



# BIG LAKE AREA SUMMARY REPORT

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Date: June, 27, 2022

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## **Summary Report of Area Planning**

### **Lois Hole Centennial Provincial Park Management Plan Status Report**

Parkland County passed a motion on March 8, 2022 to partner with Alberta Environment and Parks, Sturgeon County, City of St. Albert, City of Edmonton, the Big Lake Environment Support Society (BLESS), and the Big Lake Community Association this month to explore plans for an interpretive centre in Lois Hole Centennial Provincial Park.

A project plan was developed and implemented to focus on gathering information on the Big Lake and Surrounding Area in relation to the provincial park management plan as well as current, future and collaborative opportunities working with the local stakeholders.

A future Environmental Learning or Interpretive Centre (ELC) is an element of the broader Lois Hole Centennial Provincial Park (LHCPP) Management Plan which was completed in 2019 in consultation with local municipalities and other key stakeholders. Therefore, the Centre would be planned in conjunction with the implementation of the management plan and Alberta Parks. The purpose and the scope of the management plan were designed to provide a long term and comprehensive framework to guide both park operations and park developments. It has been produced in consultation with Albertans, stakeholders and Indigenous communities, and is intended to help achieve sustainable protection of the valuable natural and cultural values, and to provide stakeholders and Albertans a place to connect with nature for community engagement, stewardship, education, and scientific research. According to the 2019 Park Management Plan (MP 2019), the development of a multi-purpose facility on site at LHCPP that models sustainable and innovative design will greatly enhance the ability of Alberta Parks and partners to deliver high quality, high-impact environmental education programming.

Since 2012, the overall vision for the ELC (MP 2019) has remained relatively unchanged, and community support for the initiative has remained high. New opportunities have been identified, such as the potential to partner with the Alberta Climate Change office for facility design and future use. Moving forward, Alberta Parks will work with the Alberta Climate Change office to update the feasibility study for the ELC prior to developing a business case to seek support for proceeding with its development. Currently the facility project is unfunded at this time.

There are numerous stakeholder developments and activities currently in progress in the Big Lake Area as well as the surrounding communities including: Alberta Parks, City of Edmonton, St. Albert, Sturgeon County, Parkland County, Big Lake Environmental Support Society (BLESS) and community organizations such as the Parkland Big Lake Community Association and the City of Edmonton Big Lake Community League. Many of these projects will increase access to and/or usage of the park area.

The Summary Report covers the Current and Future Priorities as well as Collaborative Options.

# **Big Lake & Surrounding Community & Park Current, Long Term and Collaborative Planning**

## **Summary of Current Priorities**

### **Community**

#### **BLESS**

**Expanding the BLESS stewardship activities to cover the entire Lois Hole Centennial Provincial Park (LHCPP)**

**Working with the Parks Dept. and lobbying for funding for trail improvements and additional signage in LHCPP**

**Working with the City of St Albert to accomplish the following:**

- Raising the Red Willow Trail under the Ray Gibbon Drive bridge
- Preserving the wildlife corridor on the north side of river under the bridge
- Installing replacement trees adjacent to the NE corner of LHCPP

**Revising the City's Municipal Development Plan to delete the Employment Lands designation on two areas of St Albert adjacent to Big Lake**

**Providing and supporting environmental education programs**

#### **PARKLAND BIG LAKE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION (CL)**

**Maintaining the current park and playground areas**

#### **Neighbourhood safety**

- Monitoring speeding cars in the area as well as crime and theft issues
- The neighbourhood is being noticed more/more safety concerns lately
- The neighbourhood construction of developments near 215-231 street
- Safety while walking on 231 street by residents may become more of a concern

#### **BIG LAKE COMMUNITY LEAGUE (BLCL-COE)**

**Community Developments in City of Edmonton neighbourhoods**

- Most communities in the area are still in development and/o construction

- Represent residents of Starling, Hawks Ridge, Trumpeter, Kingslet Gardens as well as new communities developing in the area in the future

### **Implement Community Activities**

- The community league hosts numerous family and resident events each season. The Larger activities include the Winter Festival, Ice Rink and Community League Day in the fall.
- The Community Bike Challenge is a popular event and people interested in cycling, hiking and kayaking as well as other outdoor activities
- The Annual General Meeting took place recently and board in place with a few new board members

### **Community Safety**

- Aware of the issue by Parkland County PBLCA about speeding on 231 street
- People moving into the area are a combination of families, baby boomers and young professionals without children as of yet.

## **Local Municipalities**

### **CITY OF EDMONTON**

#### **Implementing current planning and development projects**

- City of Edmonton, Metro Line LRT Design development from NAIT to Bratchford Extension (Project to be completed by 2024)
- Yellowhead Freeway extension under construction. St. Albert Trail to 97 Street currently in preliminary design in 2022

#### **Facilitating partnerships, projects and activities**

- Currently has a formal inter-municipal committee with City of Edmonton (COE), City of St. Albert and Mornville for collaboration projects/information sharing
- COE Regional Economic Development Section and connection with City of St. Albert

### **CITY ST. ALBERT**

#### **Current project and activities planning with other municipalities**

- Formal inter-municipal committee with Mornville and City of Edmonton on project collaboration and information sharing



## **Current planning for parks, trails and open space activities**

- Some conversations with Sturgeon County on the north shore of Big Lake
- Aware of the Parkland County motion on the Interpretive Centre (ELC)
- Review of Red Willow Trail System - Master Plan updated in 2018
- Inter-municipal regional meetings with Mornville and City of Edmonton
- Currently have close to 100 km of trails and built to City's edge in most cases
- St Albert "Play along the way" trail has bump out trail elements on the trail system

## **Planning partnerships for regional cooperation and coordination**

- Currently have a formal inter-municipal committee with City of Edmonton and Mornville for collaboration projects/information sharing
- COE Regional Economic Development Section and City of St Albert planning

## **Recreation and facility partnerships and planning**

- Utilizing research from 2000 planning on facility capital plans as well as parks and trails partners
- Alberta Trail Net has a process for implementing a water trail in conjunction with the work on the athabasca river study

## **PARKLAND COUNTY**

### **Current planning of projects and activities**

- Include and share information with land developers to ensure they are aware of Parkland County Parks, Trails and Active Transportation Planning for their new subdivision designs or developments
- Parkland County is currently in the planning stages to prepare a Trails Strategy Plan in 2022-23
- Parkland County passed a motion on March 8, 2022 to partner with Alberta Environment and Parks, Sturgeon County, City of St. Albert, City of Edmonton, the Big Lake Environment Support Society (BLESS), and the Big Lake Community Association this month to explore plans for an interpretive centre (ELC) in Lois Hole Centennial Provincial Park.
- A future Environmental Learning or Interpretive Centre is an element of the broader Lois Hole Provincial Park Management Plan which was completed in 2019 in consultation with local municipalities and other key stakeholders. Therefore, the Centre would be planned in conjunction with the implementation of the management plan and Alberta Parks. Parkland County is a key stakeholder.

## STURGEON COUNTY

### Current open space planning for project and activities

- Most of the focus has been Sturgeon Valley east to the City of St Albert
- A completed Open Space Plan in 2016
- Website update on parks and trails in 2022
- Mapping the trail project priorities
- Priorities at this time include the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) review in 2022 and Sturgeon River major trail connections and west from Big Lake connect to the river valley (Sturgeon River Valley)

### Facilitate planning of partnerships, projects and activities

- Coordination with Alberta Trail Net
  - Currently trails are not in statutory plans
  - Reviewing for entrance trail systems in our statutory plans/frameworks
- Environmentally Sensitive Area Plan/County Plan with environmental groups
- BLESS and Sturgeon County connections/partner with provincial park/joint ideas
- Alberta Trail Riding Association and development of equestrian/riding trail systems
- Potential partnership with the Nordic Ski Club trails and expanding winter trails for x-country skiing
- Alexander First Nation and Sandy Lake Wilderness management plan
- Sturgeon County connections to St Albert trails (St Albert is at their city limits already in most cases)

## Provincial Government

### ALBERTA PARKS

#### Current planning for the Lois Hole Provincial Park Management Plan

- No capital funding at this time for the Environmental Learning Centre. They have received messages from BLESS who would like to see the project move forward and may be open to support a fundraising strategy for certain park elements or the facility
- Aware of the Parkland County motion (motion from March 8, 2022) on the facility and possible collaborations

- Land acquisitions: Core sections to be acquired and the legal process to bring them into the park. The Minister may be forwarding (to be determined on timing of this) more information soon
- There is no current concept plan for future trail locations/loops but the management plan outlines standards for the trails on the east side of the park as well as a nature trail standard for loops from the east parking area. Most of the trail work is going from east to west at this time
- Boardwalk trail in place with partnership with BLESS and City of St Albert on east park entrance

### **Facilitation and open to partnerships that are in alignment with the goals and objectives of the management plan**

- BLESS is very active in the park with stewardship and events as well as some programs
- Open to collaborations with other municipalities or groups in the area
- There is a provincial standard for trail development in the management plan as well as standard for boardwalks if that were to be utilized in the west side or other areas due to access concerns. The County could potentially with appropriate approvals utilize the park area to connect trails (utilizing provincial standards) to link around private property access issues or boundaries. The Hinton beaver trail boardwalk could be one example.
- May need a partnership to move forward to the west with Sturgeon County and the Edmonton Springs Golf Course area

## **Summary of Long Term Initiatives**

### **Community**

#### **BLESS**

#### **Working with the Parks Dept. and lobbying for funding for the following:**

- An Environmental Learning Centre as outlined in the Parks Management Plan
- Additional picnic facilities in the vicinity of the shelter
- Extending the trail system to connect with the future park facilities in the County of Parkland
- Park development in the City of Edmonton adjacent to Big Lake
- Clean up and remediation of the former Sinopec oil and gas site

## **Working with the City of St Albert to install fencing on Ray Gibbon Drive**

### **Installation of additional trees along the Ray Gibbon Drive property line**

### **Lobbying to minimize the major roads that have been proposed adjacent to LHCPP:**

- Deleting the proposed arterial road along the south boundary of the future LHCPP from the Area Structure Plan
- Downgrading the LeClair Way extension to be a collector road
- The ultimate designation for Ray Gibbon Drive to be an arterial road with a 70kph speed limit rather than a freeway

## **PARKLAND BIG LAKE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION (CL)**

### **Community Development Activities**

- Staying connected to the Province's work on the expansion of highway 16/Yellowhead
- With the ROW pipeline repair/upgrade may be a trail opportunity
- Aware of Councillor Kowalski's motion in Council on the Lois Holes Centennial Provincial Park management plan and potential new facility collaborations
- May be a future mini-shopping center on the COE/Developer properties 215-231 street developments
- Potentially green projects like trees, picnic area, but nothing started at this time

### **Community Safety and Active Transportation Activities**

- Staying connected on the 231 street and any major road improvements
- No sidewalks/trail for walkers at this time on 231 street

## **BIG LAKE COMMUNITY LEAGUE (COE)**

### **Community Coordination and Planning in the Big Lake Community League Area**

- Preparing a needs study to start the planning for a community league hall on the Trumpeter Park Site which was designated by the City of Edmonton
- Residents interested in using the provincial park, but only access now is in St. Albert
- The housing developments in new areas could be completed by 2024 approximately depending on sales and land preparations moving towards 231 street (City limits)
- Transportation issue of the need to keep the road connection to the neighbourhoods from the 137 Avenue entrance near the Starling community
- Pintail Landing community could be building in 2025 approximately as per the Neighbourhood Structure Plan (East of 215 street and north of 124 Avenue)



- Open to connecting on the Lois Hole Centennial Provincial Park planning, but have no information or connection at this time
- Future K-6 Public School being planned for the Hawks Ridge Community

## Local Municipalities

### CITY OF EDMONTON(COE)

#### Planning future projects and development activities

- Alberta Parks/Province are working on connections with COE and properties to acquire them through the COE Area Structure Plan for the area project
- Provincial funding of \$200,000 to complete an inter-municipal planning framework for the Ray Gibbons Drive/137 Street connection (Province, St. Albert, Edmonton)

### CITY ST. ALBERT

#### Planning future projects and development activities

- City of St. Albert planners working on the West St Albert MDP and West Area Structure Plan
- Provincial funding of \$200,000 to complete an inter-municipal planning framework for the Ray Gibbons Drive/137 Street connection (Province, St. Albert, Edmonton)

#### Planning future recreation and park developments and activities

- Potential for west community amenity site in St Albert - new recreation facility site
- Developments related to the new annexation area from Sturgeon County to City of St Albert
- Partner with Alberta Trail Net to investigate routes, connections to Trans Canada Trail and River Valley Alliance Trails
- Plan with the Province as they formalize/transfer a number of parcels to bring them into the park inventory
- New Riverside community connection to Red Willow trail system
- Future nature based playground will be completed in the fall of 2022

### PARKLAND COUNTY

#### Facilitating future planning and development activities in Parkland County

- Lakeridge Estates Country Residential Estate subdivision Phases 3 and 4 Planning is Developer driven and they are proposing two new phases to Lakeridge Estates. They are currently updating the Conceptual Scheme for this area to include considerations such as open space, trails, etc.

- Springbank Park Estates Country Residential Estate Proposal Planning is Developer driven and they are proposing to redistrict to support future subdivision and development of the lands. This has not yet been approved by Council but is going to be brought for their consideration this Summer/Fall of 2022.

**Implementing the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan related to a Trails Strategy Plan and countywide Trail Network, including connections to the Big Lake Area.**

- The county is launching a planning process to develop a Trails Strategy Plan including a countywide trails network. Connections to adjacent municipalities would be advantageous and provide expanded networks of trails in this region and potential connections to the Big Lake Area and Provincial Park.

**Facilitating the next steps for the Council Motion (March 8, 2022) to work collaboratively with the Province and local stakeholders on the facility and management plan for Lois Hole Centennial Provincial Park**

**STURGEON COUNTY**

**Open space planning for future projects and activities in the County**

- No countywide strategy or plan for trails or parks at this time, but plan to confirm priorities going forward
- Planning document to update environmentally sensitive areas in the county

**Historical and Regional Planning for open spaces**

- Klondyke Trail Plan for the Sturgeon River, Athabasca, Alexander First Nation, Sturgeon County areas:
  - Federal, Provincial or Heritage Trail
  - Original routes of sturgeon river to Big Lake
- Review of motorized connections, environmental reserves/other reserves and large parks planning
- Regionally acknowledging indigenous and historical trail routes on the reserve areas, environmental reserves and right of ways
- Open to discussions on long term connections to Parkland County, City of St Albert and Alberta Parks (Lois Hole Centennial Provincial Park)

## Provincial Government

### ALBERTA PARKS

#### Planning for the Environmental Learning Centre

- No funding at this time in the budget
- High level concept plan for the facility completed 2010-2012
- Location initially looked at the southside of the east parking lot
- No official engagement is scheduled at this time

#### Planning in the future based on the Park Management Plan(2019) and Environmental Learning Centre

- The Environmental Learning Centre is still unfunded at this time but there is a high level concept design that was done
- Continue with land acquisitions and consolidation of lands that had been designated for the park
- Open to a collaboration on planning for a trail system around the entire park where it is feasible and not disturbing environmental sensitive areas
- The Big Island and Fish Creek Provincial Park engagements are good process examples

### Summary of Potential Collaborations & Ideas

Some of the initiatives for collaboration, opportunities for development features and funding will be discussed and planned for the future if a strong partnership or collaboration can be created to enhance the existing desire by the neighbouring communities and local groups to protect, sustain and provide for increasing usage of the Lois Hole Centennial Provincial Park and its surrounding areas in partnership with Alberta Parks.

The Big Island park master planning and Fish Creek trails master plan engagements are a couple of good examples of processes to follow or monitor. As well, Fish Creek Provincial Park has an Environmental Learning Centre on site for educational, community outreach programming and facility rentals that is a good model already in operation.

### CITY OF EDMONTON

#### Collaborative Opportunities/Ideas

- The planning section had mentioned the public footpath network in the United Kingdom(UK) ([Link 1](#), [link 2](#)) was a good long term vision document.

### **Collaborative Opportunities/Ideas Big Lake Community League (COE)**

- One of our board members is also on the Big Lake Environmental Support Society to keep us informed
- Collaborate with the City (COE) and EFCL now, but no connection with City of St. Albert at this time
- BLCL looking to connect with the Winterburn Business Association
- Could be a collaboration with Parkland County, City of Edmonton and Alberta Public Schools on residents of PCBLCA area utilizing a future new K-6 school in Hawks Ridge.
- BLCL would be open to a collaboration with Alberta Parks and access to the park on the southwest zone of the park (City of Edmonton/Parkland County side)
- Open to stay connected with Parkland County and others on park, lake access or trail developments

## **ST. ALBERT**

### **Collaborative Opportunities/Ideas**

- Potentially with the building/facility/structure with the Province LHCPP Management Plan
- Nothing to update lately other than with David Cross and the Parkland County motion (March 8, 2022)
- Could have a special purpose project with partners in the area or a shared project charter that we develop
- Possibly a collaboration to create a regional trails plan

### **Collaborative Opportunities/Ideas**

- Potential partnership or collaboration with Sturgeon County/Mornville
- Maybe group with COE, St Albert and Parkland County to formalize strategic connections for trails in municipalities and LHCPP/management plan
- Maybe a collaboration with Sturgeon County on the north shore of Big Lake
- Could expand nordic ski trails
- Collaborate on active transportation gaps in the area
- Dealing with issues of expanded use with COVID and increased use of outdoor spaces

## PARKLAND COUNTY

### Collaborative Opportunities/Ideas PBLCA

- Potential collaboration in the 231 street area with access to park, potential improvements on the 231 street road and sidewalks/walkways
- Collaboration on improved maintenance by the COE on 231 street

### Collaborative Opportunities/Ideas Parkland County

- Collaborations with municipalities and local not for profits on the Lois Hole Centennial Provincial Park improvements and future new Learning Centre/Facility
- The county is launching a planning process to develop a Trails Strategy Plan including a countywide trails network. Connections to adjacent municipalities would be advantageous and provide expanded networks of trails in this region and potential connections to the Provincial Park.

## STURGEON COUNTY

### Collaborative Opportunities/Ideas

- Create a comprehensive plan with St Albert, Sturgeon County, Parkland County, COE and how different partners can contribute
- Sturgeon County/Big Lake/Meadowview Drive Project
  - Could there be a local destination site/farmers market/etc. and trail north to St. Albert area/red willow trails and then to Parkland County

## ALBERTA PARKS

### Collaborative Opportunities/Ideas

- Connecting with City of St Albert on the West MDP connecting river lot 56 to the Enjoy Centre lots
- Open to collaborations with stakeholders as per the direction of the management plan in regards to elements in the plan like trails, learning centre and other amenities that fit with the management plan for park. No funding for this at this time but there may be able to be some collaborative planning as well as information sharing meetings on a more frequent basis
- 199 street/137 avenue road allowance and trail access to the lake and small informal parking lot



## Other Stakeholders

**Planning and coordinating with other key stakeholders could bring additional planning resources, funding and enhanced success to future planning and developments in the area**

- Alberta Trail Net
- Nature Alberta
- River Valley Alliance
- Canadian Wildlife Federation and Wild Outside
- Outdoor Play Canada
- Ducks Unlimited
- North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance
- Alberta Public Schools

**Conversations and Consultations with Key Stakeholders included:**

- Alberta Parks, Government of Alberta
- City of Edmonton
- Big Lake Community League, Edmonton
- City of St. Albert
- Big Lake Environmental Support Society, St. Albert
- Sturgeon County
- Parkland County
- Parkland Big Lake Community Association
- Alberta Trail Net

summary overview

# WHERE TO GO NOW

## Conclusions

In conversations with the internal and external stakeholders there is an openness to collaborating on the Lois Holes Centennial Provincial Park Management Plan, the potential for a future Interpretive/Learning or Environmental Centre as well sharing information on future transportation, schools, parks or trail amenities.

The success of the functioning of the Provincial Park and surrounding municipalities or local stakeholders can be greatly enhanced by creating a forum for sharing information, collaborating on projects and current or future planning exercises.

## Recommendations for Parkland County

### 1. Trails Strategy Plan Integration

Integrate the work for the Trails Strategy Plan so that further detailed analysis of current and long range planning can occur in the Big Lake and surrounding area in conjunction with local municipalities/stakeholders as well as incorporating and aligning with strategies in the Lois Hole Provincial Park Management Plan.

### 2. Collaboration with Provincial Government and Stakeholders

Meet further with local municipalities and groups in the area to support creating a provincial or regional project team/committee to work in conjunction with Alberta Parks and surrounding current and long range planning activities.

### 3. Coordinate SW Zone Planning Activities

Begin further dialogue with the City of Edmonton and Sturgeon County on collaborative planning related to trail connections, park linkages, school developments, events planning/sharing and transportation corridors.

### 4. Synchronize Area Planning Exercises

Create a further consultation meeting with municipal representatives and local stakeholders to share information and prioritize collaborative activities.

## Short-term Wins Opportunities

1. Utilize the park management plan and especially the “*Southwest Zone Ideas*” based on the consultations and research document gathered to date and incorporate it into the Trails Strategy Plan Request for Proposal 2022 scope of work.

# Big Lake Project Area

