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Lake plan faces fight

By **ANDREA MAYNARD**
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A well-known environmentalist is preparing to fight a controversial plan to raise the level of Buffalo Lake.

Martha Kostuch, a Rocky Mountain House veterinarian, said her lawyers believe she has a good case against the federal government, which granted crucial approvals for the project.

"I am prepared to lead the effort," said Dr. Kostuch, who is now looking for backing from environmental groups.

The Alberta government plans to raise the level of Buffalo Lake near Premier Don Getty's Stettler-area home, about half a metre to raise its recreation potential.

The provincial and federal governments granted final approvals for the project two weeks ago.

But environmentalists say the project is a waste of money and could destroy habitat for animals like the endangered piping plover bird.

Dr. Kostuch said her battle will depend on finding an environmental group to support legal action.

If successful, she plans to fight the federal government's decision not to conduct an environmental assessment of the project.

The federal transportation department has allowed the project to proceed without a permit under the Navigable Waters Protection Act. That decision was made without any environmental assessment, said Dr. Kostuch.