

Lac Ste. Anne and Lake Isle Water Quality / Water Level Briefing Note – August 6, 2025

Background

Lac Ste. Anne and Lake Isle are vital freshwater ecosystems in our region. Like many lakes across Alberta, they are facing growing environmental pressure from agricultural and urban runoff, invasive species, and increasingly variable weather patterns—including prolonged dry periods and unseasonal precipitation events.

These lakes are connected by a broader watershed system that includes Devils Lake, Big Lake, and others. The Sturgeon River, which flows through the region, has been federally designated as one of Canada's Top 10 most endangered rivers.

In response, municipalities are aligning around a proactive, coordinated approach. The Lake Isle Lac Ste. Anne Stewardship Society (LILSA)—a trusted non-profit with a strong regional presence—will lead the development of a comprehensive Lake Management Plan. This plan is the first step toward potential long-term solutions, but it must begin with science, data, and collaboration.

This work will be carried out in accordance with provincial regulatory directives and environmental approval processes, ensuring it can be recognized and supported by the Province of Alberta. While this is a municipally-led effort, there is a clear expectation that provincial and federal governments must play a role in enabling solutions and supporting implementation.

LILSA includes formal representation from community members and elected officials of each summer village and municipality and has actively worked with the Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation (ANSN) and local Métis associations on initiatives such as managing invasive species like flowering rush.

Key Messages

- **This is a regionally led initiative guided by provincial compliance.** All actions will follow Alberta's environmental regulations to ensure credibility and enable provincial support.
- **The Province and federal government must play a role in supporting the long-term stewardship of Alberta's lakes and watersheds.** This work sets the foundation for that conversation.

- **No single municipality can do this alone.** Water systems are shared across jurisdictions and must be managed collectively.
 - **LILSA is a capable, experienced organization** that has earned the trust of the region and is well-positioned to lead this work.
 - **This is a responsible, data-driven approach.** We are not proposing infrastructure; we are building a plan to understand what solutions are appropriate and viable.
 - **Indigenous inclusion matters.** The work includes active participation from ANSN and local Métis communities.
 - **Delaying action increases long-term risk**—to ecosystems, to regional economies, and to public confidence in local governance.
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Draft Motion for Consideration

That [Municipality Name] Council endorse the Lake Isle/Lac Ste. Anne Stewardship Society (LILSA)—an established non-profit organization with a focus on lake stewardship, water quality, and wetland/riparian health—to take the lead in investigating and developing a comprehensive Lake Management Plan for Lac Ste. Anne, Lake Isle, and the surrounding watersheds, including Devils Lake, Big Lake, and other applicable tributaries.

Further, that Council recommend the plan include, at a minimum:

- Strategies for protecting and improving water quality and quantity;
- An assessment of historical and current lake levels; and
- Consideration of the potential need for, and implications of, a water control structure.

And further, that all work undertaken through this initiative be conducted in alignment with applicable provincial regulatory requirements and environmental approval processes.

Next Steps

Please bring this motion forward to your Council. Once passed, LILSA will coordinate next steps, including data collection, stakeholder engagement, and intergovernmental dialogue.