

Buffalo Lake project raises concern

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Red Deer

Communities that could be helped by a plan to divert water into Buffalo Lake have welcomed Alberta government plans to resurrect the project, shelved in 1984.

But a retired botany professor has voiced concerns over a recent Alberta Environment report which says the proposed \$15-million scheme to divert water from a river will not cause a serious algae

problem at the shallow lake, 19 kilometres northwest of Stettler.

Charles Bird said he can understand the desire of residents to raise the level of Buffalo Lake. Proponents of the plan say it will boost tourism in the area.

"But studying this report leads me to the conclusion that quite a bit of additional ecological work needs to be done before a firm commitment is given to go ahead with the project," Bird said.

Five years ago the province

mothballed the proposal after studies determined algae would bloom on the lake to unacceptable levels if river and lake water were mixed.

Alberta Environment now feels the river will not pump as much algae-producing phosphorus into the lake as predicted in three earlier studies.

It intends to begin an environmental impact assesement early next year.

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