

The following action plan integrates the main suggestions that come forward through discussions at the November workshop under one over-arching action for each topic/issue. The plan also lists an associated core working group for each action as suggested by the documented personal commitments. There is also one additional action listed, that being to foster ongoing communication and dialogue between the lakes in Central Alberta, something AENV staff will take on.

Approval of the action plan took place with the following steps:

1. Feedback was sent to AENV relative to thoughts on the proposed major actions by Jan 30, 2011.
2. Individuals also confirmed that they wanted their name associated with a major action in order to be part of a working group to deal with that action.
3. It was noted that AENV designated a staff member to provide a linkage to GOA for each of the working groups, but does not intent to lead the group.
4. The finalized action plan was sent out by AENV and each working group was asked to self-organize to plan the development and implementation of their suggested action.
5. Alberta Environment offered to track the progress on each action if informed of the work and periodically report back to the full contact list.

Topic Area	Major Action	Possible Core Working Group
Advisory Board for Lakes	Develop a business case and implement a strategy for the creation of a lake partnership group to give one voice to the nine major recreational lakes in Central Alberta that includes funding sources, mandate, etc. (could be similar to “Rappel’ group in Eastern Townships).	Gisel Bourgeois AENV – Tom/Christine Others - self-identified
Confusion and lack of awareness about jurisdiction and human impacts	Develop and implement a communication strategy and the tools required to help lake leaders in Central Alberta more easily increase the awareness and understanding of lake users/residents about lake science, legislation and the impact of human activities.	Ruth Hunter-Moffat? Dennis Irving? Margaret Glasford Peter Pellatt? Susan Samson Don Meredith AENV – Candace/Glenn Others - self-identified
Regional Stewardship Planning	Develop and implement a strategy that ensures the consideration of input from lake watershed groups in the planning work of all levels of government (i.e.	Jeff McCammon? Tim Casey? Hugh Sanders

	federal, provincial and municipal) and their related associations.	AENV – Christine Others - self-identified
Lake Monitoring and Computerized Program	Develop and implement a monitoring plan for Central Alberta lakes that is place-based, involves local stakeholders, and includes improved access to the analysis of data.	Dennis Irving? Pete Langelle? Graeme Strathdee? AENV – Curtis Others – self-identified
Stewardship Franchise Model	Develop and implement a Stewardship Group Franchise model that will promote ongoing success of these groups while reducing duplication of effort.	Verne Schneider Kelly Aldridge Jeff McCammon? Dwayne Willmer? AENV – Glenn Others – self-identified
Continue dialogue and communication of lake groups	Provide tools and support for the ongoing communication and dialogue of Central Alberta recreational lake groups overall.	AENV – Glenn/Christine

### **Conclusion**

From the level of interest exhibited at the November, 2010 Central Alberta Recreational Lakes Workshop, we know that there is a strong interest by those involved to take action on the common concerns expressed by the group. Many excellent ideas were shared in terms of how to address these concerns and many also made personal commitments to support these actions.

As outlined in this report, there is much work that can be done and the direction has now been set in terms of where the work should focus. Once the action plan in this report is acted on, we expect to see great gains made by the stewardship community of Central Alberta. It is now up to those who have the drive and the interest to work together for the greater good of our recreational lakes.

## Appendix A:

### Small Group Discussion Notes

<b>TOPIC #1: The concept of an Advisory Board was suggested as a way to guide the work of those with legislative authority around lakes. <i>Facilitated by Christine</i></b>
<b>Related issues expressed:</b> Coordination & control of all Watershed Associations etc. = efficiency and non-duplication. Involvement of Association of Summer Villages of Alberta in these issues. What are all the other non-legislated associations & groups? How do we ensure we are not working at cross purposes or duplicating efforts? There is lots of energy around these issues – let's get it channeled productively.
<b>Focus Question 1: What did you find interesting or useful from the presentation this morning or from the previous workshop?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- All sorts of material and no connection to reduce duplication. Distribution to where? Significant work done that is not being used.</li></ul>
<b>Focus Question 2: What are some key challenges, barriers or problem areas that may inhibit you or your group from moving forward on this issue?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Everyone doing their own thing – no way to connect the various groups efficiently – ad hoc.</li><li>- No collective voice on either side</li></ul>
<b>Focus Question 3: What might be some potential solutions for strategies to address this issue? How could we make this/these strategies happen?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- connect, assist, organize the existing ad hoc groups into one group.</li><li>- Coordinated group – not legislated, not regulating – no authority</li><li>- One common voice for the nine lakes</li><li>- Enforcement of rules already in place</li><li>- Gisele B mentioned consortium in Quebec as an example – on Lake Magod in Eastern Township – “Le Rappel”</li><li>- Sharing information is the way forward, not in a legislative way</li><li>- Advisory Board in it the right words? Maybe a consortium.</li><li>- One-stop shop for communication and information about government procedures – not an “advisory board”</li><li>- Some form of Stewardship “Collective” to be a one-stop-shop for developers.</li><li>- “User Fees” – for all uses, not just residents.</li><li>- Sustainability model – Central Stewardship Task Force</li><li>- Don't need direction to resources because still working in isolation</li><li>- “Universally agreed to thing”</li><li>- Need to fit into governance</li><li>- Acknowledge by County, Summer Villages want to get invited to the party</li><li>- One common source</li><li>- Secretariat</li><li>- Central Repository</li><li>- Propose to Watershed Management Agency – develop one-stop-shopping web site for shoreline property information – include links to educational resources</li><li>- There is a need for some base funding for this group</li><li>- Lakes should be under Water for Life</li></ul>
<b>Focus Question 4: What are 3 key actions that this group could do to address this issue?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Present a business case to stakeholders on the user-fees. The user fees can go towards whatever strategy we choose.</li><li>- Group pertinent to these nine lakes right now.</li></ul>

- Get support from agencies so the group is legitimate. Provide core info-administration. Gather as one voice.
- User pay levies to finance the group.

**TOPIC #2: There is much confusion and lack of consistency regarding jurisdictional authority around lakes. *Facilitated by Candace***

**Related issues expressed:** Will the new land-use legislation include specific rules regarding: maintenance and inspection of septic systems & minimum distances from water body for hard paving of residential or commercial property? Discussion on boat launches, Get Federal, Provincial, and Municipal on board and generalize rules and regulations – not 3 different ones.

**Focus Question 1: What did you find interesting or useful from the presentation this morning or from the previous workshop?**

- no comments captured

**Focus Question 2: What are some key challenges, barriers or problem areas that may inhibit you or your group from moving forward on this issue?**

- Issue of federal/provincial regulations granting authorization without communicating with local government
- Too many jurisdictions for every regulator to get involved
- Activity happening in area – should first go to municipality even if it doesn't affect municipality and go up from there.
- Geographic challenge of knowing where property lines are
- No common goal/lake groups vs. opposed people
- Municipalities need to be educated on jurisdictions
- Elected officials need to stand behind laws
- Costs of legal challenges with respect to development issues
- Too many cooks in the kitchen
- Regulators don't talk to each other enough
- Lack of coordination – no central place
- Pigeon lake reviewed all legislation – reviewed by EIA
- Issues of people being responsible for navigating through legislation authorities for approval
- Coordination of common interest information
- Zoning planning largely goes to municipality. Lake groups don't have input or other regulators
- Cumulative effects of approvals – letting
- No legitimacy for stewardship groups

**Focus Question 3: What might be some potential solutions for strategies to address this issue? How could we make this/these strategies happen?**

- When approval is given – all regulators need to be made aware
- Lake groups and municipalities need to get on board with vision/goals
- Municipalities need to be educated on jurisdictions and communicate
- Regulators to tell each other
- Bring Parks under same jurisdiction/fairness as the rest of land surrounding lakes
- Add a fee onto Parks fees when public stays at the Provincial Park around the lake. Money to go to lake group.
- Pigeon Lake described state of legislation & jurisdiction around lakes with Environmental Law Centre (great resource) Call and they will work with you to structure it.
- AENV pamphlet on legislation/activities around lake and send out to all municipalities
- Enforcing local municipalities to develop a local water shed group through engaged stewardship communities

- Put in place a structural place-based watershed management plan that includes stakeholders and local municipalities
- Municipalities and stakeholders need to work together
- Developers need to look to minimize footprint

**Focus Question 4: What are 3 key actions that this group could do to address this issue?**

- Inform residents on roles/regulations/responsibilities
- Communicate with each other (regulators)
- Fund that small municipalities can draw on to resolve issues (legal costs)
- Push to have Government more focused on enforcement
- Legal action against Government to enforce legislation
- Funding for stewardship groups to help clarify legislative issues
- Coordinate get together with all departments/ministries and stakeholders
- Support Expo coming to Alberta – spur on stewardship or support good stewardship
- Better understand each other – roles, responsibilities, vision

**TOPIC #3: There is a need to increase the understanding of lake users/residents regarding their impact on lakes in general. *Facilitated by Donna***

**Related issues expressed:** The maintenance of a water level which will promote a healthy environment and an acceptable turnover time of the lake volume. New boat launches – who pays.

**Focus Question 1: What did you find interesting or useful from the presentation this morning or from the previous workshop?**

- Too fast
- Presentation should still have been re-authored for the time and audience

**Focus Question 2: What are some key challenges, barriers or problem areas that may inhibit you or your group from moving forward on this issue?**

- Overcoming apathy
- Financial and human resources
- Leadership
- Lack of tools for education/monitoring
- Lack of understanding of current priorities such as CEMS, and on other such government policies
- How to communicate the message
- Attitudes of owners
- Approval process can be lengthy
- Perception that AENV has no teeth
- “I’ll continue to do what has always been done” – How do we stop this attitude?
- Local governments do not care or take responsibility for what someone is doing on their properties
- Treating lake front property the same as development away from the lake
- Lake is the people’s “play-pen”
- How do you right the wrongs.?

**Focus Question 3: What might be some potential solutions for strategies to address this issue? How could we make this/these strategies happen?**

- Local solutions (mediator, conflict resolution, problem solver)
- Consider stewardship groups to advise (to educate, not to enforce, with mediation capacity)
- Schools & Curriculum (teaching/field trips, e.g. Agrium & BRWA partnership – offer to share modules and information with others)
- Need proper funding and resources
- Simply the process for application – single point of access, ie. Single window
- Local governments must have and enforce rules, & inform people of rules and consequences

- Share/review Summer Villages Stewardship Guidelines
- Summer education programs at summer villages or at Alberta Parks
- At some point, no more “grandfathering” on the clearcutting to the lake practice
- Education strategy two tier – 90 % comply, 10% need enforcement
- Some lakes (Wabamun) don’t have a big problem & it is hard to motivate people unless there is an emergency
- Education needs to focus on the youth who motivate easily & get their parents involved
- Council saying “no” results in no re-election
- “Caring for our Watershed” curriculum
- “Parks & Rec” should be approached about hosting camps or workshops for kids on stewardship
- Capitalize on village mail-outs to provide info (pamphlets)

**Focus Question 4: What are 3 key actions that this group could do to address this issue?**

- See solutions above

**TOPIC #4: There is wide-spread concern with how lake/watershed management (or lack thereof) is negatively impacting environmental, social & economic aspects of lakes**

*Facilitated by Andrea*

**Related issues expressed:** Legislate municipalities to be required to complete watershed management plans with local groups!!!

**Focus Question 1: What did you find interesting or useful from the presentation this morning or from the previous workshop?**

- There is no information being collected – but not readily accessible or analyzed
- There should be more proactive dissemination
- Different levels of support – so many jurisdictions
- No good overall management – ineffective management

**Focus Question 2: What are some key challenges, barriers or problem areas that may inhibit you or your group from moving forward on this issue?**

- Jurisdictions and accountabilities are so varied
- Capacity of the group and capacity of supporting groups is limited
- Administration does not have capacity to work in watershed context – haven’t invested time and money
- Not enough “clout” for stewardship groups – not enough credibility with decision makers
- Had the municipal developed a watershed plan in advance
- Stewardship groups not aware of approvals process
- Barrier is engagement with people who control the process
- Economic is considered above social/environmental
- If you lose recreational capacity = social impacts

**Focus Question 3: What might be some potential solutions for strategies to address this issue? How could we make this/these strategies happen?**

- Watershed plans in advance of applications
- All developments would have to respect the plan – Jurisdictions + legislations + awareness of process
- Prior to development application, watershed management plan is referenced. Capacity – a head person, representative to challenge and represent the groups in process. This needs money & capacity
- Involvement

**Focus Question 4: What are 3 key actions that this group could do to address this issue?**

- Understanding: Association of Summer Villages Stewardship Guidelines – this group should review & research the resources

- Capacity: Collective writing campaign to ask for money, resources, support. Push for local level watershed management – planning that includes social/economic/environmental. Network with AUMA, AAMDC, etc to help capacity.
- Clout: Watershed groups make an effort to interact with Counties. Petition the government to look at lakes in social/economic & environmental context and to make the consultation process more effective.
- Force the land-use division to be made according to locally developed criteria

**TOPIC #5: Lake groups feel disconnected from Watershed Protection and Advisory Councils and the work on the Land-use Framework** *This topic was not discussed at the workshop.*

**TOPIC #6: Concern was expressed with the decline in lake monitoring as this may impact the effectiveness of lake management in the future.** *Facilitated by Curtis*

**Related issues expressed:** Is there one significant element that we can limit to reduce algae in lakes, so we can collectively work?

**Focus Question 1: What did you find interesting or useful from the presentation this morning or from the previous workshop?**

- Revelation of 50-70s decline. Monitoring is critical to give history and put issues into context
- Inherent variability within systems
- Understanding where and what are things are happening

**Focus Question 2: What are some key challenges, barriers or problem areas that may inhibit you or your group from moving forward on this issue?**

- Impact of groundwater and its trends
- Hard numbers versus compute model numbers
- Involve others in lake monitoring & collection of data
- Legitimizing groups to do monitoring involving all players – need a plan that all can buy into
- Cross jurisdictional issues
- Place-based monitoring plan – this is CEMS
- Risk-based
- Digested information
- How do you integrate resources among groups that do have resources
- Competing interests for the money
- Repetition

**Focus Question 3: What might be some potential solutions for strategies to address this issue? How could we make this/these strategies happen?**

- Use Baptiste Lake example – partner with municipalities to develop modeling fund
- Summer Village meeting – phosphates is a big problem – internal loading and agriculture
- Need to pin down what the desired outcome of the monitoring
- Identify sources of pollutants
- Identify what “end-state” is the preferred one?
- Data-sharing among anyone who is funding monitoring
- User-pay system

**Focus Question 4: What are 3 key actions that this group could do to address this issue?**

- Jointly, as a summer village group, lobby government to reinstate funding
- Lakes should identify their desired outcomes, how to achieve them, what actions need to be taken
- Identify all stakeholders who are doing monitoring and put in a more centralized form – send out to stewardship groups, etc.

**TOPIC #6: We need to make stewardship groups sustainable** *Facilitated by Glenn*

**Related issues expressed:** Support/resources for Watershed Stewardship groups – to enable education, awareness, projects, etc. Stewardship groups are not recognized as being integral to the “Regional Governance” process – do not have AE support, do not have community legitimacy, are not considered as important by municipalities, are not necessarily “included” by Alberta Environment. We need to make Stewardship Groups sustainable.

**Focus Question 1: What did you find interesting or useful from the presentation this morning or from the previous workshop?**

- In legislation slides there was nothing about watershed stewardship groups – nobody is clear on how to work with them – relates to their legitimacy
- Sustainability = support – really needs to be run as a business, e.g. how to pass on torch as leadership changes
- So much information out there, but no effective sharing between groups
- Sustainability = also includes capacity, knowledge transfer, etc.

**Focus Question 2: What are some key challenges, barriers or problem areas that may inhibit you or your group from moving forward on this issue?**

- See many battles between Summers Villages in some areas, e.g. on some lakes have so many whereas none in other areas none exist. Also in some areas counties and summer villages do support efforts. Some see themselves as competitors.
- So many societies and duplication of efforts – need to work together in coordinated way
- Have had various iterations of watershed groups that weren't very successful, so current groups have less credibility
- Lakes share about 80% common issues – with these being possibly dealt with in shared way, with 20% needing locally derived responses
- There are so many issues and stewardship groups have no real power to act – meanwhile many obvious things are not being addressed
- Is only so much energy and is divided between lake groups and WPACs
- There are so many interest groups with competing interests for same funds – ends up being divided into many pots
- No funding seems to be available for operations – is a big issue
- Unsure if the products developed by stewardship groups will really be used – needs to be negotiated
- Credibility of individuals working for these groups is also challenged when they struggle for success
- Funding & capacity
- Need to see quick wins and that are making progress
- Volunteer burnout big as many are part of several groups – time it takes is big issue
- Within existing structures, can do a plan, but implementing it is very challenging – see differing abilities in different groups from planning to “hands-on”
- In larger context aren't as committed to stewardship if just at municipal level – it needs to be addressed at a provincial level
- Need local understanding
- Funding issues with lots to do and little money
- Groups cannot tax so hard to get funds
- Need to start with broad base to be successful, e.g. include all sectors at a lake
- Generally lake residents aren't local voters, so don't get the support of local government
- Counties are not enforcing sewage regulations, so unlikely to support larger initiatives – there is not direct interest
- Sylvan Lake Management Plan is good, but there is a lack of authority – need to link to those who do have it
- Is no overall coordination of all these groups from the top
- Duplication of efforts is creating burnout
- Lack of directing municipalities to take responsibility for stewardship is a problem
- Barrier is structure of Stewardship Groups. Should be like WPAC model where more consensus based & do receive funding. Stewardship groups need similar funding to

- create incentive.
- Stewardship groups should have a role – use for local things

**Focus Question 3: What might be some potential solutions for strategies to address this issue? How could we make this/these strategies happen?**

- Have more coordination between three levels of government
- Need to define legitimacy for stewardship groups, i.e. where do they fit with other groups. They should get involved with municipalities and beyond.
- Could Summer Village or Counties identify someone who covers lake stewardship & environmental issues?
- Idea of making stewardship groups sustainable by creating (via ROL) a task force/group to create a “franchise” model for WSGs that is based on a sustainable business model with financial systems, training, promotional materials – all in one package vs reinventing all the time.
- Link to other groups that should be part of this.
- Build a sustainable stewardship model for groups at recreational lakes specifically, e.g. canned presentations, videos, brochures, business operations models, filing systems, customer access, education programs, etc.
- Could build this model as interest is shown. Could also relate to providing some centralized service, e.g. admin, filing, communication
- Synchronizing with WPACs and other NGO groups would be helpful
- Should consider standardizing watershed management plans
- Pay someone to represent Stewardship Groups at larger initiatives, e.g. Athabasca Initiators Group
- Some type of awards program for Stewardship Groups might help focus attention on them
- When looking at this from a regional context see a loss of power as every group is so small – need to make changes at the provincial or federal level
- Many volunteers have other jobs & commitments. Need to have relief via paid staff or “floaters”. Perhaps give volunteers more specific tasks
- Quick wins are important to see progress
- A system created in Washington used a system of funding based on accomplishing specific levels of tasks, education program delivered to schools, doing a State of Environment report, etc. Could tie funding to WPAC work – reinforcing common goals.
- A computer program that allows on-line discussions and decisions, plus to share information might help eliminate so many meetings.
- Need to finish “baking” the Water for Life model so that it is clear what roles WSGs have and how they relate to WPACs and others.
- Include the grassroots (WSGs) in overall planning – need to build this
- Need to integrate all that is happening in a watershed
- Should extend the WPAC agenda to include work of WSGs, e.g. WPACs would do the plans and long-term studies, while WSGs would handle mediation, education & stewardship activities.
- Provide a specific role for WSGs to do, eg. Mediation, education, stewardship activities. With a clear role in place groups will be more “fundable” as would differentiate as avoid competition
- Sustainable funding model based on user-pays.

**Focus Question 4: What are 3 key actions that this group could do to address this issue?**

- Develop a “franchise” model for sustainable stewardship groups or could focus specifically on lake stewardship groups.
- Standardize watershed management plans and other common tools lake groups need, e.g. brochures, presentations, etc.
- Develop a funding model that is based on completion of specific tasks, i.e. automatic

- gates for desired tasks.
- Complete scoping out the Water for Life model so that is clear what the roles and responsibilities of the WSGs are, i.e. give them a clear role and relate to funding as outlined above.
  - Reallocate staff to provide a Watershed Stewardship coordinator for region to work on common goals and needs
  - Develop a computer program through ROL that allows on-line sharing and discussion, e.g. funding sources and examples of good applications
  - Need leadership from government to scope out roles of WPACs & WSGs that allow mutually supportive interactions, i.e. get the house in order
  - Resolve issues with coordination and dissemination of information