

FEEDLOT UPDATE – July, 2022

THE FOLLOWING REPRESENTS A BRIEF UPDATE ON PROGRESS RELATING TO THE PROPOSED PIGEON LAKE FEEDLOT:

1. No decision has yet been made by the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB)* Due to the extensive opposition to this Feedlot the experienced view is that a decision will not be fast, with estimates of timing between 4 and 6 months.
2. Staff with the NRCB will make the initial determination, any appeal will have to be made within 10 days and if the staff decision is upheld by that Board, Court action will be necessary.
3. Appeals directly to G&S Cattle to abandon the site by several parties have gone unanswered.
4. Appeals to elected representatives receive a standard response that they have no mandate, “it is the NRCB’s role.” (see insight below) Approaches will now be made to a new Environment Minister appointed June 22nd
5. An experienced environmental/NRCB lawyer and environmental specialists have been contracted.
6. The initial Division between some of the “affected parties,” and the PLWA has been resolved.
7. Appeals to the County by several groups have resulted in modest movement from “we have no objection,” to “we have concerns” regarding a Feedlot in the Watershed.
8. A similar feedlot near the Chain Lakes in Ponoka was recently opposed for comparable reasons to the Pigeon Lake opposition, but was recently approved by the NRCB. It is a concern, but is being used as a learning event.
9. Fund raising has been robust, now over \$60,000. New initiatives like a campaign at the Aug Pigeon Lake Concerts are being contemplated. Please send tax free donations to the plwa.ca It is easy to donate by sending an e-transfer to info@plwa.ca noting the Feedlot fund and your name and initial. A tax receipt will be issued.
10. It an attempt to maintain public momentum the PLRL has developed posters placed around the Villages, a business has paid for an electronic sign on the QE II and bumper stickers are being prepared by the PLWA.
11. The PLWA has appointed a project team including Rick Melia from their Board, a program coordinator, legal counsel, two representatives for the “directly affected” neighbours, an Environmental Engineer, and a Contaminant Geoscientist. A dozen others including several from Crystal Springs are being used in an informal advisory capacity.
12. Creek samples are being taken regularly by volunteers and analyzed at the U of A and Edmonton labs as part of the planned defense. There is new evidence that the hundreds of cattle already in the watershed are now contributing to lake algae.
13. New evidence suggests Feedlot excrement will transfer e-coli as well as hormones and antibiotics through ground water to the lake.

14. The Crystal Springs Buoy has been deployed and is monitoring water quality hourly. The public can access the data at wqdata.live.com
15. The Metis Association has taken an active role, made a strong submission and is working on an Appeal.
16. The area Tribes have expressed their opposition to the Feedlot and asked the NRCB for time for a late submission.
17. Regrettably the A Executive Director has accepted a new position with the Battle River Watershed effective immediately. She will however continue working with the PLWA and this initiative two days a week over the next six “transition” months while a replacement is being sought. Hopefully leadership will not be a problem.

*INSIGHT?” There is a common perception that the NRCB is a creative and effective government construct designed to approve controversial commercial developments like Feedlots while buffering the politician from the controversy. It works well in terms of protecting politicians. It does not work well in terms of serving the community. Another common view is that the Feedlot will be approved, (ie) Ponoka, and any appeals will also fail. Court action will then be necessary and the PLWA is preparing for all events.