

Executive Summary

Fallis, Alberta is a hamlet located on the north shore of Wabamun Lake.

On behalf of our community of Fallis, the Fallis Residents Committee formed to develop and circulate the enclosed questionnaire to Fallis property owners to document their views in an organized and objective manner.

We delivered 89 questionnaires (one per property) and received 43 responses (one per property) for a 48.3% response rate. The fact that all Fallis residents could respond privately meant that many views and experiences were freely shared.

The Fallis Residents Committee is hopeful that the questionnaire results will help to create discussion and understanding in our community. In addition, the various levels of government with authority and responsibility for these topics need to consider the results of this questionnaire and respond to the concerns raised.

Highlights of Questionnaire Results:

We encourage everyone to read the extensive comments provided by respondents. Strong consensus was shown on these topics:

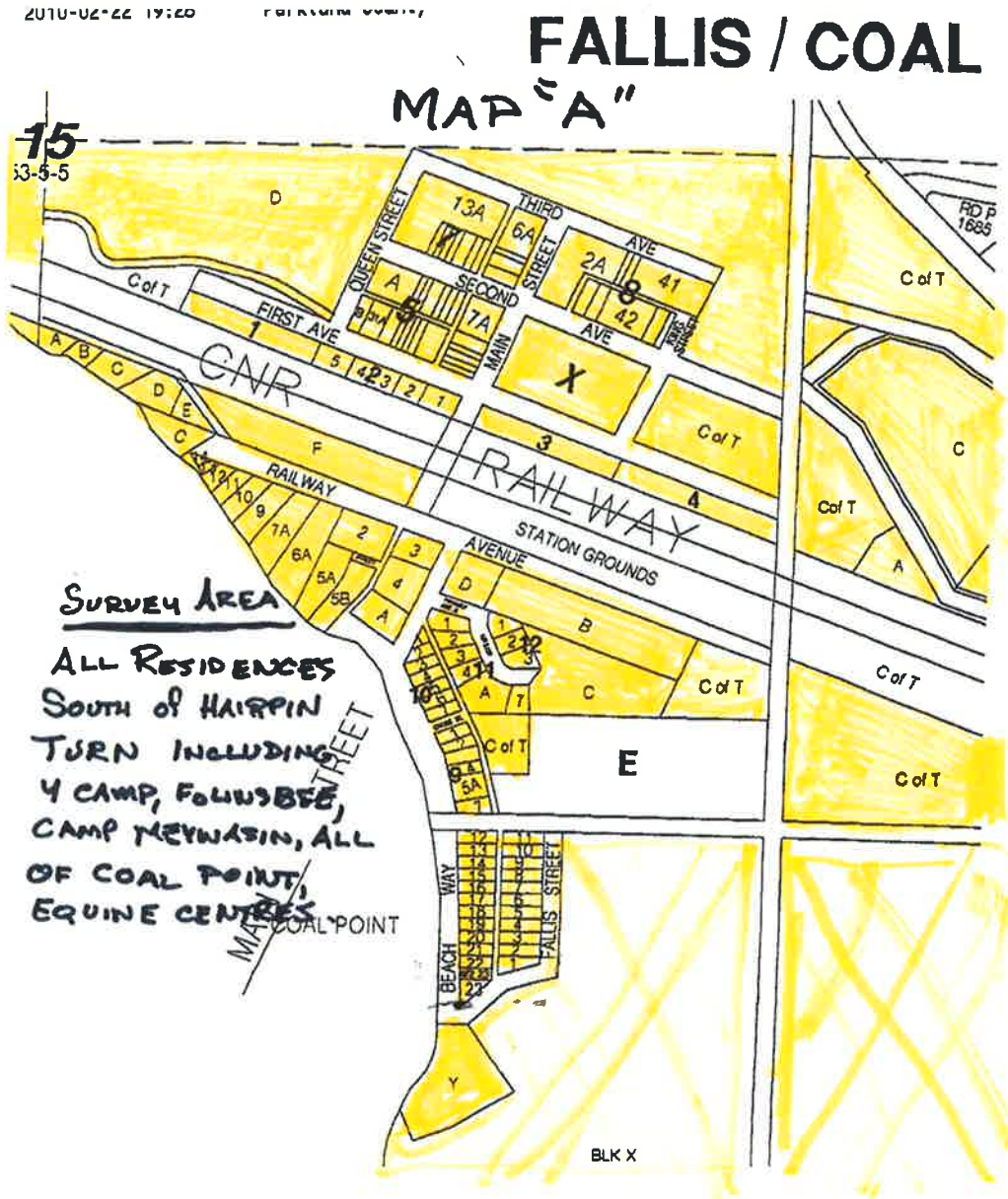
- **Shoreline:** 60% of respondents agree with the installation of devices to restrict motorized vehicles from accessing the Beach Way shoreline while allowing lifts and piers to be installed
- **Boat Launch:** 74% of the respondents selected as their first choice, either Option A or B, supporting a change to the Beach Way informal boat launch in some manner. 14% of respondents selected Option C – Do nothing.

<u>Option Description</u>	Ranked #1	Ranked #2	Ranked #3	Not Ranked	TOTAL
Option A: Close Boat Launch	23%	30%	28%	19%	100%
Option B: Gate & Residents Only Access in Summer	51%	30%	2%	16%	100%
Option C: Do Nothing	14%	21%	49%	16%	100%
No Option Ranked with this #	12%	19%	21%		
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%		

Questionnaire Methodology

- 1) Questionnaires were personally delivered to every household located south of the hairpin turn to Fallis during the period August 27-30, 2015. Map “A” shows the general locations of these residences. In all, 89 questionnaires were distributed.
- 2) One questionnaire per lot was distributed to all properties with a permanent resident or that are frequently occupied. Responses were coded and checked to deter duplication.
- 3) Written reminder notes were personally delivered to all such residents during the week of September 14, 2015. Also, signs asking for the return of questionnaires were posted in at least 8 varied locations in Fallis as well as at the Fallis General Store on Highway 16.
- 4) Map “B” shows the number of responses received by zone, with a 48.3% response rate. The map shows that a balance of responses were received from on-lake and off-lake residences, Beach Way and non-Beach Way residences and permanent and seasonal residences.
- 5) The identity of responders was kept confidential.
- 6) The 48.3% response rate was the highest response ever given in our community to any survey.
- 7) In addition to the yes/no answers and the ratings answers, residents were asked for their comments on issues. Comments are reproduced at the end of each question, except where the comment was blasphemous or disclosed identity or where the identity of the respondent could be inferred from the comments made.
- 8) The questionnaire was designed simply to ask residents for the very first time for their responses and comments on a wide range of issues. The variety of questions and topics demonstrate this.
- 9) We have a 95% confidence level that the questionnaire results are correct with an average margin of error of +/- 10.75%

MAP A – FALLIS HAMLET – DISTRIBUTION OF QUESTIONNAIRE



BOAT LAUNCH:

This year small informal launches on Wabamun Lake, such as ours on Beach Way, have experienced tremendous increases in use by the public due to: (1) the closure of all Seba Beach launches to the public; (2) restrictions on use at other small launches on the lake; and (3) the overall increase in watercraft on the lake and in our community. There were several days in June when line-ups to the Village of Wabamun launch were over 3.5 hours, with launch traffic extending to the Dragon Fly one day and all the way to Highway 16 on another.

The availability of and demand for boat launches have been the subject of two comprehensive studies by the County and Alberta Environment, and widespread discussion and debate by lake area residents of Fallis. The EDA Wabamun Boat Launch Study conducted for the County in 2012 and subsequent lake studies state that the Fallis informal boat launch has “unstable shoreline conditions and shallow water present challenging launch conditions” and conclude that its use should be restricted to “use by adjacent residents” and to “formalize access controls.” The report recommended building larger public boat launches elsewhere with inspection and washing facilities and utilizing concrete ramps in non-residential areas. The issue also involves the dangers of invasive species of clams and algae and the tremendous unsustainable increased use of the lake for recreational and commercial purposes. The results of all such studies point to the same conclusions. It is possible that our informal soft coal based boat launch will either be closed permanently and replaced by a larger public launch elsewhere or be limited to local residents’ use only. We believe that the County and the Provincial Government are headed in this direction. We would like to have your input on what you prefer among some possible scenarios.

17. Please provide your feedback on the possible future of the Fallis boat launch by ranking the 3 options described below (a “1” being your most preferred option of the 3 and a “3” being your least preferred option of the 3):

Option A (Rank ____ of 3): This option is to close and permanently barricade the informal boat launch and request the Province and County to immediately pursue other boat launch sites for general public use.

Option B (Rank ____ of 3): This option provides for a gated 10’ wide gravel single lane boat launch in the current road allowance bordered by bollards with chains or cable. During the summer months (May through September) access to this launch site would be open for residents only (key available to Fallis residents watercraft only). Use restrictions and appropriate signage could be modeled on Seba Beach’s current boat launch regulations. During the winter months (October through April), the launch would be open and would be the only access for skidoos, quads, trucks and cars. The County would place appropriate signage indicating this is not a public launch in various locations between Highway 16 and Beach Way.

Option C (Rank ____ of 3): Do nothing, and continue to allow open use to all.

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 17: Please provide your feedback on the possible future of the Fallis boat launch by ranking the 3 options described below (a “1” being your most preferred option of the 3 and a “3” being your least preferred option of the 3):

<u>Option Description</u>	Ranked #1	Ranked #2	Ranked #3	Not Ranked	TOTAL
Option A (Rank ____ of 3): This option is to close and permanently barricade the informal boat launch and request the Province and County to immediately pursue other boat launch sites for general public use.	10	13	12	8	43
	23%	30%	28%	19%	100%
Option B (Rank ____ of 3): This option provides for a gated 10' wide gravel single lane boat launch in the current road allowance bordered by bollards with chains or cable. During the summer months (May through September) access to this launch site would be open for residents only (key available to Fallis residents watercraft only).	22	13	1	7	43
	51%	30%	2%	16%	100%
Option C (Rank ____ of 3): Do nothing, and continue to allow open use to all.	6	9	21	7	43
	14%	21%	49%	16%	100%
No Option Ranked with this #	5	8	9		
	12%	19%	21%		
TOTAL	43	43	43		
	100%	100%	100%		

18. Do you have any further comments or suggestions on the Fallis boat launch?

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 18: Do you have any further comments or suggestions on the Fallis boat launch?

- Option A – If they close the Fallis boat launch, I doubt another will be opened by the County. I hate to see reduced public access to Lake Wabamun. So I ranked this option last (even though the Fallis boat launch is the wrong kind of boat launch and is not how the County should be allowing access to the lake).
- Option A – they could open up the boat launch further down the road by the YWCA camp/SRED property which is seldom used. There is ample parking up & down that road. This should be combined with closing Beach Way to traffic and building a road across the wetland adjacent to the tracks. Since 1994 residents on Beach Way have asked to have Beach Way closed and another access put into Fallis to serve the YWCA camp and all the property owners.
- Option B – will guests of adjacent residents be allowed to launch boats/watercraft?
- Option B – it might work but not by giving keys to every resident so their friends could launch boats anytime they desired. The best way for this option to work is to have the launch open 2 weeks in May and 2 weeks in September for residents to get their boats in and out. We still don't want it where it is though.
- Option B – build a new parking lot on north side of tracks / east side of road and "walk in".
- Option C – is not an option.
- Option C; keep it open, and provide a gravel base so people are not getting stuck, causing ruts and making a mess.
- I think if you take the boat launch away lots of the small businesses would suffer.
- Of all places to launch a boat, a coal beach is likely the least environmentally sensitive. Mud and weeds harbor young fish, and other flora and fauna we don't want to see disturbed. Some boat cleaning facility would be a good idea. Especially to prevent zebra mussels from invading.
- We would like to see the boat launch closed because of (1) the fragile state the lake is in already (2) Coal Point is NOT big enough for all that congestion – too many boats / people / dogs etc (3) garbage, speed & other issues that we didn't have before will go away (4) safety for pedestrians (5) property damage and (6) there is no room for garbage bins, washroom facilities, parking etc.
- Launch sites that are open to public other than residents should be disallowed

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 18: Do you have any further comments or suggestions on the Fallis boat launch?

- Remove all the boat launches.
- Put in place a concrete ramp.
- The boat launch has been there for over 70 years now. Leave it alone. Why play with it so there's only one wrecked track there.
- Another option might be to modify Option B in terms of having the County staff/monitor the gate on weekends and allow non-residents to use it up to the point that the County day use is full and there is no more room for non-residents to park. On weekdays there should be no need for the public to use the Fallis boat launch --- they should be using the Wabamun village one.
- The boat launch should be upgraded by the County and a proper, controlled launch.
- Leave community boat access to the lake (either at the end of road by SRED (Fish & Wildlife) property or at the end of Beach Way.
- The boat launch is a blight on our community.
- This past spring when the boat launch area was landscaped with grass and trees, we thought the problem was solved. We launched our boats at Wabamun and drove them back to Fallis.
- Garbage, verbal abuse, vandalism, speeding, dust are forced upon lakeshore and other residents. The health & safety of the lake is far more important than entitlement of people. Leaving the launch open means greater possibility of invasive species. We do not want to become another Pigeon Lake.
- The Beach Way road allowance actually extends in front of all the properties south of the informal boat launch.
- Because the FALLIS bay shoreline has been classified (2015) Riparian study by the WWMC as highly impaired and continually eroding --- the A option makes the most sense and only option to be considered.
- Most big boats have too many problems launching in this area.
- Having done a survey of other small launches and at other lakes, we have not found one in front of cabins like the one at Fallis.
- Note that people are using the whole Beach Way to launch boats – closing might not work. Exploring the other end of Coal Point (by fish & wildlife property) would be an excellent option.
- A fourth option would be to close and relocate to YWCA launch site (end of road near Fish & Wildlife/SRED).
- Closing the boat launch is important on many levels. Keeping it open would be detrimental for sure. The Wabamun boat launch works very well: there would be no reason to have a launch in Fallis that is open to day use or non-residents. Closing this would solve many other issues such as speeding, traffic, parking, garbage, etc.
- Develop the boat launch near the Alberta Environment property and have the YWCA run it for profit and have Alberta Environment contract the operation.

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 18: Do you have any further comments or suggestions on the Fallis boat launch?

- Over the years the traffic and use due to the boat launch on Beach Way has increased dramatically especially with the closure of some launches and Wabamun actually charging for the services.
- We are astounded that people with a \$80,000 boat and a \$60,000 vehicle pulling it actually balk at paying a \$15 fee to launch and park. They would rather launch in a mudhole at Fallis.
- A better option, not listed would be to make a launch site where the old one used to be at the end of the road by YoWoChA.
- What has taken place this year with residents taking it upon themselves to close the launch has created a great deal of frustration for those of us who have boats & own property in Fallis. Random groups creating laws & policies without the input of all residents is unacceptable and does nothing for community but create division and hard feelings.
- Boat Launch – this is a multifaceted question. We must work this out with the County before we take action.
- Boat Launch – this needs to be addressed by the province and soon. Two boat launches on a lake of this size is ridiculous. There needs to be at least one at each end of the lake but it should not be up to the respective beach to police this. It is imperative to protect the lake from the transfer of contaminants from watercraft. There needs to be an overall lake strategy on effectively and consistently managing launches.
- There is no really good #1 answer to solve this.

SHORELINE DETERIORATION:

The shoreline along Beach Way has deteriorated more this year than in any other. This is due to ice heaving and increased use by both residents and visitors. In the winter the problem is particularly severe with vehicles accessing the lake from anywhere along Beach Way. Shoreline damage can occur during any season and is caused by a variety of things including: vehicles (i.e. cars, trucks, quads, skidoos, golf carts) driving over or onto the beach, litter, placement or storage of structures, gas and equipment, and alteration/removal of natural vegetation including trees.

The extent of the shoreline deterioration has been highlighted by the County: Phase I of the Stantec Wabamun Lake Subwatershed Land Use Study dated May 12, 2015 at page 92 identifies most of Fallis' shoreline (west of Coal Point) as having the worst riparian health assessment of all 24 areas surveyed around the lake with about 90% of the shoreline being highly impaired.

In response to the Stantec findings, the responsible authorities could implement permanent protection of the Fallis shoreline to prevent further damage. Such protection could involve, for instance, barricading Beach Way from the shoreline. Bollards with chain or cables and fences are commonly used in similar sites on

Wabamun Lake to ensure protection of the shoreline from the impact of motorized vehicle traffic and from the placement of illegal structures/equipment.

19. Do you agree with the installation of such devices to restrict motorized vehicles from accessing the shoreline while allowing lifts and piers to be installed? (Yes or No)

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 19: Do you agree with the installation of such devices to restrict motorized vehicles from accessing the shoreline while allowing lifts and piers to be installed? (Yes or No)

YES	NO	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL
26	12	5	43
60%	28%	12%	100%

20. Do you have any comments or suggestions as to how to mitigate the damage, preserve our shoreline or solve this problem?

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 20: Do you have any comments or suggestions as to how to mitigate the damage, preserve our shoreline or solve this problem?

- People should use common sense when using our lake: there are some people who think they own the lake.
- Issue with shoreline at my property has increased significantly with wakeboarding boats. I have personally observed 1-1/2 foot waves on a calm lake from a boat wakeboarding ... this has washed out eggs from nests of migratory waterfowl.
- The County does not accept the reality of the problems we raise. The County does not take the advice of the engineers they consult with in all these reports we pay for as taxpayers.
- Not sure people grasp the role their actions play in damaging the shoreline. Seems that the demand & activity at Fallis is so much more now that there is a need to put up some physical barriers to protect the shoreline. This shouldn't restrict normal use of the beach for anyone (ie. swimming, walking to your pier, picnics).
- Close the road and open the road allowance in the back.
- Signage and enforcement directing winter users of the lake to use only the boat launch.
- Enforcement: stop people from launching anywhere; restore damaged beachfront by adding berms, trees & shrubs.
- Prevent further erosion by rock barrier & planted indigenous vegetation along shore line.
- I'd prefer to see posts erected or trees planted at 4 foot intervals with no chains so that the people along Beach Way could still freely walk from the road to shore without having to walk over a chain. It'll prevent the vehicles

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 20: Do you have any comments or suggestions as to how to mitigate the damage, preserve our shoreline or solve this problem?

- from driving through, the roots will help stabilize the shoreline, and it will beautify the area.
- We do not agree with installing any devices that restrict access to the lake. Concrete bollards, chain and other means are ugly, and drastically diminish the aesthetics of the lake. This would for a sad day at Fallis.
 - Our shore line has no significant changes in last 50 years
 - Quit driving stakes into shoreline for cottager's visitors to tie their boats to for weekends at a time. These have become permanent and are a danger to foot traffic --- I speak from firsthand experience.
 - Stop putting piers and launching speed boats along Beach Way.
 - Vandalism will occur if installation of barricades occurs along Beach Way.
 - We need to manage access to the lake from the shore in both summer and winter months. This is the key issue in protecting the shoreline. Devices are necessary.
 - Re: Phase 1 study -- Fallis area off Coal Point and west having the worst assessment – cause is the “coal” shores – being unique of any other shore on Wabamun.
 - All properties bordering the lake should stop all personal property development at their property lines not at the water (lake shore). This would increase the amount of shoreline available to the public and decrease pressure on Beach Way.
 - There seems to be a reluctance to upset any “entitled” property owners in Fallis although they have keys to solving some of the problems.
 - To take matters into one's own hands and closing off the launch without a suitable alternative was the height of stupidity and arrogance.
 - Kids playing on the beach or people beaching watercraft on the public beach are also an impact. There are many things that will affect the shore line. There is much to consider on how to lessen this impact.
 - It is impossible to stop Mother Nature.
 - Again, signage and using some efficient method of reaching the local population could be effective. Again, an emailed reminder in a community flyer could work.
 - Rebuild Whitewood Pit Lake / talk to Transalta or existing gravel pits to construct new parking lots and deep water ways for speed boats to race around north of highway / RR44.
 - Shoreline deterioration includes the hauling in of foreign soil & plants and the use of bobcats to do so.
 - I would like to deter motorized vehicles from driving over the lakeshore but want to be able to install our pier and boat lift.
 - There should be heavy fines to anyone who does carburetor overhauls or boat repairs on beach front where gas & oil is spilled onto the shoreline and into the water. This is a big concern and a new problem as of the past few years.

A COMMUNITY PIER:

A community pier may be a way to minimize the number of piers and improve access to the lake at Fallis for local residents if the shoreline access changes in the future. A community pier would be built or funded by everyone using it and all area residents would be entitled to store their watercraft there and use the pier.

21. Would you be in favor of a large community pier installed at the Cross Street intersection with Beach Way on the shoreline (Yes or No)?

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 21: Would you be in favor of a large community pier installed at the Cross Street intersection with Beach Way on the shoreline (Yes or No)?			
YES	NO	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL
15	14	14	43
35%	32.5%	32.5%	100%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enough stuff already. Already lost our sand box. • Yes if it was restricted to residents of Fallis. • Not without a massive area for parking vehicles and trailers. • Yes but how will it be managed? • Obligation of two perhaps all three levels of government. 			

22. Would you be prepared to assist in this project if there was consensus (Yes or No)?

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 22: Would you be prepared to assist in this project if there was consensus (Yes or No)?			
YES	NO	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL
9	23	11	43
21%	53%	26%	100%

23. Do you have any other comments about access to the lake at Fallis for lake area residents?

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 23: Do you have any other comments about access to the lake at Fallis for lake area residents?

- I feel that as a resident of Fallis but not on the shore, that we have no rights to use the lake. We are treated like we have no right to go and let our feet soak in the water.
- If people restrict their use/share of public beach on Beach Way to 1 pier & 1 boat rack, there is enough room for all Fallis residents. The problem is when some residents spread out to 30+ feet wide (a pier and 2 boats and a chain of boat racks/jet skis running parallel to shore) AND store equipment overnight for months on the public beach. Public beach on Beach Way is for all to use (residents & non-residents) and not just for how some residents want to use it.
- With all the stuff left on the lakefront: lawn chairs, kayaks, canoes, inflatable water toys, rakes, towels, various items of clothing, etc lake access is a distant wish most of the summer.
- All residents should have access and if we remove public access then the County working with the province should find alternate locations around the lake for public access that minimizes impact on local residents around those alternate locations.
- Currently Beach Way is over-saturated with piers & watercraft. Multiple families on single lots is part of the problem. The area is unsafe for swimmers. A communal pier could partially resolve this ... or provide lakefront owners with sole right to install their own piers adjacent to properties – they are paying much higher taxes for nothing and often can't find space; yet they maintain adjacent beachfront.
- Shore line cottage owners pay high property taxes – the Community Pier should be undertaken by County & Province. Also – it is unclear how the watercraft would be stored?? By pier – do you also mean boat launch? How about parking area, maintenance, garbage disposal, etc costs... survey is unclear. Would be okay with a walking access pier for non-shoreline Fallis owners to facilitate swimming & non-motorized recreational activities only.
- It would make sense for non-lakefront boat owners to have a community pier (as in south Seba, for example) but I'm not sure you would get co-operation.
- I think the Community Pier should be for those not on the lake front and they should organize.
- We are residents of Fallis and we were told and bullied by some Beach Way residents not to put a dock at the lake.
- The biggest problem seems to be non-residents of Fallis accessing the lake at Fallis. For the 35 years we have been at Fallis having individual docks

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 23: Do you have any other comments about access to the lake at Fallis for lake area residents?

worked perfectly fine. Perhaps one dock per lot might reduce the amount of docks slightly.

- I would like to work towards the establishment of a walking/biking trail from Seba Beach to Wabamun. I believe this would aid in promoting good health for the shoreline & good will between user groups.
- For property owners in Fallis, we have no problem sharing access to the lake. For squatters and non-residents, send them to Kapasiwin.
- Putting in a common pier would help with the beach deterioration by focusing the access and could be ramped up closer to the road. It may also help by creating a common shared interest in the beach front through the use and taking care of it. I am surprised that there are as many piers as there are. We should rename Beach way to Dock Alley.
- Access to the lake at Fallis should be available to all citizens.