



# LAKESHORE DEVELOPMENT IN OUR WATERSHED

The **Lesser Slave Watershed Council (LSWC)** is in the process of developing an **Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP)**. This process involves input from government, industry stakeholders, and individuals to address issues and concerns about our watershed, including ecosystem health, water quality, and sustainable water usage. Using the information we collect, the IWMP will assess these concerns and develop appropriate solutions.



The natural beauty of the Lesser Slave Region makes it very attractive for residential development and recreational activity. This activity provides an economic boon to the region as well as improved quality of life for the people who live, work, and play here.

Development near the water poses risks for the natural surroundings that attract us here in the first place. Special care must be taken to minimize disturbance to sensitive aquatic ecosystems.

Developers, homeowners, municipalities and the provincial government all have roles to play in preserving our watershed for years to come. The IWMP will bring all these groups together to determine action plans and practices that will allow our community to grow in a sustainable manner.



## SNAPSHOT OF LAKESHORES IN OUR REGION

- Lakeshore areas (both developed and natural)



### Quick Facts:

- Lesser Slave Lake has a shoreline length of 268 km.
- All named lakes in the watershed have combined shoreline length of 765 km.
- A 2006 Alberta Conservation Association assessment showed that 21% of the Lesser Slave Lake shoreline was not healthy, a result of the removal of native trees and shrubs to accommodate development. The IWMP is updating the health status of our shorelines.



## **WATERSHED RISKS**

- Alteration of the natural shoreline and removal of aquatic vegetation makes the shoreline more vulnerable to erosion and the lake more susceptible to pollution.
- Infilling of streams and wetlands results in habitat loss for wildlife.
- Without sufficient long-term planning, overdevelopment of the lakeshore may result in loss of habitat, decline in water quality, and shoreline erosion.
- Inadequate septic systems near the lake contribute to unsafe levels of harmful bacteria and blue-green algae.
- Introduction of invasive plants on the lakeshore threatens native vegetation.



## **PRACTICES TO REDUCE RISKS**

- Education on environmentally friendly building, landscaping, and maintenance techniques.
- Improve lake and river setbacks in municipal development plans to increase natural buffers.
- Reduce water use. Identify opportunities for water recycling and water treatment.
- Shoreline and septic system inspections and improvements.
- Organize community shoreline restoration projects.

## **WHAT CAN LAKEFRONT LAND OWNERS DO?**

- Avoid altering the shoreline. Leave a buffer of tall grass and native plants.
- Build docks as unobtrusively as possible.
- Reduce personal water use.
- Keep your lawn small, and as far from the water as possible. Reduce your workload by planting low-maintenance, native ground covers.
- Do not use pesticides, fertilizers, or poisons that can run off into the lake, feed algae blooms, and kill wildlife and native plants.
- Make sure your septic system is well-maintained.



# WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

The health of our watershed impacts the well-being of our environment, plants and animals, and the people who live and work here. The more information we have, the better equipped we are to offer sustainable, effective solutions to issues facing our watershed.

**Your opinions and experiences are a crucial part of a successful plan.**

**We want to hear from you!** To talk to us, learn more, or get involved, please call the LSWC at **780-523-9800** or visit **[www.lswc.ca](http://www.lswc.ca)**