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No. 33

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## Springing Ahead

Sue Styles, WWMC Chair

Welcome to the Spring edition of *Lakescape*, where we hope to inform you about WWMC updates, information about watershed events and the data resources available to help you stay informed about the lake and watershed.

- Alberta Climate, water level and LakePulse data resources
- Bioengineering workshop (willow-staking) on Sat. May 11<sup>th</sup>
- A call to 'Join the WWMC Board of Directors'
- Wabamun Fishery

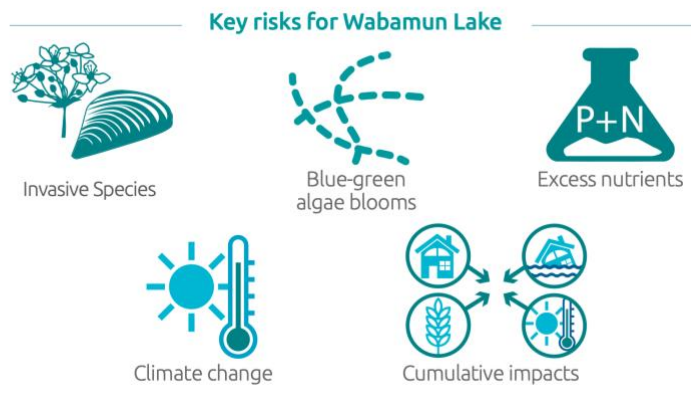
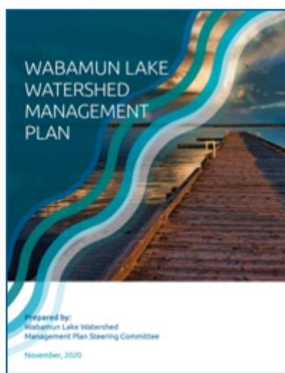


Have you noticed the longer hours of sunlight, the flocks of geese flying overhead already, the removal of ice fishing huts from the lake, and that the ice along the lake shoreline is beginning to melt? The arrival of spring and all the renewal of nature it typically brings is welcome, but I'm certain you also have noticed erratic temperature spikes this spring and, in the last 6 months, [low precipitation](#) in the Wabamun watershed relative to normal. These climate conditions raise potential concern for the health of our lake and watershed. **What can we do about this**—each of us individually and collectively?

### 1. Increase knowledge/be informed

The uncertainty about spring and later season precipitation in our area, as well as worry about continuing drought conditions overall in Alberta, implies the necessity to be knowledgeable about local

climate conditions to better adapt our interactions with the lake and watershed. In the Wabamun Watershed Management Plan (WWMP), **climate change** is identified as a key risk for Wabamun Lake and one of the objectives of the WWMP related to the goal of good water quality is '**Lake users are knowledgeable about and able to adapt to lake levels, which fluctuate with natural variability, thereby contributing to lake health.**'

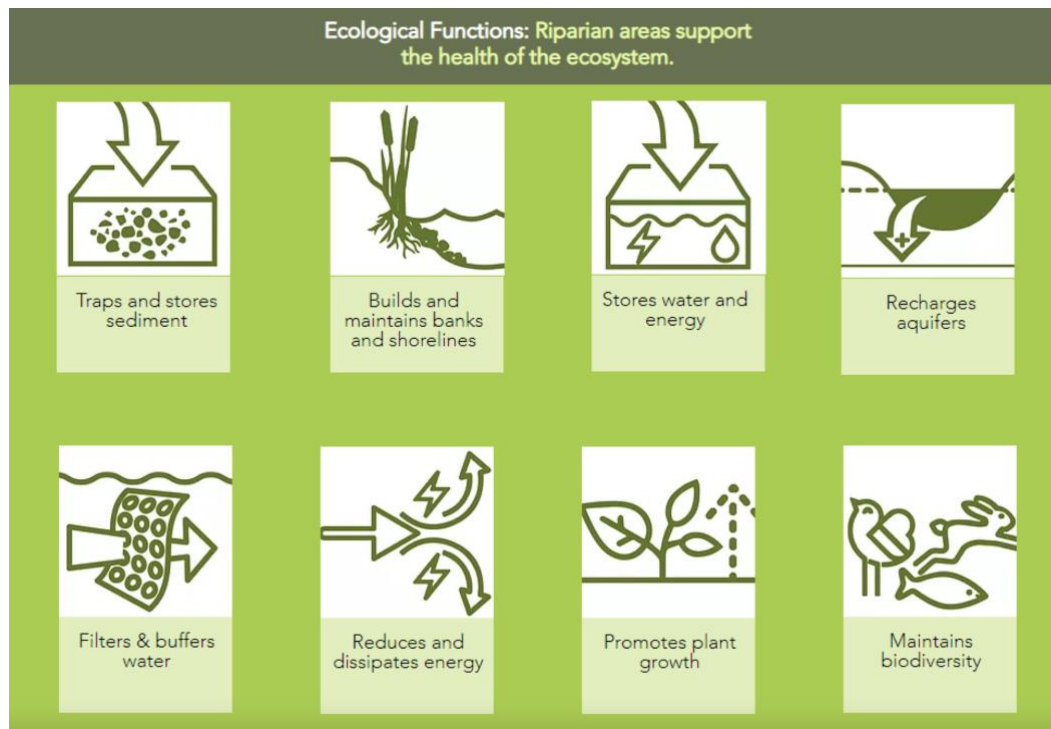


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In this edition of *Lakescape*, links to data resources are provided to support your knowledge (see [Lake Level article below](#)) and further understanding of current (real-time in some applications) and historical climate factors (e.g., temperature and precipitation) and impact on water in the context of Alberta and Wabamun Lake. We encourage you to become familiar with and refer to these resources to be as informed as possible. These resources are also available on the WWMC [Lake Water Level web page](#) (scroll down the page).

## 2. Build resilience in the lake and watershed

One important way to build resilience in the lake and watershed is to ensure healthy riparian areas. "There are multitudes of ecological functions that healthy riparian areas provide that make them a great asset for combatting the effects of climate change" (Riparian Health of Wabamun Lake, 2022). The [2022-NSWA Report-Riparian Health of Wabamun Lake](#) document provides an excellent overview of the state of riparian health of Wabamun Lake. You are urged to take a moment to review this important enlightening document.



(Ecological Functions Image credit- [Cows & Fish](#))

Related to the point of ensuring healthy riparian areas, on **Saturday May 11<sup>th</sup>** the WWMC is hosting a **Bioengineering (Willow-Staking) Workshop** to enhance a riparian area – **You are Invited to join us!** See further information in this *Lakescape* newsletter.

**Note:** this Bioengineering/riparian enhancement workshop is a component of the [Wabamun Lake Bulrush Restoration project](#) undertaken in August 2023.

## 3. Get involved

Caring for the lake is a collective responsibility. We need to care for Wabamun Lake and its watershed **together** (individuals, property owners, communities/municipalities, governments, industry/business, visitors/all lake users, and stakeholders). There are many ways to [get involved](#), such as invite those you know to become a WWMC member, volunteer on a WWMC project/initiative, become a [WWMC donor](#) and/or become a Director on the WWMC Board. How do you want to be involved—we want to hear from you- [info@wwmc.ca](mailto:info@wwmc.ca).

The WWMC currently has a call out seeking individuals interested in serving on the WWMC Board of Directors. **Consider joining the motivated and forward-looking WWMC Board of Directors** to contribute to advancing the important [mission and vision](#) of protecting Wabamun Lake. See the 'Join Our Board of Directors' notice in this newsletter and for further details about being a WWMC Director, click on [Join WWMC Board of Directors](#).

These are just some of the actions to be taken individually and collectively that address concerns about lake/watershed health brought on by changes in our climate.

Additional actions presently being undertaken by the WWMC includes the following:

- Preparing and planning activities for the upcoming field season including but not limited to,
  - Bioengineering (willow-staking) workshop on May 11<sup>th</sup> (see notice/information in this newsletter)
  - Year 1 monitoring/assessment of bulrush restoration project planting
  - Monitoring water quality (water sampling related to [LakeWatch](#) program and to [Satellite-Derived Algal Monitoring](#))
  - Aquatic Invasive Species Inspection event
- Providing input to by-law revisions of municipalities connected to Wabamun Lake/watershed and also input to Parkland County municipal development plan (MDP) update.
- Continuing to be informed and to provide feedback regarding lake/watershed land use change/development as it relates to the Highvale Mine Reclamation Application and the [Wabamun Waterfront Improvement](#) initiative. To be comprehensively informed about the Wabamun Waterfront Projects, Wabamun watershed stakeholders are encouraged to see the [Feb 6th Wabamun Waterfront project update](#) to Parkland County Council.
- Supporting lake stewardship initiatives of municipalities
- Finalizing a salt management brochure (special thanks to Randall Heil for initiating this project)
- Continuing governance work to build organizational capacity to further advance implementation of the [Wabamun Watershed Management Plan \(2-page summary\)](#) and the WWMC mission and vision and to achieve the [WWMC Strategic Plan \(2022-2025\)](#).

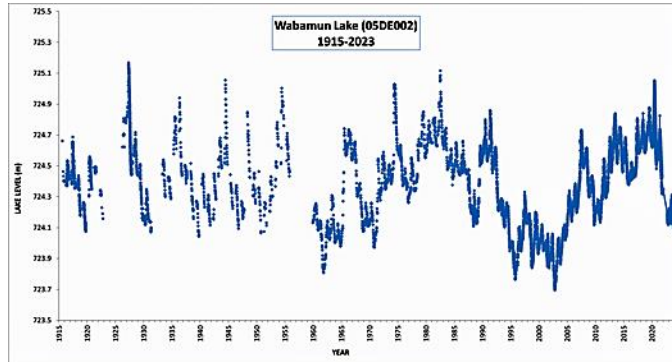
So, “**What can we do about this**—each of us individually and collectively?” Well, it turns out there is much we can do—beginning with becoming informed and getting involved. It is good and rewarding work!!

A huge thank you to all WWMC Board of Directors and representatives for your unwavering commitment and bold actions to care for the Lake and its watershed.

Contact us with any feedback re: this *Lakescape* newsletter, or any questions/concerns – [info@wwmc.ca](mailto:info@wwmc.ca).

## Lake Level

As we related in the winter edition of *Lakescape*, the low precipitation we received this winter coupled with the ongoing drought-like conditions could significantly affect the water level in Wabamun Lake. We would just like to remind you that our [Lake Water Level page](#) is your best source for lake level information. There, you can track the current lake level and see the factors that affect that level. For example, for current lake level information, you can go to either the federal government’s [Real-Time Hydrometric Data for Wabamun Lake](#) or Alberta Environment and Protected Areas’ [Alberta Rivers page](#); and for temperature and precipitation information go to [Alberta Climate Information Service](#)



Graph of historic Wabamun Lake levels, 1915-2023

## Wabamun Fishery

If you’re an angler, you might have noticed that the *2024 Alberta Guide to Sportfishing Regulations* has yet to be published (as of this writing). The guide is usually published well in advance of the new season (beginning April 1<sup>st</sup>). However, this year Alberta Forestry and Parks announced that more “careful consideration” was required before proclaiming the 2024-25 regulations. Until that time, the 2023 regulations remain in effect, but a 2024 sportfishing licence is required.



In September of 2023, Alberta Environment and Protected Areas conducted a Fall Index Netting (FIN) of Wabamun Lake to assess the fish populations and published a [summary of the data](#) in January. A group of retired fisheries biologists did an independent analysis of the data and came up with different conclusions about the health of the fishery: [Wabamun Lake, a Fishery in Crisis](#).



## Two Board Members Resign

We regret to inform you that two long-standing WWMC Directors, Stan Franklin and Randall Heil have decided to resign from the WWMC Board of Directors. We say farewell and a huge thank you to both Stan and Randall.

- Stan Franklin served as a WWMC Director for 14 years and as WWMC Chair, 2015-2017; he contributed greatly to many WWMC files, always willing to give of his expertise and skill to do the ongoing work of understanding the lake and its watershed and protecting and restoring it. Stan understood and promoted the value of building strong relationships with WWMC collaborative partners to advance watershed stewardship. We are pleased Stan will continue to participate in select WWMC initiatives.
- Randall Heil represented the business/corporate sector on the WWMC Board of Directors for the past 7 years. His commitment and contributions to various WWMC projects has been greatly appreciated; Randall's recent work on advancing awareness of salt management practices in the Wabamun watershed stands out as an important stewardship contribution. Randall has also not completely closed the doors on the WWMC, he plans to participate on certain watershed projects.

With the resignation of these Directors, the WWMC has Board vacancies that it is seeking to fill. A Board vacancy provides an opportunity for board renewal and new ideas.

## Join Our Board of Directors

The Wabamun Watershed Management Council ([WWMC](#)) is seeking active and committed people to be members of our Board of Directors. The WWMC is a registered charity, not-for-profit society that represents a cross-section of Wabamun Lake stakeholders who are committed to maintaining and improving the health of the lake and its watershed. **If you are passionate about the health of Wabamun Lake and its watershed** and want to make a difference in how the lake and watershed are managed and conserved, consider joining the WWMC Board of Directors—we want to connect with you.

- Bring YOUR voice to an engaged, motivated, and forward-thinking Board.
- The WWMC Board of Directors benefits from and seeks a diverse mix of perspectives, skills, and experience. All we ask is that, as a baseline, you have a passion for the lake and a willingness to learn (our board members are great mentors!). Note: one particular current priority skillset need is in the area of communications/information technology. But again, having said that, we welcome interest from diverse skillsets.
- The WWMC board work is not onerous, and from a personal and professional stance can be immensely satisfying, working with a board of directors' team to engage the wide variety of watershed stakeholders on lake and watershed health.

Help us be a VOICE for the Lake.

**See [Join WWMC Board of Directors \(PDF\)](#) for further information.** If you are interested in this opportunity to serve on the WWMC Board of Directors, please contact us at [info@wwmc.ca](mailto:info@wwmc.ca).

## Seba Beach Bioengineering Workshop

If you are interested in learning about or doing a lakeshore or river/stream bank stabilization or restoration project using natural material you will want to attend this workshop. This workshop will undertake a demonstration of willow harvesting and willow-staking as a bioengineering technique to stabilize a lake shoreline.

**When?** Saturday, **May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

**Where?** Meet at **Hamlet of Wabamun School (5305 50 St, Wabamun AB)**

**Who?** The FREE workshop is organized by WWMC. It is recommended for ages 12 and up who are interested in receiving some hands-on training in the fundamentals of bioengineering to restore and stabilize steep slopes and eroding shorelines.

**About?** Bioengineering is a technique using natural materials to stabilize soils. It offers an economical and sustainable method of stabilizing slopes, while promoting successional reclamation of disturbed sites.



Harvesting willow during the 2018 shoreline restoration workshop as a result of the ice heave

The day will start off with a brief introduction of the fundamentals of bioengineering, followed by hands-on training on willow harvesting and installation methods. (Willows will be harvested near the Hamlet of Wabamun and willow installation will be at a site in Seba Beach). Participants will gain practical experience in the application of bioengineering, and an introduction for how it may be used as an effective alternative to traditional engineering practices while building resiliency into the watershed. This workshop is an extension of the WWMC 2023 bulrush restoration pilot project.

Please bring safety glasses, work gloves, sturdy footwear, and weather appropriate clothing. Participation will be limited to a **maximum of 30 people**. Water and snacks will be provided. It is recommended that participants bring their own lunch and drinking water.

**Presenter: Kristen Andersen, CPWSC, PWS, P.Biol.**

Kristen is a certified professional in erosion and sediment control and restoration ecologist with 24 years of experience in stream and wetland restoration. She teaches wetland courses at the University of Alberta Faculty of Extension and is a Technical Specialist in Wetland and Restoration with Associated Environmental.

**RSVP to [info@wwmc.ca](mailto:info@wwmc.ca) by May 4th/2024.**

This project is financially supported by



## LakePulse

[LakePulse](#) is considered to be the first national database portal on lake health. This project was funded by *Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada*. Broadly speaking, the project sought to answer the question: How healthy are Canadian lakes? Wabamun Lake was included as a data collection location. The LakePulse [Lake Portal](#) is an interactive graphic display of all the lakes across Canada that were sampled and the data from each lake. While this report represents only a snapshot in time (one data collection event), the data is presented in interesting, readable graphics to display lake condition and compare with other lakes.

## Membership Renewal

As per the WWMC Bylaws, all General Members must renew their memberships by June 30, 2024. Renewal is free and easy. Just go to our [Renew General Membership page](#) and fill out the form. Thank you for your continued support of the WWMC.

If you are not a member, but want to be, go to our [General Membership page](#).

## Our Partners

The WWMC thanks the following governments and organizations for their support of specific WWMC projects:



## Donors

The WWMC gratefully thanks the following people who have donated to the WWMC to continue our work protecting the health of Wabamun Lake: Kelly & Mary Aldridge, Margaret Bakker, Todd Baldwin, Lyn ter Borg, Conrad Clement, Rob Cowley, Sandy Drummond, Carol & Keith Epton, Susan Evans, Neil Fleming, Colleen & David Judge, Kobylo Family, Maurice Lemieux, Kathy MacDonald, Averie & Carman McNary, Don and Betty Meredith, Peter and Jordyce van Muyden, Julia & Tony Nelson, Barb Parker, Cliff Richard, Robarts Family, Bill & Kate Russell, Ian Simpson, Denny Thomas, Denise & Bernie Wade, Sheila Wynn, Dwayne Zon. Edmonton Community Foundation: *Stan & Janet Franklin Fund, McIvor Kent Endowment Fund.*

**Special Note:** The Zon family wishes to acknowledge and express their appreciation to all those who made a donation to the WWMC in memory of Nick Zon.

**Remember:** Donors to the WWMC receive a tax receipt. Go to our [Donate page](#) for more information.

## Corporate Members

The WWMC thanks the following businesses, governments and organizations for joining the WWMC as corporate members and helping the council achieve its goals. Go to [Get Involved](#) for more information about Corporate Membership.

### Gold Members



### Silver Members



### Bronze Members



Seba Beach Heritage Society, Wabamun ATB Financial, Wabamun Hotel, Falher Drugs