

Best Practice

RM of Lakeland Environmental Advisor

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THE PRACTICE

An increase in activities in the area led the RM of Lakeland to establish an Environmental Advisory Committee which works to provide advice, leadership and education on all issues related to supporting and improving the environment of the municipality.

THE PROCESS

The Environmental Advisory Committee was established in 2009 for the purpose of advising council on environmental issues. Guidelines were established for the committee to govern membership of the committee and communication with council. Each Cottage Owner Association was invited to send 2 representatives to serve on the committee, and one council member was appointed to serve as liaison. An operating budget of \$2000 plus meeting space and photocopying were the resources required to make this committee functional. The committee was also encouraged to discuss issues with various government agencies.

THE RESULTS

To date, the following changes have occurred

- A paper and cardboard recycle program has been introduced in the municipality. This has succeeded in recycling 55 tonnes of cardboard and paper
- In 2010, the committee set up a sub-committee responsible for testing lake water quality.
- "No Dumping" signs have been put up to help deter dumping in the forests
- "Loon Nesting" and "No Wake" signs have been put up in sensitive areas of the lakes
- The committee has identified areas that may be environmentally sensitive and have requested that council identify them as Environmental Reserves
- An ATV policy was drafted as a resolution
- A brochure on "controlling your wake" which outlines the damage done by boat wakes was produced and distributed
- Members of the Environmental Advisory Committee have joined council in meetings with other partners to start the process of drafting a shoreline structure policy
- Summer of 2010 was the beginning of "Nurture Nature in Lakeland", which is an annual tradition of showcasing environmentally friendly activities in the community

LESSONS LEARNED

- Providing a forum for ratepayers, gathering public input from public meetings, providing mail outs, providing updates, and obtaining information on future concerns and problems help to garner stakeholder support
- Developing an annual budget, database, and filing system will help to ensure the continued success of the program.