

PARLBY CREEK - BUFFALO LAKE WATER MANAGEMENT PROJECT

ISSUE NO. 3

JULY 1991

PHASE V - BUFFALO LAKE STABILIZATION COMPONENT

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EIA STATUS REPORT

Since the second newsletter, a lot has happened. The draft EIA (March 1990) was revised to reflect your comments as well as those received by various government departments. The final EIA was released in March 1991.

An independent Review Board was appointed by the Minister of the Environment, the Honourable Ralph Klein. The Review Board was directed to hold public hearings on the project; review the environmental impacts of the project and proposed mitigative measures; review the degree to which local citizen's concerns were addressed by the proponent; and provide advice on the environmental acceptability of the project.

The Review Board established a project

office in Lacombe and held a number of meetings to familiarize members with the terms and scope of the project. The final EIA report was available at the Review Board's office and at the municipal offices of Alix, Bashaw, Mirror, Rochon Sands and the County of Stettler. Public hearings were held at the Alix Community Hall on May 21 and 22, 1991.

A total of more than 150 members of the public, the news media, registered and non-registered intervenors attended the hearings. A total of 56 presentations were made during the two days of hearings.

The Review Board learned that the majority of municipal, community and corporate representatives in the area overwhelmingly support the project.

The Review Board made the following recommendations in their report released June 24, 1991:

1. the project should proceed;
2. a Buffalo Lake Management Team should be established with membership reflecting the multiple

use nature of the project;

3. the Management Team should develop a management plan to address issues arising from the construction, operation and monitoring of the project; and
4. the project must comply with all relevant provincial acts and regulations.

Thanks are extended to those who provided input during the EIA preparation and review phase.

PROJECT UPDATE

On July 5, 1991, the Minister of the Environment, the Honourable Ralph Klein, announced Cabinet approval of Buffalo Lake Stabilization. Cabinet accepted all recommendations of the Review Board.

HISTORICAL RESOURCES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

To ensure that historical information in the project area is not lost for future generations, an historical resources impact assessment (HRIA) will be done and a mitigation strategy will be designed and implemented.

The HRIA will include field investigations along the pipeline route, Buffalo Lake shoreline and Tail Creek. Field investigations will be done by a team of archaeologists from Environmental Management Associates, Calgary.

The archaeologists will investigate man's past use of the lake and surrounding area over the past 10,000 years. They will search for campsites, killsites, animal and fish processing sites, hunting sites and so on. They will also be looking for more recent sites including homesteads and other structures dating to the turn of the century.

Prior to field investigations, archaeologists rate the historical resource potential of a project area by studying topographic maps, aerial photographs, and site files housed by Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism. Because sites tend to be found in conjunction with certain topographic features, archaeologists are then able to focus their efforts on sensitive areas while in the field.

Archaeologists complete much of their field investigations through visual examination of the ground surface as they walk the project area. Frequently, sites will be found by artifacts or features observed in cutbacks, areas of scanty vegetation, rodent burrows, vehicle tracks, and other disturbances. Flakes, the by-product of stone tool manufacture, are the most common artifact found. When buried sites are anticipated, shovel tests are necessary to expose the subsurface. Although these tests are small (less than three shovel widths on a side), they allow the archaeologists to not only find buried sites but to assess the significance of the sites.

Historical resource investigations previously completed along the lakeshore

and nearby have yielded some interesting sites. These include the Buffalo Lake Metis Settlement, the Boss Hill Buffalo Jump and numerous campsites. While these sites are not likely to be affected by the project, the archaeologists will ensure that this is the case and will look for other sites within or close to the project boundaries.

If you have observed sites, have your own artifact collections or have any concerns about the HRIA field investigations, please call or write:

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HOW TO KEEP IN TOUCH

Your continued input is needed to ensure that the project is implemented successfully.

The Buffalo Lake Management Team will be appointed in the near future. In the interim, if you have any questions or concerns, please call or write:

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BY AUGUST 15, 1991