

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BONNYVILLE NO 87

MEDIA RELEASE

Crane Lake Riparian Restoration and Preservation Program (CLRRPP) *Gears Up for Successful Second Year*

FEBRUARY 23, 2017 – Introduced in 2016, CLRRPP has seen success in its first year.

The program was designed to restore and preserve the ecological function of the riparian zone, educate residents and seasonal users on environmental issues, and to bring awareness to the need to protect the health of Crane Lake. In 2016, the program completed six Riparian Health Assessments - four assessed on environmental reserves (ER) adjacent to volunteer private lots, and two at the west side of the M.D. Park.

The information from these assessments is intended to help direct the municipality and the property owners to promote important riparian functions such as improved water quality, forage production, and fish habitat. Each report contains three scores - a score on the day of assessment, a provincial average comparison and the potential score for the site once efforts towards restoration have taken place. One of the primary goals of the program is to get each lot as close to the possible score, as well as increase the overall rating of the lake.

As seen in Diagram 1, the M.D. Campground received an initial score of 29 percent. This score represents the overall health of the site based on the evaluation of nine parameters:

- 1 - Vegetation cover
- 2a. Invasive Plant Species (Cover)
- 2b. Invasive Plant Species (Density Distribution)
3. Disturbance-Caused Undesirable Herbaceous Species
4. Preferred Tree and Shrub Establishment and Regeneration
- 5a. Utilization of Preferred Trees and Shrubs
- 5b. Live Woody Vegetation Removal by Other than Browsing
6. Human Alteration of Site Vegetation
- 7a. Human Alteration of Site Physical Structure
- 7b. The severity of Human-Caused Alterations to Physical Site
8. Human-Caused Bare Ground
9. Degree of Artificial Removal/Addition of Water)

The west side of the M.D. Crane Lake Park received a score of 18/63. The goal for the park is to achieve a score closer to or higher than the provincial average (70% or 45+/63.) To achieve this, the plan is to focus on creating more vegetative ground cover, better managing invasive plant species and limiting the human alteration of the site.

In addition to the reports, an aerial drone survey along the shoreline of the lake was conducted in July 2016, which also captured the island and the outlet channel. This footage will be used to complete an aerial riparian health assessment as a comparable data source for the data collected in 2006 and the data collected at the completion of the program.

“This information will allow us to see the changes in the shoreline from 2006 to 2016 and then the progress of restoration when we fly again in 2020,” said Environmental Coordinator Katlyn Macdonald.

Moving into 2017, the M.D. will look at working with individual lot owners to revegetate where needed, and to establish a working relationship with the lot owners adjacent to environmental reserves. Each lot owner will have the opportunity to help design their restoration program, including the selection of vegetation. There will be 1,000 seedlings for the 2017 spring plant, with a variety of species of native trees, shrubs, forbs, and grasses.

The west side of the M.D. park is the largest site in the program, and will be one of the most interactive sites as the public will be able to see where the revegetation is occurring and will be able to watch the progress over the next few years. The park will have specially selected sites along the lakeshore that will be temporarily fenced off and marked with signs (see Diagram 2) to allow the vegetation time to establish roots. These locations will have no effect on individuals enjoying the campground or the beach area.

Further engagement opportunities will be available for the community with family-friendly eco-projects and educational days at the lake during the summer months. If the community or members of the public are interested in learning more about the program, an additional presentation will be made at the Crane Lake Advisory Stewardship Society Annual Meeting this spring.

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For more information, contact:

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