



THE SCOOP ON POOP... AND OTHER SMOULDERING TOPICS

County of Stettler Lagoons

Recently, the County of Stettler was forced to limit the amount of sewage being hauled to County of Stettler Lagoons. The issue began with the Red Willow Lagoon having drainage problems, rendering it unable to be drained as we typically do. We are working with the affected landowners and Alberta Environment to rectify issues, however there is no quick fix. We were hopeful we would be able to drain the Red Willow Lagoon by this fall, however we expect now it may be another year.

With this closure, the Erskine Lagoon became the backup location. However, it soon became evident, the amount of effluent being hauled into County lagoons from Summer Villages exceeded all estimates. In order to be able to continue to service County of Stettler residences whose taxes support this infrastructure, it became necessary to limit the acceptance of effluent to only County of Stettler taxpayers. The County of Stettler has a responsibility to look after the needs of those who fund this infrastructure, first and foremost. We have been hearing comments that Summer Village residents believe they helped fund or were partners in creating County of Stettler lagoons, but we can confirm this is not the case. Summer Villages have not funded or obtained funding for the lagoons, or contributed to the lagoons, nor do they pay tax dollars towards maintaining these lagoons.

Prior to cancelling all drainage from the Red Willow Lagoon, we were able to handle the effluent from the Summer Villages. Unfortunately this is no longer the case. Discussions were held between Councils for the sake of problem solving. Councils for the Summer Villages communicated to us that they would haul Summer Village sewage to Mirror or other locations.

To clarify, Summer Villages collect their own taxes from Summer Village residents, and they currently do not provide water and sewer service. As Summer Villages, they do have a responsibility to plan and prepare and handle the infrastructure needs of their communities. While for many years, they have been utilizing County infrastructure at no cost, volumes are no longer sustainable for us and it is no longer possible. We would encourage residents of Summer Villages to become involved with their local government to solve the problem of how their infrastructure needs like septic disposal, can be met, today and for their future. It is not up to County taxpayers to bear the costs of carrying Summer Villages. The Summer Village of White Sands (SVWS) population increased 45% from the 2016 census to the 2021 census. We don't expect these numbers to go down, and in fact they will likely continue to increase.

Road Bans

County of Stettler Council through our Inter-Collaboration Framework (ICF) with the Summer Village of White Sands, was hoping to have a scheduled discussion to talk about joint road maintenance issues for the past few years. County roads leading into the village are taking a beating, requiring more and more maintenance due to usage. Our Council's position is that the Summer Villages should enter into an Agreement with the County, to share in the maintenance and repairs needed from sewage haulers, water haulers, and construction equipment. The only other way to save our road network in these areas is to reduce weight allowances, and then reduce speed. Until an Agreement can be reached with the SVWS, the County reduced weight allowances in order to reduce the wear and tear on the County's infrastructure. Again, it is not up to County residents to bear all the costs of infrastructure that supports the Summer Village communities.