

Saskatchewan Municipal **Best Practice**

Wakaw Lake Stewardship Group

CONTACT

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THE PRACTICE

The R.M. of Hoodoo, Resort Village of Wakaw Lake, Town of Wakaw, Wakaw Lake Regional Park and a special interest group called POWL (Property Owners of Wakaw Lake) have been meeting for 2 ½ years to discuss issues of mutual concern. The primary concern of the municipalities is to preserve Wakaw Lake and to facilitate sustainable development surrounding the Lake (The boundaries of Wakaw Lake are within the R.M. of Hoodoo, the Resort Village of Wakaw Lake, the Town of Wakaw, and the Wakaw Lake Regional Park.). The initial meeting was one of the first times that the municipalities and the Regional Park had met to discuss the future of Wakaw Lake. Prior to this, all of the groups were working independently of one another in their individual areas of concerns.

THE PROCESS

The Municipal Capacity Development Program was contacted and some of their staff members were sent to our meetings to assist. With their capable expertise, a plan was implemented. The group decided that the first step would be to identify the top priority actions. Since the R.M. of Hoodoo updates their Zoning Bylaw and Official Community Plan every 10 years, it was decided to undertake another Lakeshore Development Study (which would include all of the partner areas) to see if there were going to be any changes to the Bylaws in and if they needed updating. The information gathered by this study could also assist the other partners in their planning and development initiatives. A Memorandum of Understanding and a Cost Sharing Agreement were prepared and reviewed by all of the partners. Each partner took the information back to their Councils/Boards for further review and brought back any changes that were desired by the partners. The MOU & Shared Cost Agreements were signed by the partners in May and July, 2010. A Request for Proposal for the Lakeshore Development Study was created and once finalized, sent out for tenders.

During this time, other funding opportunities and applications became available, so the partners also applied for a Planning for Growth initiative grant. While awaiting grant approval, the partnership continued to look for ways to use joint information from other organizations such as the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, the Ministry of Environment and scientific data from other reports and studies.

At the time of submission of this nomination, the Wakaw Lake Stewardship Group has been successful in obtaining a grant from the Planning for Growth initiative.

THE RESULTS

Benefits have included co-operation, and a sense of accomplishment. There are also a number of barriers that must be addressed, such as a history of working independently, and lengthy timelines.

A model will be developed for the members of the Wakaw Lake Stewardship group to follow for all future development. This model will be reviewed every 5 to 10 years, depending on the growth experienced in the area. Each municipality will have the ability to adopt the recommended policies into their individual OCP's and Zoning Bylaws. The Municipalities and the organizations will also have organizational tools useful for determining development. Consistent policies among the members of the Wakaw Lake Stewardship Group will also make it attractive for potential investors to relocate to the area. These policies will help build the strengths of the region and open the doors to numerous new regional opportunities.

The Lakeshore Development Study will be a valuable learning tool and will create awareness for the municipalities and the organizations involved as well as for the residents of those municipalities. Having the policies in place (from the outcome of the study), will allow the municipalities and partners to be able to enhance the quality of life in the area and be able to identify what each community do.

The development of the new policies could also address use of environmentally friendly developments by using new technologies with waste water management, solar power, wind power, and other alternative sources, etc. These developments could encourage economic growth in those areas and attract populations that favour this type of development. These new policies would also assist in the preservation of the quality of the lake and allow the continued use and enjoyment by the residents and visitors of the area.

LESSONS LEARNED

The process used by the Wakaw Lake Stewardship Group to develop their internal structure, (authority, voting power, representation from the respective Councils and Boards, and cost sharing), made the group realize that working on this initiative as a collective group, is more efficient than on an individual basis.