

Spring Lake Environmental Advisory Committee

Newsletter Winter 2016

OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

The EAC has been active for the past 11 years and over that time we have completed over 40 initiatives and activities. These have ranged from members attending workshops on invasive weeds, participating in water studies through the University of Alberta and the Alberta Land Management Society (ALMS), to advocating for dog dropping bag stations, increased number of 12KM speed limit signs on or near the lake, building and maintaining loon nesting platforms and developing partnerships with organizations such as the Alberta Conservation Association, the Lakes of Parkland County and Alberta Environment. We have members who have for many years tracked the loon population and nesting successes, the water levels of Spring Lake as well as the freeze and thaw dates of the lake. We have nine members, four of who are original volunteers from when the EAC first originated.

As part of a new initiative that the EAC chose to pursue this year was the participation in Pitch In Week that is held in April of each year. Members took a section of the Village and with or without neighbors did an end to end clean up of garbage within the Village and it's perimeter. To show how aware and proud of our community all residents are, there were only 12 extra-large bags of garbage that was collected. For a community the size of Spring Lake, we have a very clean land environment, so everyone keep up the good work in picking up not only after you, but also your friends and neighbors. All working together will keep our community looking beautiful. A thank you also needs to go out to our Village maintenance crew as they are diligent in picking up garbage within the Village on a daily basis, so **Thank You** to them.

Since Spring Lake has a rich variety of birds and other wildlife, another new initiative that was undertaken in the past year was creating bird house kits. Adding a house or feeder to your property enhances the habitat and is a rewarding activity. We have a goal of adding 100 bird house (or more) to the community. To date, 31 kits and some completed houses were made available to residents and property owners through the Village Office. The two styles were wren cubes and a basic

bluebird house both which will attract various species. The response from the community has been outstanding and all of the kits/houses were snapped right up. Next spring there will be more kits available so if you are interested, check the main office; a notice will be posted on the community bulletin boards when they are available. There are many resources at the library as well as online in regards to bird, bat, bee and squirrel houses and feeders, so whenever you can provide basic shelter, food and habitat it will help to make the community nature friendly.

The photo display board on the east side of the lake by Heritage Park, has been very successful since its conception. In the spring of 2016 a second photo board was installed by the mail boxes on Range Road 20. The featured artists of this past year were Marilyn Madsen, Christine Mowat and Bonnie Hall. These photos are rotated and new ones displayed approximately every two months. If you have any photos you would like to have displayed, please email them along with your name and contact information to bonnieh@springlakealberta.com. They must be submitted in a minimum of 300 dpi (dots per inch) to ensure the best quality possible. It is to be agreed, any photos submitted for the community bulletin board is giving permission for the posting; please ensure your full name is included in the email so we can credit your photo.

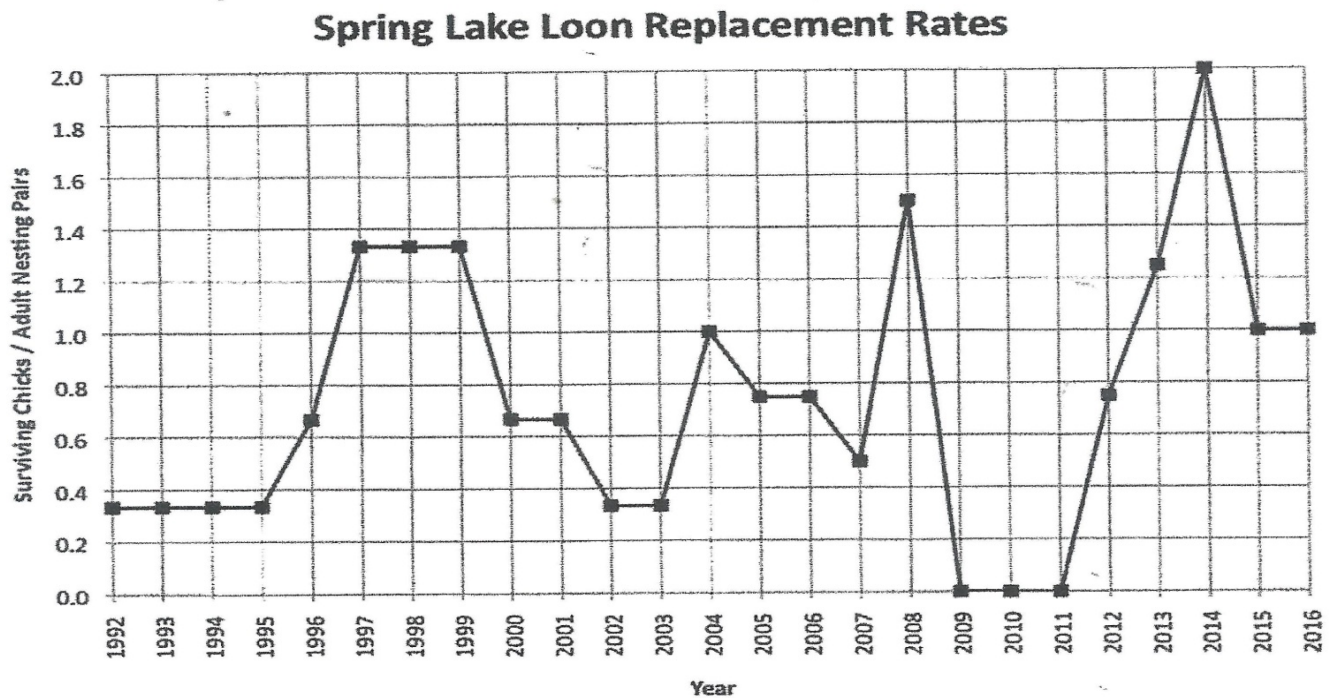
Leading by Example . . With your boat stored safely away for winter and Christmas approaching you may be wondering what type of motor upgrade you can do for the upcoming boating season. Here are a few ideas that will improve your boating experience while also improving the local lake environment:

→ Older gasoline motors can be upgraded to new designed 2-stroke and 4-stroke engines. The improvement in motors over the years has reduced the emissions released into the air and water. Each type of motor has advantages and disadvantages however, compared to older 2-stroke motors the improvement is dramatic.

→ Gasoline motors can be completely swapped out for electric motors. With a **speed limit of 12 km per hour on the lake**, a small trolling motor that is quiet and has no smell is an excellent upgrade. Over the years more and more electric motors have been seen on Spring Lake.

→ No matter what type of motor you have maintenance is key. Having leaking fuel tanks, gaskets, or batteries is not only harmful to you the operator, but also to the lake itself. By upgrading some of the accessories to the motor, you can enjoy your time on the lake rather than having a breakdown.

With our loon population this year there were five chicks born of which four survived. One nest was flooded out on the weekend we had five inches of rain and they did not re-nest. Bird Studies Canada recently published the results of a 25 year nation- wide reproductive trend analysis which indicates a chick survival rate of .50 chicks per nesting. We have been tracking chick survival rates on this lake for 25 years, (1992 to 2016) and our survival rate is .75 chicks per nesting which is much better than the national average (see graph). You will note that we had three zero years in 2009, 2010 and 2011. Since then we have put out two nesting platforms which have contributed to our improved results in recent years. Our efforts through signage and other information made available to persons using the lake has surely been a factor as well. Everyone enjoys our loons and is interested in their continuing survival on our lake.



This winter, Spring Lake will be aerated, with the system being managed by the Alberta Conservation Association as in past years. They were out on October 5 installing them, which is an all day job. Safety awareness around the immediate area of the aerators themselves will be prominent as in past years. It is also everyone's responsibility to ensure they stay away from the open water and that all pets are on leash and not running loose to ensure pet safety as well.

A reminder again, of the prohibited noxious weeds that have been found growing within our community. They must be pulled to be controlled and hopefully eradicated as soon as possible. This page illustrates those that are most prevalent in our community so please watch for them and do your part in eliminating these plants.

Spring Lake 2013

Invasive Plant Awareness

The plants listed below are designated as Invasive Weeds by the Province of Alberta. They have been spotted in this area and must be controlled or destroyed through removal. **Do not compost** if you do remove any of these plants. Please throw them in the garbage or burn them instead to minimize their spread.



Himalayan Balsam
Prohibited Noxious-Must Destroy



Perennial Sow Thistle
Noxious – Control



Canada Thistle
Noxious – Control



Oxeye (Shasta) Daisy
Noxious - Control



Creeping Bellflower
Noxious - Control

From the Environmental Advisory Committee to you....
HAVE A GREAT WINTER!