# Work on Buffalo Lake expected to cost $13M

## Cottages near Getty's home likely to increase in value

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A plan to stabilize the level of Buffalo Lake is a $9-million bonanza for Premier Don Getty's cottage neighbors and will cost taxpayers $13 million.

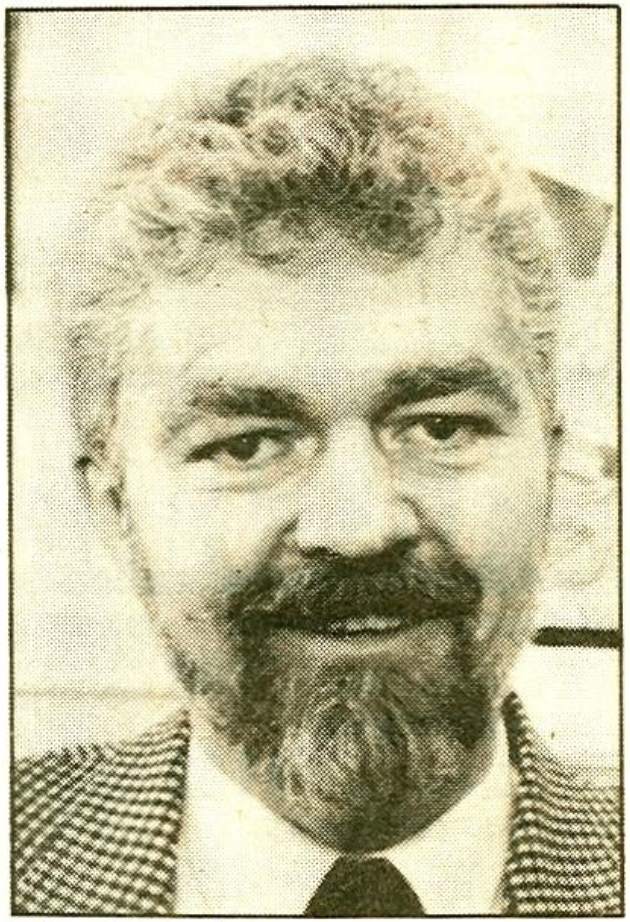
"With stabilization, it is expected that the marketability of cottage lots would improve, even though this may not lead to an increase in the price of lots," said the report of Environmental Management Associates of Calgary.

Lakeside cottage properties will see a benefit $9.6 million, if the government spends the $13 million needed to raise the lake.

The analysis also found the scheme will return benefits of about $11.1 million to the local economy.

The analysis is part of an environmental impact assessment done for the province's environment department. The study is an update of an earlier report, which gave the plan environmental approval.

Getty would not comment on the report, saying the government has appointed a three-person panel to hold public hearings on the scheme.



John McInnis

New Democrat environment critic John McInnis criticized the idea in the legislature, saying Getty's Stettler home is located near the lake.

"Now, I'd like to ask the premier in view of the fact that he has property within a short five-iron shot off the lake, if he would indicate how he feels about taxpayers' money going to support a project which is an economic loser and benefits only the property owners in the area?"

The study found that camping activities at the lake will only slightly increase, primarily due to promotional efforts.

"The recent downward trend in camping at provincial park facilities is expected to continue since the popularity of camping is declining," said the report.

Under the stabilization plan, water from the Red Deer River would be diverted through a local creek to the lake, which has seen its water levels fluctuate for years.

An initial environmental assessment found the diversion would create too much algae on the lake, but a later study found increased salinity inhibiting algae growth.